

# ISRAEL

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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The Abieh family with their six children and their uncle (right) in front of their rented house in Gondar.

## From Ethiopia to Israel—A Dream Fulfilled

In early November, we were privileged to accompany twelve Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Christians for Israel has contributed much financially to the *Aliyah* of Jews from that country. The return of the Jews from Ethiopia is one of the most wonderful stories in Israel's history. It brings to mind the text from *Psalms 126:1*: "When the Lord caused the captives of Zion to return, we were like dreamers."

For more than 2,500 years, the 'Beta Israel' (House of Israel), as the Jews of Ethiopia call themselves, lived secluded among the Ethiopians, with no contact with other Jews in the Diaspora. All these centuries, they have longed to return to their ancient homeland in God's time. From the 1980s, that return began to take off. The first rescue operations were hectic and happened in secret. Jews were suffering from persecution for engaging in Jewish activities and were fleeing civil war and famine. And so began covert missions to airlift Ethiopian Jews to new lives in the Jewish state.

In total, about 95,000 have returned, but almost every

Ethiopian family in Israel still has family members in Ethiopia. Some 10,000 Ethiopian Jews are waiting to be allowed to return to Israel.

### Hoping for Good News

The families in Ethiopia have moved out of their villages towards the city. Those from rural areas have relocated to Gondar, and others have moved to Addis Ababa. They live in small, rented houses. Every day they hope for the good news that they will be allowed to leave for Israel, especially Jerusalem. They are no longer building their future in Ethiopia. At the Jewish community centres in Gondar and Addis Ababa, run by the Jewish Agency, adults are helped with pre-Aliyah prep courses, children attend after-school Hebrew and history classes, and mothers and infants receive nutrition and medical care. Once in Israel, they are provided with their first home in one of the Absorption Centres dedicated specifically to the needs of Ethiopian immigrants, as well as Hebrew and vocational training for adults, academic enrichment

and after-school activities for the children, and social and recreational activities for all.

### Yearning

Jewish families in Ethiopia often wait years before they can leave for Israel. For the family Abieh, portrayed above, the same is true. Father Teshome (38) works as a day labourer to bear the high rent costs of their shabby living quarters and to provide food and necessities for his wife and six daughters, of which the youngest is four months old. Mother Ageriy (30) has two sisters in Israel, who also send money to help the family. Before flying to Ethiopia, we visited them in their apartment in Beersheba. The oldest sister, Salina, dreams of the family reunion every night. The family has been waiting for ten years.

The father of one of the families flying back to Israel with us meets his sister at the airport, whom he has not seen for 26 years. The miracle of return touches the heart every time. (Read further stories on page 6)

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Israel & Christians Today is the premier publication of Christians for Israel



Colophon

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Mission

Our mission is to bring Biblical understanding in the Church and among the nations concerning God's purposes for Israel and to promote comfort of Israel through prayer and action.

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The Challenges of Restoring Israel

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The Lord promised throughout scripture that He would bring back the children of Jacob – all the descendants of the twelve tribes of Jacob – from the four corners of the earth and settle them in the land. For example, in Ezekiel 28:

*“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety... Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.”*

The purpose of their return is also clear: by their physical and spiritual restoration, the name of the Lord will be sanctified amongst the nations. Why? Because He is preparing the nations for the coming of Messiah, who will be seated in Jerusalem on the throne of His father David and reign over the descendants of Jacob (*Luke 1:32-33*), and all nations will learn the ways of the Lord (*Isaiah 2*). See, for example, *Ezekiel 37*:

*“I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them, and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms... I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees... Then the nations will know that I, the Lord make Israel holy when my sanctuary is among them forever.”*

Can there be any doubt that the return of the Jewish people to the land over the last 150 years is the fulfilment of those promises? Since the 1850s, Jews have returned to the land of their forefathers from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. Today, half the known Jewish population of the world lives in Israel. Gradually, the ‘lost’ ten tribes are being found. The return is continuing every day, and we are privileged to play a small role, as you can read in this edition of *Israel & Christians Today*.



Arrival of new immigrants from North America at Ben Gurion airport. | Photo: Flash90

So much for the return of the Jewish people. What about the modern State of Israel? Is it a reflection of the Lord's will? Should we support the State of Israel?

Yes, we should. But we should also not expect too much from it.

Like all other states in the world, the State of Israel is a human institution. It is not perfect, and – like all other states in the world – it cannot be perfect. Moreover – unlike many states in the world - it is a democracy. It has a representative Parliament and separation of powers (legislature, executive and judiciary). There is always going to be tension, and even conflict, as the various components of the state advance their respective interests. That is normal in a democracy. Just look at the problems facing the USA, Canada and Australia, for example. Israel is not alone or exceptional.

The results of the elections in Israel early November have provoked a strong debate in Israeli society (and the Jewish world generally) about what it means to be a 'Jewish' state.

To be sure, there is a tension – but not a conflict - between the 'Jewish' and 'democratic' characters of the State of Israel. Over the last century, the Zionist movement has had to contend with this

tension: how to return to the land and become a Jewish 'nation' while respecting the non-Jewish population. While there have always been extremists, the vast majority of Jews simply want to live in peace and harmony with the non-Jews in the land. However, this is a huge challenge given that the very existence of the Jewish nation is opposed bitterly by her enemies – including the political leadership of the non-Jews in the land – especially the Palestinians, who take the position that the Jewish state of Israel has no legitimacy whatsoever.

The people of Israel – Jews and non-Jews – have expressed their will in these last elections. We can be confident that, while there is a clear call to enforce strong internal and external security measures, the new government will also be sensitive to the need to respect and integrate the Arab communities in the land. That is a two-way street. The Arabs in Israel and the disrupted territories also are responsible for their own situation.

Our primary task as Gentiles outside the land is to pray for the people of Israel in the coming period, and especially for its leaders - that those who form the new government will be led by the Spirit of unity, discernment and love.

Prayer Points

By C4I Prayer Team

Israel

- From December 18 to 26, the Jewish people celebrate *Hanukkah*. This year, Christmas coincides with *Hanukkah*. Both feasts celebrate the coming of light in dark times. Give thanks for the light God brings in a dark world. Give thanks that Jesus came as the Light. Pray for a blessed *Hanukkah* celebration for the Jewish people.
- Israel has recently had to eliminate numerous terrorists in Judea and Samaria due to the many attacks on the Jewish people. Pray that this will be a warning to others not to join a terror group. Pray for the protection of Jews in Judea and Samaria from terror.
- “‘I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have banished you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.’” (*Jeremiah 29:14*) This verse emphasises ‘all the nations’ and ‘all the places’. Pray for this Bible verse to be fulfilled.

Israel & the Nations

- New British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is in favour of moving the British embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In addition, he condemns the BDS movement and wants to fight it. Pray that he will do many good and meaningful things for the Jewish people.
- Pray that Christians will look beyond the (extremely prejudiced) regular news media for news about Israel. Pray that Christians will take the trouble to find dependable news sources and share this information with others.

Christians for Israel

- Due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, this was an eventful year for Koen Carlier and his C4I team. Give thanks for all the thousands of Jews they were able to help leave for Israel. Pray that they will receive strength to help many Jews in the coming year.

For daily Prayer Points, go to our website [www.c4israel.org](https://www.c4israel.org)



# Will Saudi Arabia Join the Abraham Accords?

## ■ Dr Eric Mandel

I recently returned from meetings in Saudi Arabia with diplomats, foreign ministry, counter-terrorism officials, and various think tanks. One of my goals was to see how close the Kingdom is to joining the UAE, Morocco, Sudan and Bahrain in normalising relations with Israel.

The Abraham Accords are just two years old, but they have revolutionised the relationship between the Jewish state and the moderate Sunni Arab nations, so it is not unreasonable to think that what has until now been a Palestinian veto on any diplomatic progress between Israel and Saudi Arabia might be at an end.

The Abraham Accords employed an outside-in strategy, making peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours as a bridge that would allow the Palestinians to feel comfortable with making the necessary concessions for peace. Unfortunately, with a corrupt Palestinian Authority, which has never come to terms with a Jewish state anywhere in the Levant, it is up to the Sunni states to say: Enough is enough; we need to make peace with Israel in our own interests.

It was always presumed that the UAE and Bahrain would never have joined the Accords without behind-the-scenes Saudi encouragement. However, as I learned last year when I spoke with officials at the Saudi embassy in Washington DC, the Saudis still believe they have a special obligation to protect their Palestinian Arab brethren, no matter how difficult they are to deal with. On the other hand, the Saudis know that the Palestinians are not fond of them, and the feeling is mutual.



Riyadh city towers in Saudi Arabia. | Photo: Shutterstock

Arabia is a 'critical partner' in expanding the Accords, the Biden administration has invested minimal political capital in making it happen.

The Saudis know that the administration would consider it a political win if Riyadh joined the Accords, and they are in no hurry to do Biden a favour. This is especially the case after Biden publicly reprimanded Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) for lowering oil production while Americans are paying high gas prices, despite the president's demand that he refrain from doing so.

If Biden wants the Saudis to help with future oil production, the quid pro quo will be American help against the

If new marching orders from a new king were to arrive, however, more than a few Saudis would be happy to develop relations with Israel. This was reaffirmed to me by someone close to the next generation of princes. I believe that when King Salman passes away and MBS consolidates power, the Palestinian issue will be sidelined to some extent.

I recommended to my interlocutors that, if they are not yet ready to join the Abraham Accords, they should find other public ways to build a bridge between Israel and Saudi Arabia. I said being pro-Israel is the secret sauce in Congress, as it remains, for most, a bipartisan issue. Off the record, moreover, I heard from some that the anti-Saudi comments made by Muslim members of the left-wing congressional "Squad" have not been appreciated. The American pro-Israel community is not a fan of the Squad either.

## So, will Saudi Arabia join the Abraham Accords?

While King Salman is alive and President Biden prioritises a return to the Iran nuclear agreement, it is very unlikely. However, the Saudis and the Israelis have a lot to offer each other and need a united front against their common adversary Iran. One day, MBS will be king, and the possibility of closer relations will become a reality. But with Iran threatening Saudi Arabia and Kurdistan to deflect attention from its persecution of its own citizens, it would be preferable for improved ties with Israel, and for that matter the US, to come sooner rather than later.

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**"...Without solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we're not going to have real, sustainable security in the region."**

So, I asked why they allowed the Palestinian Arabs to work against Saudi security and economic interests. A few officials reminded me that the Saudis were incredulous that Arafat did not take the Israeli-American peace offer at Camp David and Taba in 2000 and 2001 and seemed unaware of an even more generous offer Abbas refused from then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2008.

According to *Bloomberg*, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said last year that the Kingdom has "no current intention to join the [Abraham] Accords. ... The best way to build on that spirit is to find a path to solving the issue of the Palestinians and finding a path to a Palestinian state. ... Without solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we're not going to have real, sustainable security in the region."

The precarious state of US-Saudi relations today will likely be a drag on any possibility of diplomatic progress between the Kingdom and Israel. Despite Secretary of State Antony Blinken saying Saudi

Iranians. If the US stops its outreach to Iran and imposes more 'consequences' on the ayatollahs, MBS will almost certainly start pumping more oil.

When asked by the Saudis how they could get back into the good graces of the US despite the current difficulties, I said I would give them the advice I gave to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry a few years ago when President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's human rights record was hurting Egypt's relationship with America: There is still bipartisan consensus in support of the U.S.-Israel relationship, and any warming of relations with Israel would be welcomed in Congress and by the administration.

All the Saudis I met, officially or not, on the record or off, made a point of saying that they are ready for diplomatic relations with Israel only if the Palestinian issue is resolved. It sounded to me like they were still following the old Saudi playbook: A resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would have to come before normalisation.

## Short News

### Jewish Sports Museum

It is the first Jewish Sports Museum in the world that was opened this Autumn. The museum is in the town of Kfar Maccabiah in Israel and recently opened its doors to the public. One thousand authentic and rare items are on display, covering the period from the 19th century until the present day. For lovers of sports and history definitely worth a visit.

### Israel's Top 50 Christian Allies



This year the Israel Allies Foundation published a list again of the top fifty Christian leaders who contributed to the Jewish State. The organisation publishes the list on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles because Christians feel connected with this feast. Director Reinstein: "Recognition of this invaluable work of our Christian supporters is an important way of expressing our thanks to them. Each of them is an example of the far-reaching influence of diplomacy for Israel on the basis of their faith. They are Christians – not countries – on whom we can count and who will always stand next to Israel." On the list are two well-known names from Christians for Israel: Frank van Oordt (Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands | left in the photo) ranked 37, and Andrew Tucker (Editor-in-Chief of Israel & Christians Today | right in the photo) ranked 45. | Photo: C4I

### Economy is Booming



The Israeli economy is booming. With a population of nine million people, the growth is enormous, with low inflation (4.3 per cent) and a low unemployment rate (3.5 per cent). In addition, the currency, the shekel, has become stronger in the past years. It is expected that the growth of the GDP this year will hit 5.2 per cent. The technology sector in it is of vital importance to the Israeli economy. It is the largest sector in the country, from car parts to medical supplies and solutions for climate change. Israeli inventions and developments are vitally important for the industry outside of Israel. | Photo: Flash90



# Why Israel Must Not Provide the Iron Dome to Ukraine



An Iron Dome anti-missile battery is stationed near the southern Israeli city of Sderot, on 6 August 2022. | Photo: Flash90

## ■ Jacob Nagal

**Iran and Russia have been moving closer against the backdrop of an ongoing war in Ukraine, which has dragged on and expanded. For Israel, these ever-closer ties are a source of constant headaches.**

Ukraine has not relented in its efforts to have Israel provide it with the Iron Dome missile defence system, other types of air defense technology, and a whole host of cutting-edge weapon systems. Official requests have been relayed from Ukraine's prime minister, foreign minister and defence minister, as well as from its ambassador in Israel. Israeli officials have rebuffed these efforts, prompting Ukraine to lash out at Israel. Their strong rebuke has received support from various elements both within and outside Israel, who have failed to see the big picture.

