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CHRISTIANS FOR
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INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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At the scene where a missile fired from Iran toward Israel struck and caused damage in Bnei Brak, central Israel. | Photo: Chaim Goldberg/Flashy

Israel Between Fear and Help—Again!

On 28 February, Israel and the US launched a long-anticipated joint military attack on Iran's revolutionary Islamic regime. The aim of the Israeli-US operation is to end the Ayatollahs' capacity to carry out its declared intention to destroy Israel (the 'Little Satan') and the United States (the 'Great Satan'). Ultimately, it is hoped the war will lead to regime change.

What was initially expected to be a short-lived operation has escalated into a regional war. Despite the targeted elimination of most of Iran's political and military leaders, and annihilation of Iran's nuclear programme and ballistic missile production, the regime is fighting back. Many countries are now involved. The mutual attacks on energy infrastructure are affecting the global economy.

The return to large-scale war has created very different

realities across Israel, depending on location and circumstances. Tel Aviv, for example, has suffered the most from Iranian missile attacks since the start of Operation Roaring Lion on 28 February. In total, dozens of Israelis have been killed by Iranian missiles.

Residents of Tel Aviv usually have a few minutes to reach a shelter. In Haifa, by contrast, people face both Iranian missiles and Hezbollah rockets from Lebanon, which rejoined the fighting on 2 March in solidarity with Iran. There is often little or no warning of Hezbollah rockets, leading some residents to sleep in bomb shelters.

In the western Negev, where the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023 sparked the regional war, life has, ironically, become calm following the 'disarmament' of Hamas. In Judea and Samaria, some Jews are now

reporting improved security, partly due to the proximity of Arab areas—making Jewish communities less attractive targets for inaccurate rockets—and due to what some describe as a tougher approach to lawbreakers.

In Beit Shemesh, about twenty kilometres away, nine people were killed on 1 March when a rocket struck a crowded bomb shelter. The community subsequently came together at the hospital, partly by organising the *bar mitzvah* of a boy whose father, Yossi Cohen, was killed in the attack and whose mother ended up in hospital. "The whole community worked together to ensure the *bar mitzvah* took place on the scheduled date. It was tragic, heart-warming, sad and yet joyful at the same time," said a villager about the ceremony on 7 March at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital.

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Help to Victims



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

Colophon

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Mission

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

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Is War Justified?

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

Once again Israel has found itself embroiled in a dangerous war, and civilians in Israel are coming under fire from rockets launched from Iran and Lebanon. The war has extended to include many other countries.

War is ugly and horrific. Can it be justified? Shouldn't Israel and the US simply 'turn the other cheek'?

We often hear Christians condemning every war by definition. Even now, Israel is facing a great deal of criticism throughout the West.

We do not live in Israel. We have not had rockets rained down on us time and again over the past decades. We are not threatened by millions of bloodthirsty religious fanatics who want nothing more than to murder us. We have not suffered an invasion of our country in which 1,200 innocent civilians were slaughtered in the most barbaric manner in a single day.

In a recent press conference, Prime Minister Netanyahu explained the current war on the Iranian regime, from Israel's perspective, as follows:

"We have to be armed. We have to be more powerful than the barbarians, or they will not be merely at the gate. They'll crash our gates and destroy our societies. That's what Israel is doing now with the United States. And I'm very proud of the fact that the Israeli people are standing strong, that the Israeli army is standing strong. We rose from 7 October. Our people, our soldiers, rose like lions. But in protecting ourselves and in joining with our great American friends, we're also protecting the entire world."

This bellicose language jars the ears of us in the West. Since WWII, we have been brought up with the idea that the road



Israeli soldiers operate near the Israel-Lebanon border during Operation Roaring Lion. | Photo: Ayal Margolin/Flash90

to peace is through diplomacy, not war.

The fact is that diplomacy with the evil regime in Tehran has failed. Over the past decades, Western countries have bent over backwards to persuade the Ayatollahs not to seek to annihilate the Jews and destroy the West. To no avail.

The prophets of the Old Testament teach us that there will come a day when the lion will lie down with the lamb, and peace and righteousness will cover the earth. When the *Messiah* rules from Jerusalem, Satan will be bound, the word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem, and the nations will go up year by year to Jerusalem to celebrate the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

But until then, we are living in a broken world in which Satan is still exerting his evil influence. *"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* (1 Peter 5:8)

It is true that Jesus said "all who draw the sword will die by the sword." But

this does not mean that governments may not use force when needed to ensure law and order.

Nations are allowed to use force to defeat evil. In fact sometimes they have a responsibility towards their citizens to do so. Of course, such use of force must be limited to what is necessary and proportionate. And great care must be used to ensure innocent lives are not lost.

It was the Ayatollahs who started this war, not Israel. For decades they have aggressively pursued the goal of eliminating Israel and destroying the West. They have killed thousands of Jews, Israelis and US citizens around the world over the years - in addition to oppressing their own people, most recently massacring tens of thousands. Israel's intention is to destroy the military capabilities of this evil regime, while limiting civilian casualties as far as possible. That is a noble goal for which we should be thankful.

Prayer Points

Israel

- *"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him"* (Nahum 1:7). Pray for Israel's protection from enemy attacks from neighbouring countries and from Iran. Pray for God's protection of the country.
- Pray for comfort for all those who have lost loved ones in the war with Iran and in the war with Hamas. Pray that the wounded will recover well and that those suffering from trauma will receive healing and feel comforted by God.
- *"Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You"* (Jeremiah 32:17). From the evening of 21 April to the following day, 22 April, Israel celebrates Independence Day. Give thanks for the great miracle of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and pray for Israel's protection on this day.

Return

- This year marks the 30th anniversary of Christians for Israel's 'Bring the Jews Home' campaign. Give thanks for all the Jews who received help last year to return to Israel. Due to the current war with Iran, the *Aliyah* (return of Jews to Israel) has been put on hold. Pray that, despite the war, many Jews from all over the world will be able to return this year.
- Please pray for the *Aliyah* field workers of Christians for Israel in Ukraine. They often have to do their work in exhausting and dangerous circumstances.
- *"Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of Him.' So shall it be! Amen"* (Revelation 1:7). Pray that the time will soon come when Jesus will set His feet on the Mount of Olives and bring justice and peace to the whole earth.

For daily Prayer Points, go to: www.c4israel.org

Israel–Hezbollah: Maronite View

■ Shadi Khalloul

Israel is fighting an intense war in the north against Hezbollah. The group violated the ceasefire on 2 March, leading to Israeli strikes on Hezbollah strongholds in Beirut and the elimination of its rocket commander. Israeli troops have engaged heavily in southern Lebanon. To understand Israel's war with Hezbollah, you must understand the centuries-old conflicts in this region and the diverse communities in Lebanon.

I am an Aramaic Maronite Christian. Luckily I am an Israeli citizen. I enjoy the freedom of the Jewish Israeli democracy since I was born in the Galilee, Israel and not on the Lebanese side of the border, where Hezbollah oppresses our Aramaic Maronite Christian nation.

In Israel, there are 10,000 Maronites, while in Lebanon there are about 900,000, and worldwide about 10 million Maronites who migrated after surviving genocides and massacres in the recent past, such as the 1860 and 1914 genocides.

The Maronites are an Aramaic-Phoenician Christian people who have lived in Lebanon for thousands of years. They founded Lebanon as an autonomous entity in the 7th century, which lasted until the beginning of the 14th century. During the last two centuries of that era, they allied with the Crusaders, which were defeated by the Mamluks in 1308; later, the Ottomans took over the Maronite lands. In the 16th century, the Maronites reestablished connections with Rome, France, and the West, followed by a unique alliance with the *Druze* in the 17th century. The Maronites demanded and established the modern country of Lebanon after WWI as a Christian refugee homeland for persecuted Christians in Lebanon and the Levant.

The *Druze* are a distinct monotheistic religious group in the Levant whose faith emerged in the 11th century from Islam, incorporating elements of Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. Persecuted by the Islamic majority, they hid in the mountainous areas of Southern Syria and Lebanon. During the 17th-century, they played a foundational role alongside the Maronites in the formation of the Mount Lebanon entity. Although this robust Maronite-*Druze* dualism characterised by shared trade and autonomous governance was disturbed by sectarian conflicts in 1860, it remains a defining historical pillar of the modern Lebanese state.

