

# ISRAEL

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

[www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org) | [info@c4israel.org](mailto:info@c4israel.org)



View of the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

## The Messiah is Coming

**From the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, you have a magnificent view of the Old City.**

There Jesus sat with His disciples when He spoke to them about the things that were to come upon the earth. “And Jerusalem shall be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

It was from this mountain that He entered the city on a donkey. The people shouted “Hosanna”, and “Blessed He who comes in the name of the Lord”. Those same words He Himself sang with His disciples as a final hymn of praise after eating the Passover meal (Psalm 118). And He left Jerusalem to be delivered at Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

On the Mount of Olives, today, we see the graves of the deceased Jews who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. They knew the words of the prophet Zechariah, that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. They expected His coming.

**When He Comes, the resurrection will take place.**

Recently, Jews celebrated *Passover* and Christians celebrated Easter. Easter is the first sign of the redemption to come, of God's overcoming grace. Paul writes: “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Easter reminds us that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. Jesus taught His disciples about the Kingdom. We have received that teaching. As David Nekrutman reminds us (see page 11): “The Passover Seder is rooted in the exilic experience. However, everything changed 75 years ago with the creation of the State of Israel. Since 1948, we are living in redemptive times. Hence, the *Passover* celebrated today should acknowledge this season.”

The Messiah is coming. He will reveal the fullness of new life in the resurrection. Then joy will surpass all confusion, pain and suffering.

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Roman's Story



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





Colophon

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

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.

Editorial Team

Andrew Tucker

International Editor-in-Chief  
atucker@c4israel.org

Cathy Coldicutt

Managing Editor  
newspaper@c4israel.org

Marloes van Westing

International Communications Manager  
international@c4israel.org

Ian Worby, Bryce Turner, Rita Quartel,  
Marie-Louise Weissenböck and Marijke Terlouw

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C4I Offices

Christians for Israel International

Leon Meijer, *Chairman*  
Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer, *President*  
Rev Cornelis Kant, *Executive Director*  
PO Box 1100 | 3860 BC Nijkerk,  
The Netherlands | Tel: +31 33 422 0405  
info@c4israel.org | www.c4israel.org

The English Edition of *Israel & Christians Today* is published by the following English speaking branches:

Christians for Israel - Australia

Ian Worby, *National Leader*  
PO Box 1508, Springwood  
Queensland, Australia 4127  
Tel: +61 7 3088 6900, info@c4israel.com.au  
www.c4israel.com.au

Christians for Israel - New Zealand

Bryce Turner, *National Executive Director*  
PO Box 12 006, Penrose,  
Auckland, New Zealand 1642  
Tel: +64 9 525 7564, +6421 127 7214  
info@c4israel.org.nz  
www.c4israel.org.nz

Christians for Israel - Korea

Rev Paul Wonil Jung, *Director*  
Suite 3, 37 Railway Parade, Eastwood NSW,  
Australia 2122  
Tel: +61 410 430 677  
email: c4israelkorea@gmail.com  
www.c4israelkorea.org

Christians for Israel - USA

David Sudlow, *Chairman*  
PO Box 400, Front Royal, VA 22630, USA  
usa-info@c4israel.org  
www.c4israel.us

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# Will Judicial Reforms in Israel Destroy Democracy?

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

At the time of writing, large demonstrations are being organised in Israel against the Netanyahu government’s plans to reform the Israeli judicial system. A significant section of Israeli and Jewish society is violently opposed to the government’s reforms which they claim will destroy Israel as a democracy, reducing it to a dictatorship akin to Hungary, Poland or even Turkey. The issue is tearing Israel apart. There is violence on the streets. An increasing number are refusing to sign up for reserve army duty. Many even fear a civil war.

But will these reforms be as devastating as some are claiming? A recent discussion hosted by J-Air between Professors Alan Dershowitz and Eugene Kontorovich was enlightening. Dershowitz is a highly respected civil liberties advocate and liberal democrat, Kontorovitch a conservative who is affiliated with the Kohelet Forum, a right-wing Israeli institute and the author of many of the proposed reforms. They differ on key issues. Dershowitz disagrees with most of the government’s proposed reforms, Kontorovitch supports them as reasonable and necessary. However, they were in agreement that the government’s proposed reforms to the Israeli judicial system will not destroy Israel’s democracy, as some claim; and that the obsession of the international community about this issue is unwarranted.

Dershowitz observed that had the reforms been proposed by a left-wing or centrist government, there would be no violent demonstrations, suggesting that the vigorous debate in Israel is not about the judicial reforms, as such, but about objections to the character of the leaders of the government and the policies and extreme positions adopted or advocated by some in the current government.

The jurists agreed that the Israeli Supreme Court has an important and necessary role to play in constraining political majority excesses but that the court has, in recent



Israelis block the Ayalon highway in Tel Aviv during a protest on 16 March 2023. | Photo: Flash90

decades, gone too far in claiming powers over issues that should be left to the elected legislature to decide. They agreed some reform of the current judicial system is warranted to restore balance between the court and legislature. Although they disagree on the nature of some of those reforms, they are both of the view that these are complicated issues about which it is reasonable to disagree, and even if the proposed reforms are adopted, this will not undermine democracy as such. Finally, both agreed that compromise is needed and desirable to break the political impasse.

As Dershowitz observed, the political crisis in Israel is, therefore, not about the judicial reforms or whether or not Israel is a democracy but about fundamental ideological issues that separate the secular left and the more religiously inclined right. There is a great deal of distrust and contempt for Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is seen by the left as corrupt, driven by self-interest, and willing to compromise with the extreme religious right to stay in power. The matter has not been helped by the inflammatory remarks and conduct of some senior members of the government, which the Prime Minister has not confronted.

One of the most divisive issues concerns the Jewish character of the state, the position of the Arab population of Israel,

and policies on Israeli settlements and the future of the territories claimed for a Palestinian state. The right-wing religious government has a hawkish approach to security issues and a policy of expanding settlements and extending Israeli sovereignty – directly or indirectly – over Judea and Samaria. Those on the left bitterly oppose the settlement movement, regarding it as an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians.

Whatever view one takes of the judicial reform proposals, the fact is that Israeli society is seriously rupturing as never witnessed before. This is a crisis of major proportions. Even some who support the reforms (or at least part of them) warn that pushing the reforms through against such opposition is unnecessarily undermining the confidence of the army, and relations with worldwide Jewry and other governments. They are urging the government to stop the process, in order to focus on finding a consensus, and restoring stability and social cohesion. Some fear that the break-down within Israel unnecessarily weakens Israel at a time it is facing major external threats: especially increasing Palestinian Islamist violence, and the rising threat of nuclear Iran.

It is to be hoped that in the coming days and weeks, rest and unity will be restored in Israel.

## Prayer Points

### Israel

- There is turmoil in Israel because of government plans to reform the Supreme Court. Pray that the government will continually seek wisdom from God in these challenging times and keeps in mind what is best for the country.
- Pray for the very tense situation in Judea and Samaria. There are regular clashes between the Israeli army and terrorists. Attacks are being made on Jews with retaliatory attacks by residents from Jewish villages towards residents from Arab villages. Pray that peace will come to the Biblical Heartland.

### Israel & the Nations

- Despite attacks by Israel on nuclear enrichment facilities in Iran, it seems that Iran is getting closer and closer to producing nuclear weapons. Pray for Iran to be stopped and for Israel to succeed in thwarting Iran time and again.
- Jews living outside Israel are regularly stared at and questioned by their fellow citizens about what the Israeli government decides or does. Sometimes, it is even worse, and they face abusive comments and violence the

moment there is unrest in Israel. Pray for the protection of Jews from hatred and pray that people will realise that anti-Zionism is also antisemitism.

- ‘Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve Him shoulder to shoulder’ (*Zephaniah 3:9*). Give thanks for this wonderful promise from Zephaniah. Pray that it will soon happen that the nations will call on the name of the Lord.

### Christians for Israel

- Recently, Christians for Israel International organised conferences in Rwanda and Kenya. Give thanks for this wonderful opportunity. Pray that Israel will have a lasting place in prayer and preaching among the pastors who attended the conferences (*Psalms 117 & Romans 15:11*).
- As the State of Israel is celebrating its 75th anniversary, Christians for Israel teams in several countries are organising events around this jubilee. Pray that many people will attend and join in celebrating the miracle of Israel’s existence.

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



# Saudi Arabia Seeks US Assurances in Exchange for Israel Ties

'A Wall Street Journal' report also notes Riyadh wants Washington to help build out its civilian nuclear programme; both demands are viewed as 'daunting obstacles' in political circles.

Saudi Arabia says it will normalise ties with Israel if the United States provides it with security pledges and helps build out its civilian nuclear programme, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

The two Saudi demands are viewed as 'daunting obstacles' to a deal, as "some Washington lawmakers will likely oppose those measures," the report said.

"The nuclear issue is one of, if not the biggest, challenge for Israel, and one Israelis should debate whether it's worth the price for peace," Yoel Guzansky, a senior research fellow at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies, told the *Journal*.

Such an agreement, however, has become a priority for the Biden administration, which wants a diplomatic victory, according to people involved in discussions.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is also eager for a deal, which he sees as part of a bulwark against a nuclear Iran. He has also said that peace with Saudi Arabia will go a long way in solving the Arab-Israel conflict.

Saudi Arabia has improved its security ties with Israel in recent years due to the



(Left): Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. (Right): US President Joe Biden. | Photo: US State Department/Joe Biden via Facebook.

Iranian threat. It has also tacitly supported the agreements with Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Still, it has been reluctant to openly sign an agreement with Israel, fearing a backlash from other Arab states and its own population.

"Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto Saudi ruler, has indicated that he wants to see significant support among Saudi citizens before he agrees to any deal, according to people who have met with him to discuss the issue," reported the *Journal*.

Saudi opposition to relations with Israel has dropped from 91% in 2014 to 38% in 2022, according to a recent poll by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.

"The kingdom is committed to normalisation with Israel," Mark Dubowitz, CEO of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told the *Journal*. "Its requirements from Washington, even if they sound excessive to some, are an expression of Saudi security concerns and not a way to say no to Israel."

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## Short News

### Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Centre Global Leader



*Newsweek* has named Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Centre a world leader in oncology, and for the fifth straight year one of the globe's top hospitals in both cardiology and smart technology. The rankings appeared in the 'World's Best Hospitals 2023', produced by *Newsweek*, in partnership with the global data firm Statista. 300 hospitals in 28 countries were assessed.

### Israel World Leader in Agriculture

Israel is a major exporter of fresh produce and a world leader in agricultural technologies despite the fact that the geography of the country is not naturally conducive to agriculture. More than half of the land area is desert, and the climate and lack of water resources do not favour farming. Only 20% of the land area is naturally arable. Israel produces 95% of its own food.

### Israeli Tourism Industry Recovering

The number of tourists visiting Israel is slowly approaching pre-Covid 19 pandemic levels. This is evidenced by figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics. It recorded 590,500 arrivals to Israel for January and February of this year. That's about 100,000 fewer than in the spring of 2020, before travel restrictions began. A total of 2.7 million tourists visited Israel last year. 2019 was the previous record year with 4.9 million visitors. Israelis, meanwhile, broke their own record: 1,173,000 Israelis travelled abroad in January and February 2023.

### Tennis Bridges Gap

The Israel Tennis & Education Centers (ITEC), a 50-year-old foundation, uses the tennis court as a venue where young Israelis from all backgrounds can meet and engage in a spirit of respect and friendship. ITEC has about 6,000 children aged six to 18 playing at 17 centres across Israel, including Arab Muslims, Christians and Druze, Orthodox Jews and more. The Abraham Accords led to the foundation's Abraham's Bridge initiative to spread 'tennis diplomacy' more intensively in Israel's Arab, Bedouin, Druze and mixed Jewish-Arab cities — and to Abraham Accords neighbours. In March, top Israeli coach and players travelled to Bahrain and taught the ITEC approach to nine local coaches, some born in Bahrain and others born in Tunisia, Romania, Philippines and Yemen. Then they coached some promising young Bahraini tennis players. The plan is to do the same in Morocco next.

# Israel Engaging Four Muslim Nations to Expand Abraham Accords

## ■ Shirit Avitan Cohen

They include Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world.

Israel is working to expand the Abraham Accords with four other nations, *Israel Hayom* learned recently.

Foreign Minister Eli Cohen is working to normalise ties with Mauritania, Somalia, Niger and Indonesia, sources said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is—of course—also involved in efforts behind the scenes, as are the US's Secretary of State Antony Blinken, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Senior Adviser for Energy Security Amos Hochstein, who mediated the Israel-Lebanon maritime deal during the Bennett-Lapid government.

Negotiations with Mauritania are in an advanced phase. Cohen hinted as much last week in a meeting with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, during which he officially asked her to help Israel with the breakthrough vis-à-vis Mauritania and Niger.

Israel and Mauritania established diplomatic relations in 1999 but

Mauritania cut ties in 2008 due to that year's Gaza war.

Israel and Somalia have never had diplomatic ties, but over the past year, reports have emerged that the country's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is

interested in establishing them. Jerusalem is particularly interested due to Somalia's strategic location between the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean at the entrance to the Red Sea.

Israel has never had official diplomatic relations with Niger either, and those that did exist unofficially suffered during the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 2000-05 Second Intifada.

Niger is a global supplier of uranium and ties to Israel might prevent the sale of the material to hostile countries and reduce



MK Avi Dichter, now minister of agriculture, and then-MK Nira Shpak attend the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Nusa Dua, Indonesia. | Photo: JNS

the number of nations voting against Israel in international forums.

Cohen is also working to normalise ties with Indonesia, which with a population of around 280 million is the most populous Muslim country in the world. Although Jakarta does not have official diplomatic ties with Jerusalem, there have been unofficial connections in trade, technology and tourism.

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# What's Worse: Threats by Smotrich or Amnesty International?

■ Jonathan S Tobin

**The Israeli finance minister's call for wiping out Huwara was abhorrent, but so is the so-called 'human rights' group's demand for the mass expulsion of Jews from their homes.**

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich does not appear to be ready for prime time. Last week, he 'clarified' public remarks saying that the Arab village of Huwara—site of the terrorist slaying of two young Israeli men as well as a host of other attacks on Jews—should be 'wiped out.' But he brought down on himself and the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the kind of opprobrium that served to further undermine it at a moment when they were already facing intolerable pressure from the opposition and the international community over efforts to enact judicial reform.

Smotrich now claims that the comment wasn't intended to suggest "erasing the village". Instead, he said it was a call "to act in a focused manner against terrorists and supporters of terrorism within it and to exact a heavy price from them in order to restore security to the residents of the area."

Had he merely said that in the first place, the comment wouldn't have generated headlines around the world, as well as condemnations from Israel's opposition parties, the US State Department and many American Jews. Smotrich is still planning on coming to the United States this week. But thanks to this controversy, the chilly reception he was already likely to get is probably now going to be even colder.