**It is almost certain that any system provided to Ukraine will ultimately fall into the hands of the Russians and, subsequently, of the Iranians, even if the Ukrainian forces limit their deployment to the Kyiv area...**

Iran has been providing Russia with weapon systems—mainly kamikaze drones—and there is talk that it might also send sophisticated ballistic missiles. But that is only part of the problem: Iran has also been guiding Russia on how to circumvent Western sanctions and how to game the international banking system.

The United States is duty-bound to help Ukraine and defeat the brutal invasion of Russian President Vladimir Putin; Israel must do its utmost to lend a hand. But Jerusalem must not send Iron Dome or other weapon systems to Ukraine and should not be expected to do so.

The Iron Dome's combat record is stellar, making it easy to understand why Kyiv has its eyes on it. The Iron Dome is capable of getting the job done in Ukraine (I won't go into the technical or operational aspects, some of which are classified). Those who have tried to explain Israel's refusal by claiming the system would not be up to the task in Ukraine are both wrong and misleading. Having said that, there are four reasons why Israel cannot afford to send the Iron Dome and other systems to Ukraine.

The main and most important reason is obvious: It is almost certain that any system provided to Ukraine will ultimately fall into the hands of the Russians and, subsequently, of the Iranians, even if the Ukrainian forces

limit their deployment to the Kyiv area (as they have claimed they would in some cases). This would result in a potentially greater destructive potential for Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad when they target Israel in future wars. One cannot expect Israel to compromise its core (and secret) self-defence capabilities.

The second reason we should not provide such systems is that Israel still doesn't have enough interceptors for its own operational needs (especially when it comes to countering the threat on the northern border). It is going to take a long time to truly bolster our production capacity, perhaps years. It is also important to keep in mind that in order to have the systems do their job effectively, Ukraine would need many more interceptors than Israel can provide because of its massive geographical spread.

Third, even if Israel agreed to send weapon systems, it would still take time—presumably months, if not years—before they could be phased into service in Ukraine, as Ukrainian troops would need proper training.

These three reasons are as valid for the United States as they are for Israel. The U.S.-made systems Washington has been sending, despite not being top- or even second-tier, will likely fall (some have already) into the hands of Iran, which is likely to also get from the Russians any operational lessons drawn from their use in combat, including their limitations and modus operandi. As such, one can understand why the United States has been adamant in its refusal to provide Kyiv with advanced air defence systems such as the THAAD or Patriot. It's also worth noting that the United States doesn't even have enough air defence systems to cover its own deployed forces.

There is a fourth reason why Israel should not heed Ukraine's request: the impact on Israel-Russia relations and the dwindling presence of Russia in Syria, as well as the threat of Iran replacing it. While it is less important, this reason should not be overlooked. The war may have led Russia to take troops out of Syria and deploy them in Ukraine, but this seemingly positive development has become a source of concern because Iran seeks to fill this

vacuum with the backing of Russia and Syria. Having Israel send systems to Ukraine could create a potential threat, from Russia, Syria or Iran, to Israel's freedom of manoeuvre. Some have even speculated that Russian President Vladimir Putin would retaliate by changing his policy toward Russia's Jews, but this does not appear to be a real concern.

However, while Israel should avoid sending Iron Dome and other weapon systems to Ukraine, it could definitely provide Kyiv with good intelligence on Iran's actions, its drones and its ballistic missiles (should they be provided to Russia). As Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said, Israel can also send sensors and an integrative early warning system that would dramatically help Ukraine deal with drones, rockets and missiles. Israel must also continue and even increase its humanitarian aid to Ukraine and its citizens.

Those who have been critical of Israel for not sending the Iron Dome or other sophisticated systems to Ukraine should take a look in the mirror and ask why they have not held the United States to the same standard. They can demand that the United States send Ukraine advanced air defence systems such as the Patriot or the Predator drones. I hold the view that the United States, like Israel, has done the right thing by withholding such systems for the above-mentioned reasons.

Washington has opted instead to send less sophisticated systems, which might also fall into the Iranian hands. These systems are of greater availability, and there is a shorter period necessary to phase them into service.

A final note regarding global hypocrisy over Iran's nuclear programme.

Even as Russia and Iran move ever closer, the Iranian regime has continued supporting terrorist activities all over the world. It has not been forthcoming in answering the questions posed by the International Atomic Energy Agency and has been brazenly breaching the nuclear deal and various other pacts it has signed. It is simply beyond the pale that the United States and the European Union have persisted in the absurd effort to find a "creative" way to revive the JCPOA. It is time we understand the nature of the murderous regime in Tehran and confront it head-on.

*IDF Brig. Gen. (res.) Jacob Nagel, formerly the national security adviser to the Israeli prime minister, is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a visiting professor at the Faculty of Aeronautics and Space at the Technion.*

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# Netanyahu's Stunning Election Victory Explained

■ Yochanan Visser  
Correspondent in Israel

Election polls in Israel can be wildly off the mark, history teaches us, and this was certainly true for the election that took place on 1 November.

With almost all surveys, including the three exit polls published immediately after polling stations closed at 10pm on 1 November, predicting that the deadlock in Israeli politics would continue, the rightist bloc led by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu secured a surprising and resounding victory.

The right-wing bloc led by Netanyahu ultimately won 64 seats, securing a comfortable majority in the Knesset, Israel's parliament.

The bloc of left-wing and right-wing parties led by outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid, supplemented by the Arab Ra'am party, fell to 50 seats out of 120 in the Knesset and will see Lapid become Israel's shortest-reigning prime minister.

The leader of Israel's second-largest party Yesh Atid, which won five seats to reach 24, was heavily criticised by other left-wing parties for the way he handled his campaign, which was mainly focused on the unrealistic attempt to make Yesh Atid the largest party in Israel.

Lapid's critics say the outgoing prime minister's campaign was responsible for the disappearance of the far-left Meretz party from the Knesset and for the fact that Labor, which for decades was Israel's largest political party, is now the smallest faction in the new Knesset, with only four seats.

Those four seats were just enough to pass the 3.25 per cent electoral threshold that Meretz failed to pass.

Before the election, however, Lapid tried to have Meretz and Labor enter into a temporary or permanent merger but to no avail, however, because Merav Michaeli, the leader of the Labor party, opposed it.

Michaeli assumed that if her party and Meretz were to participate separately in the elections, they would win 13 seats together.

At the time, the Labor leader defended her decision, pointing to the importance of Lapid's bloc winning enough seats to prevent Netanyahu from achieving his next premiership.

That turned out differently, as we now know, and Netanyahu will again be the prime minister of Israel and will be able to form a stable coalition for the first time in almost four years.

The Likud leader already held the record for longest-serving prime minister (15 years) and, with his stunning victory, has now given a new dimension to his party's name, which means consolidation.

Netanyahu's comeback is linked not only



Likud party chairman MK Benjamin Netanyahu seen after coalition talks at a hotel in Jerusalem on 6 November 2022. | Photo: Flash90

to Likud winning 32 seats, two more than in the March 2021 election, but also to the rise of the far right and the gains of the religious party Shas, which won 11 seats, two more than in March 2021.

The biggest surprise, however, was the newly formed Dati Leumi (National Religious) party, which won 14 seats, eight more than in the previous elections and became the surprise of this election.

The rise of the party of Betzalel Smotrich and controversial far-right activist Itamar Ben Gvir has two causes.

Statistics showed that almost most of the supporters of the right-wing party Bayit HaYehudi (Jewish House) had defected to Dati Leumi.

Bayit HaYehudi (formerly Yamina) is the party of ex-Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, who led the party to a debacle in this election and got more than 1.2 per cent of the vote.

In the previous election in 2021, Bennett and Shaked's party won seven seats, but it now appeared that their supporters had not forgiven the two leaders for joining a coalition of left-wing and Arab parties led by Yair Lapid.

Bennett thus violated his election promise, which he made during the 2021 election campaign, that he would never sit in a government with Lapid.

Another reason for the astonishing growth of Dati Leumi is the sense of personal insecurity that many Israelis have resulting from the current wave of terror in Israel, especially in Judea and Samaria, where attacks have been carried out on a daily basis in recent months.

Itamar Ben Gvir strongly appealed to this sense of insecurity during the campaign and promised to claim the Internal Security portfolio when his party would be part of the next coalition in Israel.

In that position, Ben Gvir wants to take

all kinds of measures that are supposed to bring an end to the current wave of terror.

He is, for example, in favour of introducing the death penalty against Palestinian terrorists and wants to deport Arab Knesset members who openly support terrorism or express their admiration for terrorists, as has happened recently.

Also, in cities with a mixed Arab-Jewish population, where violent riots broke out last year during the war with Hamas in Gaza, the support for Dati Leumi grew significantly.

The support for the party in the city of Lod, for example, grew from 3.9 per cent to 15.5 per cent of voters.

The same was roughly true for the cities of Akko, Ramle, and Jerusalem, where 14.2 per cent of voters now voted for Dati Leumi.

In other cities that did not witness the Arab violence in May 2021, an upward trend for the party of Ben Gvir and Smotrich was also registered.

One of those cities was Eilat, where the party won 11.1 per cent of the vote compared to 3.4 per cent in March 2021.

Another factor contributing to the victory of the Netanyahu-led right-wing bloc was the high voter turnout.

This high turnout of about 72 per cent benefited right-wing parties and was the result of Netanyahu's campaign, which targeted right-wing voters who stayed at home last year.

It is now expected that Netanyahu will soon be able to cobble together a coalition composed entirely of right-wing parties for the first time.

The prime minister wants to end the rule of the current caretaker coalition as soon as possible.

## Short News

### Robot Cleans Solar Panel



Solar panels must be cleaned from time to time to produce the maximum possible amount of energy, but the use of water is not always eco-friendly. That is why the Israeli company Airtouch Solar came up with a solution: clean without water – and with the aid of a robot. The product is available in Israel and India. | Photo: Shutterstock

### BDS Has to Back Down

Spain adopted a law that states that a subsidy or public funds are prohibited for organisations and bodies that promote antisemitism. This law defines antisemitism as is defined in the working definition of antisemitism of the IHRA, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. This law against antisemitism effectively excludes BDS groups from public funding in Spain.

### High-Quality Textbooks Morocco

Morocco is the first Arab country to include relevant Jewish history education in its compulsory curriculum. The Anti-Defamation League ascertains that they do this in a good way. The textbooks promote the appreciation of Jews and show the students what Jews contribute to the country. In various Middle Eastern countries and Northern Africa, negative perceptions of Jews occur and even antisemitism.

### Alternative for Bees



Bees are indispensable, on a worldwide basis, for pollinating crops. Unfortunately, the bees are doing poorly. And yes, a first step towards a solution is in sight. In Israel, the company of Arugga presented a commercial robot imitating a bumblebee. The robot is called Polly. Polly produces vibrations releasing the pollen from the flowers and ensures fertilisation. During tests in hothouses in Israel, Australia and the United States, the results are promising. Tomatoes fertilised with Polly yield five per cent more harvest than with the traditional bumblebee. | Photo: Shutterstock.



# From Ethiopia to Israel—A Dream Fulfilled

■ **Marie-Louise Weissenböck**  
Christians for Israel Austria

*Continued from page 1...*

A small team of Christians for Israel had the privilege to visit Jewish families in Ethiopia and learn more about Jewish life and *Aliyah* in early November this year. Preceding this, we had the opportunity to visit their family members in Israel, who had already made *Aliyah* years before—many of them with the help of Christians for Israel—and were eagerly awaiting the reunification of their families. Their stories deeply impacted us.

## Moket and Babich

**Ashkelon, Israel:** In Ashkelon, we visit Moket, who welcomes us to her home with traditional Ethiopian snacks: fresh popcorn and fruit. On her arm, she has her little son, Beni'el. Moket made *Aliyah* to Israel five years ago, together with her husband and their daughter, who was five at the time. Her brother also lives in Ashkelon, and together they save money to send to brother Babich in Gondar. The family needs their help to survive.



Photo left: Averu offering us Ethiopian food. Photo right: Babich reads the card which Moket wrote.

On cards which we brought with us, the word 'Shalom' written colourfully on the front, they write a few sentences to their brother. Other than that, they are in touch by phone.

**Ethiopia, Gondar:** After a night flight of 2,100 kilometres southwards, our team arrives in the old imperial city of Gondar the next morning. Surrounded by mountains, the former capital of Ethiopia lies at an altitude of more than 2,000 metres in the north of the country. It is not far from the Tigray region, where civil war is still raging these days. Together with our guide and translator, Tariku, we set off to visit Moket's brother Babich and his family. We are accompanied by three Ethiopian soldiers for the entire duration of our trip. As the former capital of Ethiopia, Gondar has much to offer, with numerous castles, churches, monasteries, and well-preserved buildings. But the closer we get to the rented house of Babich, the poorer the area becomes. We leave the busy main road and walk up a narrow dirt road. At the top, there is a collection of simple mud houses with corrugated iron roofs. A few steps lead into the interior. In front of one of the houses, Babich (35) is waiting for us with two of his daughters peeping through the door. His



The road to Babich's rented house.

wife, Torango (30) and the three daughters, Kalkidan (8), Kidist (6), and Simcha (8 months), are curious to meet us. The family welcomes us with smiles on their faces and invites us into their living space.

The room, no more than 20 square metres in size, is dark and cramped, with light only coming in through the open door. Eventually, everyone finds a place to sit. Half a year ago, the family moved from the countryside to the city. They wanted to be closer to the Jewish community and are hoping for an exit permit to Israel soon. Like Babich, there are about 10,000 Jews who are waiting in Gondar and Addis Abeba, some of them for more than 20 years. The family cannot afford a real apartment or a larger room. Babich works as a day labourer, doing odd jobs. With the help of the Jewish Agency and his siblings in Israel, the family survives. Our tour guide Tariku explains to us that the Jews in Gondar are charged horrendous rents for the shabby rooms: "There is a lot of envy of the Jews in the neighbourhood because they are allowed to go to Israel and receive support from there. Knowing the need of the Jews to live close to the Jewish Community Centre, the landlords charge very high prices."