Lebanon's sovereignty has been hijacked by forces that brought insecurity and instability to Lebanese Christians,



Lebanese Maronites | Photo: Shutterstock

starting a cycle of recurring wars from the first day of Great Lebanon's creation. The first massacre was executed by Shia Muslims in South Lebanon against a Christian village named Ein Ebel in May 1920, because the Shia refused to be part of the new Lebanese country and resisted the French Mandate. This was followed by many other attacks by Shia Muslims against Christian Lebanon.

The Shia are the second-largest Muslim group worldwide after the Sunnis. The Shia presence in Lebanon goes back to the Abbasid Caliphate era, when Arab, Kurdish, and Turkmen tribes were brought to settle in lands taken from Christians in South Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley, Metn, Keserwan, Akkar, and Tripoli. This surrounded the last free Christian entity in the Levant as a strategy to choke it and sever its connection to the world. Historically, the Shia settled in areas bordering Christian populations; today, we still see a large presence in the Beqaa and the South, with ongoing attempts to infiltrate Christian areas.

Israel and Its Northern Neighbour

Relations between Jews and Maronites go back to the middle of the 19th century. When Maronites intervened to stop a blood libel in Damascus in 1840, Jews likewise intervened to stop massacres against Maronites in Mount Lebanon in 1860. The relationship continued to flourish through the Patriarchate, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and the Zionist movement. In the period 1937-1948, the Maronite Patriarch supported the establishment of the Jewish homeland in Palestine.

These peace efforts were undermined by Arab Muslim groups, Palestinian terror groups like the PLO, and their leftist

allies, supported by Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. They launched violent demonstrations, sparked civil wars, and carried out terrorist attacks on Israel from the southern border. This forced Lebanon into continuous internal strife and led to external wars with Israel to secure northern Israeli villages.

The Northern Front Today

Nowadays, the northern front is the front line for the free world against the Iranian 'Axis of Evil', led by Hezbollah. This Shia militia strengthened after the civil war and took control of Lebanon after the Syrian withdrawal in 2005. Hezbollah has not only attacked Israel but also the Lebanese people, assassinating Prime Minister Hariri and other politicians and officers, and attacking *Druze* and Christian neighbourhoods and towns.

Israeli villages in the north, Christian and Jewish alike, are under constant threat from Iranian and Hezbollah missiles. Lebanon has turned into a ruin serving the Ayatollahs, where Christians live under a 'Dhimmitude' system and existential threat. Hezbollah uses civilians as human shields and has turned Christian villages in the south into weapon depots and launching sites, just as Hamas does in Gaza.

The Solution

The time for 'containment' is over. Israel must ensure absolute security. We cannot tolerate an Iranian presence a stone's throw from our homes. Hezbollah must be demilitarised across all of Lebanon. No more 'paper agreements' like Resolution 1701. The IDF must ensure no terror infrastructure exists that threatens Israeli security.

Shadi Khalloul is Founder of the Israeli Christian Aramaic Association and the Christian Aramaic Jewish PreEducation Military Program.

www.aramaic-center.com

Short News

Peace with Israel?



A YouGov survey of 260 Syrians shows that nearly two-thirds of respondents support a security agreement with Israel. 59 per cent of Syrians consider peace with Israel likely. In addition, half of the respondents said they want normalisation with Israel following a resolution of the conflict with the Palestinians. A similar survey was also conducted among Lebanese. It revealed that they are more skeptical about peace with Israel than Syrians. Only 40 per cent considered this likely, and only 25 per cent of respondents supported normalisation with Israel. | Photo: Flashgo

Great Isaiah Scroll on Display

The Great Isaiah Scroll, the oldest nearly complete book from the Hebrew Bible, is being displayed in its full length for the first time since 1968. Dating to around 125 BCE according to experts, the ancient manuscript stretches more than seven metres. The scroll is presented at the Israel Museum in a specially designed glass case that allows visitors to view the entire artifact. Its vellum sheets still show ancient stitches, stains, holes, and fading letters—evidence of centuries of use and careful preservation. Experts believe the scroll was placed in a cave in the Judean Desert during the 2nd century CE, where it remained hidden until its discovery in modern times.

3D Implant for Tissue Repair

Researchers at Technion University have created an innovative 3D implant designed to replicate lost human tissue. The bioengineered structure integrates muscle and fat along with blood vessels and a lymphatic network—an advancement that may improve treatment for patients who lose large amounts of tissue due to injuries, burns, or cancer surgery. Currently, doctors rely on an autologous flap procedure, which involves moving tissue from another part of the patient's body to repair damaged areas. The new engineered flap aims to offer a more advanced alternative.

Stopping Tehran's Apocalyptic Goals

■ Jonathan Tobin

JNS

Two weeks after the start of the US-Israeli offensive against Iran, naysayers about the wisdom of the operation remain pervasive and loud. The arguments against the war are based on a variety of concerns. The motivations of many of those denouncing the decisions of President Donald Trump are clearly partisan, ideological, and, in the case of a considerable percentage of those on the far right and left, connected to prejudice.

Regardless of the validity of those complaints—and many, if not most, deserve to be dismissed—there is no avoiding the main question to be answered about such a conflict. Is it worth the cost in blood, money and political capital, both at home and abroad, that the administration is expending on a fight with no definite endpoint in sight?

And to that question, there are no easy answers. There is good reason to worry about whether the unintended negative consequences of the war will, in the long run, be viewed as more significant than the issues policymakers are currently obsessing about.

Kicking the Can Down the Road

Nevertheless, even the most reasonable skeptics of the effort, not to mention the deafening chorus of those partisans and ideologues predicting doom for Trump's war plans, are largely failing to address another equally important question that must be answered. Is the cost of allowing the pre-war status quo to continue higher than those associated with the uncertainties of war?

Iran was steadily rebuilding its nuclear programme with an imminent option to race to a bomb, expanding missile production and continuing to orchestrate an 'axis of resistance' dedicated to fomenting chaos and war. That's more than enough to justify the risks of potential disaster that are an inevitable part of all wars.

Like the question about the cost of war, the answer will only be clear after the fact. Yet even now, with the outcome of the campaign still somewhat in doubt, it's obvious that continuing a policy of kicking the can down the road that Trump's predecessors chose—either out of bad judgment, an unjustifiable sympathy for Tehran, cowardice or just plain apathy—would have been as colossal a mistake as even the costliest military blunder.

The dangers that lie ahead are not



Firefighters and volunteers work to extinguish a wildfire following drone attack from Iran, in the Golan Heights in 2025. | Photo: Michael Giladi/Flash90

Both governments have also stated that they favour regime change in Iran. That's something Israel believes is absolutely necessary to achieve

limited to the short-term question of whether Washington and Jerusalem will achieve their objectives, which are aligned with each other but not identical.

The first purpose of the campaign is the eradication of Iran's nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes, in addition to its support and active participation in international terrorism. Washington and Jerusalem are committed to those objectives, which they rightly see as not only crucial to their own countries but integral to the security of the West as a whole. Those are widely seen as achievable goals to one degree or another.

Both governments have also stated that they favour regime change in Iran. That's something Israel believes is absolutely necessary to achieve. The Trump administration would like it to happen, but could live without it, as long as the ayatollahs were stripped of their nukes and missiles, and had their terrorist option foreclosed.

It's far from clear whether the goal of toppling the Islamist government in Tehran can or will be accomplished. If a successful domestic uprising doesn't happen, both countries are wisely reluctant to commit to a ground incursion on the scale required to install a new government.

Economic & Strategic Problems

Still, the problems that are being generated by the war don't only involve Iran retaining nuclear capability or

whether the theocrats can cling to power. Just as important is whether the economic consequences of the war or its impact on equally important strategic problems faced elsewhere by the West will wind up overshadowing what happens in the Persian Gulf or the Middle East.