His statement played right into the hands of those who believe that the government he helped form is neither responsible nor able to deal with the complex problems the country faces. Expressing such repugnant sentiments at a time when many Israelis are justifiably enraged about the recent surge in terrorist murders may help Smotrich compete with Minister of Public Security Itamar Ben-Gvir—his electoral partner and rival for the affection of the Israeli right. But they also demonstrate that Smotrich doesn't seem to understand that along with responsibilities and power, the challenge of high office involves showing that he's capable of evolving from a right-wing provocateur into something like a statesman who works for the good of the country and all who live in it. To have spoken in that matter strengthens the argument that he simply is undeserving of a senior cabinet post, let alone the respect of his fellow citizens.

**Amnesty and others, including some who say they accept the legitimacy of Israel in the pre-1967 armistice lines, believe that all Jewish communities in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria are illegal settlements.**

Still, what's interesting about the furore stirred up by Smotrich is that it helped obscure some other outrageous stands about recent events, including one by Amnesty International. Many on the intersectional and anti-Zionist left reacted to the terror attacks and then the subsequent riot in which a group of Jews rampaged through Huwara setting fires, damaging property and fighting with local Arabs with a predictable lack of interest in the murder of Israelis. None, however, was more outrageous than the assertion by the group still considered by many to be a prestigious and reliable advocate for human rights around the world.

Amnesty's statement on the Huwara riot made no reference to the terror attack that preceded it or to the many other brutal incidents Jews have been subjected to while traveling on a highway that passes the town. Instead, they focus only on the issue of 'settler' violence against Arabs. While any crimes committed by Jews who live in Judea and Samaria



| Photo: Shutterstock

against Palestinian Arabs should be punished, the narrative about the subject is distorted because incidents of Arab violence far outnumber those of Jewish attacks.

The riot in Huwara—and statements like those of Smotrich, which seemed to justify it—was wrong, and the perpetrators should be held accountable for it. Yet even if every rioter were prosecuted and jailed, that wouldn't be enough for Amnesty. While it deplores some of Israel's efforts to punish and deter terrorism, such as blowing up the homes of the families of terrorists, as 'collective punishment,' it thinks that the only proper punishment for the damage done in Huwara is to expel every Jew living in Judea and Samaria from their homes.

That would involve the uprooting of nearly 500,000 people from towns and villages they have lived in for decades. And, since groups like Amnesty consider those parts of Jerusalem that were illegally occupied by Jordan from 1949 to 1967 as no different from the most remote hilltop settlement in what they call the West Bank, the logic of Amnesty's demand would also involve the expulsion of approximately 250,000 Jews from their homes in various neighbourhoods that have been built since 1967, in addition to those who live in the Old City.

Amnesty and others, including some who say they accept

To note this is not 'whataboutism.' Amnesty is already one of the principal authors of the 'apartheid Israel' smear, a big lie rooted in antisemitism and hatred. But for Amnesty, and others in the 'human rights' sector, Jews have no rights. That is the reason why they view the destruction of the homes of several hundred thousand people, including schools and synagogues in places where Jews have lived for millennia, as 'justice.'

If any Israeli or Jew were to suggest depopulating Arab villages and towns and expelling that many Palestinians, Amnesty would be labelling them racists who should be treated as pariahs. But say the same about Jews, and you can be considered an 'anti-racist' or advocate for human rights. That's also why they treat Palestinian terrorist murders as merely a case of Jews getting their just desserts instead of crimes against humanity.

So, perhaps it is understandable that while Smotrich is roasted, Amnesty's call for the mass expulsion of Jews in response to Huwara was ignored.

None of this should get Smotrich off the hook.

The results of the November Knesset election gave him the opportunity to recreate himself as a major figure in Israeli politics. But for this arrangement to work out in the long run, it was also going to have to mean that his behaviour was going to have to change along with their job titles. That meant acting like an adult government minister with real power—and not as if he was still operating on the margins of Israeli political life and the subject of investigations from a security establishment that still views him with suspicion.

By diving into the Huwara mess in the worst possible way, Smotrich demonstrated more than a dark side to his personality. It showed that he has not yet started thinking like someone who sees the big picture the way Netanyahu or anyone who aspires to lead the country should.

Still, those who are preparing to boycott him should ask themselves how they would behave towards Arabs or other opponents of Israel with their own records of inflammatory statements. Those calling for the State Department to deny him a visa to enter the United States are not just overreacting to a terrible statement. If they don't similarly oppose visas for Palestinians or Iranians or anyone else who calls for Israel's elimination, then they aren't just hypocrites; they're enablers of antisemitism. If you see no problem with hosting members of Israeli Arab parties that are anti-Zionist or Islamist or those who share Amnesty's desire to make the West Bank judenrein, then don't pretend you stand on the moral high ground in relation to Smotrich.

*Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS (Jewish News Syndicate). Originally published at [www.jns.org](http://www.jns.org). Republished with permission.*



# Israel Bombed Without Footprints?

## ■ Bradley Martin

The Shin Bet and Israel Defense Forces suspect that the Palestinian terrorist Israeli forces shot and killed on 13 March after he planted a roadside bomb, which seriously wounded a man from the Israeli Arab village of Salem, was working for Hezbollah.

Days later, it is known that the attacker infiltrated northern Israel from Lebanon, where he was attempting to return when forces neutralized him. Whether he has a connection with Hezbollah remains to be seen.

“Whoever is responsible for the attack will pay for it. We will find the right place, the correct way and hit back,” said Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

As the investigation continues, the unusual nature of the attack is a cause for concern, counter-terrorism experts told *JNS*. “The fact that a terrorist was able to infiltrate into Israel from Lebanon is itself disconcerting, whichever group proves responsible for the plot,” Matthew Levitt, a fellow and director of the programme on counter-terrorism and intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy think tank told *JNS*. “If it does prove to be true that Hezbollah was involved, this would mark a serious escalation in the group’s efforts to find ways to attack Israel in ways the group calculates limit the likelihood of large-scale reprisals,” he said.

Jonathan Schanzer, senior vice president for research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a nonpartisan, national security and foreign-policy research institute, agreed. “If this attack was ordered and executed by Hezbollah, Israel will understandably need to respond,” Schanzer told *JNS*. “However, there are complications in doing so. For one, tensions are already high in the West Bank, and the last thing Israel needs is a two-front conflict.”

Hezbollah’s stockpiling of lethal precision-guided munitions makes the potential for conflict more daunting, he added. “The timing is connected.”

To Israeli counter-terrorism experts, the fact that



Israel Defense Force soldiers guard on the border between Lebanon and Israel on 15 March 2023. | Photo: Flash90

Hezbollah—a terror group that is backed and funded by Iran—has not claimed responsibility for the bombing compounds the already complicated situation.

“The modus operandi of this attack is confusing,” Liram Koblenz-Stenzler, senior researcher and head of the global far-right extremism desk at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) in Israel and a visiting fellow at Yale University, told *JNS*.

“Since the Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah has not conducted an attack inside of Israel,” she said, referring to the nearly two-month conflict in the summer of 2006. “The fact that Hezbollah may have been involved in an attack without leaving a footprint is very worrisome.”

Koblenz-Stenzler’s colleague Michael Barak, head of the ICT’s Palestinian and global jihad research desk, told *JNS* that there are clear signs that Hezbollah was at least involved in the attack.

“I believe that this penetration was with the affirmation

of Hezbollah,” he said. “We know that a Palestinian from Lebanon went to Megiddo to conduct the attack and that Hezbollah established a joint warfare room to launch attacks on Israel.”

The explosive used in the attack wasn’t custom-made in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, according to Barak. Hezbollah has been increasing coordination with other terrorist groups, such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas, according to Arabic media reports.

“The timing in this attack is also connected,” added Barak, to Ramadan—the Muslim holy month that begins on 21 March.

“The hope may be to provoke Israeli Arabs and Palestinians to cause unrest,” he said. “With the ongoing civil unrest in the West Bank and internal legal reforms, Hezbollah may see this as a perfect opportunity to cause chaos.”

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# “Auf Wiedersehen,” Roger Waters?

## ■ Ben Cohen

Once upon a time, Roger Waters was a hero in Germany. In July 1990, a few months after the razing of the Berlin Wall, the former Pink Floyd frontman performed the group’s 1979 album *The Wall* on the Potsdamer Platz in the newly reunified city. As the gig came to a close with the collapse of the giant wall backdrop behind the singer that was accompanied by the words “tear down the wall,” the crowd erupted in appreciation, handing Waters yet another iconic rock-star moment.

How differently things look a little more than 30 years later. Now 79, Waters is embarking on his *This Is Not a Drill 2023* tour in dramatically different circumstances, widely reviled in Germany and other countries for his constant spouting of antisemitic conspiracy theories, his detestation of the State of Israel, and his knuckleheaded apologia of Russian dictator Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. These days, the question is less about where and when Waters will play and more about whether he will be permitted to play at all.

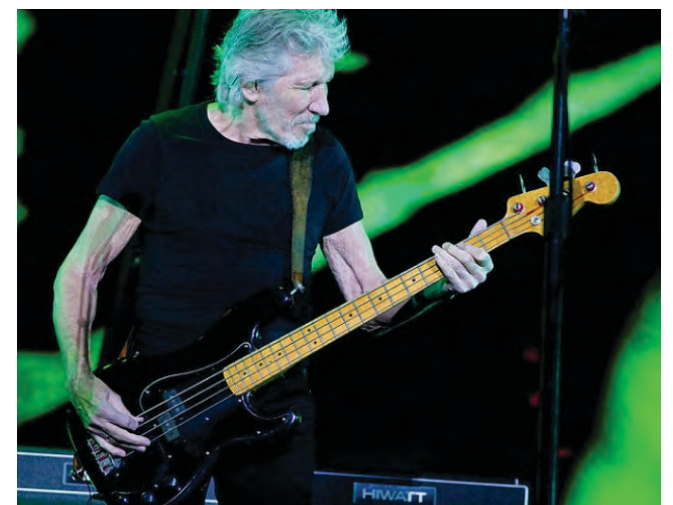
Waters will doubtlessly be spouting plenty of nonsense between numbers during his tour, and he will likely make use of the offensive symbols that have appeared on previous tours, such as an inflatable flying pig embossed with a Star of David. This sort of imagery sails close to the edge in most European countries. It remains

especially so in Germany, the land of the Holocaust, where in the postwar era, Nazi symbols, Holocaust denial, Holocaust mockery and demands for Israel’s elimination as a sovereign state can run afoul of the law.

Indeed, those politicians advocating for Waters’ dates in Germany to be cancelled as a protest against his antisemitism and his affinity for Putin have repeatedly referred to the country’s democratic constitution in making their case, as well as the corresponding moral values arising from Germany’s rebirth as a liberal democratic polity. Last month, the municipal council in Frankfurt announced the cancellation of Waters’ 28 May concert at the city’s Festhalle venue, citing his status as one of the world’s “best-known antisemites” as the reason. Similar moves are afoot in Munich, Cologne, Hamburg and Berlin, where Waters is also scheduled to appear.

Given that there are two months to go before the German dates are intended to take place, it remains distinctly possible that Waters will lose one or more of the four cities still hosting him. The challenge for local politicians is whether they can convert their frequently expressed horror of resurgent antisemitism into concrete action.

An outright ban on Waters would send the message that Germany is serious about tackling antisemitism beyond mere rhetoric. Yet that is by no means a perfect solution because it does not engage the minds of the legions of fans who are sufficiently unconcerned by Waters’s antics



to spend a three-figure sum on a ticket for one of his gigs.

If the gigs do go ahead, Jewish and anti-racist groups in Germany have pledged massive demonstrations outside the stadiums. These will provide an opportunity to explain why Waters is such a toxic proposition to the masses in attendance. The degree to which they pay heed to this message will give us valuable insight into whether ordinary Germans take antisemitism as seriously as their politicians seem to do.

Ben Cohen is a New York City-based journalist and author who writes a weekly column on Jewish and international affairs for *JNS*. Originally published at [www.jns.org](http://www.jns.org). Republished with permission.



## What preceded the founding of Israel—Part 2

# Hebron: the Primary Anchor of Jewish Rights in Israel

■ **Wim Kortenoeven**

Author, Journalist and Former Politician

The 75th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel, which was immediately attacked by its neighbours, will soon be commemorated. However, the Arab war against the Jews in the land of Palestine (the Land of Israel) had already begun in 1920. That fact, and especially the bloody pogrom that destroyed the centuries-old Jewish community of Hebron in 1929, illustrates that the Arab-Jewish conflict in the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River has nothing to do with the 'Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory'.



The Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. | Photo: Shutterstock



The Jewish shrine of the Machpela in Hebron was converted into a mosque by the Muslims. Pictured is one of the minarets. | Photo: Wim Kortenoeven

About 3,700 years ago, Abraham purchased a piece of land with a cavern on it in Hebron to bury his late wife, Sara. The deed of purchase and conveyance of what can be called the world's oldest piece of Jewish real estate is recorded in detail in *Genesis 23*. The cavern of Machpelah also became the final resting place of Abraham himself and later of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Ownership of this 'national mausoleum' was never waived by the Jewish people or the State of Israel. It is the now almost four millennia-old anchor of Jewish rights in and claims to the Land of Israel.