Tears run down Babich's cheeks when we hand over the cards written by his siblings. His eight-year-old daughter reads aloud over his shoulder. His wife and children visit the Jewish Agency's community centre in Gondar every day. There is the Synagogue, where men and women pray every morning. Torango gets medical care for her youngest children there and two meals a day. The cost of living is extreme, especially if you are focused on the Promised Land for your future. Babich is full of hope that the waiting will soon come to an end and that the family can leave for Israel in two or three months.

## Preparing for Life in Israel

The visit to Babich and the other families makes us aware of how important the work of the Jewish Agency is: These Jewish families live in great poverty, many live very traditionally, they cook over open fires, and electrical appliances are not common to them. It will be a long journey until they have integrated themselves into the modern high-tech nation of Israel. The Jewish Agency tries to prepare the Jews in Gondar for life in Israel as much as possible. To this end, it supports the city's Jewish Community Centre. Here, in addition to attending state schools, children receive further education in the afternoons. Both children and adults get classes in Hebrew and Judaism, as well as the history of Israel and the Jewish people. Some attend computer classes. When our team visited the Synagogue in the Community Centre one morning, we were stunned to see women, children, and men in great numbers. The Jews of Gondar come here not only on *Shabbat* but every morning to pray. The Torah scrolls are read in Hebrew and in the local language, Amharic. After the service in the Synagogue, we are introduced to the nutrition programme. Two hundred mothers and



Moket and her brother with Frank, Marie-Louise and Dana of C4I.



The nutrition programme in Gondar.



The Synagogue in Gondar.

pregnant women, as well as 1027 children under the age of five, receive a meal at the Centre five days a week. They can take some food home to provide another meal consisting of bread, an egg, potatoes, and bananas. Children under five and citizens over the age of 50 also receive free medical treatment.

The other family we visit shares a similar fate. Averu (48) and Asasi, who have prepared a wonderful Ethiopian coffee ceremony (*Buna*) and traditional food for us when we visit them in Bat Yam, made *Aliyah* with their husbands and children 15 years ago. They are waiting for their sister Mantaboch and her family in Gondar to make *Aliyah*. For those who already have family members in Israel (blood descendants), the process of *Aliyah* is mostly smoother. Mantaboch and her family eagerly await their *Aliyah* at the end of this year.



Family Reunion in Israel

Two families and a young woman have their dream come true when they join us on our flight back to Israel. At the airport in Tel Aviv, they are welcomed by employees of the Jewish Agency. Supplying them with money, SIM cards for their mobile phones and other necessary documents, they help them enter their ancient homeland. For as long as necessary, they will receive a first home in an Absorption Centre in Ashkelon. There they will stay until they are integrated and ready to rent their own apartment. In the entrance hall, their relatives are waiting with flowers and gifts. As they appear, they are showered with confetti, sweets, and kisses. Tears of joy and relief are mixed with excited chatter and laughs. Finally, they are home!

With your help we could reunite these Ethiopian Jews with their families in the land of Israel! We continue working towards bringing more Ethiopian olim home to Promised Land. You can donate by filling out the coupon on the back of this newspaper.



Reuniting families -arrival in Israel.

# Being a Light in Dark Times

■ Koen Carlier  
Aliyah Fieldworker | Christians for Israel Ukraine

By now, winter has set in in Ukraine. Attacks with missiles and kamikaze drones continue unabated. Infrastructure across the country is being affected. Especially in the south and east of Ukraine, great damage is caused to schools, apartment buildings and industrial sites.

We prepare as best we can for the coming months to ensure we can continue evacuating Jewish refugees. Meanwhile, we are also in contact with someone with four large buses who is willing to help us with evacuation. Such a trip takes two to three days on average.

Wise Decision

Among the people, we brought to the Moldovan capital of Kishenov was Natalya with her 17-year-old twins: son Pavel and daughter Anna. The three came from Konotop, a small village not so far from the border of Belarus and Russia. Her husband, who is now obligated to serve in the Ukrainian army, had told Natalya, “You should leave here as soon as possible, leave for Israel and do not ask too many questions.” Natalya did ask us several times when her husband would also be able to leave. Our answer: when the mobilisation law is no longer in effect, or the war ends. We encouraged Natalya and her children and told them it was a wise decision to leave and that the children are ‘the future of Israel’.

We try to encourage everyone who leaves. People often need so much positive conversation after all the hardship and reassurance that their choice to go to Israel is the right one.

Light

We hope to be a light to our Jewish brothers and sisters even in these ‘dark’ times, and at the same time to not be bothered by snow and ice. As long as it is needed our help continues.

“I will signal for them and gather them in. Surely I will redeem them; they will be as numerous as before. Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return.” Zechariah 10:8-9

The costs of helping a Jewish person leave for Israel is €135 | US \$150. You can donate by filling out the coupon on the back of this newspaper.



Natalya and her two children, in the middle of the photo, along with several other refugees, on their way to Israel. | Photo: C4I



Rockets destroyed the homes of many Ukrainians, including the Jewish refugees we are helping. Many lives were also lost. | Photo: C4I



# “Please Tell Us About Israel”



Meeting with the students in Guantamo.



The group of pastors and students in front of the Seminary in Santiago.



The Seminary in Santiago.

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

How are Jews doing in Israel? And what is their relationship with the Christian church? These and other questions were fired at me by dozens of Christian students and pastors in Cuba. Cuba is a communist dictatorship, and the state propaganda about Israel is one-sided and exclusively negative. Yet I noticed a huge interest in Israel.

I contacted the dean of a Seminary in Santiago de Cuba through a missionary organisation last year, where pastors are educated. Because of the corona pandemic, we kept in contact via Whatsapp, but this year he invited me to come to Cuba and teach several days on Israel’s biblical and theological significance in our Christian faith. “We are keen to learn more about Israel here, and our pastors and students will be eager to attend,” he assured me. And it really turned out to be like that.

In the university town of Guantamo, over 30 students from various disciplines turned up for a Bible study and meeting on their free Saturday. That God’s promises for Israel are repeated and confirmed in the New Testament

was an eye-opener for them. “Is it true that Israel is trying to exterminate the Palestinians?” one of them asked. “We couldn’t believe this either,” was their response when I made it clear that this was just nonsense propaganda. They listened breathlessly when I told them about Israel’s current events and its situation.

In Santiago de Cuba, I was invited to conduct a Bible study with over 40 pastors and students on Israel’s continuing role in God’s salvation plan with the world: “Now we see and feel a deep faith connection with Israel and the Jewish people”. We talked about the continuity between the Old and New Testaments as opposed to an often assumed ‘break’ between old and new. And we studied how God’s covenants and promises for Israel are repeated and confirmed in the New Testament. This was also an eye-opener for these pastors: “Israel has suddenly become much closer,” they said. There appears to be a great need among pastors and students in Cuba for biblical and historical information about Israel. They asked me for more books and articles about Israel. So there is still a lot of work to be done for Christians for Israel in Cuba.

Taking books about Israel to Cuba was too great a risk. It could get me and the Seminary into problems with the

authorities. So we had the book ‘Why Israel’ translated into Spanish, and the text was put on 100 USB sticks. This raises no questions at the customs, and giving away USB sticks for free is just allowed. So in that way, we could still give the ‘book’ to every student and pastor on USB.

In Cuba, there is a serious shortage of medicines and painkillers like Tylenol and Ibuprofen. A doctor told me she often has to prescribe a certain medicine to a patient, knowing that this medicine is not available in Cuba. So my suitcase was filled with a lot of these medications before my departure to Cuba. Some students told me that many students feel discouraged and would like to leave the country because there is no future there.

Churches have reasonable freedom in Cuba and are allowed to hold services on Sundays. Their sermons and teachings are just not allowed to criticise the government. So a sermon emphasising Israel’s Biblical and historical legitimacy might conflict with state policy.

We agreed to start a partnership with the Seminary and pastors will translate and distribute more Bible study materials on Israel.

| Photos: Christians for Israel International

# “This is a New Revelation to Me”

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

The title reflects the reaction of a pastor during one of our conferences in India in November. It was not long ago that a pastor from Bangalore, the largest city in South India, recently proposed to our Regional Director Asia, Dr Wilson Ng, to organise three conferences for pastors with teaching about Israel in three different cities in India. During our preparations this pastor told us: “Your message about Israel is important for India and the pastors here are eager to learn about Israel”. And so it happened that Rev Willem Glashouwer (President C4I International), Rev Dr Conrado Lumahan (C4I Philippines) and I ended up teaching at conferences in Bangalore, Pondicherry and Chennai.

This is all the more special, because India is number ten of *Open Doors ‘World Watch List’* of 50 countries where Christians face the most persecution for their faith. Recently three churches in Bangalore were burnt down by angry Hindus. So pastors were only invited privately to attend these conferences and without making any publicity. During the conferences, a car and driver were permanently ready next to the church to remove us in case of riots. About 2.5 per cent of the Indian population is Christian and they are often facing hard times. Nevertheless they told us they are not afraid and fully inspired to continue church planting and preaching the gospel in their country.

In Bangalore 140 pastors from various denominations



The conference in Bangalore. | Photo: Christians for Israel

attended our conference. It was impressive to see how some were on the edge of their seats listening to our teachings. Rev Willem Glashouwer spoke about God’s everlasting covenants and promises for Israel and the Jewish people. Rev Conrado Lumahan concentrated on Biblical reasons for Christians and churches to stand with Israel during his teaching. I had the opportunity to share with the participants how Israel disappeared from our Christian theology during the first centuries and about the role of Jesus as Messiah in the present-day return of the Jewish people to their homeland Israel.

Many pastors told us this was a new revelation for them.



Our local host in India with Rev Cornelis Kant, Rev Willem Glashouwer and Dr Wilson Ng. | Photo: Christians for Israel

One of them had tears in his eyes and explained to us that he felt the need to repent, because he never preached about Israel in his Church. Even the pastor who was the host of the conference told us most of our teachings were new to him: “In all these years that I have been a pastor, I was never aware of the Biblical significance of Israel as you taught us these days”. All pastors will receive the book ‘Why Israel’ that was translated in their local *Tamil* or *Telugu* language. We were again deeply impressed by the impact of this Biblical message and convinced of the important mission of Christians for Israel.





# Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine:

## Part 3 - The San Remo Conference of April 1920

■ **Hugh Kitson**  
Writer, Director and Producer of the *Whose Land?* documentary

The San Remo Conference commenced on 18 April 1920 at the Villa Devachan in the Italian Riviera town of San Remo. As previously mentioned, the San Remo Conference was an addendum to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference specifically to deal with the carve-up of the defeated Ottoman Empire.

### The Legal and Spiritual Significance of San Remo

This little-known conference had far reaching consequences for all the peoples of the Middle East and, not least, for the Jewish people who had been scattered across the world for two millennia. Yet, for many decades its records were buried deep in the British National Archives and, along with it, its significance for the Jewish nation.

Dr Jacques Gauthier, an international human rights lawyer, described this gathering of the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers at the Villa Devachan thus:

“It was in this place that the leaders with the power to make binding dispositions with respect to the Ottoman territories deliberated and made the decision, having heard claims from the Zionist Organisation in Paris in 1919 during the Paris Peace Conference [and] having heard submissions from the Arab delegation in respect to what they wanted in the Ottoman territories.

Having heard these submissions, a group of them gathered here and made final binding decisions in international law as to who would get what.”

There is tremendous spiritual significance to this fact, as well as historic. The Hebrew Scriptures record that the Almighty God, whom Christians and Jews worship, gave the title deed to the land of Israel to the descendants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as an everlasting possession some 4,000 years ago. What God did at San Remo was to enshrine that title deed into international law in the modern era.

And the Lord did this knowing that 100 years later, the very legitimacy of the Jewish state in their ancient homeland would be seriously challenged.

### A Plot to Torpedo San Remo

As far back as 1920 there was opposition to a Jewish national home in Palestine—even within the British establishment. After the capture of Jerusalem by General Sir Edmund Allenby in December 1917, a British military administration was installed to govern the conquered territory. Instead of sending administrators from England, most were moved up from Cairo. At that time the British Empire was ruling over many Muslim people, and the British Army had a key role in that. Many of the military personnel who had arrived in Jerusalem were ideologically opposed to the Balfour Declaration and its implementation.

In April 1920 a group of senior officers under General Bols, who was then the Military Governor of Jerusalem, inspired an Arab radical Islamist, Haj Amin Al-Husseini (later appointed as Grand Mufti of Jerusalem), to instigate a pogrom in the Old City. They created favourable conditions for him to do so. Their purpose was to torpedo the outcome of the San Remo Conference by showing that a Jewish national home in Palestine was both undesirable and unworkable.

The British Government reacted by disbanding the



Mandate for Palestine. | Photo: 'Whose Land' Documentary

military administration and appointing Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner of Palestine. While the military plot didn't succeed, it did create a precedent that would haunt the rest of British governance over Palestine.

Before examining the San Remo Conference in more detail, we need to rewind and take a brief look at two previous policy decisions by President Woodrow Wilson of the United States that had a bearing on what happened at San Remo.

### President Woodrow Wilson's Vision of Self-Determination of Peoples

Prior to World War I, whenever a nation or an empire conquered another nation or empire, the victor generally annexed or colonised the territory of the vanquished country and subjugated its population. Quite simply, it was 'the law of the jungle'. Israel's ancient history is littered with such examples, both as victor and as vanquished. So is Great Britain's, for better or for worse. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, had it been implemented, would have seen most of the Ottoman territories annexed and/or colonised by Britain and France.