With respect to economics, it's obvious that Trump and his team—contrary to the false narratives about the war being impulsively decided on a presidential whim or as the result of sinister Israeli or Jewish pressure—were fully cognizant of the implications of combat in the region on the price of oil. That Iran might seek to stop its flow through the Strait of Hormuz was always a likely possibility. And it was a given that the price of oil, and consequently, the price of gas at the pump in the United States, would go up once the war started.

A long-term jump in oil prices would harm the global economy, set back Trump's objectives for American prosperity, and impact domestic politics and his party's chances of retaining control of Congress in the midterm elections this fall. You don't have to be an isolationist who opposes any foreign interventions to understand that any one of those things might be considered a good enough reason for an American president to hold off on efforts against Iran.

The China Factor

Added to that is the impact of the

conflict on the international stage, where the United States is—whether many Americans fully understand it or not—locked in a geostrategic rivalry/conflict with Iran's allies: Russia, and even more importantly, China. As historian Niall Ferguson, who supports action against Iran, has pointed out, this war must be seen in the context of a second Cold War in which the United States is facing off against what may prove to be a Chinese opponent that's far more formidable than the Soviet Union was in the first such conflict in the 20th century.

Removing the Iranian threat is a blow to China in terms of its strategic quest to dominate the globe and because it is an important source of oil to Beijing. But should the United States be embroiled in an unsuccessful war in the Middle East, this would help the Chinese elsewhere. And Russia is benefiting from the way the current war is increasing its oil and gas revenue, and serves as a distraction from its stalemated efforts to wear down Ukraine in that four-year-old war.

While the success of the US-Israeli offensive won't be able to fully evaluated until after the conflict is over, it's clear that both militaries have not been thwarted during the first two weeks of the joint campaign. To the contrary, they have systematically eliminated Iran's military capabilities, hunted down its missile-launchers and done more damage to its nuclear programme.

The fact that a country as large as Iran is not completely defeated in two weeks is not a reason to believe the war has so far been a failure. If the armed forces of the two allies are allowed to continue their military efforts, the already devastating results for Iran will likely become even more impressive. It could possibly go a long way toward rendering the regime harmless to its neighbours and/or unable to resist the desire of its population for a new government. There is no reason to believe that the war is already a 'quagmire,' other than the wish on the part of Trump's opponents that this is what it will turn out to be.

Even if the results are not everything the two governments would wish for, the arguments that say the United States would have been better off delaying action or even appeasing Iran, as the Obama and Biden administrations did, ring false.

Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS (Jewish News Syndicate). Follow him: @jonathans_tobin.

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The Truth about Israel and Middle Eastern Christians

■ **Caroline Glick**
Israeli-American Journalist

Israel is the only state in the Middle East where the Christian community is growing and thriving. That's not an accident. Since its inception, Israel has viewed Middle Eastern Christians, first and foremost its own Christian community, as its natural allies and partners. Christians in Israel are commanders in the IDF. They are justices on the Supreme Court. They are diplomats and reality TV stars. And their prosperity is reflected in their numbers. In 1948, there were 34,000 Christians living in the State of Israel. Today there are 188,000. Christians are full and equal citizens in Israel. They have the same legal and civil rights as Israeli Jews. Their per capita income and education level are among the highest in Israel.

The chart (opposite) from the Philos Project shows the decline of Christian communities throughout the countries surrounding Israel.

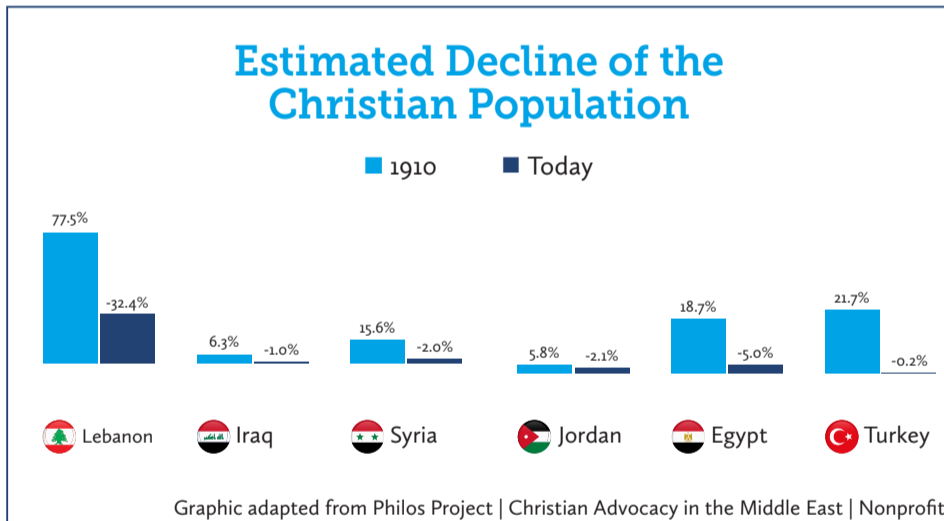
Although the percentage of Christians in Israel's overall population has declined, this is not due to persecution of Christians. It is due to the massive increase in Israel's Jewish population by successive waves of Jewish immigration. In 1948, 650,000 Jews lived in Israel. The first major wave of Jewish immigration after Israel's establishment came from the Arab world. 800,000 Jews were forced from their homes and communities throughout the Arab world in a largely ignored massive ethnic cleansing. Equally, over a million Jews from the former Soviet Union immigrated to Israel when the gates of the Soviet Union were finally opened.

Today it is the Christian communities that are being pushed out of many Middle Eastern countries. As Ambassador George Deek, a proud Israeli Christian Arab has explained, "The ethnic cleansing of Christians in the Middle East is the greatest crime against humanity of the 21st century. In just two decades, Christians like me have been reduced from 20 percent of the population of the Middle East to a mere four percent today."

Christian communities are often compelled to keep their religion to themselves. Dan Burumi, a Jordanian convert to Christianity living in forced exile, recalled in a recent essay on X that last year, Christians in Fuheis, the last Christian majority town in Jordan, installed a statue of Jesus in the town square. "Within two hours, they were



President Isaac Herzog hosted Christian leaders in the Holy Land for the traditional New Year's reception at the President's Residence in Jerusalem. | Photo: Maayan Toaf, GPO



forced to remove it because it was deemed provocative to Muslims."²

In recent months, on instruction from Prime Minister Netanyahu, the IDF stepped in to stop the massacre of Druze in Syria. He stated repeatedly that Israel remains committed to defending threatened Christian communities from Syria to Nigeria.

Those presenting false claims of Israeli state persecution of Christians and an equally false portrait of Christian life in the Muslim Arab world are distorting reality. If they are believed, they will make the world less safe for Jews. But as Israel has proven, the Jewish state is capable of defending itself. Those who will be truly harmed by these distortions are the people they claim to care for—the Christians of the Middle East.

¹ In 2018, George Deek was appointed Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan. He is the first Israeli-Arab Christian to become ambassador of the Jewish state. Deek emphasises that Christians in Israel enjoy unprecedented religious freedom, access to high-quality education, and professional opportunities that far exceed what is available in other countries in the

Middle East, and he is convinced that Arab Israelis can be a bridge between Israel and the Arab world.

² Some quotes from Dan Burmawi's essay: "In 1930, Christians made up about 20 percent of Jordan's population. Today, they make up only about two percent. Christians can practice their faith freely as long as they remain within the walls of their churches. Christians are allowed to legally convert to Islam and change their official documents. Muslims can never convert to Christianity. Leaving Islam leads to the loss of civil rights. Christians in Jordan have chosen security and sacrificed their freedom. That is the price of survival in an Islamic country. In Israel, Christians are sometimes spat on, but they enjoy genuine freedom and full civil rights."

Would you like to learn more about the situation of Christians in Israel?

In this interview with the American news channel CBN, Shadi Khalloul, an Aramaic Christian and founder of the Israeli Christian Aramaic Organisation, explains what it means to be a Christian in Israel:



Short News

Underground Hospital



Hospitals in Israel have moved parts of their medical operations to underground facilities to better protect patients from Iranian missile attacks. For example, at the Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv, a parking garage was converted into a fully functioning hospital within about 36 hours. Intensive care units and operating rooms, among other facilities, have been set up there. This allows care to continue as usual, even during air raid alerts. | Photo: Flashgo.