### Temple Mount

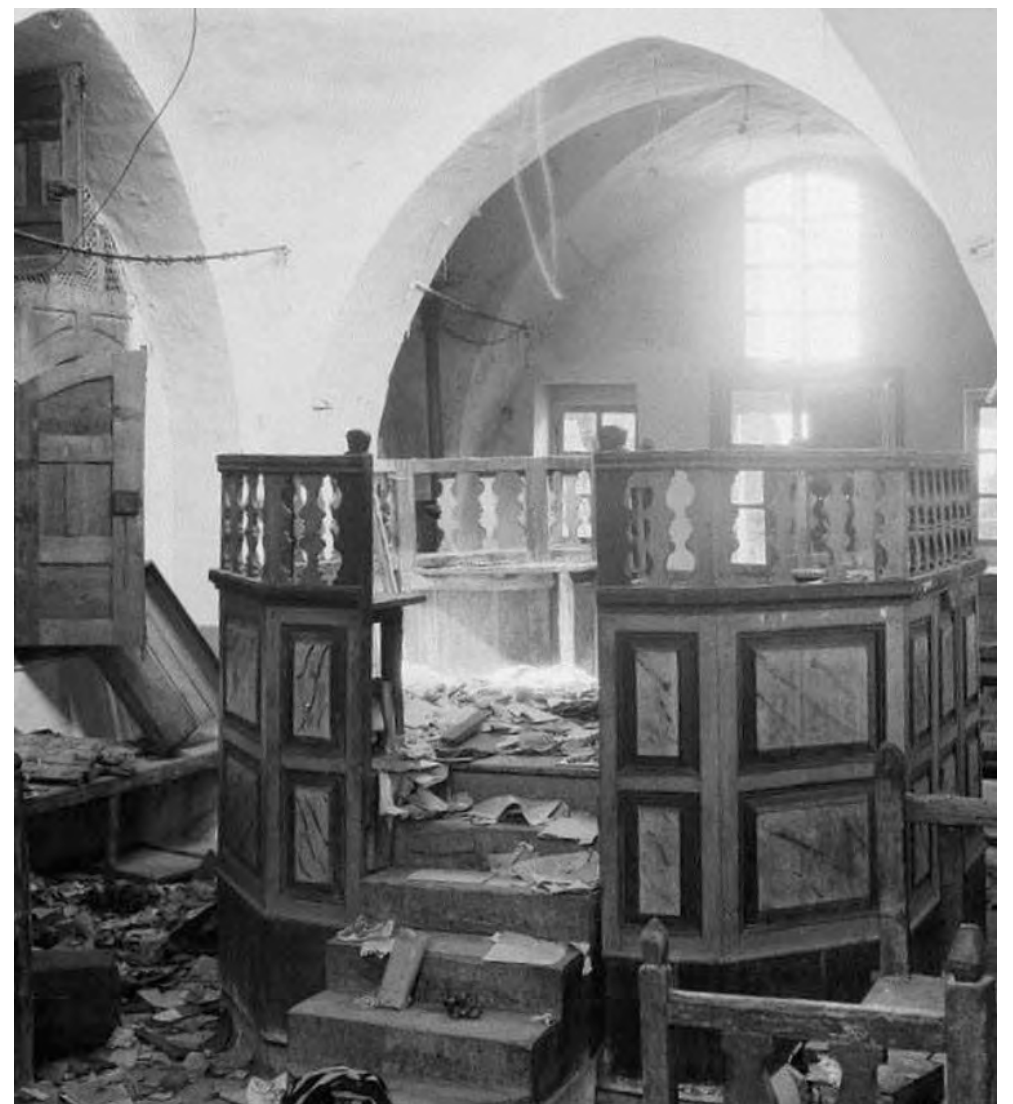
Hebron also plays a central role in the history of the first Jewish state. David was anointed king of Judah there and ruled for over seven years; until Jerusalem was conquered by him and went on to serve as the capital of the united kingdom of the tribes of Israel. That was in the year 1004 BC. David followed the example of Abraham when he formally purchased the hilltop where the Jewish temple was to be built instead of accepting it as a gift. Therefore, even the Temple Mount is inalienable Jewish real estate.

### The Seventh Tree

A thousand years after David, King Herod had 'the cave of the Patriarchs' in Hebron surrounded by an immense structure, which has stood the test of time to this day. In Byzantine times, the Jewish sanctuary was converted into a church and, after the Islamic conquest of the area, into a mosque. Jews were systematically denied access to the Machpela cavern by Christian and Islamic rulers. The last (Islamic) decree dated from 1267 stipulated that Jews were allowed to approach the sanctuary up to the seventh step of the ascent to it. This restriction remained in place until the Israeli conquest of the city during the Six-Day War (1967), which brought the entire cradle of Jewish civilisation (the Biblical heartland; others speak of 'West Bank') back into Jewish hands. It is, of course, baffling that the international community demands that Israel renounce those very territories, including Hebron and Jerusalem, to allow a Palestinian-Arab state to be established there.

### Ethnically Recognised Jewish Claims

Indeed, the Jewish people have territorial claims based on historical rights throughout the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. This was first recognised internationally in British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur Balfour's declaration, issued to British Zionist foreman Lord Walter Rothschild on 2 November 1917.



The Abraham Avinu Synagogue in Hebron was looted in the Arab riots of 1929, destroyed by the Jordanians after 1948 and rebuilt by Israel in 1977. | Photo: Wikipedia



At the time, Britain was at war with the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled ‘Palestine’ since 1517. In 1918, the Turks were expelled by the British, and as part of the peace settlement, Britain was granted the mandate over the area by the League of Nations in 1921. Central to this was implementing the Balfour Declaration: creating a Jewish national home and promoting large-scale Jewish emigration to that area.

**Jews were supposed to behave like dhimmi: in utter subjugation to Muslims and were immune from arbitrary violence only after paying a special protection tax.**

The League of Nations did not create a right but recognised an existing right based on the Jewish people’s historical connection to their own land, where Jews have always lived despite expulsions and oppression. By 1864, for instance, more than eighty years before the founding of the State of Israel, the absolute majority of Jerusalem’s population was Jewish. We are then talking about ‘East’ Jerusalem, the intended capital of a Palestinian state. West Jerusalem did not exist then at all.

Demographic Developments

Under the Ottoman rule, relations between Arabs and the small Jewish communities in the area had been mostly peaceful. The second part of the 19th century saw waves of Jewish emigration to Palestine, mainly from Eastern Europe, where the Jewish population suffered from violent antisemitism. During the same period, the European superpowers, Britain, France, Germany and Russia, infiltrated the long-dormant and desolate region on a large scale. The Turkish sultan was unable to resist this.

Increased European and Jewish economic activity in the very sparsely populated region raised living standards, created jobs and, as a result, attracted Muslims from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. British historian James Parkes wrote: “Some villages were populated entirely by settlers from other parts of the nineteenth-century Turkish Empire. There are villages with Bosnians, Druze, Circassians and Egyptians.” In his book Heth and Moab (1883), British colonel CR Conder noted that the population of Palestine was “constantly refreshed by the tribes of the Arabian desert, with colonies of Turks, Circassians, Kurds and others planted among them”. Thus, an artificial Palestinian-’Arab’ people were created (*compare Deuteronomy 32:21*).

Dhimmi

After the forced departure of the Ottoman administration, friction soon arose between the various Muslim and Jewish populations in ‘West Palestine’. In March 1920, even before the mandated order had been issued to London, anti-Jewish violence broke out in several places. These were instigated by the radical Muslim leader Mohammed Amin-al-Husseini. The violence would swell and continue in waves until the 1948 war.

When Husseini began his incitement campaign against the Jews in 1920, he was playing on long-held views about the place of Jews in Islamic society. A dominant Jewish role was unthinkable - and something like a Jewish state even more so. Jews were supposed to behave like dhimmi: in utter subjugation to Muslims and were immune from arbitrary violence only after paying a special protection tax. Increasing Jewish immigration, however, jeopardised those old relationships.

Hebron

During the wave of violence in August 1929, 133 Jews were killed and 339 injured. Over eight thousand Jews were driven from their homes, including all surviving residents of Hebron’s Jewish quarter. And during the 1948-1949 War of Independence, dozens of Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza were destroyed, even those from Jerusalem’s Old City. But the Jewish right to those ‘anchors’ was never given up. After the Six-Day War in 1967, many Biblical sites were rebuilt, including the Jewish quarters of Jerusalem and Hebron. Much to the dismay of the international community, which annually passes UN resolutions on the subject on the basis of which the Jews would have to leave again.



All Jews who had survived the 1929 Hebron massacre were evacuated to Jerusalem. | Photo: Wikipedia



Grand Mufti Amin-al-Husseini was the driving force behind the violence against the Jews. | Photo: GPO



An Israeli soldier guards the Jewish quarter in Hebron. | Photo: Shutterstock



# Israel in Rwanda and Kenya

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

“An answering of prayers” is what the pastors’ conference in Rwanda can be described as. The sisters of the Bethany Deaconesses have been praying for years that the Biblical message about God’s plan with Israel may also resonate in the churches in Rwanda. As a result the President of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda invited us to Rwanda. Over 130 pastors attended the conference in the capital city of Kigali. Rev Frank Heikoop, chairman of Christians for Israel in the Netherlands, and myself, provided the lectures and Bible studies. “This was an eye-opener for me” was surely the most heard comment in the corridors of the conference. All pastors were given a copy of the book *‘Why Israel’*, either in French or English. The Presbyterian Church is the second largest

denomination in Rwanda, after the RK Church, with over 300,000 members. The following day, we visited 43 sisters of the Bethany Deaconesses on the other side of the country. We spent over three hours together studying the Bible on Israel, and more than an hour was needed to answer their many questions.

We then travelled to Kenya. For over a year, I kept close contact with the secretary-general of the Reformed Churches East Africa. Now the time has come to visit Kenya and meet the pastors on the topic of Israel. In Kenya, too, there is enormous interest in solid Bible study on the continuing significance of Israel. Almost all 160 pastors of this denomination had travelled from all over the country to the city of Eldoret. For some, this was a long day’s journey by public transport. For two days, we did Bible study together. The reactions were

heartwarming: “You have given me a new perspective on Israel.” Someone else said, “I always thought the Jews were cursed.” Some also asked, “What can you do for us to teach our students about Israel?” The secretary-general, in an after-conversation, told us, “You are a trustworthy organisation because you take the Word of God very seriously, and that is important for us.”

It strikes me every time, both in Africa and Asia, that these Christians are not burdened with an age-old legacy of criticism of Jews and Israel. In Europe, criticism and aversion to Jews and Israel is almost in our genes. But outside Europe, people are much more open-minded, and the authority of the Bible prevails.

Both in Rwanda and Kenya, the church leadership expressed their intention to continue cooperating with us in the field of training and education. | Photos: C4I



Kenya



Rwanda



Kenya



Rwanda

# Great Opportunities in Uganda

**■ Jos van Westing**  
Christians for Israel The Netherlands

Early this year it seemed that there would be no chance to join the ‘Israel Conference’ in Kampala, Uganda, because the disease Ebola was dominantly present in that area. But in the middle of that radiant and joyful annual conference in Africa, the country was confirmed ‘yellow’, and people from abroad were allowed in.

I made a last-minute booking and travelled to Uganda, where I was gratefully welcomed by members of the Christians for Israel Uganda team, Sarah and Asher, and Victor of the VOSO Gilgal Church. On behalf of

Christians for Israel International, I was able to teach during the five remaining days of the conference about God’s love for Israel and His plans for Israel, the Church, and the nations.

**Life Broadcast**

Everything happening in the world today has been foretold by the Lord Jesus and the prophets. We can therefore put the Bible next to, (or rather on top of), the newspaper! As a result of the contacts we have established in previous years, we were also invited to share the message about Israel during a live broadcast on Light House Television. The TV station is reaching all countries in the eastern part of Africa.

**Grateful**

Another opportunity came when I was asked to teach at Life Line Ministries. This ministry has more than a hundred congregations spread all over Uganda. Founder and president is Bishop Julius Oyet, a charismatic leader with a vision for Israel, who has become a good friend over the years. Bishop Oyet will organise a huge ‘Israel Conference’ in central Uganda later this year, where many pastors are expected to attend. We are so grateful for the opportunity to spread the message about God’s chosen people, the apple of His eye, and the Promised Land in Uganda, a mainly Christian nation. To Him be all the glory!





# Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine

## *The Fall-out from British Betrayal of the Mandate—Part 5*

■ **Hugh Kitson**

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

**The White Paper of 1939 was effectively an abrogation of the British Mandate for Palestine.**

In a fierce debate in the House of Commons, Winston Churchill, who a year later became Prime Minister, vehemently opposed the White Paper. Denouncing the British government he famously said: “Now there is the breach. There is the violation of the pledge. There is the abandonment of the Balfour Declaration. There is the end of the vision, of the hope, of the dream.”<sup>1</sup>

### Appeasement Bought with Jewish Blood

It was also a death sentence for an innumerable number of Jewish people trapped in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The late Professor Shalom Lindenbaum, an Auschwitz survivor who was later imprisoned by the British in both Atlit (in Israel) and Cyprus, described the 1939 White Paper as a “political appeasement that was paid [for] with the blood of the Jewish people.” He went on to express what many Jewish people who lived through that period and survived the Holocaust felt: “By preventing Jews from escaping Europe—for them to arrive here [in Israel] and not take them in—this was real co-operation with Hitler!”<sup>2</sup>

### Churchill: Jews in Palestine by Right

When he was Colonial Secretary with the responsibility of implementing the Mandate for Palestine in the early 1920s, Winston Churchill had stated emphatically that the Jews were in Palestine “as of right, and not on sufferance” (1922 *White Paper*).

But from the mid-1930s onwards, the British Government treated the Jews of Palestine as if they were there on sufferance, and not by right.

### Records of the San Remo Conference Buried

While it is absolutely true that without Great Britain there would be no State of Israel today, the British betrayal of the Mandate, and the Jewish people in their hour of need, was not just a moral failure which the British establishment has refused to acknowledge, but a legal one too.

The British Government, and especially the Foreign Office, have gone to great lengths to cover up this failure. The official records of the San Remo Conference were buried deep in the National Archives and were only discovered in the mid-1980s by a Jewish.

### Canadian Lawyer, the Late Howard Grief

Much of the truth of what really happened in the Mandate era has only come to light in recent decades.

The truth is that Britain violated the terms of the Mandate on almost every single level. Sadly, in the end, the Jewish nation was born in spite of Britain, rather than because of us.

### The Exodus Incident

The Labour Government that followed Churchill’s electoral defeat in 1945 became politically opposed to the emergence of a Jewish state at any cost, and actively set about trying to thwart such a possibility.

The Royal Navy blockade against Holocaust survivors trying to get to their ancestral homeland—nearly all of them penniless refugees who had lost all of their family members and had nowhere else to go—is just one example. Not only was it an act of extreme cruelty that



Passengers on the Haganah Ship *Exodus* forced to return. | Photo: History Central

caused the drowning of some 3,000 Jewish people at sea, but it was a flagrant violation of the terms of the Mandate. The *Exodus* incident in 1947 exposed their plight for a horrified world to see.

As the likelihood of a Jewish state being declared increased—especially after the *Exodus* incident and the 1947 Partition Plan was passed by the UN General Assembly—the British Government’s policy was to keep the Jewish community in Palestine unarmed, while at the same time arming and training both the Egyptian army and the Jordanian army (*the Arab Legion*).

### A Call to Annihilate the Jews of Palestine

The British Government did this knowing full well that the Arab League nations had declared ‘*jihad*’ against the emerging Jewish nation—which was nothing less than a call to annihilate the Jews of Palestine. After David Ben-Gurion’s declaration of independence, the Arab Legion attack on the newborn Jewish state was led by a serving British Army General, Sir John Bagot Glubb—otherwise known as ‘Glubb Pasha’.

Personally, I believe that it was only the hand of Almighty God that prevented another genocide of Jews just three years after the end of the Holocaust. But quite apart from the moral questions surrounding the actions of the British, there are also legal questions to consider.

### Arab Invasion Illegal

After World War Two, the United Nations was formed in 1945 to replace the League of Nations. The UN Founding Charter is itself an international treaty, and any nation joining the UN commits itself to be bound by that Charter. In other words, the UN Charter itself is part of ‘international law’.

Article 2 of the UN Charter forbids the invasion of a sovereign nation and the seizure of its territory. Andrew Tucker, an international lawyer who is Director of The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.), puts this legal perspective on Israel’s War of Independence: “There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the State of Israel existed as a matter of law and fact on 14th May 1948. Those Arab nations attacked a state that existed under international law. I think it’s really arguable that

Great Britain was fundamentally itself in breach of the UN Charter by being involved in the attack on Israel.”<sup>3</sup>

### Continued British Denial of the Truth

Today in Britain, if one writes to one’s Member of Parliament—or even the Foreign Secretary—about Israel’s historic and biblical rights in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, the letter will be passed on to the Foreign Office. A standard reply usually comes back stating that Israelis do not have the right of domicile in any part of what the Foreign Office has regarded as ‘*occupied Palestinian territory*’ since the Six-Day War of 1967.