In principle President Woodrow Wilson supported the Balfour Declaration. This is reflected in two of the policies that were announced in the President's 'Fourteen Points' he made as a condition of the USA entering World War I on the side of the Allies. One of the policies included in the 'Fourteen Points' was that the age of imperialism would come to an end, and the world powers strive towards the self-determination of all peoples. As he believed that the Jewish people should have the right of self-determination too, he gave the green light to the Balfour Declaration.

Another policy was that a 'League of Nations' would be formed in order to protect the independence of all countries, no matter how big or small, and to ensure that a war like the 'Great War' should never happen again.

### The Covenant of the League of Nations

The League of Nations was established at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, at the instigation of the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers.

Article 20 of the Covenant of the League of Nations stated that all 'secret agreements' between nations—e.g. the Sykes-Picot agreement—were to be abrogated. Article 22 dealt with the setting up of a series of Mandates, for



Delegates to the San Remo conference in Italy, 25 April 1920. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

those peoples who were released from the grip of being ruled by an imperial power during World War I.

These peoples (including the Arabs in the former Ottoman Empire) were to be assisted in achieving self-determination until such time as they were ready for self-government and independence. Mandates were also set up for a number of former colonies in Africa and Latin America. The Mandates, wherever they were, were to be regarded as a 'sacred trust of civilisation'.

International lawyer Professor Avi Bell says: “What the whole institution of Mandates was about was a way of guaranteeing self-determination of peoples. It was really the first time that international law created and recognised this right.”

Today the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state is violently challenged. The accusation that Israel is 'an illegal colonialist racist enterprise' is the common chant of the anti-Zionists. Recorded history shows us that the opposite is true.

### The San Remo Conference Establishes Mandates in the former Ottoman Empire

The San Remo Conference initially had three Mandates to consider: Syria and Mesopotamia for Arab self-determination, and Palestine. The Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine: was unique in that the vast majority of the population for whom self-determination was intended—namely the Jewish people—were actually living outside the area of Palestine at that time because most had been expelled from there by the Romans nearly 19 centuries earlier.

When considering the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the minutes of the conference recorded that it “had been accepted by the Allied Powers, that Palestine was in future to be the National Home of the Jews throughout the world.”

Dr Jacques Gauthier summarised the decisions in this way: “It was the Jewish people that were chosen to be the beneficiaries of a Trust—a Mandate—under the care of the British Government in respect to Palestine. It was the Arab inhabitants of the territories of Mesopotamia—Iraq now—Syria and Lebanon that were chosen to be the beneficiaries of a trust, or a mandate, part of it under the trusteeship...of the French (Syria and Lebanon), part of it under British supervision (Mesopotamia).”

Continued on page 3



# Lessons for Life

## *Facing Change, not with Fear but with Faith (part 3)*

■ Keith Buxton

Former National Director of Bridges for Peace Australia

This is the final part of a 3-part series on 'lessons for life', concluding our exploration of the Torah portion 'Sh'lach' or 'Sh'lach Lecha'. This well-known passage in *Numbers 13-15* recounts the mission of the twelve spies sent by Moses to explore and report back on the land of Canaan as a future home for the Israelite people.

We have in this series been recognising the reality that there are seasons in life when God clearly calls us to make a specific change in our personal circumstances—maybe to move to a new location, even perhaps to head in an altogether new direction in life. It is at such times that God's Word so often proves to be especially helpful.

Changes in life inevitably confront us with challenges. One specific challenge that we looked at in the previous article (*part 2 in this series*) is the need to confront and overcome the fear that so often accompanies the prospect of change.

We saw how ten of the spies brought back what was, in effect, a negative report on the land of Canaan, a report that resulted in fear gripping the hearts of the Israelites in the wilderness. They declared that the Canaanite people were fierce and intimidating and described the land of milk and honey as 'a land that devours its inhabitants.'

Joshua and Caleb, however, saw things differently; they saw things from a different perspective—they factored God into the equation! They chose to believe in and focus on the promises of a good and strong God who they were confident would enable the Israelites to overcome the very real obstacles before them. They were true men of faith.

Ultimately, the issue for us when confronted with significant changes in life isn't ultimately whether we are competent or strong enough.

The question is really this: Will we take God at His word, and will we trust Him with our problems? The problem with our fears is not fear itself but what they reveal about our concept of God and our willingness to trust Him implicitly.

Canaan always comes with Canaanites in it. Obstacles come with the territory. But let's remember that no matter how big the problems are, God is bigger. Do you believe that? Are you a faith or fear person?

I love how Dr E. Stanley Jones puts it—"I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt and anxiety.

"In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath—these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely—these are my native air. A John Hopkins University doctor says, 'We do not know why it is that worriers die sooner than the non-worriers, but that is a fact.'

"But I, who am simple of mind, think I know. We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cells and soul, for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality."

Caleb lived in reality! The reality that if God's people in simple faith obeyed God's word, He would enable them to be overcomers—right there and then. And so we read: Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

There is urgency in his voice and passion in his desire! Caleb knew that now, right now, was the time to claim victory. And so it may be for you, perhaps even today! Don't put off moving forward into your God-given destiny!

The fact that Caleb was ready to go showed the genuineness of his faith. Faith and action go hand in hand. As we are reminded in *James 2:14-17*—"What does it



| Photo: Lightstock

profit, my brethren if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." That is real Jewish thinking.

Following the complaining cries of the Israelites, Joshua and Caleb, still very positive, declared: "If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."

"They are our bread"—maybe today we would say, "Hey, this is a piece of cake!" Both Caleb and Joshua were just as confident of victory as the other ten spies were certain of defeat.

They chose to put their faith in an all-powerful God. In *Numbers 14:24*, God specifically celebrates two things about Caleb—"he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully." What an affirmation from the living God!

In *Psalms 119:2*, the psalmist says, "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!" Caleb knew that a life of blessing was a life of total obedience to God.

And so Caleb, together with Joshua, acted in obedience to the Word of God, knowing that God would be with him whatever the outcome. And God's promise to be with us in every situation remains true for every believer. Our part is to have faith and obey.

Writes author Eileen Guder: "A ship wrecked off the New England coast many years ago. A young member of the coast guard rescue crew said, 'We can't go out. We'll never get back.' The grizzled old captain replied. 'We have to go out. We don't have to come back.'" It's so true—we really don't know the future. But we know the One who holds the future in His hands!

The command by the Lord at the end of our passage for the Israelites "to make tassels on the corners [fringes] of their garments" is a powerful reminder that the One who holds the future in His hands calls us to be like the two spies Caleb and Joshua, who refused to hold back from obeying the Lord.

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the

corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.

"And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God."

The tassels, or *tzitzit*, are an outward reminder of what God in His Word requires of me—"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (*Micah 6:8*).

Rabbi Jonathan Cohen tells the story of a person thrown from a boat into the sea. "The captain stretches out a rope and tells him to take firm hold of it, for his life depends on it. The rope is like the *tzitzit*, and the captain is like God. The *tzitzit* provide a lifeline." Fringe benefits, if you like!

It just may be that, for some of you reading this, obedience to God's Word and stepping out into the exciting and even scary future that God has prepared for you will be the very thing that will cause all fears to flee.

I don't know what changes or challenges or difficulties you may be going through right now or will face in the future, but ultimately you must make the choice. It's really an 'either-or' thing or, put another way; it's an 'I can't' or 'God is with me' situation.

You may feel that you have blown it completely... that you are no longer worthy of God's forgiveness because of your negative outlook on your circumstances... that your fear of embracing God-inspired change has disqualified you from His blessing.

Don't go there! As a Christian, you are a son or daughter of the King of Kings! I love the worship song 'No Longer Slaves', featuring Jonathan and Melissa Helsner, which really speaks to my heart about the importance of facing any fears or doubts that I may have by affirming my faith in who I am as God's forever child.

"I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God" - so go the words of the chorus of this song. Never forget that as Christian believers, we are defined by who we are as His children. And hold on to the unchanging truth that He is a forgiving and gracious God, as Moses well recognised when he interceded to God for the people as they complained bitterly at the thought of entering into the land of Canaan:

*Continued on page 4*



# Partition - the Idea of Two States

■ Andrew Tucker

Director | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) | [www.thinc.info](http://www.thinc.info)

In 1920 the League of Nations approved the Mandate for Palestine. The idea was to enable the Jewish people to re-establish their homeland 'in Palestine'. The territory of Palestine was one area, comprising what is today Israel, the West Bank and Jordan.

The idea of dividing Palestine into two states - one Jewish, the other Arab - is not new. Time and again over the last century, as conflict and violence between Jews and Arabs has erupted, the international community has proposed division of the land into two independent states.

The first manifestation of this principle was the creation of Transjordan in 1921: a Jew-free state for the Arab Palestinians.

Division of the remaining Mandate territory (west of the Jordan River) was discussed intensively already in the period of the Mandate for Palestine, as the British sought to reconcile competing Jewish and Arab Palestinian interests. Partition was the model proposed and adopted by the UN General Assembly in the UN Partition Plan in 1947, which was reluctantly accepted by the Jewish leadership, but rejected by the Arabs.

After its creation in 1948, the young State of Israel faced three wars of aggression launched by various alliances of its Arab neighbors, each intended to destroy the new Jewish State (the 1948/9 War of Independence, the 1967 Six Day War, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War).

In the mid-1970s, the idea of two states was again revived by the international community.

In the meantime, Israel proceeded to negotiate and ultimately reach peace treaties with two of the Arab aggressor states: Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994). The others, including Israel's two other immediate neighbors (Lebanon and Syria), do not even recognize Israel's existence, and remain in a state of hostile belligerency.

In 1991 the US-Soviet sponsored Madrid conference called for Israeli-Arab peace based on the territory-for-peace principle. Within the next few years, Israel and the PLO entered into a series of agreements intended to lead to Palestinian autonomy and a permanent agreed resolution of the conflict. These 'Oslo' agreements established the Palestinian Authority and other institutions. The West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C, and Israel withdrew in part. Key issues such as 'borders' and 'security' were left for further negotiation.

Since 1980, the European Union has been pushing hard for a 'two-state' solution to this conflict. According to the EU, the creation of a Palestinian state within the '1967 lines' is the only way to solve this conflict, and thus to bring peace to the Middle East.



| Photo: Shutterstock

While in the 1980s-1990s there was wide support for the idea of establishing an independent Palestinian state adjacent to Israel, public opinion has shifted significantly over the decades. The failure of the Camp David negotiations in 2000 followed by the Second Intifada was a watershed.

Today there is very little support - either in Israel or within Palestinian society - for a two-state solution. Recognising that a full-fledged Palestinian state is unrealistic and perhaps even undesirable, commentators and actors across the political spectrum, both in Israel and Palestinian society, are discussing alternative solutions to the conflict. These include the creation of one 'unitary' state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, to replace the current State of Israel and administered territories. Such a state could be either bi-national, 'Jewish', 'Palestinian', or nationless. Other alternatives that are discussed include a federation, a confederation, and a Jewish state containing a territory on which Palestinians would have limited autonomy.

The current Two-State Policy advanced by the European Union and others is based on three main assumptions:

- a) That the PLO would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian State within the 1967 lines as a final resolution of the conflict;
- b) That the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, are entitled under international law to the establishment of an independent state, and Israel is obliged to enable the creation of such a state; and
- c) That the legal and political culture of Arab Palestinian society in particular, and the region in general, supports

the establishment of a peaceful state in Palestine based on the rule of law. In our view each of these assumptions is currently questionable:

First, the core issue of the conflict is not Palestinian statehood, but the right of the Jewish people to nationhood and statehood in the land. The Israel-Palestinian conflict today is essentially the same as the conflict that began when the foundations for a Jewish State were laid in the Mandate for Palestine, implementing the Balfour Declaration. The core issue in dispute is: does the Jewish State of Israel have a right to exist as a Jewish State? The PLO has always denied the right of the Jewish people to exist, and there is no sign that this will change.

Second, international law does not mandate the establishment of a full-fledged Palestinian state within the '1967 lines'. The Palestinians have a right to self-determination, but this is not an automatic right to statehood. Moreover, the 1949 Armistice Lines have never been accepted as borders of the State of Israel. The only way for Palestinian self-determination to be fulfilled is through negotiation with the State of Israel.

Third, an examination of the dynamics, powers and legal and political culture in the Middle East, as well as the Palestinian society, suggests that there are significant cultural and structural impediments to the creation and stable development of Western-style states in the region. These impediments are insufficiently acknowledged or addressed by the EU's policies and programs supporting Palestinian statehood. The result is that, while some Palestinian institutions of government have been established, these are little more than an empty shell.

Continued from page 1

## Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine: Part 3 - The San Remo Conference of April 1920

### The Scope of the Jewish National Home

The Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers—made up of Great Britain, France, Italy (in the Chair) and Japan, with the USA observing—also discussed the territorial scope of the Jewish national home. The leader of the British delegation was Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who was influenced by his Baptist upbringing and knowledge of the Bible. Using maps prepared by George Adam Smith, he proposed that the reconstituted Jewish homeland should encompass the area that Israel resided in during the historic reigns of King David and King Solomon—from Dan to Beersheba.

Referring to this fact, international lawyer Dr Cynthia Day Wallace states that: "In formulating legally binding instruments there was a recognition of the cultural historic roots of the Jewish people in that land."<sup>6</sup> Of course, this recognition most definitely included the

historic Jewish heartland of Judea and Samaria that today is commonly known as 'the West Bank'—and within that included the historic Jewish capital, Jerusalem. So, the intention of the Supreme Council was clear.

### A Jewish State in Palestine, not just a 'National Home'

A few weeks after the San Remo Resolution, the first High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, arrived in Jerusalem. He bore with him a declaration by King George V in three languages—English, Hebrew and Arabic—which he read out to representatives of the population of Palestine at Government House in Jerusalem. The king concluded his declaration with these words: "I shall watch with deep interest and warm sympathy the future development and progress of a State whose history has been of such tremendous import to the world."