War & Antisemitism

According to data recently released by the Antisemitism Research Center, the number of antisemitic incidents worldwide has risen by 34 per cent since the outbreak of the war between the US, Israel, and Iran. The incidents included incitement to violence against Jews and conspiracy theories blaming Israel or Jews for the war.

Anti-Israel Coalition

Two members of a coalition of countries formed to punish Israel have withdrawn. Honduras and Bolivia recently announced their departure from The Hague Group. Both countries have new governments and are therefore maintaining warmer ties with Israel. The Hague Group was established to 'take measures against Israel's violations of international law.' The coalition recently met in The Hague to discuss new proposals for measures.

Cyber Threats Grow

As Israel finds itself at war with Iran, cybersecurity experts are warning of a parallel threat unfolding online. Authorities say coordinated phishing and scam campaigns are targeting Israeli civilians, taking advantage of heightened public anxiety during the conflict. The goal, experts say, is not only to steal personal information but also to undermine public confidence. Experts note that while conventional warfare focuses on damaging infrastructure, cyber campaigns aim to erode trust and create uncertainty among the population. Israelis are asked to be increasingly aware and take responsibility.

Focusing on the Positive

How a Hostage Family Continues to Live After the Death of their Daughter

■ Dana Nowak

Christians for Israel Germany

Ricarda Louk lost her daughter on 7 October 2023. The family had to watch as Shani was driven through the Gaza Strip, half-naked and motionless, surrounded by cheering terrorists. Two years later, Ricarda speaks about how her family is coping with the loss.

How does a family cope with the fact that their daughter, their sister, was brutally murdered by Hamas terrorists? “Compared to other families, we are doing relatively well today. We are looking ahead, keeping ourselves busy, moving on.” Ricarda Louk radiates inner peace and at the same time deep pain as she tells her story.

She and her husband have been travelling constantly for two years. It is important to them that what happened on 7 October 2023, in Israel and in their lives, is not forgotten. On that *‘Black Shabbat’*, their daughter Shani was taken from them. Their “little girl who was so full of life and love”. Talking about this tragic loss is like therapy.

Not Everyone Manages to Return to Normal Life

In the months following the Hamas attack, the Louk family was in close contact with other relatives of hostages. Ricarda remembers the strong solidarity among the families. “We supported each other and built real friendships,” she says. Many organisations and government institutions also offered assistance. But not every family has managed to rebuild their lives.

My husband and I always said to ourselves, Shani isn’t coming back, we have to move on. We still have other children who need us now. So we tried to be strong, and that helped our family. Of course, the pain remains, but we can laugh together again. That’s what Shani would have wanted.”

Hope for Something Good

Above all the pain and the many questions, the Louk family has one great hope: that the many people who died on 7 October did not die in vain. “My husband always mentions the end of the Second World War. If someone had told the Jews who were led into the gas chambers, or the survivors at that time, that they would have their own state in four years, no one would have believed it. We have hope that things will get better; it can’t get much worse.”

Ricarda cannot say exactly where she finds the strength to carry on and not despair. “Somehow it’s in our family; we grew up with a positive attitude to life. But in difficult situations, you always find more strength than you could have imagined before.”

Ricarda, originally from Germany comes from a Catholic family. When she met her Israeli husband, she converted to Judaism. She would not describe her family as religious, but they do try to keep the *Sabbath* rules.

The ‘Black Sabbath’: “I thought It Was Fake News”

Ricarda recounts how she experienced 7 October 2023. “At 6.36am, the missile alarm went off and didn’t stop. We called Shani, who was at the Nova Festival in the south. Her boyfriend from Mexico had come to Israel with her. He was also murdered by Hamas.”

Shani answered the phone and told the family that she was on her way home. In the meantime, Ricarda’s family had heard on the news that terrorists from Gaza had invaded Israel. “At first, I thought it was fake news.

We called Shani again, but she didn’t answer. Around 10.30am, my son Amit received a video and was asked if Shani was in the clip.”

The video shows heavily armed terrorists in the back of a pickup truck. At their feet lies a half-naked woman face down. Her limbs are twisted unnaturally. One terrorist is pulling her hair. Others are placing their booted feet on her fragile body. The vehicle is surrounded by Palestinian civilians. They spit on the woman’s head, cheer and repeatedly shout “*Allahu Akbar*” (Allah is greatest).

“My son started screaming and crying, ‘That’s Shani! That’s Shani!’ We recognised her by her tattoos. I was sure it was my little girl! We didn’t know if she was dead or alive. We watched that terrible video over and over again to see if we could find any sign of life in her.”

In Israel, all the authorities were overwhelmed, and no one was available. So the Louks turned to the embassy in Germany. They hoped that they would get help more quickly there, as Shani had both an Israeli citizenship. “We thought that a German would have a better chance of getting out of Gaza than an Israeli.” The family also sent the video to the press. It quickly spread around the world. It was one of the first testimonies of the brutal massacre to become known beyond Israel’s borders.

The Knock We Feared, After Weeks of Waiting

The family lived in uncertainty for three weeks. “It was a terrible time. You’re on the go all day and in the evening, you sit there exhausted, trying to calm down, and then the brooding starts: What are they doing to her right now? At the same time, we could always hear the bombings in the Gaza Strip and were afraid that the hostages would be hit.”

Then one day there was a knock at the door. It was by military representatives and social workers. “When we saw them, we knew what it meant. They told us that a piece of skull bone had been found and identified as Shani’s. You can’t live without that bone. It was found on Israeli soil. So it can be assumed that Shani died instantly and the terrorists took her body to Gaza. She probably didn’t suffer. On the one hand, that was a great relief for us. But until then, we still hoped that she was alive. Now we knew she would never come back.”

It took seven months before the Louks were able to give their daughter a dignified funeral. In May 2024, Shani’s body was found in a tunnel in the Gaza Strip. It had been buried there, alongside the remains of five other hostages. “I always said we didn’t want soldiers to risk their lives to bring Shani’s body home. But it felt good when we were finally able to bury her. We were able to find closure.”

Doubts About Lasting Peace

Ricarda cannot imagine that the situation with the Palestinians in the Gaza will change. “Twenty years of Hamas rule and the associated hatred of Israel have left their mark on the people. Even small children grow up with such hatred towards Jews. In Israel, we live together with many Arabs. Many doctors, bus drivers and pharmacists are Arabs. They just want to live their lives. Still, the events of 7 October changed something fundamental. “It was a huge breach of trust,” she says. “Now we don’t know whom we can trust anymore.”



Ricarda Louk fought day and night for the release of her daughter Shani, who had been abducted by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. | Photo: Private



Dana Nowak (left) visits Ricarda Louk. Artwork behind them was donated in memory of Shani. | Photo: C4I Germany.

Concern About Radicalisation

Ricarda observes with concern that so many young people in particular are taking a one-sided stance in favour of the Palestinian side on social media and at universities worldwide. “They are so radical in their views. Young people see beautiful pictures of Shani on the internet. A girl who is happy and dancing, and then terrorists who kidnap this girl and torture her. It’s such a harsh contrast between good and evil. You would think that people would side with good, but there are so many supporters and followers of these very terrorists among young people. People need to find their way back to humanity.”

Shani had many international friends, including many Arabs. “She was so cosmopolitan. She always said that there are no bad people, only people who are suffering. Our wish is that people will find their way back to goodness.”

Ricarda and her family do not want to become bitter. “We don’t want to allow hatred to take hold, it only destroys you. The army has informed us that the four men in the pickup truck have all been found and are dead. But ultimately, that doesn’t help us either. We want to look ahead, focus on the good things in life; anything else is pointless.”