Basically, the British Government, which calls itself ‘*a friend of Israel*’, has turned the legal rights of Israel and the Jewish people on their head. Britain’s cover-up of its continued violations of international law, both during its conduct of the Mandate and since, has had a devastating effect on the wellbeing of the Jewish state, as well as prolonging the conflict between Israel and the people who are today known as ‘*the Palestinians*’.

I would go so far as to say that Britain’s position has actually exacerbated the suffering of the people known as the ‘*Palestinians*’ by its support of the tyrannical regime of its leaders. Quite simply those leaders are not interested in living in peace beside Israel. They want nothing other than the destruction of the Jewish state.

### So What Relevance does the Mandate Have Today?

So, what bearing does the Mandate have on the legal rights of the Jewish people today? International lawyer Dr Cynthia Day Wallace explains: “Article 80 of the UN Charter assumes the powers given to the League of Nations, so that anything that was decided under the League of Nations, such as the San Remo Resolution, such as the Mandate of Palestine, are still legally binding under the UN Charter.”<sup>4</sup>

International human rights lawyer Dr Jacques Gauthier emphasises this still further: “Article 80 of the UN Charter, which is an international treaty, which is a source of rights and obligations, specifies that all of the rights given to any people prior to the execution and ratification of the UN Charter are to be protected, observed and honoured.”<sup>5</sup>

*Continued on page 3*



# Israel is on Trial in the UN— Is there a Case for the Defence?

■ **Andrew Tucker & Gregory Rose**

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

In May this year, many Jews and their friends will celebrate the 75th birthday of the State of Israel. The Jewish State has been violently opposed for over a century, since before it was a physical reality, even back when it was still a political idea. Today, continuing attacks on that political idea are taking the form of lawfare. Informed responses, formulated through war rooms or workshops, such as described at the foot of this article, are needed with increasing urgency.

## Ideological Attacks

What is lawfare? First, it is not kinetic war. The Jewish homeland has survived over a century of riots and terrorism, the 1948, 1967 and 1973 Arab wars for its destruction, and the continuous attrition campaign of armed attacks conducted by Palestinian militants. Israel has responded successfully to these kinetic warfare tactics by growing militarily stronger to become a regional power.

Second, it is ideological. Attacks on Israel—reckoned by numbers of people over time—are principally against the very idea of the Jewish homeland rather than physical attacks. Consistent ideological themes include denial of Jewish indigenous identity and history, incitement to protect the Al Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, antisemitism (particularly Jewish conspiracy), and glorification of martyrdom while fighting Jews. Muftis have deployed antisemitism to incite Arabs since murderous riots in 1920 before the Jewish State existed.

Despite their enduring themes, ideological attack strategies evolve in a comparable way to military tactics and equipment, taking advantage of time and place. Political campaigning against the British Mandate to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine shifted in the second half of the 20th century to campaigns against the Jewish State of Israel within a diverse array of contemporary UN and other international organisations.

**When faced with situations where the technical rules are poorly defined and the situation highly political, judges act with pragmatism, which typically requires serving the political master. Breach of judicial rulings can be characterised as lawbreaking. Lawfare is a winning strategy.**

The British took their cricket bat home without fulfilling the Mandate in 1948. The United Nations condemned Zionism as racism in 1975. The European Union adopted the 1980 Venice Declaration on Palestinian statehood and suspended activities under its Association Agreement with Israel in 2013. The African Union ejected Israeli observers in 2023. In the ideological battle space, international attacks against Israel are usually successful.

## Lawfare

Today, lawfare is the predominant form of ideological battle. It is conducted through legal machinery, deploying legal tactics that misuse international law by applying it in extraordinary ways other than that for which it was intended or designed.

For example, a Hamas lawfare tactic is to deliberately place civilians in harm's way in armed conflict to leverage in its favour laws intended to limit the battlefield suffering of civilians. The Israeli military targeted by this lawfare tactic must either harm the innocent or abort combat. Either way, the lawfare tactic works: to win an ideological victory against the Israeli military for its alleged deliberate war crimes or to block it from battle.

Of course, placing civilians in harm's way undermines the



Flags of all nations outside the UN in New York City. | Photo: Shutterstock

purpose and intent of international humanitarian laws by deliberately risking or causing harm to the innocent. The lawfare tactic undermines the integrity of the legal system that it leverages.

This undermining of the purpose of the manipulated law is a feature of lawfare that occurs beyond humanitarian law. For example, when international civil law is leveraged to draw a court into political matters outside of its intended trade treaty framework, that court strays beyond its legal authority. Consequently, its mandate is seen as politicised, undermining its own integrity as a fair and neutral arbiter.

In the 21st century, the major battleground for ideological attacks on Israel is now within international judicial institutions, such as the International Criminal Court. Due to globalisation, international regulatory and dispute resolution systems have proliferated. The pervasiveness of interstate laws and institutions offers

multiple opportunities for lawfare. If courts can be tempted into political disputes, they offer multiple and excellent quality opportunities for ideological gain.

Many judges on international tribunals seize opportunities to decide lawfare cases. Those who have spent a lifetime analysing and articulating the law are disinclined to surrender an opportunity to actually apply it. The universal human will to power is shared by ambitious judges and motivates them to have an immediate impact on the world. Among international law practitioners, it is a truism that contemporary tribunals never decline jurisdiction over a case. They instead compete for them.

Moreover, judges carry authority and their decisions articulate law. When faced with situations where the technical rules are poorly defined and the situation highly political, judges act with pragmatism, which typically requires serving the political master. Breach of judicial rulings can be characterised as lawbreaking. Lawfare is a winning strategy.

Unfortunately, this has negative consequences for the rule of law and for respect for judicial institutions. Judges accepting jurisdiction over non-justiciable international

security matters undermine the proper purpose of the laws that they apply. In the long term, they undermine respect for the broader rule of law. Ultimately, their own court will be repeatedly misused, and they become complicit in its abuse.

## Lawfare Against Israel

The UN's highest judicial institution, the International Court of Justice in the Hague (ICJ), can be relied upon to serve the UN General Assembly (UNGA) pragmatically, subordinating its own independence. Its misuse of its advisory jurisdiction for lawfare undermines the rule of international law, a perverse outcome.

On 8 December 2003, the UNGA requested the ICJ to provide advice on the illegality of the wall and fence that Israel was building along and within the West Bank/Judea and Samaria. On 9 July 2004, the court obliged.

Having already obliged once, the ICJ was inevitably called upon again by the UNGA on 9 January 2023 to advise on the “ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures” as well as to give advice as to how these Israeli practices “affect the legal status of the occupation” and advice as to what are the “legal consequences that arise for third parties from this status”.

It is apparent that the UNGA had already characterised the matters on which it requested advice as illegal violations. These allegations are clearly political questions inappropriately laid before a court of law, where they should be non-justiciable: self-determination, demographic change, holy cities, self-defence, disputed territory, occupation and so forth. Furthermore, the UNGA is aiming for sanctions to be imposed by UN members (‘third parties’, rather than by the Security Council, as in 2003-4) in the form of diplomatic, trade and investment boycotts.

*Gregory Rose is the Director of Research at thinc. and Professor of law at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Andrew Tucker, Director of thinc. and International Adviser, Christians for Israel International.*

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# Teach Them To Your Children

■ Greg Cumming  
The Torah Portion | [www.thetorahportion.org](http://www.thetorahportion.org)

“Tell us a story Grandpa.”

I have seven beautiful grandchildren—six handsome grandsons and one stunning granddaughter. I love them with all my heart.

We chat all the time we are together—when we go camping and fishing and build go-karts or collect insects or have a cup of tea in plastic cups or eat popcorn watching Mr Bean—but the thing I love to hear the most is when we sit down for our Friday night *Shabbat* meal and they say “Tell us a story Grandpa.”

And by story they mean a Bible story.

I will invariably launch into a child-friendly story from the current week’s *Torah* portion.

I keep the story pretty exciting; I use my hands, I use objects like the salt shaker, or my drink glass, and I keep the story moving along by asking lots of questions.

My last story involved me using the *challah* bread and a sharp knife. I said, “Who knows what ‘*shinantam*’ means?” No one knew, so I took my knife in one hand and with the other I held the bread on my plate and began to cut off a slice. It was good *challah*—a bit tough—so the knife only went about a quarter of the way through on the first pass.

By this time all the little eyes were on the knife. As I made this first cut I said “*Shinantam*’ means ‘teach them’. God says to “teach His commands to your children”. When God says ‘teach them’ He says ‘*shinantam*’.”

“But I want to tell you a little secret. ‘*Shinantam*’ doesn’t really mean teach them in the ordinary way. ‘*Shinantam*’ is like this knife cutting this bread. Did I cut through the bread with my first cut?”

“No” they all said.  
“Shall I try to cut some more?”  
“Yes” they all shouted. “Ok I will—but as I do I want you to say ‘*shinantam*’ with me.”

So I ran the knife through the bread a second time and we altogether said ‘*shinantam*’. But the bread was tough and we were still not quite through.

“Is the job done?” I asked.  
“No” they shouted laughing.

“That’s because God doesn’t want us to teach His commands just once to our children; because the job would not be done. They wouldn’t understand it.

Rather He wants us to keep teaching a second time, and a third time. I need to keep cutting this bread till the job is done.”

“What do you think? How many times should I keep teaching my children the commands of God?” “Till the job is done” they said. I have smart grandchildren.

“Alright then, let’s keep cutting this slice of *challah* but each time I have to make a cut, you have to say



‘*shinantam*.’” I made two more cuts to the accompaniment of the children saying the word ‘*shinantam*’ and finally the knife did its trick and ‘*voilà*’ we had a slice of bread—which was promptly shared and gobbled up. This is how the Lord tells us we are to teach our children the Word of God. ‘*Shinantam*.’

## Shinantam

*Deuteronomy 4:7* And you shall teach them (*shinantam*) to your sons... In Hebrew this verse is said ‘*V’shinantam l’vanecha*.’

The term ‘*shinantam*’ is an interesting term. What do you think ‘*shinantam*’ means? It isn’t the normal term used to describe teaching. In fact the root word of *shinantam* is ‘*shanan*’ which is a verb meaning to ‘*sharpen*’ something. Wherever else it appears in the Bible it is translated ‘*sharpen*’, because it is related to the word ‘*shen*’—tooth. This is the only verse in the Bible where it is translated ‘*teach*’.

That’s why the Rabbi Rashi says: “‘*Shinantam*’ is an expression of *sharpness*, meaning that these words should be sharply impressed in your mouth, so that if a person asks you something, you will not have to hesitate about answering him, but you will tell him immediately.”

– Rashi on *Deuteronomy 6:7*—The Rabbis grapple with the meaning of ‘*shinantam*’ in this verse. Rabbi Seforno believed that it meant to “teach your children with *sharp* explanations that explain matters intelligently.”

Rabbi Alshich believed that it meant that the words should “*penetrate* the listeners hearts like *sharp* arrows.”

Rav Hirsch believed that it meant that one must “imprint it in *short, sharp, concise* sentences.”

Brown-Driver-Briggs, translates it to “teach the words *incisively*” meaning that the teaching effectively *penetrates* the listener!

Rabbi Ibn Ezra refers to a “*sharp* arrow” but says that the root word ‘*shanan*’ (*sharpen*), derives from a completely different root word. ‘*Shanah*’ which means ‘*repeat*’ from which we get the word ‘*Mishnah*’—so *sharpening* is produced by the means of *repetitive* actions.

For example, instead of a sharp arrow piercing the listener, we are to focus on how the arrow is sharpened. A sharpening stone goes *back and forth* over the arrow point repeatedly to make it sharp.

In other words, the instruction technique of ‘*shinantam*’ means teaching by *repetition*. We’ve all heard the saying that “repetition is the key to learning.”

Rashi says that the doubling of the letter ‘*nun*’ in *v’shinantam* implies using multiple repetitions (at least three) until the matter is familiar to the listener.

Another interpretation explains ‘*shinantam*’ as a way of teaching that “incises or engraves by incessant recitation and explanation.”

Even our English versions attempt to explain a term that doesn’t actually say ‘teach’, by saying things like “teach them diligently to your children” (NKJV), “impress them on your children” (NIV), “get them inside your children” (Message), “repeat them again and again to your children” (NLT).

Are you getting the picture? ‘*Shinantam*’ doesn’t just mean ‘teach them’; ‘*shinantam*’ means a sharp, or piercing or repetitive type of teaching.

Can you think of where in the New Testament the Word of God is described in this way? You were right if you said *Hebrews 4:12*:

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 1

## Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine: The Fall-out from British Betrayal of the Mandate—Part 5 UN Security Council Resolution 2334

In December 2016 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2334 which stated, among other things, that the Jewish presence in Judea, Samaria and the Old City of Jerusalem was “a gross violation of international law.” This resolution, which was largely drafted by the British Foreign Office, was only passed because President Obama refused to exercise the United States’ power of veto. Andrew Tucker questions the UN verdict:

“Do they have a right to enforce their will in this? No they don’t! There is no other dispute in the world that is resolved by the United Nations without the consent of the parties. The whole of the United Nations structure in

international law is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of states.”<sup>6</sup>

Dr Wallace, a former legal advisor to the UN Secretariat in Geneva, puts another argument: “I believe that Resolution 2334 would be in breach of Article 80 of the UN Charter, if it were enforceable. But it’s not enforceable.” She goes on: “The United Nations is not a ‘*legal body*’—it is a political body. **The UN does not have the authority to make law**” (*emphasis added*).<sup>7</sup>

There are a number of other principles of international law that support Israel’s right to sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, which will be examined in Part 2 of ‘*Whose Land?*’ when we are in a position to complete it.

**In the final article of this series, we will examine the spiritual and prophetic significance of the San Remo**

## Resolution.

### References:

1. Hansard, 23 May 1939.
2. Interview with Professor Shalom Lindenbaum in ‘The Forsaken Promise’ (2006). Produced by Hugh Kitson for Hatikvah Film Trust.
3. Quoted from an interview segment in ‘Whose Land? Part 2’.
4. Quoted from interview segments in Episode 9 of ‘Whose Land? Part 1’, produced by Hugh Kitson.
5. Ibid.
- 6-7. See note 3.

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 fifth in a six-part series exploring the significance of the British Mandate for Palestine. Part 6, ‘The Spiritual and Prophetic Significance’, will follow. To contact Hugh Kitson, email: [hugh.kitson@titledeedmedia.com](mailto:hugh.kitson@titledeedmedia.com)



# Israel-Fiji Reaffirm Partnership

Israel and Fiji have reasserted their commitment to advance cooperation on issues of mutual priorities, such as UN peacekeeping operations, economic prosperity and sustainable development. Israel's support was conveyed on 10 February 2023 to the Prime Minister (PM) and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka at a courtesy call by the non-resident Ambassador of Israel to Fiji, His Excellency Mr Roi Rosenblit.