However, the San Remo Resolution had not finalised the actual boundaries between the various Mandates. These were to be set by the Principal Allied Powers and submitted to the Council of the League of Nations. The

San Remo Resolution of 25 April 1920, which had the status of an international treaty, received the unanimous endorsement of all the founding nations of the League of Nations.

References:

- 1. All quotes from interview segments in the documentary 'Whose Land?'—Part 1 'Foundations'.
  - 2. The 'Fourteen Points' was a statement of principles by President Woodrow Wilson to the US Congress on 8 January 1918 on aims and peace terms to be implemented at the conclusion of the war.
  - 3. See reference 1.
  - 4. Access a full copy of the minutes: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Minutes\\_of\\_the\\_1920\\_Conference\\_of\\_San\\_Remo.pdf](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Minutes_of_the_1920_Conference_of_San_Remo.pdf)
  - 5. See reference 1.
  - 6. See reference 1.
- Hugh Kitson is a documentary filmmaker who has made many films about Israel. His films about the British Mandate for Palestine include 'The Forsaken Promise'—a three-part series (Hatikvah Film Trust 2006) and 'Whose Land?' Part One, presented by Colonel Richard Kemp (Title Deed Media 2017)—see [www.whoseland.tv](http://www.whoseland.tv). Part Two is still in production.

This article is the second in a six-part series exploring the significance of the British Mandate for Palestine for today. Part 4, 'The Legal Obligations of the Mandate', will follow.

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# Torn Between Soviet Flat & Flight Ticket

## Hope for needy Jewish seniors in Ukraine

**Anemone Rüger**  
Project Coordinator | Holocaust Survivors in Israel and Ukraine | Christians for Israel

While tens of thousands of Jewish people have left Ukraine since the outbreak of the war and found a new home in Israel, most seniors have stayed where they were. The ailments of age have kept many from leaving their apartments. The fact that there are Christians supporting them in prayer and practical help gives them new hope.

It's two o'clock in the morning. I am awakened by the shrill sound of a siren. Is this live? Or is my hotel neighbour getting an air raid warning from a more Eastern city in Ukraine he may have registered for?

I am back in Ukraine for the first time in a year. Were it not for the tank traps along the side of the road, no one would suspect a war in this golden October land. God gave me a time window, a small team and a driver to visit some of the needy in our sponsorship programme—those who have stayed behind, which is true for most of them. The elderly, who all received an apartment from the state through their work during Soviet times and lived their entire lives there, find it incredibly difficult now in their advanced age to leave their familiar four walls behind.

The seniors of the Jewish community in Uman sit around the checkered plastic tablecloth like in the olden days. Their meeting place is a ground-floor flat in an apartment block from the 1970s or so. Most of the elderly are Holocaust survivors. Several have died since our last visit; others have been added to the group. The table is



Galina in Uman and our staff member Anemone in a conversation. | Photos: Christians for Israel

unit, a pair of felt boots standing next to it. Volodya is deployed somewhere in Eastern Ukraine. He was in hospital with a concussion resulting from heavy combat but soon had to return to the front lines.

So many tears. It is a time to weep with those who weep, embrace Ukraine's Galina's and comfort them with the words of *Psalm 91*: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High ... will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress.'"

Galina knows there are people in faraway countries who pray for her and share what they have. This comforts her. She asks us to say a special thank you to the woman who knitted the beautiful socks for her.

"I leave this world the same way I entered it – in wartime," says Lilia, who

blackcurrant, pickled cucumbers. I want you to take some with you!"

It's already getting dark. A few hours ago, Koen, the director of Christians for Israel's work in Ukraine, left for Zaporozhe with his team and hundreds of food parcels – in the eye of the storm. Just a few hours earlier, the city had been heavily bombed. Now many in the Jewish community are waiting for our team's arrival – some wait for material help, others for a seat in the bus that will take them to safety. By the end of the week, 81 members of the Jewish community will have been evacuated from burning Zaporozhe by our bus. New requests keep coming in.

*Aliyah* and comfort, returning to Zion and packing food parcels, listening and hugging are some of the ways God uses us to help restore His Jewish people.

**Would you join in?**

Please see the coupon on the back page for details on how you can bring comfort to the Jewish people of Ukraine! Any donation is welcome.



Lilia (left) still wants to see the end of the war. Galina (right) enjoys a pair of hand-knitted socks from Germany.



set with homemade honey pie and 'Sharlottka'—a delicious apple cake. How grateful they are to know they are supported by their Christian friends during these difficult times. The walls are decorated with photos of our many visits, which used to happen regularly with international groups – all before corona.

Then we venture out to visit the less mobile community members. We climb the stairs with a large bag of fresh food items in hand and sound Galina's doorbell. She leads us to the living room and immediately breaks out in tears.

"Look at this—this is what my son-in-law sent from the battlefield! This is what he received from some volunteers, and he sends it off to ensure I'm taken care of!"

A large bag of freeze-dried meals sits in front of the wall

ended up in a ghetto with her grandmother as a 4-year-old. Her Ukrainian mother was able to buy her out and hide her; the grandmother was shot.

Then Lilia corrects herself. "No. I still want to live to see the end of the war!"

Before we say goodbye, Lilia takes her crutches and makes her way downstairs, step by step. "I made so many food preserves for the winter – raspberries,



Our bus is constantly taking members of the Jewish communities from the East Ukrainian cities to safety.

Continued from page 2

### Lessons for Life—Facing Change, not with Fear but with Faith (part 3)

"And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 'The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression'" *Numbers 14:18*.

When fear causes you to balk at embracing changes that God is calling you to make, never underestimate or undervalue the depth and extent of His forgiving mercy, which as Christians, we see demonstrated supremely in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Are you facing changes in your life, even significant and perhaps scary changes, that you have come to recognise

come from the heart of God, who only ever wants to bless you? Then declare, "I'm no longer a slave to fear; I am a child of God" - and resolve like Joshua and Caleb to move forward in confidence and faith as the forever child of God that you are!

*Keith Buxton is an ordained pastor. He currently serves on the Christians for Israel Australia management committee and is a liaison with Christians for Israel Oceania Island affiliates.*



# Believing Without Israel - Part 2

## How Israel Disappeared from our Christian Faith

■ **Rev Cornelis Kant**  
Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

In this new series of articles Rev Cornelis Kant explains how it happened that the role of Israel was seen as insignificant in the development of our Christian faith and in the history of Christian theology.

**The Early Church**

The new Christian communities around the Mediterranean grew rapidly in the first decades after Jesus had sent out His Apostles into the world. These new Christians underwent a radical change in their lives as a result of their conversion and reception of the Holy Spirit. They often could not understand why most Jews did not believe in Jesus as Messiah. Surely, they already had the Old Testament for centuries and were familiar with the prophetic expectations of the coming of the Messiah? Paul explained to them in Romans 11 that through the fall of Israel salvation had come to the Gentiles. And he spoke of the mystery of a ‘partial hardening’ over Israel, a covering as a result of which they could not recognise Jesus until the fullness of the Gentiles would come in. Only then would all Israel be saved (Romans 11).

The inability of the majority of the Jews of that time to believe in Jesus was an essential part of God’s plan of salvation for all people – Jews and Gentiles: “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day” (Romans 11:8). And Paul continued his explanation of this mystery: “Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious” (Romans 11:11). But that ‘mystery’ eluded the Early Church. Paul also emphasised that the Jewish people, nevertheless, remained “beloved for the sake of the fathers” as far as election was concerned (Romans 11:28). In other words, his message was that the inability of most of the Jews to see and acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah, does not mean that they have ceased to be God’s people.

**Tension**

So there is a tension between the fact that most Jews have difficulty seeing Jesus as the Messiah, on the one hand, and the eternal faithfulness of God to His Jewish people, on the other. And Paul tries to explain this tension as part of God’s plan of salvation for the world, for our sake, the Gentiles. But those first Christians from the Gentiles often did not realise this ‘mystery’ and increasingly saw the Jews as stubborn and disobedient, and therefore as unbelievers. People also didn’t have a printed Bible yet with commentaries like we have today. Paul’s letters were rewritten and read during



Reconstructed first-century synagogue in Nazareth village based on sites excavated in the Holy Land. | Photo: Flickr

congregation meetings. Those Christians, however, were not able to study the Bible like we can do today. So gradually a lack of comprehension grew in the early church about the mystery regarding the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the majority of Jews at that time. Gradually, this resulted in various forms of replacement theology – ie. theologies in which the covenants and promises for Israel declared in the Old Testament were declared to have been transferred to the Christian church.

**Keeping the Law**

Also, inside the early Christian church, there was a tension between Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah and the Gentile believers. Many Jewish believers saw the existence of the new Christian congregations as an internal Jewish issue. Jesus - the son of the Jewish woman Mary and the Son of the God of Israel – was born under the law and He had to fulfill the law in order to be worthy to take away the sins of His people and of the world on the cross. That’s why many Jewish believers in Jesus thought that the new Gentile believers needed to be circumcised and live according to the law. That’s why Paul so explicitly claimed in his letters that the Gentiles don’t need to be circumcised, because they don’t need to become Jews to get salvation. At the Council of Jerusalem James explained “how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles” (Acts 15:14), and that these Gentile

converts only needed to follow certain basic laws. So both inside and outside the Christian church there was a growing misunderstanding and lack of comprehension between Jews in general, Jewish believers in Jesus, and Gentile believers. This eventually led to major misunderstandings and conflict between Jews and believers in Jesus from the Gentiles – a tragedy as we will see in the next article.

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A laptop and a smartphone displaying the Christians for Israel Video on Demand website. The laptop screen shows a video player with the title 'ISRAEL: COVENANTS & KINGDOM'. The smartphone screen shows a similar interface. The background is a blue and orange gradient.

www.c4israel.org/video-on-demand

Signs of Faith  
By Kees de Vreugd

**Tzitzit**

In this series, ‘Signs of Faith’, objects, procedures and concepts that express Jewish faith are explained and discussed.

Every pious Jewish man always wears them as a visible sign of faith: the *tzitzit*. Those are the tassels spoken of in Numbers 15:38: “Speak to the Israelites and tell them to make tassels at the corners of their clothes for themselves, all their generations.” This is further specified in Deuteronomy 22:12, albeit with a different word in Hebrew: “At the four corners of the outer garment in which you cover yourselves, you must make tassels for yourselves.” The *tallit*, today’s prayer shawl, goes back to this rectangular upper garment.

What is the purpose of the *tzitzit*? Every time you look at it, you will think of God’s commandments and do them (Numbers 15:39). This is how Israel is reminded to be holy before God. Two notable places in the Bible where we should think of the *tzitzit* are

Zechariah 8:23 and Matthew 9:20: the bleeding woman touches the *tzitzit* of Jesus.

The *tzitzit* consists of four threads, three short ones and one long one. The long one is called the *shammash*, the ‘servant’. This was originally a blue-purple thread (Numbers 15:38). Over time, people had lost track of exactly which snail this colour was extracted from. Therefore, since the second century, four white threads have usually been used.

There are different ways of knotting the *tzitzit*, but the basics are the same. The four threads are inserted through an eye in the corner of the garment so that there is an equally long strand on both sides, two times four threads. Only the *shammash* is a lot longer on one side. Then a double knot is tied with the two strands. Then the long end of the *shammash* is wound around both strands several times, after which another double knot is tied. This is repeated three more times. The numerical value of five knots, eight threads, and the word *tzitzit* (600) is 613: the

total of all the commandments and prohibitions that Israel must remember (Numbers 15:38).

The Ashkenazi tradition is to put seven windings first, then eight, then 11 and finally 13. In the Sephardic tradition, the *shammash* is first wrapped around it ten, then five, then six and finally five more times. This is the numerical value of the letters Y-H-W-H, the ineffable Name of God. Yemenite Jews have a very distinctive way of knotting, borrowed from Maimonides.





## Recommended Reading

## Israel, the Nations and the Valley of Decision

By Harald Eckert

This highly accessible book is intended for praying Christians, intercessors, intercessory leaders, networks and movements. It is a call to pray for our nations - all over the world - a Global Prayer Call! The objective of this prayer call is to pray for our nations with regard to their relationship towards the Jewish people and Israel.

This book was launched in the spring of 2015 - 70 years after the end of the Holocaust and the end of WWII - when the events of the Holocaust and the attempts of Nazi Germany to annihilate the Jewish people were at the forefront of public attention.

This book contains a Bible study based on Jesus' parable of the judgment of the nations (*Matthew 25*). The author clarifies the relevance of the Old Testament in understanding the New.

In 16 carefully written chapters, the author argues that -

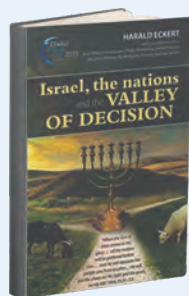
1. for God, nations have a role to play in the New Testament;
2. there is judgement not only over individuals but also over nations; and
3. this judgement is connected to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Today, antisemitism is on the rise. The nations of Europe and the West have not yet truly learned from the Holocaust. This book therefore remains highly relevant. Below is a quotation from the book:

*"Just as we can assert with biblical certainty that every person is created in the image of God, and thus has an intrinsic individual dignity enabling him to understand that he is personally loved by God, so too can we ascertain that the same applies to the nations: God loves every nation! God has created an endless variety of individual forms of expression of the likeness of His image, and honours and loves each one of them. The same applies to the collective forms of expression of the likeness of His image. Each nation has its own collective personality, its own particular mentality, its collective temperament and its collective creativity. The biblical God is simultaneously the God of the microcosm and the macrocosm. The God of the Bible is the creator and God of each individual person and the creator and God of each individual nation."*

This book is available from:

- [www.c4israel.org/webshop](http://www.c4israel.org/webshop)
- [www.globalprayercall.org/en/resources/book](http://www.globalprayercall.org/en/resources/book)
- [www.amazon.com/Israel-Nations-Valley-Decision-Harald/dp/9081969552](https://www.amazon.com/Israel-Nations-Valley-Decision-Harald/dp/9081969552)



Harald Eckert (1960) is a Bible teacher, spiritual pioneer, author and networker. A former Chairman of Christians for Israel International, he is the founder of the Global Prayer Call.