A Legacy of Hope *Eli Sharabi Honours His Wife and Daughters*



(Left) Eli Sharabi with Shalva's CEO, Yochanan Samuels, and Deputy Director, Itamar Shevach. (Right): Eli Sharabi with Yossi Samuels, the blind and deaf son of the founder of Shalva, Kalman Samuels. | Photos: Shalva Israel

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck Chair | Christians for Israel Austria

In memory of his wife Lianne and daughters Noya and Yahel, Eli Sharabi is turning profound personal loss into a legacy of hope and compassion. In partnership with Shalva, Israel's leading organisation for disability care and inclusion, the Shalva Sharabi Family Center currently under construction in Ashkelon will support families raising individuals with disabilities while also providing care for those coping with trauma and PTSD in Israel's southern communities.

The Sharabi Family

On 7 October 2023, as terrorists from Gaza burst into the Sharabi family home in Kibbutz Be'eri, Eli Sharabi and his wife, Lianne, thought only of their children. They threw their bodies over their two daughters, Noya (16) and Yahel (13), in a desperate attempt to protect them. As Eli was dragged from the house by gunmen, he made one final plea for their lives, shouting that his wife and daughters held British passports.

Realising he was being kidnapped, Eli turned back toward his family and called out, "I'll be back." It was the last time he ever saw them.

Eli Sharabi (53) spent 16 months (491 days) in filthy tunnels under the Gaza Strip with his legs chained, starving and enduring terrible hygienic conditions. He survived the horrors of captivity. But on the day of his release, another devastating truth awaited him. Turning to the social worker escorting him, he asked quietly, "Please bring me Lianne and my daughters." She replied, "Your mother and your sister will tell you." In that moment, Eli understood the bitter truth—his wife and daughters had been murdered. He learned that his wife and two teenage daughters had been killed in their home by the Hamas-led terrorists on the same day that he had been taken hostage.

Despite this profound loss, Eli has shown remarkable resilience. In his recently released book, *Hostage*, he writes: "I want to live. I love life. I choose life."

Those words, *L'Chaim*, to life, have become Eli Sharabi's guiding principle since his release.

In the aftermath of tragedy, Eli asked himself one question: "How do I honour the memory of my family?"

The answer lay in the values they lived by—dignity, compassion, and inclusion. His daughter Noya had volunteered for years with people with disabilities and

determined to transform grief into purpose, Eli made a decision. "I want to dedicate something in their memory at Shalva," he said. "That's what they would have wanted."

The new Shalva Center in Ashkelon, part of Israel's leading network of care for people with disabilities and their families, will be named the Sharabi Family Center.

A Continuation of Values

More than a building, the Center will reflect the compassion, inclusion, and responsibility for others that Lianne, Noya, and Yahel embodied.

The center will offer diagnostic evaluations, therapeutic services, and professional guidance for individuals with disabilities and their families, alongside specialised support for those affected by trauma following the 7 October attacks and the ongoing challenges facing the region.

Serving communities across Israel's south, including Ashkelon, Sderot, Netivot, Ofakim, and surrounding areas, the center will bring Shalva's multidisciplinary expertise closer to families who often struggle to access these essential services.

"I am honoured to introduce the Shalva Sharabi Family Center in Ashkelon, which will provide vital support for children with disabilities and their families," said Eli Sharabi. "My wife Lianne and our daughters Noya and Yahel always looked for ways to help others. It is my hope that the spirit of love and goodness they shared will continue through this center."

"This center represents the very heart of Shalva's mission," said Yochanan Samuels, CEO of Shalva. "Together with Eli Sharabi, we are ensuring that families in Israel's south, especially those facing the dual challenges of disability and trauma, receive the professional care, compassion, and community they need to rebuild and move forward."

The Shalva Sharabi Family Center stands as a powerful testament to resilience transforming loss into action and ensuring that families facing disability and trauma receive the care, support, and hope they deserve.

Support for Regional Trauma

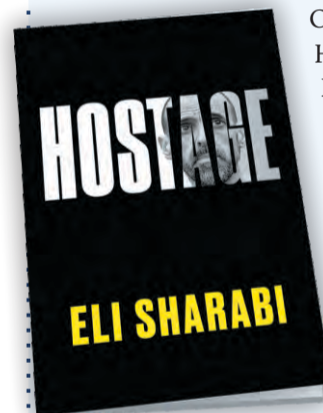
Located in an area deeply scarred by recent events, the Center will serve families facing disability, uncertainty, and emotional pain.

Professional Care with Human Warmth

The Center will offer high-level professional care alongside community, dignity, and belonging.

Eli Sharabi's story, and the Center established in his family's name, stands as a testament to lives taken too soon, and to the enduring human capacity to choose meaning, responsibility, and life, even after unimaginable loss.

Hostage The First Memoir by an Israeli Hostage by Eli Sharabi



On 7 October, 2023, Hamas terrorists stormed Kibbutz Be'eri, shattering the peaceful life Eli Sharabi had built with his British wife, Lianne, and their teenage daughters, Noya and Yahel. Dragged barefoot out of his front door while his family watched in horror, Sharabi was

plunged deep into the suffocating darkness of Gaza's tunnels. As war raged above him, he endured a gruelling 491 days in captivity—all the while holding onto the hope that he would one day be reunited with his loved ones.

In the first memoir by a released Israeli hostage, and the fastest-selling book in Israel's history, Sharabi offers a searing firsthand account of survival under unimaginable conditions—starvation, isolation, physical beatings, and psychological abuse at the hands of his captors.

Eli Sharabi's story is one of hunger and heartache, of physical pain, longing, loneliness and a helplessness that threatens to destroy the soul. But it is also a story of strength, of resilience, and of the human spirit's refusal to surrender. It is about the camaraderie forged in captivity, the quiet power of faith, and one man's unrelenting decision to choose life, time and time again.

Reminiscent of Elie Wiesel's *Night*, *Hostage* is a profound witness to history, so that it shall be neither forgotten nor erased.

“You Were Here Last Year Too”

Why Presence Matters in Israel

■ Leon Meijer

Executive Director | Christians for Israel Netherlands

“You were here last year as well,” an Israeli participant remarked at the *Generation of Truth: Combating Antisemitism* conference in Jerusalem. I smiled. “Did I make such an impression that you remembered me?” He shook his head. “No. You keep coming. You continue to stand with us. And that fills our hearts with gratitude.” It was a brief exchange at the end of January—easy to overlook, yet revealing. On the night flight to Israel, I had wondered whether the trip was worth it. Two days of sessions, speakers, and then straight back home. But that single comment captured something essential: for many Israelis, the simple act of showing up carries enormous weight.

A Presence That Speaks Louder Than Words

Christians for Israel International runs a wide range of activities: publishing books, producing videos, distributing a newspaper, organising teaching conferences, and providing prayer resources. These efforts help Christians worldwide understand Israel’s

biblical significance and stand with the Jewish people in their own communities.

In a world where false theology has entered churches—teaching that Israel no longer has a special place and that the Church has replaced her—it is vital to provide solid biblical teaching that shows otherwise. God’s covenant is irrevocable; Israel remains the apple of His eye. In a world where media outlets often spread misleading or false stories about Israel, it is crucial to counter those narratives and share reliable reports from the ground. Our work aims to offer clarity where confusion spreads, and truth where narratives distort.

We also support humanitarian projects, including a team in Ukraine assisting Jewish people who wish to make *Aliyah*. Comforting Israel is not just a calling; it is a responsibility we take seriously.

But Presence Still Matters

And yet, nothing replaces being physically present.

Israelis today often feel isolated. While international headlines focus on bombings in Iran, they rarely show the impact of the missile barrages on Israeli towns and

cities. More than 500,000 times, air raid sirens have sounded. Each alarm sends families—children, the elderly, the sick, the anxious—running for shelter.

In November 2025, during our *International Leadership Forum* in Jerusalem, we hosted an evening for Israeli guests. There were speakers, music, and food. For weeks afterward, messages kept coming in: “You came. You stand with us. We are deeply touched.”

A month later, when we travelled through Israel with twenty young people from twelve nations, strangers stopped them on the street. “Just the fact that you came means so much to us. Thank you.”

Continuing the Work—and the Commitment

Christians for Israel International will continue educating, informing, and supporting projects on the ground. But we will also keep doing something that cannot be printed, streamed, or shipped: we will keep showing up.