PM Rabuka welcomed Ambassador Rosenblit on his official visit to Fiji to discuss the potential areas of cooperation between the two nations.

At the meeting, Ambassador Rosenblit presented a congratulatory letter from the PM of the State of Israel, Honourable Benjamin Netanyahu, to PM Rabuka.

In his message, PM Netanyahu conveyed his sincere congratulations to PM Rabuka for the recent elections and wished him well in his role.

PM Netanyahu extended an invitation to PM Rabuka to visit Israel at a time convenient to him.

In response, PM Rabuka expressed the Coalition Government's, and the people of Fiji's, best wishes to PM Netanyahu and the people of Israel.

He also reaffirmed Fiji's commitment to further strengthen its partnership with Israel at the global and regional levels.

The Coalition Government's plan to establish a Fiji Embassy in Jerusalem

within the next two years signifies the importance of longstanding relations between Fiji and Israel.

Additionally, the ongoing cooperation in the UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East through the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), and the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was also highlighted at the meeting.

Ambassador Rosenblit extended Israel's heartfelt appreciation to Fiji for its excellent contributions to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the MFO.

He said he was honoured to meet PM Rabuka and commended him for his exemplary service in the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping duties stating:

"PM Rabuka diligently served as the Commander of both the battalions in MFO."

Ambassador Rosenblit said Israel looks forward to welcoming PM Rabuka to Israel to take Fiji-Israel's relations to newer heights.

At the meeting, they discussed opportunities for cooperation in areas of mutual interest, particularly in agricultural development and economic-based sectors.

"Israel is keen to collaborate in a number of initiatives, particularly, in the capacity of building and skills development training, in areas of agriculture, technology,



Ambassador of Israel to Fiji, His Excellency Mr Roi Rosenblit with Prime Minister, Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka

business and investment, to name a few."

Israel looks forward to supporting Fiji through agricultural programmes, which promote real-time practical learning and skills enhancement.

Ambassador Rosenblit mentioned, "We are also going to build cooperation in the enhancement of health care services through the provision of medical scholarships for Masters in Public Health. There are a number of beneficiaries of this programme in Fiji who have recently acquired their Masters in Public Health from Israel. I am pleased to inform you that they are now working in high

positions within Fiji's Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation.

"We hope to offer more of such scholarships to Fiji and also look at ways to support Fiji's commitment to quality health care services," he added.

During his week long visit to Fiji, Ambassador Rosenblit met senior government officials and Heads of Missions in Suva. He discussed current areas of cooperation while exploring opportunities to increase the levels of collaboration between Fiji and Israel.

*Article supplied courtesy of Jordan Raphael, C4I Fiji.*

# God's Purpose for Israel in the Islands

■ **Lepani Makubuna**  
Christians for Israel Facilitator

Greetings in Jesus Name from the Hapi (*Happy*) Isles, Solomon Islands.

As former National Leader for Christian for Israel Fiji, I have now been resident in the Solomon Islands since 2020.

For those who have never heard of the Solomon Islands, it is a group of islands located in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Papua New Guinea and northeast of Australia.

I came to the Solomon Islands for employment reasons on my first work assignment outside of Fiji. For me, visiting the Solomon Islands for the first time was like God telling Abram to leave his homeland and go to another land, not knowing fully the reason why God had called him and the opportunities that awaited him. However, deep within my heart I knew God was calling me to the Solomon Islands for His purposes and to help equip the churches here.

Before I left for the Solomons, I had been seeking the Lord to connect me to a local church which I could call my home church. After attending two churches, I finally came to the church where I am now attending, the *Bible Way Centre*.

Three things caught my attention as I first arrived at this church. Firstly, the structure was a simple open-leaf house building with no walls, hence, the phrase 'the church with no walls' is often being used to denote this church. Secondly, as I first entered this building, I was overwhelmed by the greetings and reception by its members I immediately felt at home. The church reminds me of our local church back home in Fiji. I found a sense of family and belonging, and I felt connected right away. The third and final confirmation which caught my attention was the Israeli flag on the stage behind the pulpit. In the photo (right), you will also notice a lady wearing a Christians for Israel Fiji t-shirt, a gift from C4I Fiji which she received along with a hand-held Israeli flag, after she had made a contribution towards the C4I ministry.

*Bible Way Centre* always remembers Israel in their prayers. During my three years with the church, we have incorporated bible teachings concerning God's separate plans for the Church and Israel and we look forward to go a little deeper this year.

C4I newspapers continue to be circulated. Recently we sent some to Malaita Province. The feedback we received has been overwhelming and people there are



Members of Bible Way Church outside their facility holding up an Israeli flag.

demanding more newspapers and looking forward to Bible teachings on Israel to be held there one day.

Generally speaking, Solomon Islands is a Christian nation, and the people already understand the prominence of Israel in the Bible. However, there is a greater need for teaching and quipping the church leaders who in turn can teach others to have a proper biblical understanding of God's separate plans for Israel and the Church. We are hoping and praying to hold another C4I conference in the not-

too-distant future.

As readers, we value your prayers as we trust the Lord to extend the mission of Christians for Israel movement here in the Solomon Islands.

We hope in the next article, to update you on further developments of the C4I ministry in the Solomon Islands.

*Tangio Tumas* (thank you very much) for this opportunity. May God bless us all as we all continue the ministry of C4I throughout the world and may God bless the Solomon Islands from shore to shore.



# Important Conditions for Experiencing the Amazing Blessing of our God—Part 1

■ Keith Buxton

Former National Director of Bridges for Peace Australia

In this and the next two issues of *Israel & Christians Today* I will be sharing some thoughts from the *Torah* portion, or *parsha*, named *Ekev*—*Deuteronomy 7:12 - 11:25*. The Israelites who survived the forty years of wilderness wandering are preparing to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land, and to conquer and settle the land in keeping with God’s instruction to their forefathers.

Moses, now 120 years of age, continues in this passage from the *Torah* his series of farewell messages to the children of Israel as the Promised Land awaits them. He encourages them to trust in God, and to discover the wonderful ways in which He will abundantly bless them if they faithfully listen to and obey Him.

By the way, has it ever occurred to you how seldom we hear that term ‘Promised Land’ used these days in relation specifically to Israel? It is a politically incorrect term that is biblically very correct.

Our God is a promise-making and a promise-keeping God who will never forsake His people—that applies to Christian believers and it applies to the people of Israel and the land that He has promised them. He is always watching over His people, even as you read these words.

Rabbi Avi Geller, who gives a popular weekly *parsha* class in Jerusalem’s Old City, writes: “I once saw a postcard with the picture of an Israeli soldier holding a machine gun, under which was the verse, ‘Behold, He does not sleep or slumber, the Guardian of Israel!’ The ‘Guardian of Israel’ is not the soldier or the machine gun (although they are a necessary effort for security), but rather God Himself. This is the proper Jewish perspective of life.”

These chapters remind us that God is a good God who desires to lead His people into His best for them. As we read through this *Torah* portion, it is almost overwhelming to reflect on the immense blessing that the Lord desires to pour out upon His people. Listen to what *Moses* declares in *verses 13-16 of chapter 7*:

“He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

“You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you. Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the Lord your God delivers over to you...”

Continued from page 3

Teach Them To Your Children

The Word of God must be taught thoroughly, repetitively, interestingly, meaningfully and over and over again until they get it.

My Disciples Are My Children & My Children Are My Disciples

The Lord doesn’t suggest that we teach our children His commands, He actually commands us.

Rashi reminds us that this scripture does not just refer to physical children, but also to spiritual children—disciples.

“To your sons”—these are your disciples. We find everywhere that disciples are termed ‘sons’, as it is said: “You are children to the Lord your God” (Rashi on *Deut 6:7*)

Sifrei on *Deuteronomy 6:7* “Teach them diligently to your children’, means to teach Torah to your disciples. We find



| Photo: Shutterstock

What amazing promises!

Again and again throughout this *parsha* we read how God desires to bless His people as they anticipate entering into their inheritance in the land promised to them.

*Deuteronomy 8:7-10*: “For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.”

*Deuteronomy 11:14-15*: “I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.”

That is just a selection of verses! The point however that we need to focus on is that Israel’s experience of these many promised blessings is dependent upon a number of important conditions that are highlighted in various ways in our text.

*Psalms 24:3-5* is for me a favourite Scripture passage, and I found myself turning towards it as I was thinking about the conditions given by God to Israel if they were to experience His blessings:

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may

stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

1. ‘Clean hands’ speak to me of those who faithfully live out their lives according to the Word of God. I am reminded of the words of Jesus in *John 15:3*: “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”
2. Those with a ‘pure heart’ possess true humility—they recognise that all that they have comes from God, and in all that they do they seek to give Him all the glory. They have no hypocrisy or guile, no hidden motives. Said Jesus in *Matthew 5:8*: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
3. He “who has not lifted up his soul to an idol” desires only the things of God, and to listen to and obey Him alone. They have an uncompromising desire to please God in all things. Said Jesus in *Luke 6:46*: “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

Word of God—Humility—Obedience: W-H-O—Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? The question implies entering into an ever deeper knowledge and experience of the Lord and His best for us, which is the greatest blessing of all.

The biblical teaching on God’s blessing shows us that true blessings are not gauged ultimately, or even necessarily, by outward conditions and circumstances.

Continued on page 6

that a man’s disciples are always called his children.

And if a man’s disciples are called ‘his children’, equally, a man ought to regard his children as ‘his disciples’ and therefore must personally take the responsibility for raising them as disciples of Jesus and for teaching them the ways of the kingdom.

My son and daughter Kyal and Tash began their children’s Bible learning in earnest when the children reached the age of five. Their two eldest sons aged five and six, receive daily Bible teaching from the Torah with links to Jesus. That’s right, they learn the book of *Leviticus* too. These two boys are regular members of the weekly Saturday online *Torah Portion*.

Recently at school, my eldest grandson overheard two Christian preschool teachers say that they were considering doing something for Halloween. In his polite and respectful way, he said to them “Do you really want

the Lord to turn His face away from you?” They consequently didn’t do anything on Halloween and one of them reported back to Tash that she was learning the Bible from him.

Why don’t you make the commitment to prepare your children and grandchildren for the Kingdom like this. Perhaps you just said, “but I don’t know the Bible well enough?”

To Teach I Have To Be Prepared

One cannot teach unless he has learned. In order to be able to teach *Torah*, whether teaching his own children or teaching other students, he must *first* study and learn himself. The institution of discipleship—teacher and disciple—is based upon the commandment to study *Torah*. The teacher must teach *Torah* diligently to his students, and the students must diligently learn from their teacher.



# Messianic Jews—the Elephant in the Room of Jewish Christian Relationships

■ **Barry Rodgers** OAM  
President | Beersheba Vision

As an evangelical Christian closely involved in building bridges between Christians and Jews, there is a subject I try studiously to ignore, and that is the ‘problem’ of Messianic Jews. It is indeed the ‘elephant in the room.’ The issues for many of my Jewish brethren are twofold, firstly, ‘Messianics’ (Jews who have accepted Jesus as their Messiah) are considered traitors and heretics and secondly, evangelicals are mainly concerned about getting Jews converted, they always have an agenda. As to the former I understand their concern and this concern I might suggest is not primarily theological, but rather one cultivated by a long history of sickening persecution by Christians. I say this because this hostility and charge of apostasy does not seem to apply to Jews converting to Buddhism or even becoming atheists for example.

The elephant of the Messianics is not leaving the room, and to continue with the idiom, it can’t leave, as the doors with their constrictive theological and historic frameworks, are too small to let the elephant out. If I may digress for a moment, let us remember that the Scriptures are replete with idioms and metaphors as they can often explain Biblical concepts better than ‘literal language.’ In fact, it could be argued that the attempt to interpret the ‘literal language’ of many Biblical texts is responsible for many of the theological differences that exist, resulting in the formation of over 40,000 different Christian denominations, according to the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity.

I can hear someone say “well, if you have correct exegesis and apply correct hermeneutics you will arrive at the same interpretation of any passage.” Having been around a long time, including having done a stint at Bible College I know that is not necessarily the case, so let us not be bogged down in ‘minutiae’ and miss the ‘burden’ of God’s Word. Back to our idiom, if the elephant can’t leave the room, if we are to get anywhere in Jewish Christian relationships, we must leave that room, and we can and still remain in the ‘house.’ Building relationships is like building a bridge, the utility of bridge building starts by building foundations on both sides of the divide with the construction on each side reaching out to make the connection.

In other words, both Jews and Christians have a job to do in this most sacred of tasks. Our Jewish brethren must overcome their animosity towards Messianics, which is an attitude that both concerns and saddens me greatly, as although we may not agree with ‘Messianics’ on all matters and with some even adopting a spirit of superiority, we still regard them as our brothers and



sisters. On our side of the ledger Christians must not see Jews as evangelical targets and must have a greater sensitivity to their concerns. We must on both sides of the divide be prepared to hand over our concerns to the Almighty for the sake of what Rabbi Nekrutman calls this most ‘sacred calling.’

## Our Light is Our Love

Let God do His own work by His Spirit, for both sides our light must be our love, and that love must be unconditional, no strings attached. The picture accompanying this article says it all, theological discussions are not the answer as the elephant is ever present, casting its shadow over all proceedings. I have seen many debates on the subject by leading Rabbis and Christian theologians over the years and they are interesting, but in reality don’t go anywhere, at least not from what I have seen.

However, encounters like this do; this one happened when I was attending the Bridges for Peace Institute of Israel Studies, in Jerusalem in 2019. The evening session of worship was to be led by an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi, Rabbi Akiva Gersh, I couldn’t see it going anywhere spiritually but thought to myself this is novel and should be interesting. The young Rabbi quietly strumming on is guitar led us in a worship session that was profoundly uplifting. In moments without any conscious effort or understanding, I transitioned from an interested spectator to an enthusiastic participant. As I look back, I am still shocked at how I felt, and how close to God I felt at the end of our worship, we were all somewhat transfixed by the wonder of the moment. Shortly after, I

went up to him as he was quietly packing away his guitar and with a voice trembling with emotion, said, “Rabbi you have touched our hearts tonight,” he looked at me and said quietly, “and you have touched mine.” Now that is the ‘room’ we must go to as that is where reconciliation and understanding takes place, too much of our Christian faith is cerebral and not enough of the heart. It was a classic case of the ‘deep calling unto deep’ we were communing at a level that transcended the realm of the theological, the realm of the mind. It is a state where the heart encompasses what the mind cannot.

I must say I have had similar experiences such as the recent meetings with the Israel Ambassador Amir Maimon and other Jewish leaders last year at Nambour Baptist Church, where the Ambassador was reported to have said he was ‘blown away’ by what he called the unconditional love of Christians, and the joyous celebration of our love for Israel and one another that was spontaneously shared by all. Also, the monthly Southern Cross Alliance For Israel zoom meetings hosted by Jews and Christians, and the Beersheba Vision broadcast on Jewish radio continue to progress this movement of reconciliation in a similar vein.