Theirs are the Service of God, the Promises and the Fathers *Romans 9:4*

## ■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer &amp; Author

This is part eight in a series of articles based on the book *Rejoice, You Nations, with His People*, by Johannes Gerloff (due for release in 2022).

**"Theirs are the service of God, the Promises and the fathers" (*Romans 9:4*)**

The Temple Worship (*Romans 9:4*)

To this day, Jewish worship in the synagogue refers back to the Levitical sacrificial service - not only in the designation of its liturgical parts but also in its content. The worship service of the Israelites is the only worship that clearly springs from divine instructions written in detail in the *Torah*.

The *Pentateuch* allocates much space to describing how God wants to be worshipped. In contrast, later biblical writings, including the New Testament, offer no, or hardly any, alternative forms of worship. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles nor the early believers ever distanced themselves in principle from the worship service of the Israelites. Paul presupposed that his Jewish brothers and sisters, who believed in Jesus as Messiah and lived in Jerusalem or visited there as pilgrims, participated in the Temple worship, as he did himself (*see Acts 21:15-26*).

... and the Promises (*Romans 9:4*)

In the context of the Greek words *epangelia* (= promise, pledge) and *epangellomai* (= to promise, to pledge), the New Testament mentions the following *epangelma* (= promised goods, pledged riches) which God promises: the land, descendants, well-being, the Messiah, the Holy Spirit, the resurrection from the dead (*Acts 26:6-8*), eternal life, the 'rest' (*Hebrews 4:1*), the eternal heritage, and a 'new heaven' and a 'new earth' (*2 Peter 3:13*).

Christian readers of the Bible today often apply all these promises primarily and without question - either literally or in a figurative sense - to themselves. Only secondarily - and this is the best case! - they might ask themselves whether there are some promises that still apply prophetically to those descendants of Israel who still do not recognise Jesus as their Messiah.

Paul, laying the foundation of his theology on Israel, started from precisely the opposite side. First of all, he states that 'the promises' belong to 'the



| Photo: Pxhere

Israelites' - without explaining which promises or even excluding any of them! In contrast, he reminds the Christians in *Ephesus* that they only 'secondarily', through Jesus Christ, became participators of the riches of Israel: "Remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are being called uncircumcised" were "strangers to the covenants of promise" (*Ephesians 2:11-12*).

... whose are the Fathers (*Romans 9:5*)

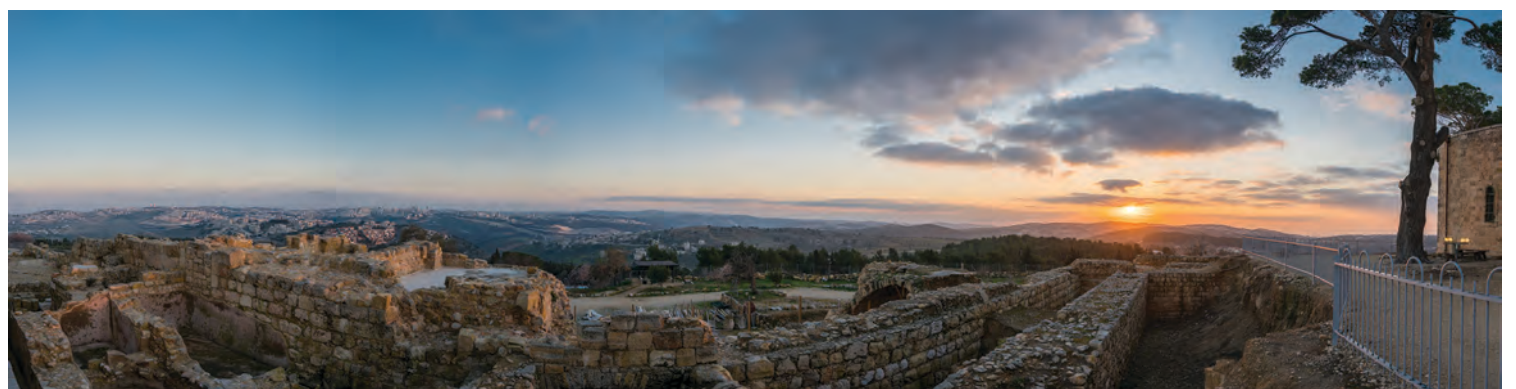
'The Fathers' referred to here are the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as Jacob's sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Josef and Benjamin, from whom the tribes of Israel received their names. Here, Paul creates a concrete historical connection, which is also referred to whenever the living God makes Himself known as 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', as 'God of the fathers' or as 'God of Israel'. The apocryphal book, which is called the 'Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach' provides in its 'Praise of the Fathers' (*chapters 44-49*) a wide outline, starting from Adam (*49:20*) up to the leaders of Israel in the time after the Babylonian exile (*49:13-15*).

This reference to human history is further underlined by the fact that the 'riches of Israel' here in *Romans 9:4-5* are framed by the expression 'according to the flesh'

(*kata sarka*) in *verses 3 and 5*. Those who are 'Israelites', 'their' God and the revelation that connects the two are all firmly rooted in history. The Holy Scriptures are not just "projections of human wishes and ideals into an imagined transcendence", through which, as the German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach once stated, "man created a God according to his own image".

Rather, the very existence of 'the Israelites' and the validity of those privileges which the Creator of the universe granted to them prove the Bible's self-revelation of the only living God. This fundamentally distinguishes the Judeo-Christian faith from all other religions, spiritual experiences, and theories of salvation. Before our very eyes, the history of those 'who are Israelites', constitutes true, substantial and tangible proof of God's existence and intervention in space and time.

"Yea, not just the fathers, even the Israelites themselves serve as 'marking of God's identity'," as Norbert Baumert suggested. Therefore, God commissioned Moses: "Thus you shall speak to the children of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, he has sent me to you. This is my name forever. This is how I shall be remembered from generation to generation'" (*Exodus 3:15*).



Mystical sunset over Jerusalem and the ruins of the Hellenistic city and the Crusader castle seen from the Tomb of prophet Samuel, Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock



# Winning the War on Truth *Part 3*



| Photo: Canva Pro



■ **Kameel Majdali**  
Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

**By now, we should be convinced that there is a definite and deliberate war on truth. Lying, deception, and delusion are all in overdrive. Left unattended, these things will mislead and destroy all those who heed its pernicious message.**

Make no mistake: there is a direct link between persistent deception and lawlessness. You can't have one without the other. That's why both are proliferating in our present evil world.

Deception and delusion are very real and dangerous. A lot of fantasy, fairy tales, and falsehoods are being peddled in the public square; no matter how outlandish, these things are conveyed with straight faces. As always, we can turn to the Bible for insight and help

The apostle Paul gives us a detailed prophetic warning of this in 2 *Thessalonians* 2:9-12:

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them, that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

The above passage is a reminder that the last days ‘battle of the ages’ is not just with visible forces but even more so with those that are invisible. Satan will be working overtime ‘with all power’ at his disposal to deceive through all kinds of signs and lying wonders. The whole idea is to distract and seduce people from the genuine Christ so that they follow a ‘fake Christ’ - the antichrist. Many will fall into this trap because they do not have the ‘love of the truth’ that they might be saved. Their enjoyment, indeed a pleasure, is in unrighteousness.

## A Historic Precedent

This seemingly bizarre scenario in 2 *Thessalonians* 2 does have historic precedence. It's a tale of two kings: wicked Ahab of Israel and righteous Jehoshaphat of Judah. These two monarchs wanted to launch a joint military campaign against Ramoth-Gilead. They sought prophetic advice. All four hundred false prophets, presumably from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, told the two kings to go ahead and attack Ramoth-Gilead, “for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king” (1 *Kings* 22:6).

Though engaged in a foolish alliance with an unrighteous partner, Jehoshaphat was still a Godly man and wanted to hear from a prophet of the Lord. Ahab reluctantly called for Micaiah, son of Imlah, whom he personally detested but also knew was a genuine, true prophet of God. Micaiah, after a false start, gave the definitive word of the Lord: Israel would be soundly defeated (1 *Kings* 22:17), despite their superior numbers and weapons.

But there was more: Micaiah shared a vision of the Lord sitting on His throne, surrounded by the hosts of heaven. The Almighty asked who could persuade Ahab to fight at Ramoth-Gilead, where he would surely be killed. There were all kinds of spirits volunteering to convince the king. When a lying spirit appeared before God and said he would persuade Ahab, the Lord was convinced this would work and gave him permission.

Micaiah concluded in 1 *Kings* 22:23: “Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.” This was an audaciously bold thing to share - one sole true prophet against hundreds of false. Micaiah would be sent, or returned, to prison for this prophetic word and vision.

Note that Ahab was told the truth - if you go to Ramoth Gilead, disaster and death are waiting for you. Yet because he loved lies and unrighteousness, he rejected prophetic counsel and was slain in battle.

Remember, Pharaoh chose to harden his heart; therefore, God gave him what he wanted and hardened it even more. If Ahab wanted to believe a lie about his military campaign, God allowed this to happen. Likewise, if people in the last days want to ‘love a lie’ and reject the ‘love of the truth,’ they will be susceptible to grand delusion.

## Israel's Plight

When it comes to Israel and the Middle East, there are all kinds of lies that are viewed as dogma. The notorious and fraudulent Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which are defamatory and anti-Semitic, are still distributed as if they were true. Rumours that Israel plans to change the status of the Temple Mount/*al-Haram al-Sharif* have proven to be false. Unsubstantiated and untrue talk of Jewish ‘threats’ of danger to the *al-Aqsa* Mosque can cause riots and death. Israel is accused of ‘not wanting peace’ despite offering or accepting numerous peace proposals. The label of ‘apartheid state’ is particularly odious, considering the equal legal status of Arab Israelis. The ‘land of the Bible’ is the epicentre of the cosmic war of truth versus lies.

## How Shall We Live

In order to survive and succeed in these challenging days of deception, it is paramount to cultivate the spiritual gift of discernment. Like a lighthouse warning of the rocky shores ahead, discernment will help you know what is true and what is false, thus preventing lethal gullibility. After all, people's lack of discernment can be destructive.

As a related item, falsehood is like poison, and the antidote is the truth: God's truth, which is the only truth that matters. There are three readily accessible sources of divine truth. They are 1. Jesus Christ is the truth (*John* 14:6); 2. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (*John* 16:13); and 3. The Scriptures are true (*John* 17:17). When you have all three sources operative in your life, you are safely and securely immunised from lies, falsehood, deception and delusion.

Truth is worth paying the price. After all, God's truth in Christ sets you free (*John* 8:31-32).

## Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

## The Hebraic Influence of The Lord's Prayer

One of the most familiar prayers in Christian Scriptures is entitled *The Lord's Prayer*. However, Jesus never used these words, nor does it contain the name, Lord. Jesus passed this prayer onto his followers when one of his disciples asked him how to pray (*Luke* 11:1). Therefore, *The Lord's Prayer* should be entitled *The Disciples' Prayer*.

Some say that *The Disciples' Prayer* is modelled after the *Kaddish*, a prayer that was and still is invoked after learning God's word with a quorum of ten people. It contains the phrases “Exalted and hallowed be his great name” and “May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime” that parallel “hallowed be your name” in *Matthew* 6:9 and “your kingdom come” in *Matthew* 6:10. Others posit that *The Disciples' Prayer* is like certain petitions within the *Amidah*, the oldest synagogue congregational prayer created by the Men of the Great Assembly in the fourth pre-Christian century. The prayer contains petitions of:

“Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed...”

“Bless this year to us, *Adonai Eloheinu*, together with every kind of produce for our welfare; give dew and [seasonal] rain for a blessing upon the face of the earth...”

The above appeals are modelled by *Matthew* 6:13 - “Forgive us our sins...” and *Matthew* 6:11 - “Give us this day our necessary portion...”

The opening of *The Disciples' Prayer* with “Our Father” is influenced by *Isaiah* 63:16 - “For You are our Father (*A'vi'nu*), for Abraham did not know us, neither did Israel recognize us; You, the Eternal, are our Father (*A'vi'nu*); our Redeemer of old is Your name” as well as *Isaiah* 64:11 - “And now, the Eternal, You are our father (*A'vi'nu*); we are the clay, and You are our potter, and all of us are Your handiwork.” The metaphor of the Father-son relationship conveys the idea that even when Israel is not always faithful to God, this does not alter the degree of kinship with their Father.

I believe Father John Crossan's insight from his book, *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer*, sums up the Hebraic understanding of The Disciples' Prayer - “a prayer from the heart of Judaism on the lips of Christianity for the conscience of the world is one which prays for God's distributive justice.”

More than a prayer, *The Disciples' Prayer* commits the one praying it to make the vision a reality. Prayer and justice are two inseparable sides of the same coin.

*David Nekrutman is an Orthodox Jewish theologian involved in the sacred calling of Jewish-Christian relations for over two decades and currently serves as the Israel Director for The Isaiah Projects. In 2018, Mr Nekrutman received his master's in biblical literature from Oral Roberts University.*



# The Joys of Hanukkah

**Kees de Vreugd**  
Theologian | Christians for Israel International & Editor  
| Israel & the Church

On 18 December, Sunday evening, the Jewish *Hanukkah* festival begins. In the streets of Jerusalem, in Jewish homes, and in many cities around the world, *Hanukkah* lights are lit. One is lit on the first evening, two on the second evening, and so on, until eight lights are lit on the last evening. *Hanukkah* begins on 25 *Kislev* (a Jewish day begins in the evening) and lasts for eight days. *Kislev* is the winter month of the Jewish calendar.