Because sometimes the most powerful message is simply this: “**You were here last year too.**”

Waiting Patiently

■ Ira Sulim-Carlier

Christians for Israel Ukraine

Yevgeny was born in 1947 in Magdeburg, Germany. His father was a Russian military officer, and his mother was a Jewish nurse from Belarus who managed to escape while most of her family—her mother and six sisters—perished in a mass grave during World War II.

After the war, the family remained in Germany near a Soviet military base. Later they moved to the Baltic countries, then to Saratov in Russia, and after several more relocations eventually settled in Krivoy Rog, Ukraine. There Yevgeny began his career building elevators. He also met his wife, Alfiya, and together they raised three daughters. A few years ago, he became a pensioner.

Yevgeny and Alfiya lived in the small village of Lozovatka near Krivoy Rog, where they were the only Jewish family. Their days were filled with the simple rhythms of rural retirement life—repairing the house, tending the garden, raising chickens and their twelve goats, and fishing in a small nearby lake. But the increasingly frequent sounds of shelling were constant reminders that their world was changing, and not for the better.

Eventually they made the difficult decision to move to Israel. At 79, it wasn’t easy to leave everything behind. Most of their belongings they gave away to people in the village, and their old house is now home to refugees from Melitopol, a city currently occupied by the Russian army.

After all the arrangements had been made, and just one day before their planned departure, the war with Iran began and all flights to Israel were cancelled. Yevgeny and Alfiya suddenly had nowhere to go. Their former home was already being used by



Yevgeny and Alfiya (middle) with our C4I field workers in Ukraine. Ira Carlier on the right. | Photos: C4I Ukraine

Ukrainian refugees, and travelling to Israel was no longer possible. There was no way back, so they called us and asked if we could bring them to Kishinov. They decided to wait there until the first opportunity to fly to Israel, hoping to arrive in time for an important event in their grandson’s life.

We hope they will make it in time—that neither war nor any other circumstances will stop them from continuing their journey—and that this new chapter of life in Israel will be filled with special shalom and the blessings of the Almighty.

Their departure reminded us of two Bible verses. In *Zechariah 2:6-7* we read: “*Flee from the land of the north and escape to Zion.*” And as the last Jewish family to leave the village of Lozovatka, their story also brings to mind the promise in *Ezekiel 39:28*—that none of His people will be left behind in the diaspora.





Are Israel and the US Permitted to Attack Targets in Iran?

■ Andrew Tucker

Director General | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (*thinc.*) | www.thinc.info

On the morning of Saturday 28 February 2026, the US (Operation Epic Fury) and Israel (Operation Lion's Roar) launched coordinated air strikes on Iranian military targets. These operations are primarily aimed at destroying Iran's missile, air force, naval and commando infrastructure. The attacks followed the failure of recent negotiations between the US and Iran regarding the Iranian nuclear programme.

Whilst some countries support these operations, there is also much criticism. Many international legal scholars believe that the actions of the US and Israel contravene Article 2.4 of the UN Charter, which prohibits the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state.

Their reasoning is that there was no threat of an 'imminent armed attack' by Iran—a prerequisite for invoking the right to individual or collective self-defence as recognised in Article 51 of the UN Charter. In their view, the other exceptions to the prohibition on the use of force—consent from the state concerned or authorisation by the



Israeli security forces near a fragment of a missile fired from Iran toward Israel, intercepted by Israeli air defense systems, seen lodged in the ground in the Golan Heights, 19 March 2026. | Photo: Flash90

Security Council—have also not been satisfied: they were either absent (consent) or were considered meaningless due to the deadlock in the Security Council (authorisation).

Professor Dr Geert-Jan Knoops rejects this conclusion. According to Knoops, it is simply impossible at this stage to determine whether or not Israel and the US faced a threat of an 'imminent armed attack' by Iran when Israel and the US

launched their operations. We simply do not know what evidence the US and Israel had at that time. It is quite possible that, despite the attack by the US and Israel in June 2025, they had evidence a few weeks ago that Iran is now indeed capable of carrying out an attack in the foreseeable future using nuclear weapons, and that Iran was threatening to carry out such an attack.

Other experts, such as Professor Geoffrey Corn of Texas Tech University—one of the world's leading experts on the law of war—argue that it is irrelevant whether there was an imminent attack by Iran. They believe that the actions of the US and Israel are legally justified because they form part of an existing and long-standing armed conflict between the US/Israel and Iran.

According to Corn, this armed conflict with Iran did not begin two weeks ago, or even a year ago. It began many years ago. Iran's long history of aggression—beginning with the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979, followed by the bombing of the naval barracks in 1983, the continued use of proxies (Hezbollah, Houthis, Hamas) and the pursuit of nuclear weapons, and the support for Hamas's attack on Israel in

October 2023—all bear witness to an ongoing aggressive agenda. This, he argues, confirms the ongoing nature of the armed conflict.

In an ongoing armed conflict, Corn argues, there is no requirement for a new threat assessment prior to each attack. Each state has the right to neutralise the other's capacity to continue posing a threat—provided they adhere to the laws of war. One of the principles of the laws of war is that each party may only target legitimate military objectives. Military infrastructure, command and control capabilities, missile launch and regrouping sites, and the leadership of the IRGC are all legitimate targets in this context. Targets such as oil production and refinery facilities are legally more complex; here, a clear demonstration of their significant contribution to the enemy's war effort and a clear military advantage in their destruction is required.

According to Corn, most legal scholars are too 'formalistic' in their approach. They fail to sufficiently recognise the complex reality of modern state security interests and the changing nature of threats posed by non-state actors and hybrid warfare. Professor Corn and his colleagues advocate a more pragmatic interpretation of international law that recognises the reality of ongoing, intense armed conflicts.

At the same time, Corn emphasises that state actors must articulate their legal rationale consistently and clearly. Professor Corn criticises the inconsistent rhetoric of the US government. President Trump's inconsistent statements, including references to the 'imminent threat' posed by the Iranian regime, weaken the legal basis of Operation Epic Fury. In contrast, he praises Israel's 'unapologetic' and coherent strategic communication, which emphasises the existence of a 'protracted armed conflict' with clear operational objectives.

The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) is a Netherlands-based think-tank specialising in international law and policy.



Israeli security and rescue forces inspect the damage at the scene where a missile fired from Iran toward Israel caused damage in Nahariya, March 26, 2026. Photo by David Cohen/Flash90

In and Out of Shelters

■ Sondra Oster Baras

International President | CFOIC
Heartland

More than two years ago, I began this regular column as a way to communicate to you the experiences of the terrible war that began on 7 October 2023. I would never have dreamt then that we would still be enmeshed in that same war today. The first nine months were catastrophic. The focus was on Gaza and the need to destroy Hamas and release our hostages. At some point, the fighting became less intense but persisted nevertheless until the final hostages, both alive and the remains of those who had died, were returned to Israel. But Hamas is still alive in Gaza, albeit weakened, and Israel remains in control of about half of the Gaza Strip, which requires ongoing vigilance and frequent fighting.

During this time, we experienced several rounds of fighting with Hezbollah in the north, including the amazing pager attack and ultimately, the removal of Hezbollah leader, Hasan Nasrallah. Despite the cease-fire that took effect in Southern Lebanon, the IDF retained a strategic presence in the area and continued to fight against Hezbollah and destroy their weapons caches as the opportunity arose. We were told that the threat from the north had been largely neutralised and the tens of thousands of residents of Kiryat Shmona and the smaller northern communities who had been evacuated in October 2023, were able to return home and rebuild their lives.

Iran attacked Israel with missile barrages several times during that period, including ongoing attacks from the Houthis in Yemen. In June of last year, there was all-out war with Iran, as we attempted to destroy their ballistic missile and nuclear capabilities. The US joined the effort and destroyed two vital nuclear sites, but shortly thereafter, they forced Israel to halt the fighting, leaving Iran's ballistic missile capability largely intact. Since then, Iran doubled down on their ballistic missile production and initiated steps to restart their nuclear programme.