## The Upper Room

In summary, if we are to progress further in Jewish Christian relationships, as indeed with all relationships requiring transformation, we must leave that room downstairs where the elephants are, and go to the ‘Upper Room,’ where elephants can’t be found, to that transcendent place where God can do His transforming work.

*Continued from page 5*

## Important Conditions for Experiencing the Amazing Blessing of our God—Part 1

To be blessed by God includes—perhaps more than anything else—experiencing His favour, guidance, wisdom, strength, protection, presence and peace.

As a Christian, I am most blessed when I enter into all that God has purposed for me, even in the midst of the hardships of life, because I am indwelt by the Spirit of God and an entirely new life of love, relationship, and service to the Lord opens up for me. That is another message in itself!

The promised blessings of provision, health and security awaiting the children of Israel as Moses spoke to them on the other side of the Jordan were, as we have seen, amazing! Let us now look more closely at the conditions in our Torah passage for the children of Israel to experience these blessings in their lives.

We recall that it was true for the children of Israel—and

true for every believer—that He shall receive blessing from the Lord who (1) holds fast to the Word of God, (2) displays true humility, and (3) demonstrates obedience to our Lord.

Our Torah passage develops the first of these three important conditions for experiencing the amazing blessing of our God—holding fast to the Word of God. We read here how Moses takes time to give to the people various reminders of the importance of obeying God’s Word and His ways. Then there will be blessing!

There is here a simple principle which in the busyness and the complexity of our own modern life we can so easily forget, or just ignore. That principle is this: if we listen to and give priority to God and His Word, He will care and provide for us, He will protect us, and He will even lovingly restore us when we go off track.

In *Deuteronomy 8:3* we read: “He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.”

Dr Raymond Scheindlin, Professor of Medieval Hebrew Literature at the New York Jewish Theological Seminary, said of these words: “Not what we put into our mouths sustains us but what comes out of God’s mouth: His words, His teaching, His decree of death and life, of famine and plenty.”

Jesus quoted this Scripture in *Matthew 4:4*—“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Bread is important. We talk of providing food as ‘keeping bread on the table.’ When there is no more bread in the house we naturally feel the urgency of going to the local store to buy groceries.

What Jesus is saying, however—and what God was saying to the Israelites—is that mankind needs more than physical food alone to live. We need to know and obey the instructions for living that He has lovingly given to us.

Paul says to Timothy in *2 Timothy 3:16*: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”.



# Believing Without Israel

## Covenant Broken? Part 4

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

In this 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.

Can we say that the covenants between God and the Jewish people have been broken, and therefore terminated, with the death of Jesus? No, we cannot say that. Both the Old and New Testaments clearly state that God remains eternally faithful to His covenants with Israel. When God made His covenant with Abram, He already spoke of an everlasting covenant. In *Hosea 11*, God says that if the people of Israel sin and thus cause God to be angry, even then He will not punish His people and will remain faithful: “My heart recoils within Me, all My compassion is aroused. I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not devastate Ephraim again. For I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come to destroy” (*Hosea 11:8-9*).

Even in the New Testament, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, the validity of God’s covenants with Israel is reaffirmed. Paul says: “What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true” (*Romans 3:3-4*).

Further on, he states about the Jews: “From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of

God are irrevocable” (*Romans 11:28-29*). God has never broken His everlasting covenant of love and faithfulness to His people Israel. That would go against His own words and promises, and yet that is unthinkable. Time and again, the Bible emphasises God’s everlasting faithfulness in the face of the unfaithfulness that is often peculiar to both Jews and Christians.

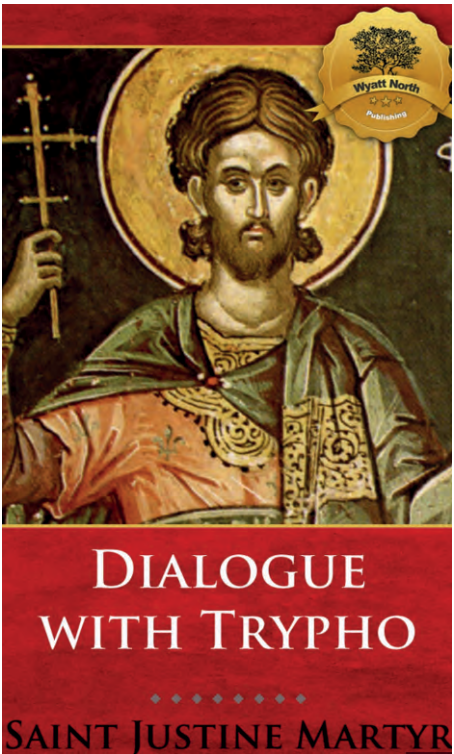
**Church Fathers**

So it is a mistaken view that Jews have become excluded from God’s covenant and are no longer God’s people. It had terrible consequences in the many centuries that followed. Apparently the aversion to Jews was stronger than the eloquence of the Bible. Such views and sentiments got in the way of proper Bible reading.

In the second century AD, Church Father Justinus Martyr wrote in his letter to the Jewish man Trypho: “Judaism has come to an end and the Christian church has become the true Israel. In killing true righteousness, you have reached the climax of your depravity”. It is shocking to see that such views could arise and become widely shared so early in the history of Christianity.



(Left): Saint Justin statue on the Milan Cathedral, Italy. | Photo: Shutterstock. (Right): Book cover.



Bishop Cyprian of Carthage wrote in his book against the Jews in the third century AD: “The Jews are a cursed people and the devil is the father of the Jews”.

Bishop Chrysostomus of Constantinople said about the Jews: “The Jews are mindless animals, unfit to work, fit for slaughter though”. He called the synagogue a “bordello and a theatre”. This speech had dramatic consequences for Jews.

**Development Over the Centuries**

This makes it clear how these kinds of views of Jews from the first century has festered. And this has remained so throughout the centuries. It is also shocking to see how church fathers, who often made such spiritual and valuable statements, could speak so rudely and condemningly about Jews. It is obvious that in such a development, there is less and less room for an enduring significance of Israel and the Jewish people in Christian theology.

In the first century AD, these views were limited to an exclusively theological level: the Jews crucified Christ and therefore God’s covenant with Israel was broken. But gradually the aversion focused more and more on Jews as human beings in general. This gradually led to measures against the Jews in Europe.



Crucifixion and Resurrection... he is risen. | Photo: Shutterstock

Signs of Faith  
By Kees de Vreugd

### Seder Plate

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

Many of you will know the *matzah*, the unleavened ‘bread of affliction’ that the Israelites ate in Egypt and which is still an important element in the *Passover* celebration. Another essential element mentioned in the Bible is the *paschal* lamb. However, since the destruction of the temple, no *Passover* lamb could be slaughtered, at least according to Orthodox Jewish tradition.

But at the *Seder*, on the first night of *Passover*, a number of symbolic dishes still appear on the table. They are not mentioned in the Bible, but in ancient times they were part of the festive banquet that formed the basic pattern for the *Seder* celebration. Gradually they took on symbolic significance. They are usually placed together on small platters on a

special plate, the *seder* plate, or in round recesses in the plate.

In terms of arrangement, different communities have different customs. That too can have a symbolic meaning, but that would take us too far for now. In any case, the following things are on the plate:

**Zeroa (leg):** This can be a roasted lamb bone, but because no Easter lamb can be slaughtered until there is a temple, a roasted chicken leg is usually put down.

**Beitzah (egg):** An egg that is hard-boiled and then roasted. The egg recalls the festive offering that was traditionally brought to the temple on *Passover* (and other feasts) in addition to the regular sacrifices. The egg is also seen as a symbol of mourning on the one hand, and renewal of life on the other.

**Maror (bitter herb):** Usually lettuce is taken for this. The bitter taste symbolises the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

**Charoset:** A sweet mixture of apple, nuts and wine, whose greyish colour recalls the mortar of the bricks in Egypt, but whose sweet taste also evokes liberation.

**Karpas:** Vegetable, usually parsley, is dipped in salt water at the beginning of the meal and eaten as an *amuse bouche*, as is customary at a festive dinner. It also symbolises spring.

**Chazeret:** Radish or horseradish, the sharp taste also symbolises the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

While telling the story and eating, you literally taste slavery and liberation.





## Recommended Reading

### Autobiography: Shaul Ladany

By Joanna Moss

Gracing the dedication page of Shaul Ladany's 378-page autobiography are these words, "... for race walkers and sports lovers everywhere". Indeed, it is a sportsman's account of his background and build-up to the glory days of setting the 50-mile world record and winning the 100km world championship and beyond. But Dr Shaul Ladany is not just a global sportsman; he is an emeritus professor from Ben Gurion University, a proud Zionist, IDF veteran of the 6-Day and Yom Kippur wars, inventor and holocaust survivor. He was a member of the Israeli Olympics games team that suffered the infamous massacre in 1972, the winner of the Pierre de Coubertin medal, holder of eight US patents, and author of many books and countless scientific papers.

Like a lot of sporting autobiographies, it is filled with details on training, races and the physical demands of endurance races that few could bear. These are not 100-metre sprints, but a sport that lasts hours, cover long distances and requires lengthy preparation. Interestingly, the racer is highly dependent upon the support person. When the support person fails to deliver, it is disastrous for the competitor. Ladany approaches a race as the mechanical engineer he is, seeing the body as a machine, with inputs and outputs, testing, taking into account timing and the impact on muscles and stamina of certain foods. Who knew Coke had such positive applications? There is no doubt that Shaul Ladany has a gritty personality and doesn't suffer fools gladly.

The book is laced with friendship and human frailties, as well as fights with sporting bodies and egotistical officials. Then there are the trials of trying to compete globally in a sport that doesn't enjoy a stellar profile or much funding from sporting bodies. It has cost him dearly financially. But Shaul is determined to fight for truth no more so than in suing the publisher of a book that made spurious claims about his actions during the Munich massacre.

But for me, it is also a story of Israel's coming of age, told through the lens of a beloved son. Sport is not high on Israel's priority list. Scarcity, improvisation and individual perseverance prevail. We see the people, the camaraderie and desires, the land with citrus groves, feel the sunshine and savour the landmarks amid institutions blossoming and towns expanding, all on the back of a lot of sweat and tears.

Ladany knows what it's like to be wanted and unwanted and what it means to be Israeli and to fight for your country as an accepted duty. He is both European and Israeli, so aptly seen in the comment he makes, "I'm from Israel. In Hungary, I was just a stinky Jew". To race overseas, he buys blue and white tourist t-shirts with the words ISRAEL emblazoned front and back as his uniform. Shaul Ladany *veni, vidi, vici*.

# Who Are You, O Man?



Closeup of 'Abraham' in Hebrew in a Torah page. | Photo: Shutterstock

### ■ Johannes Gerloff Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This is part ten in a series of articles based on the book *Rejoice, You Nations, with His People*, by Johannes Gerloff.

Paul says at the beginning of *Romans 9* that he wished to take the place of his "relatives according to the flesh"—the Jewish people who were "accursed and cut off from Christ". The next moment, however, he states that they are "Israelites". Even though these people reject their Messiah, they still possess all the riches which are associated with the name 'Israel'.

The question that arises is whether this is an incompatible contradiction. Either the Jews are "accursed and cut off from Christ", then they are no longer 'Israel'. Or, they indeed possess "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, and the fathers". But then they cannot be "accursed and cut off from Christ". The Apostle goes on to explain:

It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are from Israel are Israel. Neither are all descendants of Abraham, his children (*Romans 9:6-7*)

outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God." Already "John the Baptist had warned of a 'self-assuring trust in one's descent from Abraham' and was taken seriously and understood with this message in Israel". In summary, it could be said that physical descent from Abraham is no 'guarantee of salvation'. In order to become Abraham's heir, one needs more than an appropriate genealogical tree.

Paul expounds in five steps what makes Abraham's descendants 'children' and the foundation on which this is established. In this article, we will consider two of them.

#### 1. Isaac and Ishmael

Looking at the brothers Ishmael and Isaac, the Apostle demonstrates the difference between 'seed' (*sperma*) and 'child' (*teknon*)—the difference between 'the children of the flesh' and 'the children of God', between natural descendants and 'the children of the promise', i.e., the called and acknowledged descendants.

'Abraham's heirs' and bearers of the promises. It is not the blood lineage from Abraham that is decisive in the end, but exclusively God's electing promise.

#### 2. Jacob and Esau

Isaac and Ishmael were half-brothers. They did not have the same mother. Ishmael was born to an Egyptian slave. He was conceived outside the regular marriage and was the result of Sarah's and Abraham's impatience. In Ishmael's case, we are still able to see some human 'guilt', some logic that might explain God's dealings with Hagar and her son and make it acceptable in our sight.

With Jacob and Esau, however, all considerations of this kind are impossible. They not only have the same mother, but they came into existence (*sic* literally translated) 'through one and the same intercourse' (*ex henos koiten*) of Rebecca with Isaac. Because they were twins, there were no differences in descent that could have influenced God's choice.

Neither in their parents' behaviour nor in connection with the birth of the twins can a reason be found for the unequal treatment by God. Both of them were an

**In summary, it could be said that physical descent from Abraham is no 'guarantee of salvation'. In order to become Abraham's heir, one needs more than an appropriate genealogical tree.**

'Israel' designates Abraham's physical descendants. Paul now states that only a part of Israel bears the title 'Israelite' with all the prerogatives and obligations that come with it. Only a part of the whole of Abraham's descendants are actually his children. Physical descent from Abraham is significant inasmuch as this means participation in the choice to become an 'Israelite'. It does not, however, necessarily mean that one is, in the end, indeed entitled to the inheritance.

What Paul acknowledges unconditionally as Israel's 'possession' in *Romans 9:1-5* is not simply owned by every Jew. As he had stated already in *Romans 2:28 29*: "A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely

Abraham's physical offspring was not only Isaac, but also Ishmael and the children of Keturah, to whom "Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he was alive, eastward, to the east country" (*Genesis 25:1-6*). According to *Romans 8:17* a 'child' is the lawful 'heir'. While Abraham gave gifts to the other sons, he "gave all that he had to Isaac" (*Genesis 25:5*).

In this way, Paul confirms what God had said to Abraham concerning the expulsion of Ishmael and his mother Hagar: "Do not consider it evil what happens to the boy and the maidservant... For in Isaac your seed shall be called" (*Genesis 21:12*). Only Isaac and his lineage was elected, called, named and acknowledged to be

answer to prayer (*Genesis 25:21*).

Finally, Paul emphasises that God had made his choice at a time when the twins "were not even born when they could not have done anything either good or bad". Neither their conduct nor any attitude of the two brothers offers an explanation for God's decision. Before Esau and Jacob could have made any decision of their own, already during her pregnancy, the Lord had told Rebecca: "The older shall serve the younger" (*Genesis 25:23*).

The basis of the existence of God's people is neither historical coincidence nor the right of the older or stronger, but the free decision of the living God who is not accountable to anyone.