The ritual is actually quite simple. You need a candlestick with eight candles or oil lamps, and a ninth - the 'servant' - to light the other lights. Two basic rules apply to the chanukia: the lights must be in a straight line and at the same height. Other than that, artists and designers can take all the liberty to make something beautiful out of it, and they do.

When the light is lit, a blessing is said, thanking God for the miracle of *Hanukkah*. Then the song *Ma'oz Tsur Yeshu'ati* ('Solid rock of my salvation') is sung. It is also a custom to eat *sufganiot*, a kind of doughnut fried in oil, and *latkes* (deep-fried potato biscuits) as a reference to the miracle of oil (see below). The children play with a special *Hanukkah* toll, the *dreidel*.

### Historical Background

The word *Hanukkah* means 'dedication'. The *Hanukkah* festival celebrates the rededication of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, which took place in 167 BCE. Its history is described in the books of the Maccabees. The Greek king Antiochus IV, who had nicknamed himself *Epiphanes* - which means 'divine apparition' - was then seated in Damascus and also ruled the land of Israel. In an attempt to equalise all Jews in Greco-Hellenistic culture, he banned *Sabbaths*, circumcision and *Torah* study (the books of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament). He also placed an image of the Greek supreme god Zeus in the temple in Jerusalem and had pigs sacrificed to it. In *1 Maccabees 1:54*, this is called the 'abomination that brings destruction', a designation we also encounter in the Bible in the book of Daniel (*Daniel 9:27*).

A significant part of Jerusalem's upper-class society, including the leading priests, went along with this Hellenisation. Jerusalem got a theatre and a gymnasium, where sports were played naked according to Greek custom. The people of Israel were in danger of slipping into pagan culture and customs and forgetting the commandments of God.



| Photo: Shutterstock

But resistance arose in the countryside. The people did not allow their Jewish identity to be taken away but remained faithful to God's command. A family of priest-farmers from the town of Modi'in (northwest of Jerusalem) rebelled. And led by Judas the Maccabean, they eventually succeeded in recapturing Jerusalem and driving the Greek soldiers out of the city.

They found the temple in a desolate state. Immediately they began to cleanse the temple of the idolatry that had been practised there. The altar was restored and on the 25th of the Jewish month of *Kislev*, the same date on which Antiochus had desecrated the temple by offering pig sacrifices there, the temple was rededicated. The temple was decorated with wreaths and golden shields and festively lit with large candelabras so that it could be seen for miles around. The feast of dedication lasted eight days, exactly like the dedication feast of the first temple under King Solomon (*1 Kings 8*). That dedication by Solomon, incidentally, had taken place during the Feast of Tabernacles, which also lasted eight days.

Judas the Maccabean, together with his brothers and the whole assembly of the people, determined that from then on the feast of rededication should be celebrated every year for eight days with gladness and joy. And so it happened, Jesus, too celebrated it. At least He is said to

have been in the temple in Jerusalem during the feast of the dedication (*John 10:22*). It also mentions that it was winter, so there can be no doubt.

### Oil

The *Talmud* (Jewish lore) relates that when the Maccabees entered the temple, they wanted to re-light the *ner tamid*, the lamp that always used to burn in the temple. However, there was no ritually pure oil available. Finally, after a long search, they found a jug of oil that was just enough for one day. But a great miracle happened there: for eight days, the menorah burned on that small amount of oil. And that was the time it took to prepare new oil. That is why the feast is also called the 'feast of lights'.

### Dedication

*Hanukkah* is not just about lighting candles. Above all, it is about dedicating yourself and rededicating yourself to a life in accordance with the Word of God. The Hebrew word also has to do with 'formation', education. It is a Jewish idea that every person should make himself a temple, a sanctuary, by learning the values of God's Word. In this way, he or she will spread light in the world. Judaism sees it as a task for the Jewish people to be a light to the world.

## Seven Fruits of Israel

"For the Lord, your God, is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with **wheat** and **barley**, **vines** and **fig trees**, **pomegranates**, **olive** oil and **honey**; a land where bread will not be scarce, and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land, He has given you."

Deuteronomy 8:7-10



### Land

The word 'land' is mentioned seven times in the passage from Deuteronomy quoted above. Five of the seven fruits grow only in fertile environments, but the olive tree and the date palm also grow in regions that are much less fertile. Israel then adds extra flavour and quality to these fruits.

### Months of the Year

The seven fruits also correspond to the months of the year. Time and place come together in the fruits. Wheat and barley grow in Nisan and Iyyar (spring). Grapes grow in Sivan and Tammuz (late spring, early summer), the fig in Av (summer). The



pomegranate blooms in Elul (late summer, early autumn). The olive tree and the date palm are autumn fruits and come off the tree in Tishrei, Heshvan and Kislev (autumn, winter).

### Environment

The other five of Israel's seven fruits basically only grow in a fertile environment. They are also fruits which Israeli grows to a high quality, but Israel does not excel so clearly in them. It is particularly in olives and dates, which grow basically everywhere, that Israel's special sacred growing power is evident. Israel produces excellent olive oil and also delicious honey.



# Israel-China Relations

## ■ Donna Ho

Film director & Tanakh Scholar

For years, I have taken entrepreneurs and professionals from mainland China to Israel from multiple industries, including film and the arts. People have asked me why connect China with Israel?

Let me share a time when I took some Chinese on their first trip to Israel. Thinking that Israel was a country of wars, barren deserts, and unknown cuisine, they packed instant noodles galore. One day, they came to me with a 'problem'. They had now visited coffee plantations, enjoyed gourmet lunches at wineries, and discovered traditional Israeli dishes that were similar to Chinese dishes (*Shakshuka* is like the unofficial Chinese national dish of eggs cooked with tomato). They had seen flowers blooming in the Negev, water flowing in the desert, and they had eaten apples at *kibbutz* orchards and were sweetly surprised by its taste. They were amazed by Israel's ancient history and impressed by Israelis whose innovations they had seen, heard and tasted. Their 'problem' was what to do with the uneaten noodles to make room for the wine, coffee, Dead Sea products, and dates. Before experiencing Israel for themselves, their concept of Israel was shaped by the media, which focused on the conflicts in Israel, just like the average person living outside of China. As followers of God, however, our calling is to be above average, to be the 'salt and light' of this world. Hence, we need to critically examine how our world views have been unduly influenced by media and whether we have missed what the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is and has been doing so that Israel fulfils her calling to be a light onto the world.

Some facts about modern Israel-China relations:

1920: Dr Sun Yat-Sen, the father of modern China, wrote to NEB Ezra (Jewish founder of the Shanghai Zionist Association): "All lovers of democracy cannot help but support whole-heartedly and welcome with enthusiasm the movement to restore your wonderful and historic nation, which has contributed so much to the civilisation of the world and which rightfully deserves an honourable place in the family of nations." The original letter is stored in the National Library of Israel.

1930s: David Ben-Gurion, then leader of the *Yishuv* in Palestine, proclaimed that China would be one of the world's great powers. He would declare the rebirth of Israel as a country and become the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

1948: The State of Israel was established.

1949: The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) was established.

1950: Israel was the first country in the Middle East to recognise the PRC as the legitimate government of all of China.

1992: Israel and China established diplomatic relations.

2020: The Chief Rabbi of Israel, Safed Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, called for prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, to pray for China and Covid-19 victims. Despite heavy rain, thousands of Jews went. Rabbi Eliyahu prayed in Hebrew and also in Mandarin.

2022: China is one of the few world powers to concurrently maintain warm relations with Israel, Arab countries and Muslim nations in the world.

Since I first took mainland Chinese to Israel, China-Israel relations have transformed rapidly. China is Israel's third-largest trading partner. The 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) spurred Israel to look eastward for economic and trade opportunities as Israel realised she could not rely on Europe and North America only. In 2019, over 160,000 Chinese tourists visited Israel (54,000 from Australia). In 2021, trade between the two nations was 22.8 billion USD, which is an increase of over 700 times since Israel started diplomatic relations with China in 1992.

China is Israel's largest East Asian trading partner and sources Israeli expertise in a wide range of industries, including green technology, manufacturing robotics,



| Photo: MFA Israel

water management, irrigation and desalination technology. In 2022, over 2000 Israeli firms operated in China, and China's *kosher* food industry, with more than 500 manufacturers, is worth over 10 billion USD.

With China's increasing interest in Jewish literature and education, scholars undertook Middle-eastern studies and went to Israel for further studies. Israel's universities established campuses in China, offering Hebrew, Tanakh and other courses. Chinese are interested in Israel's ancient, Biblical, and modern history. They are fascinated by the Israeli-Jewish mindset. They see Jews as a unique people who, like the Chinese, have a continuous written history dating back thousands of years. Both nations are rooted in ancient civilisations, and hence there are cultural similarities today, making them natural partners in the international community.

Jews have lived in China for centuries without experiencing antisemitism. Since Abraham's time, Jewish merchants travelled on the Silk Road through Central Asia, past India, and into China. During the Song Dynasty (960- 1279), international trade was booming. The Song Emperor welcomed and bestowed seven Chinese surnames upon Jewish merchants so it would be easier for them to live in the empire's capital city of Kaifeng. One Chinese surname given was 'Gold' – this surname is still held by many Jewish families today.

The father of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was raised in the city of Harbin, a thriving Jewish community dating from the 19th century in Northern China. In 2007, Prime Minister Olmert visited China to bolster trade ties and also sought China's support against Iran's ongoing nuclear threats towards Israel.

In the lead up to WW2, thousands of European Jewry landed in Shanghai after fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe. The Jewish and the Chinese community had friendly relations and co-existed peacefully. The relationship became closer when, to please their Nazi allies, the occupying Japanese Army rounded up Jews and forced thousands to live in the Hongkou ghetto with the 100,000 Chinese already there. Some Jews died of illness and malnutrition. Many Chinese living in the same ghetto died from starvation and were slaughtered by the Japanese. In 2007, the Israeli consulate of Shanghai gave 660,000 yuan, donated by Israeli companies, to community projects in Hongkou in recognition of Shanghai's role as a safe harbour for Jews during the Holocaust.

China's embrace of Jews on her soil is one of affectionate sympathy. The Chinese admired their contributions to humanity and their ability to thrive. Sharing the same values on family, frugality, hard work, and education has also been an impetus towards their enduring friendship. When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited China

in 2017, he and his wife Sarah visited the Hongkou ghetto synagogue, now a museum supported by Shanghai city. Netanyahu thanked China, cited their experiences of similar historical events, and it is no wonder why both countries have warm relations. In November 2021, Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, phoned President Xi to discuss opportunities to enhance bilateral ties ahead of celebrations of 30 years of diplomatic relations.

In 1992, Israel-China relations was at a G to G level (Government to Government) and has since expanded into the following spheres - Economics to Economics and Scholars to Scholars. Despite significant relations developing over the last three decades, both nations still have a superficial understanding of each other. The immense voice of media and social media that magnify the selfish agendas of short-termed leaders, focusing on fault lines and amplifying extreme views, is a well-known phenomenon but easily overlooked. In such climates, it is easy for propaganda to permeate society, stereotyping a country and her people. Hence the next stage of relations needs to be people to people, to build on shared virtues and interests, to deepen the understanding that strengthens bilateral relations, to treasure the worth of a people despite the cacophony of voices against them, and to combat the rise of racism, fascism and antisemitism throughout the world. Chinese need enhanced insights about the Jewish people and Israel so as not to be swayed by geopolitics and not be polluted by antisemitism transmitted from other nations. Jews need to perceive China as a distinction from previous world powers. China has an Eastern (collective) mindset, the only country to pull millions of her people out of abject poverty in this century, unlike others where millions have gone below the poverty line; China does not have a history of antisemitism; and has a longstanding friendship with the Jewish people. Followers of God need to filter out the riotous noise of this world to discern the current moves of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Returning to the question, why connect China with Israel? My reply is, how can I not? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has been establishing friendly connections between Israel and China for centuries. Today, God has advanced His plan, and thousands upon thousands of mainland Chinese have visited Israel. Thousands are studying the Jewish mindset and the Tanakh. Israel's diplomatic relations and trade ties with China mitigates the economic hardships and oppression faced by Israel from the ongoing boycotts instigated by the BDS movement and their allies. China has been called by God to be a friend of Israel. It is imperative now for followers of God to accelerate genuine connections between these two peoples and to bring in more allies to support Israel through practical actions.



# Jerusalem of Gold

■ **Tal Hartuv**  
Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

In the amazing and very varied repertoire of Israeli songs, there are two which Israelis, both young and old, will stop in their tracks and sing along to wherever they are: *HaTikvah*, and *Jerusalem of Gold*. Although there is somewhat of a competitive edge between the two songs, throughout the years, *Jerusalem of Gold* has become so cherished by Israelis that until today, some see it as a viable alternative to *HaTikvah*, the national anthem of the Jewish State.

The song was written by Naomi Shemer, arguably the most popular singer-songwriter in Israel at the time. Shemer drew upon ancient sources to bring the past to the present and the present to the past. Among other themes, the lyrics deal with exile and the Jewish longing for Jerusalem. This takes after a medieval Jewish poet, Yehuda Halvi, who is famously recorded as saying: “To all your songs, I am a lyre.” The title *Jerusalem of Gold* refers to a piece of jewellery mentioned in a famous Talmudic parable about Rabbi Akiva, who was martyred by the Romans after the Bar Kochba Revolt. In addition, there are many Biblical references from the book of *Isaiah and Lamentations*; a book read out on the fast day of the 9th of Av.

On 15 May 1967, the night after Israel’s nineteenth Independence Day, the inimitable mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, commissioned *Jerusalem of Gold* to be sung at the Israel Song Festival. At the time, the Old City was under Jordanian control and against all International agreements. Jews had been banned by the Jordanians from entering the city since the conclusion of the Independence War 19 years earlier, a war which saw Jewish people who had lived in the Old City lose their homes and become refugees. Some were even taken as Prisoners of War to Jordan. No Jews were allowed to return to the city, even for a visit.