On Saturday 28 February, the US and Israel jointly attacked Iran, taking out their top leadership and launching Operation Lion's Roar/Epic Fury to completely destroy Iran's military capability and enable regime change. Shortly afterward, Hezbollah launched missile attacks against Northern Israel. So here we are again, engaged in major warfare with Iran and their proxy terrorist group Hezbollah. The entire country has been running to bomb shelters for weeks and the people of



Yonatan and Libi were married days before the war, then drafted to separate bases in the north.

Northern Israel are practically living in bomb shelters because they have no advance warning of an attack. And although the circumstances change from month to month, we are still at war and life is not really normal.

I had gone to the US in February for a series of meetings and lectures to promote the work of CFOIC Heartland and to educate Christian audiences about Israel, about the war and about life in Judea and Samaria. While there, war talk coming out of Israel became far more serious than before and I made the decision to return to Israel earlier than scheduled. It was a wise decision.

Just before the war broke out, my nephew Yonatan got married (*photo above*). His older brother Amichai had fallen in this war just two years ago, in January 2024. The wedding was an amazing celebration of life after tragedy; even as we remembered Amichai and his terrible sacrifice, we celebrated the new family that was being created—life goes on. On the *Shabbat* following the wedding, the entire family of both bride and groom gathered together in Karnei Shomron to celebrate the new couple. As is the custom, we enjoyed large family meals together, with singing, blessings and Bible teaching. Friday night went without a hitch.

On Saturday morning, the first siren went off just after 8am. When we received the all-clear, we went to the synagogue as usual—we were not updated on exactly what was going on other than the fact that Israel had attacked Iran. The *Torah* reading that day included a special segment dedicated to the holiday of *Purim* which would fall just a few days later. We read *Deuteronomy 25:17-19* which reminds us of Amalek's attack against the Israelites

as they left Egypt, an attack that represents for us the evil of antisemitism as it has harmed us throughout the ages. Haman is associated with Amalek; hence, the custom to read these verses on the *Shabbat* preceding *Purim*, the day we celebrate our salvation from the wicked Haman of Persia some 2,500 years ago.

As the siren rang out and we rushed downstairs to the shelter of the synagogue, we kept repeating to ourselves the words from the end of *Deuteronomy 25*—destroy Amalek! Indeed, we believe that we are engaged in the battle against Amalek today in the form of modern-day Persia (Iran), even as our ancestors fought against Haman and ancient Persia. And then as now, we await God's salvation. As we read the Book of Esther on *Purim*, we felt as if we were reading current events—once again, we are threatened with annihilation by Persia and once again we fight and defeat our enemies with God's help.

During the coming days, we continued to run to the shelters, sometimes eight times a day, sometimes less and during the night as well. But spirits remained high throughout. In fact, as we gathered at night in our community shelter, pajamas and all, we were a bit groggy but settled into comfortable chats with our neighbours as if it were afternoon tea-time. Our shelter reflects our neighbourhood, mostly retirees with the occasional family with teen-age children. But in neighbourhoods comprised mostly of young families, there is singing and dancing, colouring and puzzles and other child-oriented activities to keep the children busy and happy.

In the meantime, my newly-married

nephew and his beautiful bride were both drafted into emergency reserve duty just days after their wedding. Thankfully they were both stationed in the north and, although at separate bases, they are able to see each other from time to time. But I am overwhelmed with gratitude to these two young people and others like them, who time and time again put their personal lives on hold to run to the defence of our people.

As I write this article, I have no idea when and how this battle will end. In Israel, we are unified in our determination to fight this war to the end. We cannot tolerate countries with both the capability and the determination to destroy us. We are patient as we sit in our bomb shelters, night and day, as our schools are closed and so many businesses remain paralysed. It is all worth it if we can rid ourselves of this terrible enemy and its proxies once and for all. We can no longer tolerate the threat of ballistic missiles from Iran, Iraq and Yemen firing at us at the whim of evil dictators. We will no longer sit tight while terrorist organisations like Hamas and Hezbollah and their patron states, Lebanon and Iran, rain terror upon us in the form of missiles and guerrilla warfare. Our people deserve a normal life and we are determined to return to normalcy.

Israel has shown itself in these recent years to be a regional power. The IDF is a full partner with the US in the battle against Iran, which is crazy when you think about it. Israel is smaller than the smallest state in the US and yet we have developed the technology and intelligence that is helping major superpowers defend themselves. God promised Abraham some 4,000 years ago that "*Through you all the Nations of the World will be blessed*" and today we are seeing that promise being fulfilled. But Israel can bless the world with far more than military know-how. We have become world leaders in technology, medicine and science. But the greatest blessing we have ever shared with the world is the knowledge of God. We hope and pray that peace will come to our region which will enable Israel to share with the world the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. For the good of all humanity!

Sondra Oster Baras is the Founder and International President of CFOIC Heartland, representing the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria to Christians all over the world. To support the urgent needs of the people of Judea and Samaria, during this terrible war, please use the form on the back page and select CFOIC (Christian Friends of Israeli Communities).

Fighting for Peace

■ His Excellency Alon Roth-Snir The Ambassador of Israel to New Zealand

Today, as these words are being written, a missile launched from Iran has struck the city of Arad in southern Israel. It hit residential buildings, wounded many dozens of people — including children — and was deliberately aimed at a civilian population.

“Seek peace and pursue it” (Psalms 34:14). “A time to be silent and a time to speak... a time for war and a time for peace” (Ecclesiastes 3).

This is perhaps the moral axis that best describes the heart of Israel. We are a small nation, surrounded by enemies, that has never ceased to pray for peace even as it has been repeatedly forced to fight for its very existence. For this reason, when Israel engages in confrontation with the regime in Iran, it is not a war of conquest, revenge, or arrogance. It is a defensive war. It is a war imposed upon us by a regime that has openly declared its intention to destroy Israel, that has spent years building a ring of terror around us, and that has already launched missiles and drones toward our civilians and our cities.

The Iranian regime does not settle for threats. It funds, trains, arms, and directs terrorist organisations and armed proxies across the Middle East. For many years, it has worked to destabilise nations, ignite fronts, and spread an ideology of death. When such a regime deliberately fires at civilian population centers, and when it repeatedly declares that its goal is to eradicate us, this is no longer a typical political dispute. It is a real, ongoing, and existential threat.

Every night of sirens, every family rushing to shelter, every child awakened in fear—these are reminders of the terrible price of a world in which evil is not stopped in time.

This is also the moral and legal foundation for Israel’s actions. Under international law, a state has the right—and indeed the duty—to defend its citizens against armed attack. The right of self-defence is not a legal loophole; it is a foundational principle of the international order. No country could reasonably be expected to accept a situation in which a hostile regime builds massive offensive capabilities over years, activates terrorist proxies on all sides, and launches weapons at its civilians—all without response. Expecting Israel to absorb such a threat is not more moral; it is simply recklessness wrapped in fine words.

It is important to say this as clearly as possible: our struggle is not against the Iranian people. On the contrary, many Israelis hold deep respect for the Iranian people—for their ancient history, their rich culture, and the courage shown by many of their sons and daughters who have bravely opposed oppression. The struggle is against an extremist, violent, theocratic regime that has turned hatred of Israel into a state doctrine, and terrorism into a strategic tool.

But beyond the legal question lies a deeper moral one: what distinguishes the sides? The answer lies not only in what we say, but in what we intend and whom we target.

Here lies the fundamental difference. Israel directs its actions against military targets, against the Revolutionary Guards, against terrorist infrastructures, and against decision-makers responsible for bloodshed



People take cover in a bomb shelter in Tel Aviv from incoming missiles fired from Iran, 19 March 2026. | Photo: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90

and aggression. The Iranian regime, by contrast, directs its weapons at cities, neighbourhoods, families, and children. Israel seeks to minimise harm to civilians; its enemies use civilians as targets, as shields, and as instruments of propaganda. These are not two equal sides of the same tragedy. This is a fundamental moral distinction between those who defend life and those who sanctify death.

There is also a tragic irony in a regime that brutally represses its own people, tramples their rights, and

Israel does not fight because it has ceased to love peace. Israel fights because it loves life.