# David’s Conquest: The History of Jerusalem—Part 2



Mishkenot Shaananim—an old area of Jerusalem, Israel. | Photos: Shutterstock



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

The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. The Jebusites said to David: “You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off.” They thought, “David cannot get in here.” Nevertheless, David

captured the fortress of Zion: which is the city of David—2 Samuel 5:6-7

In just a few words, a simple conquest by the warrior king transformed a nation and the world. A city that eluded the armies of Joshua, the judges, and king Saul—was captured by David. Yes, the shepherd king who worked his way up: slaying the lion and bear, defeating the giant Goliath, now he was supremely confident that he could take the stronghold of Zion - Jerusalem—city of the Jebusites.

**Recap:** Before going further, let us recall what we have covered so far. In the previous article, we learned that Jerusalem is the premier city of Scripture, mentioned one thousand times, and is known by various names. We also learned that Zion is the royal section of the city, if not the city itself, depending on the context. It was in heathen hands for the first thousand of its four thousand-year history, though there are possible allusions to it in the Bible. Isaac was nearly sacrificed on Moriah while Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem, received tithes of Abraham. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin both tried—and failed—either to capture it or retain it. This leads us to one of history’s great events.

**Neutral Capital Territory:** Enter king David, the man after God’s own heart and the sweet psalmist of Israel. He was eager to unite the tribes of Israel with his own tribe of Judah. Like the US with DC and Australia with Canberra, he needed a centrally located capital city that belonged to none of the tribes, forestalling inter-tribal jealousy. Instead, this neutral territory would belong to all the tribes. The Jebusite stronghold fit the description.

**Conquest:** As we read in the above text, David and his men approached the walls. The Jebusites were confident that David would fail to breach the wall like the others before him. They boasted that even the blind and the lame could keep David out. Verse 7 says, ‘Nevertheless David captured the stronghold of Zion.’ How did he succeed when the others failed? The normal answer is that instead of breaching the high heavy wall on a steep slope, David’s troops ascended through the underground water tunnel that leads from the Gihon Spring into the main city. 1 Chronicles 11:6 says it was Joab who made the ascent and was rewarded with the position of chief and captain.

Thus, Jebus—the Jebusite city—became known as Jerusalem. Like the conversion of a rank sinner into a super saint, Jerusalem was transformed by David. First, it became the ‘city of David,’ the capital of the united tribes of Israel. Thus it became a royal city. Then, David took another bold step: he brought the ark of the covenant to the city. The ark was the golden chest that contained

the ten commandments on Moses’ two tablets of stone. On top of the ark were two cherubims, positioned like arm-rests on each side. Between them, the top of the ark was the mercy seat, which was God’s throne.

In other words, the ark represented God’s holy presence and had to be handled with care. To do otherwise was to court disaster, as Uzzah tragically found out (2 Samuel 6:6-8). Once the ark was moved to Jerusalem, the city became God’s earthly address. Now Jerusalem was a holy city. Imagine, in one masterstroke, Jerusalem was transformed from ‘heathen’ to ‘holy,’ all because of a man called David.

God was apparently so pleased with David’s actions that He chose to put His name on David’s city. Despite its turbulent and, at times, sordid history, God kept the city alive for the sake of his servant king. And Jerusalem would forever be considered sacred because of the house (temple) of God, the *shekinah* glory in that house, and the Name of the Lord on the house and city.

In summary, Jerusalem was transformed into a royal city - that’s the human side. It also became a holy city, highlighting the divine side. The third transformation would involve both human and divine sides—but more about that in a moment.

**A Covenant with David:** It is impossible to properly understand the Bible in general, prophecy in particular, and the importance of Jerusalem without knowing about the notion of ‘covenant.’ In short, it is a binding agreement between two parties that promises great blessings for compliance and terrible repercussions for violations. God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses. He is a covenant-maker and covenant-keeper. Now, the man after his own heart would get a covenant, too. We read about the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17. In short, God promised to give David a son and successor who would rule on his throne. The Son of David would build God a house. He would also have a long reign, indeed, an everlasting one. Finally, the Son of David would concurrently and simultaneously be God’s Son. This singular individual would be known as ‘The Messiah,’ ‘the anointed one,’ or ‘the anointed of the anointed.’ Clearly, the Son of David is Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 21:9; Mark 11:10; Luke 3:31). Solomon is also referred to as son of David, but he is definitely not the Messiah.

### Comparing the Two ‘Sons of David’

	Solomon	Jesus the Messiah
Reign	Forty years	Everlasting; forever and ever
House	Built the first temple	Building the church/kingdom
Anointing	Anointed as king	Anointed prophet, priest & king
Capital	Earthly Jerusalem	Earthly & Heavenly Jerusalem

In light of all this, the third transformation is that thanks to the Davidic Covenant, Jerusalem becomes the City of the Great King. It’s the city of God’s Son and David’s Son, who is the same person. Aren’t you glad you serve a righteous King who’ll reign forever?

## Biblical Roots By David Nekrutman

### Restoring the Fifth Cup of Passover

On the evening of 5 April, Jews around the world will celebrate *Passover*. The whole formality of the evening is known as a *Seder*. The family table event has a script known as a *Haggadah*. Some of the rituals that take place at the *Seder* are eating *matzah*, bitter herbs and drinking four cups of wine (or grape juice).

One of the main directives for the *Passover* evening celebration is to fulfil the instruction of feeling as if we are being redeemed from slavery in the present moment (*Deuteronomy 5:15 & 6:23*). What is truly taking place at the *Passover Seder* is that we are making a leap through time and turning a ‘then’ into a ‘now.’

While praising God with *Psalms 113-118*, the drinking of wine, and eating the *paschal* sacrifice in the community was the emphasis of *Passover* during the time of the Temple, the *Passover Seder* in its current form is a rabbinic development after the destruction of the 2nd Temple. The idea of continuing to celebrate freedom via a *Seder* under Roman persecution and uncertainty of the Jewish people’s future was truly revolutionary.

The *Passover Seder* is rooted in the exilic experience! However, everything changed 75 years ago with the creation of the State of Israel. Since 1948, we are living in redemptive times. Hence, the *Passover* celebrated today should acknowledge this season.

The earliest record of drinking wine on *Passover* evening is recorded in the *Book of Jubilees* (135-105 BCE). For the *Passover Seder*, the rabbis institutionalised drinking wine into four separate cups drunk at different sections of the *Haggadah*. One of the main reasons for the ‘four cups of wine’ custom, was based on the four expressions of redemption mentioned in *Exodus 6:7-8*:

Therefore, say to the children of Israel, ‘I am The Eternal, and I will escort you from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their labour, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments, and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God...

There was a rabbinic custom of drinking a 5th cup of wine at the *Passover Seder* that was drunk after reciting *Psalms 136* or *Psalms 23* when the Temple was still standing. This 5th cup represents the fifth redemptive expression of *Exodus 6:8* —“And I will bring you in unto the land...” It is understandable that during the 2,000 years of exile, only 4 cups were drunk at the *Passover Seder*, but now with a reborn Israel, the fifth cup needs to be restored.

It would be my hope that my Christian brothers and sisters who wish to join us in the *Passover* celebration would be willing to drink a cup of wine or grape juice and recite the following:

“And now, in our own time, when we have been privileged to behold the mercies of The Eternal in the establishment of the State of Israel, we drink this 5th cup as a form of thanksgiving. Just as we have been privileged to live in an era of the fulfilment of “And I will bring them” in *Exodus 6:8*, so may we be worthy of witnessing that all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God.

Afterwards, one should drink the cup of wine and recite both *Psalms 136* and *23*. May you and your family have a joyous *Passover*!

*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 Road to Passover

■ **Rabbi Shmuel Katz**  
Rabbi | Gerard Dou shul | Amsterdam | The Netherlands

In this article, I am going to take you on the road to *Passover*. The *Passover* ceremony stands alone, but it does not come from a vacuum. The ceremony contains the essential message, mission and purpose of the Jewish people here on earth.

**Firstborn**  
“And you shall say to Pharaoh, thus said God: the people of Israel are my firstborn.” *Exodus 4:22*

During all those moments leading up to the exodus, Moses at one point gets the message: go to Pharaoh and tell him: that people you despise, the people you seek to exterminate, that people is my firstborn. What does God mean by this?

The firstborn represents the greatest blessing because he, as it were, takes the father and carries him on into the future. He continues that father, as it were. This is what Moses indicates when he says this to Pharaoh. A people, born as ordinary people, will go and proclaim My message here on earth. The people, Pharaoh, that you wanted to exterminate in the Egyptian gulag, carries forward My future. Does that make it chosen? Yes. Did that make it easier? No, absolutely not!

God also indicates that. He says (*Exodus 12:3*): In front of the Egyptians, take a *Passover* lamb – an animal that to them is an idol. Show that you trust in Me by smearing the blood of that animal on your doorpost after you have slaughtered it (*Exodus 12:7*).

After a night when all of Egypt’s firstborns died, they moved out of this land. In the desert, they depended on the heavenly manna and the spring that supplied them with water. There they were also given the *Torah*, the book that meticulously states what is expected of that firstborn and that chosen son.

This is what passes through me as I raise the cup of wine and pronounce the *kiddush*. The *kiddush* opens the *seider* evening. The *kiddush* articulates the synthesis between flesh-and-blood people who become carriers of a chunk of

Divine essence. This is the cornerstone of the Jewish people. Every family anywhere in the world is filled with emotion. Is it the *sabra* mother whose two sons have come home from the trenches on the Hermon and at Sderot? Is it grandma of 88 who will again tonight tell her Dutch grandchildren about that last *Passover* in 1930s Germany? Is it grandpa on the West Coast below San Francisco who will make it clear that his grandson, too, the banker on Wall Street, the PhD student at MIT, or the producer in Hollywood, should not miss out on the traditional *seider*?

**Praise**  
“This people I have created for me. They will proclaim my praise.” *Isaiah 43:21*

Horrible slavery. Pitiful conditions: hopeless people cry out in distress. Those cries are heard, and Moses gets his mission (*Exodus 7:1-5*): Go and, above all, do not be afraid. You will be stronger than Pharaoh; believe in this mission because I will lead you. Pharaoh is stubborn; he is recalcitrant, and he does not give an inch: So who is this God that I will listen to him?

Then a tsunami of ten plagues breaks out. Pharaoh finally gets down on his knees to be totally defeated one more time by the sea. This teaches the people one thing; they are tasked with proclaiming who God is, how great, special and extraordinary He is, in addition to that spiritual mission.

That is the emotion of pronouncing the second cup of wine when the story has been told, and everyone has felt and experienced, as if it were today, what the exodus really was.

**Glory**  
“This is my God, I will bring glory to him.” *Exodus 15:2*  
But the emotion goes even deeper. The Jewish people were given the commandment to recount the exodus and were given the ability to sing to God. In it, the Jewish people express how, as the chosen people, the firstborn, they express their deep soul connection in telling the story and singing the song.

This is what it says in the song at the Red Sea (*Exodus 15:2*): “This is my God, and I will bring glory to him.”

You have to be at a Jewish family’s house on *seider* night for this when the last part of *seider* night is experienced while singing. It is a singing of a chain of generations of grandfathers and grandchildren filled with deep emotions singing about the greatness of God.

For a moment, there is a flashback. The *hagada* (liturgy) shakes us up and takes us back to dark, bitter times. The text refers to those peoples who refused to acknowledge You, our great God. God, wipe them out from under your heavens, it sounds. Gone praise, gone exaltation.

How should we understand that? We know what history has brought, we know the feelings. But that doesn’t get us there. We invoke and say immediately afterwards: “Not for us God, not for us God, but give honour to Your Name” (*Psalms 115:1*). We turn the camera away from Auschwitz, from Lisbon, from Moscow, and we look forward to a world that focuses only on the glory of God, and we pray and we hope that one day all humanity will join in this.

Having written these lines, I wonder. What can you do with this as a reader? What I wrote to you sounds very abstract. Moreover, I do not expect you to celebrate the *seider*. You have your own spiritual experience and background.

Therefore, I want to end with a story told by Shlomo Carlebach: A boy called Moishele and his father are in the Warsaw Ghetto, it is April 1943. A month later, the Warsaw Ghetto would no longer be there. They celebrate the *seider* together. None of the usual attributes of the *seider* are present. However, Moishele can ask the four questions that the Jewish child has traditionally asked at the beginning of the *seider* for many centuries. After asking those customary questions, he says: “Father I have one more question, a fifth question.” Father replies: “Dear son go ahead”. “Father will you and I sit at the table together again next year *Passover*, will I be able to ask you those same questions again?” To which father replies, “Whether you will be there I don’t know, whether I will be there I don’t know either. But one thing I do know, somewhere in this world on *Passover* there will be a Moishele sitting at the table together with his father and that Moishele will ask his father exactly the same questions you have now asked.”

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# Is China Becoming the New Superpower in the Middle East?

On 10 March 2023, Iran and Saudi Arabia announced a joint agreement, brokered by China, to pursue the restoration of diplomatic relations. The agreement outlines a two-month process to reopen embassies in Tehran and Riyadh, as well as discussions on progress toward a range of cooperation mechanisms.

This is a major development, given years of hostility between these countries that threatened stability and security in the Gulf and helped fuel conflicts in the Middle East from Yemen to Syria.

The agreement also has potentially huge consequences for Israel, which regards Iran as its arch-enemy, while it has been trying to build a positive relationship with the Saudis, building on the 2020 Abraham Accords.

Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iran in 2016 after its embassy in Tehran was stormed during a dispute between the two countries over Riyadh’s execution of a Shi’ite Muslim cleric. The kingdom also has blamed Iran for missile and drone attacks on its oil facilities in 2019 as well as attacks on tankers in Gulf waters. Iran denied the charges. Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi movement has also carried out cross-border missile and drone attacks



Iranian Rial with China Yuan Renminbi currency banknotes. | Photo: Shutterstock

But it is questionable whether China can continue to balance the pursuit of its interests with both sides without derailing its own long-term strategic interests. While China has much to gain in the short term through cooperation with the Gulf states, it sees Iran as a long-term strategic source for energy, security, economic, and investment cooperation.

developing a civilian nuclear programme, and fewer restrictions on US arms sales to Riyadh. “With its offer to the United States, Riyadh appears to be leaving the door open for a stronger U.S.-Saudi relationship but is making clear by pursuing a hedge with China that they will not be waiting around,” according to

2019 unmanned aerial vehicle attacks on Saudi Arabia, the UAVs launched against oil tankers and oil facilities,” said Zisser. While Saudi Arabia, a leader of the Sunni Arab bloc, remains adversarial to Shi’ite Iran and does not trust it, nor does it seek war with the Islamic Republic, said Zisser. According to analyst Yochanan Visser, “the Iran-Saudi Arabia deal has little to do with Israel, but much to do with the struggle for global hegemony between China and the US.”

According to Visser, the latest agreement does not mean that Saudi Arabia will stop the process of normalisation of relations with Israel. The Kingdom is currently undergoing an unprecedented modernisation process and needs Israel for technological reasons. The Israeli deterrent against Iran is, furthermore, also important for Saudi Arabia, which has always worked to curb Iranian influence in the Middle East.