Sunset over the Old City Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

Only three weeks after the song was sung at the festival by the-then unknown Shuli Natan, the Six-Day War broke out. It was a war that was to change the history of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide. Just three days into the conflict, Israeli Paratroopers took the Temple Mount. Standing where King Solomon had built his House of Worship, they burst into song with *Jerusalem of Gold*.

As God had told his people hundreds of years ago, Zion had at long last finally returned to the Nation of Israel. It was truly a miracle. Against all odds and after defeating the mighty Arab armies, the Jewish people were sovereign again in their land and in the holiest place on earth.

Shortly after the momentous and historic reunification of Jerusalem, Naomi Shemer realised that her song was now incomplete. Accordingly, she wrote a new ending. “We have returned to the cisterns, to the market and to the marketplace. A shofar calls out on the Temple Mount in the Old City.”

Shofars indeed blew from Temple Mount on that day, which is what inspired Shemer to write about it. And while it may not be the official anthem of Israel, *Jerusalem of Gold* is indeed an anthem of triumph for the Jewish Nation that finally returned home.

# Jews and Diamonds: *Mazel und Broche*

■ **Joanna Moss**  
Christians for Israel New Zealand | Contributor

Jews have been associated with diamonds for centuries, and diamonds are even mentioned in the Bible as part of the priestly garments *inter alia*. But what is it about diamonds and Israel that they should play such a significant part in the global and Israeli economies? Diamonds ideally fit the bill for Jews in a number of ways. First, they are traded commodities and therefore rely on trust and networks. Jews have for centuries had communities dotted all over the world and well-established connections between them. Community affiliation brought security to transactions. Devious trading behaviour could be punished by the community, and the threat of expulsion hung over the traders. Secondly, diamonds are small and can be cut and polished using small tools in a restricted space rather than requiring mass factories favouring family or niche businesses. Thirdly, diamond cutting is both an art form and a craft requiring skill, often passed down through generations. Fourthly, diamonds are high-value goods and portable. So that if any diamond processing or trading Jews needed to flee in a hurry, they could. Finally, diamonds are stores of value. This last point was played out expressly during the *Shoah* when Jews sewed diamonds into their clothing and traded them for food or security.

## Diamond Industry History

When diamonds were discovered in South Africa in the late 19th century, it was Jewish firms that developed the mining and trade. Over time two firms dominated:

Oppenheimers and De Beers. But Jews were involved in all aspects of the business. Pre-WWII, the Netherlands and Belgium were important diamond processing centres for cutting and polishing raw diamonds from South Africa primarily. However, as war loomed, some processing was moved to London and others to Israel. At one point, there were 4,000 polishers in Israel, mainly in Netanya. Jews on three continents largely controlled the process. After the war, the decimation of European cities combined with the lack of skilled craftsmen only encouraged the development of the Israeli industry, and by the 1970s, Israel had overtaken Antwerp as the world’s largest wholesaler. In 1982 diamonds represented a whopping 24 per cent of exports. The industry grew rapidly until 2003 and today exports about USD\$5 Billion.

## Bursa

European Jews started the diamond business in the 1930s Mandate period. When the industry flourished in Israel in the 1960s, it was decided to build a dedicated diamond district based around a four-tower structure. Today the impressive *Tel Aviv Diamond Exchange* is located in Ramat Gan next to Tel Aviv and known as the *Bursa*. It’s still growing and renown as a sophisticated, highly-organised and secure industry that’s praised for its unique features. Today, employing over 15,000 people in 1,500 companies boasting a vast trading hall and dedicated museum!

## A Diamond is Forever®

By the 1890s, the USA was the largest market for diamonds, but still small. Globally a demand for

diamonds needed to be created to match increasing supply on the premise that diamonds were both necessary and desirable psychologically. Enter ad agency *N W Ayer* who in 1938 created the *A Diamond is Forever®* campaign for De Beers, described by *Advertising Age* 50 years later as the greatest advertising slogan of the 20th century. Over many decades strategists built demand for diamond engagement rings linking diamonds with romance and commitment using celebrities, school projects, advertising and movies as they mass-marketed their products, subtly suggesting that the size and quality of diamonds were proportional to love. It worked.

## Israeli Supremacy

Japan became an important market from the 1960s onwards as affluence increased, and then China and, more recently India, signify a Far East shift. But Israel is holding its own as it’s particularly good at cutting and processing the gems. Industry processes have been largely developed by the Israelis themselves using Orthodox Jews as cutters. Israel specialises in advanced cutting and matching of stones. Advanced science is applied alongside skilled labour and craftsmanship with automated equipment, security, quality guarantees and scientific cost control to make Israel a world leader.

## Mazel und Broche

Much diamond trading is still done in *Yiddish* by men in black coats and hats and by others wearing just a *yarmulke* to signify affiliation. The *Mazel und Broche* expression, often shortened to *‘Mazl’*, seals contracts worth millions of dollars with a handshake, and for the uninitiated, it means good luck and a blessing: *May you be rich!* I’ll stick with diamonds thanks!



# Demand for Meals Increases at Hineni

## Christians for Israel International

Hineni is located in the heart of Jerusalem and runs, among other things, a soup kitchen, which Director Benjamin Philip refers to as a humanitarian restaurant. After all, people do not just need a meal; they also need to be treated with respect and dignity. This is why the team at Hineni is attentive to all visitors and offers them a listening ear.

Jerusalem is the most densely populated city in Israel but also the poorest, with many citizens dependent on charity. Hineni means 'Here I am, I am ready to serve with love'. Hineni Jerusalem brings people together that want to serve God and are ready to serve with love. Among other things, Hineni runs a humanitarian restaurant, preparing 500 meals on a daily basis for the poor of Jerusalem from all walks of life. Holocaust survivors, lonely homeless people, new immigrants, and refugees. Hineni also has a programme for lone soldiers. They try to help where they can, wherever the need is. Recently Benjamin Philip visited the Christians for Israel headquarters in the Netherlands, and we had the opportunity to talk about the work of Hineni.



**Why do people come to Hineni for food and help?**  
'First of all, they are referred to us by social workers of the municipality or other government officials. They come for food, but once they come to us, people start to realise they get much more. They get compassion, love, and a listening ear. At Hineni, people receive a sense of community and the Word of God. We remind people that God loves them and that if they would pray to Him, He can always bring salvation. We also organise special events during the Jewish holidays to give people a sense of Jewish traditions and love for God's word. I am just a simple Jew trying to remind the people that God loves them, and if they will read His word, He will answer them: Hineni, 'here I am.'"

**The cost of living is going up around the world. How does this affect Hineni?**  
'We serve high-quality meals with fresh vegetables, chicken and fish, but also the product prices increase here in Israel. The donations we receive from our faithful sponsors abroad are worth less since the value of the foreign currency dropped. At the same time, we see that the demand for meals has increased tremendously. For



instance, there are now 400 refugees from Russia and Ukraine are now housed near our Hineni centre. They would like to receive a meal, and we try to help, but we also need to prepare the meals that we provide to about

**Hineni responds to what is happening around them. They try to assist wherever the need is most urgent.**

300 homebound people. Many of them are lonely and elderly, oftentimes Holocaust survivors. On top of that, about 200 meals are served daily in the restaurant of Hineni. So looking from a budget point of view we cannot provide more meals. In all this, we trust the Lord that He will continue inspiring people to help. We are never in despair.'



**What can we, as Christians, do to help Hineni?**  
First of all, pray for the sake of Jerusalem and for the well-being of the Jewish people. You can also come to Israel and join Hineni as a volunteer in our kitchen and restaurant. We have staff working in the kitchen, but amazing volunteers handle packing the food and distribution. The encounters with our volunteers positively impact the people coming to Hineni. And when you come to Jerusalem, you are more than welcome to join us for a Shabbat dinner. We can welcome the Shabbat together at the Western Wall, and you can experience the Jewishness of our faith and ask questions. Of course, your donation to Hineni, as a blessing to the decedents of Abraham, is more than welcome!

**Hineni wants to provide a hot meal for Jerusalem's poor, elderly, and children. Your gift to Hineni goes directly to the purchase of food. Costs of a hot meal: €7,50 | US \$7.50**



Benjamin Philip (photo above) visited Christians for Israel's headquarters recently. Watch the interview here: <https://www.c4israel.org/video/interview-hineni/>

Scan and watch the interview here.

## Overview of our projects

Part of our mission is to comfort Israel and the Jewish people through prayer and action. If you would like to support one of our projects you can complete the coupon on page 16 or make an online donation. Thank you very much for your support!

### Aliyah

Aliyah is the Hebrew word for the return of the Jewish people to Israel. We support Aliyah mainly from Ukraine (and the former Soviet Union), but also from India and France. Furthermore, we help new immigrants (in Hebrew: olim) to integrate into Israeli society.



### Hineni Soup Kitchen

We help the poor of Israel, by providing them with food. We do this in partnership with the Hineni Center in Jerusalem, headed by Benjamin Philip. Your gift for the soup kitchen goes directly to the purchase of food.



### Holocaust Survivors

We support impoverished Holocaust survivors in Israel and Ukraine through various projects which provide assistance to survivors of the Holocaust. Those survivors are elderly and will not be among us for long, and there is a growing demand for practical assistance.



### Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

You can support the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, the heart of Biblical Israel. The main purpose is to encourage the people in the Biblical Heartland and to show them that there are Christians throughout the world who support them and share the belief that the areas of Judea and Samaria are part of Israel's inheritance.



### Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

We distribute food parcels amongst Jewish people in Ukraine. These parcels are handed out to Holocaust survivors, needy families, and the sick. Those food parcels are a sign of friendship that demonstrates your support for our Jewish brothers and sisters and that they are not alone.



### Arab Christians

Life for Christians in Bethlehem is often not easy. Christians for Israel supports the First Baptist Church of Rev Naim Khoury in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The members of this church spread the gospel among Arabs and share their love and heart for Israel and the Jewish people.



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, [www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org)



# Food Parcels for Ukrainian Jews



In Ukraine, thousands of Jewish elderly live in great poverty. Often lonely and in remote places.

As Christians for Israel, we have been distributing food parcels to Jews in Ukraine for years each winter. As you will understand, this year will be a little different compared to previous years...

In spite of all the uncertainty surrounding the situation in Ukraine, we cling to the certainty that God is continuing His plan with His people. Therefore, we continue to:

- provide food aid to the Jewish communities;
- evacuate Jews from eastern Ukraine;
- provide a shelter for Jewish refugees;
- and help Jews return to Israel.

We don't know how food supplies will be affected this winter. Therefore, we are stockpiling emergency supplies in order to meet the many requests for help. In total, we hope to distribute over 40,000 food parcels (over 400,000kg) this winter.

It is a comfort and encouragement to the Jewish people that we have the opportunity to do this. Will you help make this work possible, with your gifts and prayers?

Warm greetings on behalf of the entire Christians for Israel team in Ukraine,



The food parcels brought by the Christians for Israel team in Ukraine are very much needed to get through the harsh winter and especially since food prices are going up. This winter in Ukraine, we hope to distribute 40,000 food parcels to poor Jewish families and Holocaust survivors. One food parcel costs €15. Please donate one or more parcels!



Photo: (left) Mikhail (58) and his mother Anna Kreiser (87).  
Photo: (right) Ludmilla Balaban (67)

**Anna Kreiser (Holocaust survivor):** "I lived a long life, experienced a lot of tragic moments, but my heart cries when I think of what is going on now... This war in the 21st century, as any other war, is just terrible. So much grief, but in the midst of darkness there are people like *Christians for Israel* who do not stop no matter what and continue to help and support Jews in Ukraine! Your food parcels are such a support and blessing to us! Thank you very much!"

**Ludmilla Balaban (67):** "Thank you very much for supporting us at this difficult time for everyone. It is good to know that we are not alone and there are people who think about us. These food parcels are very important and will help to live through winter months."

One €15 parcel contains:

1 kg spaghetti

1 kg macaroni

1 kg grits

1 kg rice

1 kg bulgur

1 kg sugar

2 kg flour

1 tin of peas

1 tin of corn

1 litre cooking oil

1 tin of chicken

1 pack of coffee

1 pack of tea

“Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy, honours God”. Proverbs 14:31

## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post .....

### ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

- ☐ One person from Ukraine - € 135 | US \$150 .....
- ☐ One family (5 people) - € 675 | US \$750 .....
- ☐ One bus (25 people) - € 4500 | US \$5000 .....
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland - € 450 | US \$465 .....
- ☐ Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - € 950 | US \$1000 .....
- ☐ Aliyah Ethiopia .....

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- ☐ Food Parcels in Ukraine - € 15 | US \$15 each \$.....
- ☐ Children at Risk - Jaffa Institute \$.....
- ☐ Hineni Soup Kitchen - € 7,50 | US \$7.50 per meal \$.....
- ☐ Holocaust Survivors \$.....
- ☐ Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC) \$.....
- ☐ Arab Christians \$.....

TOTAL DONATION .....

### DONATION

### TEACHING RESOURCES

- ☐ Israel on Trial (Book) by Andrew Tucker
- ☐ 70 Questions About Israel (Book) by Chan Siew Fong
- ☐ Israel 70 Years (One-off Collector's Magazine)
- ☐ Jerusalem 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (One-off Collector's Magazine)
- ☐ Israel: Covenants & Kingdom (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- ☐ Why Israel? (Book) ☐ Why Jerusalem? (Book) ☐ Why End Times? (Book)
- ☐ Why Israel? (Trilogy Book Set)
- ☐ Why Israel? Study Guides (Trilogy Book Set)
- ☐ Why Israel? (DVD) ☐ Why Jerusalem? (DVD) ☐ Why End Times? (DVD)
- ☐ Why Israel? (Trilogy DVD Set)
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- ☐ Why Jerusalem? (Book, DVD & Study Guide)
- ☐ Why End Times? (Book, DVD & Study Guide)

To order these and other resources, go to [www.c4israel.org/webshop](http://www.c4israel.org/webshop)



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