## The Iran-Saudi Arabia deal has little to do with Israel, but much to do with the struggle for global hegemony between China and the US.

into Saudi Arabia, which leads a coalition fighting the Houthis, and in 2022 extended the strikes to the United Arab Emirates. The breakthrough agreement highlights China’s global ambition to replace the US as the superpower in a new world order. As part of this strategy, it seeks to play the role of mediator in the Middle East and shore up its investments and interests in the Persian Gulf. China is gradually, intentionally, filling a vacuum left by the US withdrawal from the region over the past years.

The Iran-Saudi deal comes at a time when Israel is trying to tie down a normalisation agreement with the Saudis. However, previous normalisation agreements have depended on US involvement. In recent years, Saudi-US relations have soured, as the Biden Administration has not prioritised a strong relationship with Riyadh. Hours before announcing its agreement with Iran, Saudi Arabia revealed its terms for normalisation with Israel. The Saudi proposal asks for security guarantees from the United States, assistance in

the Foundation for Defence of Democracies. According to Prof Eyal Zisser, vice-rector of Tel Aviv University and chair in Contemporary History of the Middle East, the Saudi decision was actually about Riyadh’s perception of Washington, not Jerusalem. “I believe that Israel was not a factor in the Saudi decision. Saudi Arabia, in any case, is not counting on Israel to protect it. It had hoped that the United States would protect it, but the Americans turned out to be hesitant, following the

Facts Speak

2022  
In Review

SYRIA & LEBANON

10 bags of drugs caught before being smuggled into Israel

570 guns seized before being smuggled into Israel

JUDEA & SAMARIA

7,589 incidents of rocks thrown at Israelis

493 illegal guns and weapons confiscated by the IDF

1,268 Molotov cocktail hurlings

14 terrorist weapon-manufacturing factories shut down by the IDF

185 shooting attacks on Israelis

US \$700k (2,796,514 NIS) in terrorist funds seized by the IDF

14 stabbing attacks on Israelis

1 fired from LEBANON

Rockets fired at Israel

4,500+ fired from GAZA

approx. 97% of the rockets were intercepted by the IRON DOME

IDF ACTIVITY

30 smuggling attempts were prevented and thwarted at sea

1,000 operational attack helicopter flights

30 operations led by the missile boat flotilla

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ISRAEL? WHY? WHY NOT?



# The Death of a Visionary

■ Tal Hartuv  
Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist



At the end of 2022, Israel mourned the passing of Rabbi Haim Druckman, one of the most important rabbis and educators in the Religious Zionism movement - and arguably in the modern state of Israel. Thousands attended the Israel Prize laureate’s funeral, including his wife of 65 years, his nine children, 200 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Without a doubt, Rabbi Chaim Druckman led an astonishing life.

Born in 1932 in the former Polish town of Kutý (now in Ukraine), he and his family fled to the Soviet Union with the invasion of the Nazis. His parents, fearing for their child’s life, made the unthinkable decision and entrusted their 12-year-old son to a childless couple, not knowing if they would ever see him again. But the Druckman family were one of the few fortunate Jews who not only managed to survive the Holocaust but who were reunited in Israel after the war.

In Israel, and barely out of his teens, Chaim Druckman thrust himself into learning Torah. It was during those times that he came to realise it was imperative for the Jewish people to recognise that, no matter what the squabbles and disagreements, unity was critical to survival. Israel’s unity was both physical and spiritual. Druckman wanted to strengthen his people by educating the young nation both as passionate Zionists and also Torah scholars. With this in mind, he founded the Or Etzion high schools which sought to combine Torah study and prepare young people for the army.

The Yom Kippur War was an event in his life which forged his path ahead. Three thousand Israeli soldiers having fallen in battle in less than a month, after the war ended, Druckman knew it was crucial for Jews to settle in Judea and Samaria, the territory the young country had barely managed to hold on to during that war. For this purpose, he started the Gush Emunim movement with the goal of building Jewish communities in Biblical Israel. For Druckman, separating Biblical Israel (i.e Judea and Samaria) from the likes of Tel Aviv and the rest of the modern state, was tantamount to handing it over to the enemy. This was not just a national mistake, Druckman believed, it was also a crime against God.

It wasn’t long before the tireless rabbi decided to run for

politics. Just four years after the Yom Kippur War he was elected to the Knesset on behalf of the National Religious Party. The years that followed saw him stand in support of many Israeli Prime Ministers. He was even the personal rabbi of the recent former Prime Minister, Naftali Bennet.

But he was a man not without controversy. When it came to the very painful episode of disengagement from Gaza, he expressed support for Israeli soldiers who refused to force other Jews to evacuate their homes. In such terrible times, some saw that stand as an unethical politicisation of the army for the sake of his own religious views - and therefore an unfair position to put upon any soldier.

Whether one agreed or disagreed with him, the rabbi left his mark on all sectors of Israeli society as witnessed by the tens of thousands who attended his funeral. People attended from all walks of life and across the political spectrum . The president of Israel, Isaac Herzog, summed up best the national mourning when he said, “I mourn the passing of Rabbi Haim Druckman, a public emissary and spiritual leader who led in vision and in action some of the most important Torah, Zionism and revival enterprises of our generation.”

May he rest in peace.

# The Voice of Israel

■ Tal Hartuv  
Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

On 6 October 1973, at 2pm in the afternoon, the silence of Yom Kippur, the most holy day of the year, was shattered by a news flash: Egyptian and Syrian forces were invading the Jewish state. The newscaster who read out the terrible news was Aryeh Golan. Golan, whose usual strong, smooth voice was the one which would wake up the nation at six every morning, was now jittering. He was in such a state of shock that he even forgot to announce his name, and the hour of day. Even now, nearly 50 years later, the veteran radio broadcaster shudders when he thinks back to that day.

**Despite the difficulties, the little family felt safe. Golan remembers his parents’ astonishment of how “everything was suddenly Jewish,” from bus drivers, to policemen...**

Like many who find their career in media, Golan’s career also began as a broadcaster during his service in the IDF. He loved working for the Army Radio. He knew that on finishing his service he would pursue a career in radio.

Golan is one of the most respected journalists in Israel. He is known for his impartiality, his lilting voice, his perfect Hebrew, and his occasional wry dig at politicians who avoid answering difficult questions. Most politicians do not cherish the thought of an interview with the astute broadcaster. Many reluctantly admit that Golan somehow always gets them to say things that they had never intended to say.

But that’s what makes for good media; so much so, that Israel has the unique—and slightly bizarre—habit of simultaneously televising morning radio programmes. This is not breakfast TV, as is known in Europe where broadcasters smile at the camera with a cup of coffee on a tidy table going over the papers headlines. This is simply a camera mounted on a wall which captures the radio broadcasters doing their job. Thus, not one of the broadcasters wear makeup, or dresses up for TV. Sometimes they forget to brush their hair. They seem unaware that the camera is there. The idea of a camera in the studio is something that the broadcasters are not

fond of, but for some reason, this voyeuristic TV has awarded Golan’s morning radio show with the highest TV ratings in the country. The viewer can eavesdrop on their favourite radio host conducting an interview with someone on the phone, while he is also preparing notes for the next interview or messing around with buttons to play some adverts.

Born in Poland just after World War II, Golan came with his family to Israel in the late 1950s, just before the Iron Curtain shut down on Eastern Europe for the next forty years. Like many immigrants, his early childhood was also difficult. His parents were the sole Holocaust survivors of their families. His mother survived the Warsaw Ghetto and concentration camps, and Golan’s father, jumped from a train destined for the extermination camp, Treblinka. When the war ended his father thought he was the last surviving Jew in the world. The young Golan had an aptitude for languages, and he learned Hebrew very quickly. His parents found it hard to learn Hebrew or find work. Thus, they were entirely dependent on their young son to help them function in Israel.

Despite the difficulties, the little family felt safe. Golan remembers his parents’ astonishment of how “everything was suddenly Jewish,” from bus drivers, to policemen, to waiters to secretaries, to menus to libraries. Being safe, was an exhilarating feeling for them all, and it is what gave them the strength to face the difficulties.

When the young boy Golan, took upon himself the responsibility of helping his surviving parents navigate themselves in a Hebrew speaking country, it set him in good stead to become the competent Voice of Israel and the cherished radio broadcaster that he is today. Still fluent in Polish, he is occasionally interviewed by Polish Radio. But for the most, he is to be found in the studios and the hearts of people all over Israel.



Yom Kippur War. | Photos: Wikimedia Commons



“No, Abram was his Name”

Anemone Rüger Christians for Israel

Writing down the stories of the Holocaust survivors sometimes tears my heart apart. So much suffering, so much injustice in just one human life! Wars, persecution, and man-made disasters like Chernobyl still cast dark shadows on Ukraine’s Jews... What a privilege that God would use us to find the broken-hearted in their darkest places and bring the light of hope—one heart at a time.

Her name is Lidia Alexeyevna, and she resides in north Ukrainian Sumy. “So your father was called Alexey,” I began my conversation, quoting Lidia’s father’s name, which is traditionally used in Russian to address a person politely. “No. He was called Abram,” Lidia corrected me. “Alexey was only his Soviet name. With such a Jewish name, he wouldn’t have come very far...”

It didn’t take long for tears to fill Lidia’s eyes. “He was from Odessa, a true ‘Odessit,’ as they say. His family had been living there for a long time. He had to go to the battlefield, and when he came back, there was no one left. His father had been killed in battle, and his mother and his brother had been shot by the Germans.”



Lidia’s family—left: father, mother and little brother, who were killed by Germans.

Abram couldn’t bear to stay in his hometown, so he moved to the opposite end of Ukraine, to the city of Sumy. “He went back only once, and he took me along,” Lidia shared. “The apartment had been taken over by the neighbours. His family’s old furniture was still standing there. The memories were

overwhelming.” Asked about her own family, Lidia wiped her eyes again, listing the next generation’s tragedies. Nearly everyone had died of cancer: Her brother, her sister, who she cared for until her death; her husband, and most recently her daughter. Chernobyl is never far away in Ukraine. All she has left is a granddaughter in neighbouring Belarus (with borders closed and even phone connections cut since the war started)—and a nephew in Israel, who would love for her to join him there. But Lidia still hesitates—“in my age, and with all my ailments...”

We handed Lidia a food parcel with a bar of Israeli chocolate on top—a sampling of the ‘fruits of the land’. With your support, we can keep reaching out to the many ‘Lidias’ still left in Ukraine and bring some healing with every act of kindness. And who knows, we might see Lidia and her granddaughter in Israel one day!



Lidia in north Ukranian Sumy with photos of her family. | Photos: C4I



Lidia’s Grandparents.

Roman’s Story

Anemone Rüger Christians for Israel

While most of the elderly have opted to remain in their familiar surroundings in war-torn Ukraine, where they continue to rely on external help to survive, some have taken the big step and started a new life in Israel in their golden years. Our staff recently went to visit many of them to see how they are settling in.

“When my father had to go to the battlefield, I was still very young,” said Roman, a nearly blind and deaf Holocaust survivor, who was recently evacuated out of Dnepropetrovsk by our Ukraine team and just joined his granddaughter Yelena and her family in Sderot, Israel. He’d been talking a lot lately, often sharing tearful memories, Yelena said.

“Mom fled with me and my younger brother to Kazakhstan,” Roman continued. “We never saw Dad again. At some point, we got a notification that he was missing in action.”

Many of Roman’s relatives stayed in the region. “All my uncles and aunts and cousins who didn’t leave on time were taken to a concentration camp. They were forced to build the road between Krivoy Rog and Dnepropetrovsk. Once they were done, they were shot.”

One of Roman’s second cousins survived. “She was 13,” Roman said. “She had already fallen into the pit where everyone had been murdered, but she was not dead. In

the cover of darkness, she was able to crawl out. The neighbours hid her and saved her life.” Roman has spent his whole life in Dnepropetrovsk. There are not many people left of his family. His wife died in 1994, his son died shortly thereafter, soon followed by his daughter, Yelena’s mother. Roman still has a brother living in Arad in the Negev.

Yelena has been living in Israel for many years. She came with a youth programme and has adapted well. When the war broke out, she realised that her grandfather would need help.

“I have survived one war already in my childhood, and now I need to see another war in my old days,” said 88-year-old Roman. “I have so much wanted to see my granddaughter all these years. It is hard for me that I need to burden her now. But I am so thankful that she received me!”



Roman with a pair of hand-knitted socks from a German supporter. | Photo: C4I

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)



Hineni—"Here I Am"

Marie-Louise Weissenböck
Christians for Israel Austria
Just around the corner of Jaffa Street, Jerusalem, there is a place which has become a refuge for many inhabitants of the city. It is the humanitarian restaurant Hineni. The Hebrew name Hineni means 'Here I am', and that is literally what this place stands for.

Six days a week, you will find hundreds of people queueing for a take-away meal or sitting at tables, waiting for their food with thankful faces. Not only does the Jewish aid organisation Hineni feed the hungry, amongst them, Holocaust survivors, elderly, homeless, refugees and others in need, but here one also finds people who empathise, who listen and comfort.

"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink" (Matthew 25:35a).

One of the frequent visitors is Eliyahu, a middle-aged man who came to Israel from Russia a few years ago. Due to an accident, he cannot work anymore, and as his pension is very small, he walks to Hineni six days a week,



to receive a hot meal. But it is not the hot meal which is the most important to him, Eliyahu says, it is the gentle and warm atmosphere which welcomes him, makes him feel loved and cared for. Here he finds people to talk to, and the staff, most of them volunteers, even sometimes massage his hurting feet after mealtimes. The founder of Hineni, Benjamin Philip, an orthodox Jew, came to Jerusalem about thirty years ago. Seeing the needs of the poor and lonely in Israel's most populous and at the same time poorest city, he decided to help, aiming "to create a better society, with a focus on social and spiritual care". Thus, in 1995 the Jewish humanitarian-aid organisation Hineni was founded. Its aim is to help many different groups, such as the city's

poor and weak, orphans and survivors of the Shoa and terror. "People don't just need a meal, they also need to be treated with respect and dignity. That is why the Hineni team is open to all visitors", Benjamin says.



Meals on Wheels
Seventy per cent of the people who receive meals are between seventy and ninety years old. Many of them are Holocaust survivors. Receiving a hot meal is often the highlight of the day for these lonely elderly people.
Meals in the Humanitarian Restaurant
These meals mainly help elderly people and Holocaust survivors who live below the poverty line and live independently. At Hineni, they find others who have experienced the same as well as a homely atmosphere.
Food Parcels and Packed Lunches for Schoolchildren
Hineni arranges for the distribution of food parcels in the poorer areas of Israel. On holidays such as Passover and Hanukkah, packages with special contents are distributed to those in need. | Photos: C4I

Christians for Israel has been supporting Hineni for many years, helping the poor of Israel. Many of them depend on charity projects. Will you help us to help? Costs of a hot meal: €7,50

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY
DONATION
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

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 50th 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)
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