As a person, and as a grandfather of three grandchildren—with another granddaughter to be born in a week—I write these words from a deeply personal place. The fear is real. It arises with every siren, with every thought of small children in shelters. Yet alongside the fear there is also clarity: the responsibility to protect our families and our citizens is not a choice—it is a duty. In that sense, the decision to fight is not only a matter of policy; it is a moral imperative.

Therefore, at this moment, support for Israel is not only a political position. It is also a moral one: standing with the right to life, with the essential distinction between good and evil, and with the hope that one day, swords will truly be turned into plowshares.

massacres its own citizens—yet seeks to present itself as a moral actor or a victim. The truth is simpler: a regime that threatens to destroy others, while simultaneously oppressing its own people, is dangerous both to its citizens and to its neighbours.

We do not rejoice in war. We do not glorify power. Every loss of life is a tragedy. Every night of sirens, every family rushing to shelter, every child awakened in fear—these are reminders of the terrible price of a world in which evil is not stopped in time. Precisely because we value human life, we understand that at times one must fight in order to protect it.

Today, between *Purim*—when we remember a moment in history in which we survived an attempt to destroy us—and the season of Easter and *Passover*, when themes of freedom, redemption, and hope are central, we are once again reminded of our enduring desire for peace. This has been demonstrated by the Abraham Accords, which have brought tangible cooperation, stability, and renewed hope to the region. Yet there is also a time for war: a moment when inaction is not moderation but moral weakness, because it abandons the innocent.

Peace can only come when forces of destruction are stopped, when terror ceases to be policy, and when those who threaten annihilation understand that they will not be able to carry out their threats. This is not a call for endless war. It is a call for moral responsibility.

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God's Love for Israel

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God loves Israel. You can find proof throughout the entire Bible. He chose Israel and set them apart to be His own people. The Bible uses various metaphors to describe this love: God calls Israel His firstborn son, and through the prophets. He also calls Israel His bride. In this reading plan, we invite you to join us as we dive deeper into God's love for Israel.

Ukraine—Four Years of War

The Work Continues

■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator | Holocaust Survivors Ukraine

24 February marked the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, the Ukraine team at Christians for Israel is working tirelessly to help Jewish communities in many ways. Here is a brief status report.

When Koen Carlier, head of our Ukraine ministry, was practically forcing supplies of mattresses and food on Jewish communities at the end of 2021, no one could have imagined that four years later, this Eastern European country on Europe's doorstep would still be burning and bleeding.

No one could have imagined that 30 years after the end of the Cold War, Russia would continue a war on Ukrainian territory that has already lasted longer for the population than the German occupation during World War II. The US Center for Strategic and International Studies estimates a total of 1.8 million casualties, including up to 140,000 dead on the Ukrainian side and 350,000 on the Russian side. Russia has not been able to break the will for freedom of the country, which has been independent for 35 years, and Ukraine, for its part, has not been able to repel the Russian occupation.

In the spring of 2022, the Russian front closed in like a crescent moon around the eastern half of Ukraine—from the shared border with Belarus in the north to the Black Sea in the south. After the planned blitzkrieg failed, the hell of the front line in the east solidified along the separatist districts of Luhansk and Donetsk. With the (re)opening of a second front in the north in the spring of 2024 and increasing attacks on cities along the Black Sea, Ukraine is once again surrounded by a pincer-like siege ring. It is no longer possible to travel north, south, or, for a long time now, east.

However, a drone or missile attack can hit any place at any time. When a guided drone enters Ukrainian airspace, it can take hours before it strikes or is neutralised. That is why in some places there are days when the air raid sirens hardly ever stop. And no one seeks safety anymore, because life must go on somehow.

What is new this winter is the now devastating state of the energy infrastructure, which is being attacked with increasing frequency—a key strategy in this war of attrition. While power outages were still a surprise in

the early years of the war, and the country was able to compensate for the outages after targeted Russian attacks with other power plants, days with only one or two hours of electricity are no longer an exception, even in the interior of the country. As soon as the lights come on, people rush to the power outlets to charge their cell phones and power banks and quickly cook something.

What was also unforeseeable four years ago is that we are still able to carry out our work in Ukraine; that our brave staff on the ground are still there, standing by the Jewish people wherever they need help and comfort. After the chaotic first months of the war, when all resources were being used to evacuate refugees, it became clear that all the aid provided so far would continue to be needed. The children of war from back then do not want to or cannot leave again now that they are elderly, and families often cannot bring themselves to part with their husbands, who are conscripted into military service and are not allowed to leave the country.

More than 10,000 hot meals are served each month in over 20 soup kitchens. The team, together with local helpers, packs an average of 2,000 food parcels per month. Ukrainian Jews are driven to consulate appointments and finally to the airport in Chisinau on the day of their departure—every week. And the survivors of the Holocaust are visited in their loneliness and given gifts. Alina made 700 visits last year to the Jewish seniors in our sponsorship programme.

Now the war has once again entered a critical phase. Targeted attacks on the remaining power plants have brought the country closer and closer to the brink of collapse, with double-digit sub-zero temperatures lasting for several weeks. It is the coldest winter since the war began. The fact that the mayor of Kiev called on the millions of inhabitants of this metropolis to leave the city was unprecedented. More than half a million people have left the city, and one million households in Kyiv are without electricity. No electricity also means no water. The frost has caused irreparable damage. How long will the country, will our team, be able to hold out?

“What keeps us going is the knowledge that we are not alone,” says Koen Carlier. “The prayers of our friends on the home front keep us going.”



In the early weeks of the war, many Ukrainian Jews fled to Israel in a mass exodus. Since then, our team has been taking individual families to the airport each week. For the elderly, starting again elsewhere is daunting, and men aged 18–60 have not been allowed to leave for four years. For those able to travel, the decision is difficult—but once made, our team provides practical help and loving encouragement. | Photos: C4I International



MEALS ON WHEELS—For many elderly in Jewish communities, a daily hot meal is no longer guaranteed. Widows and widowers often struggle alone, with pensions too small to cover food, medication, and heating. Many live in upper floors without lifts, making even basic tasks difficult, and support for families with disabilities is limited. C4I runs over 20 soup kitchens across Ukraine, providing around 10,000 kosher meals each month, prepared with care.



YOUTH ALIYAH—Through the Na'aleh and Selah programmes run by the Israeli Jewish Agency, Jewish teenagers can complete their final school years or further studies in Israel without their parents, supported throughout. At that age, they quickly learn the language and integrate; many remain, with families often joining later. In September 2025, Christians for Israel once again funded a flight for Jewish youth.



FOOD PACKAGES—Volunteers pack around 2,000 food parcels each month to support elderly Jewish community members amid ongoing hardship.

Biblical Prophecy, Iran, and Israel: *Interpreting Ancient Texts in a Modern Context*

■ Leon Meijer

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

The conflict between Iran and Israel is a struggle of all ages. What does the Bible say about Iran and Israel? I discussed this recently with Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer, President of Christians for Israel International.

Glashouwer's central argument is that the Bible contains many references to ancient nations—particularly Persia and Elam—that correspond geographically to present-day Iran. These texts provide insight into the spiritual and historical dynamics shaping the Middle East today.

The conflict between Israel and Iran cannot be understood solely as a modern political issue. Instead, it has deep historical and biblical roots. In the Bible, the region now known as Iran was called Persia or sometimes Elam, both of which appear in prophetic passages. These ancient kingdoms played important roles in biblical history, and their presence in prophecy suggests they might relate to modern events.

Persia's relationship with Israel in the Bible is not entirely negative. One of the most famous examples is the Persian king Cyrus the Great, who allowed the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon and rebuild the temple. This historical episode shows that Persia was at times supportive of the Jewish people. Therefore, biblical references to Persia should not automatically be interpreted as hostility toward Israel.

Despite this historical cooperation, Glashouwer notes that some prophetic passages suggest that Persia—or regions associated with it—may play a role in conflicts involving Israel. One of the most significant examples he discusses is found in the book of *Ezekiel*, particularly chapters 38 and 39. In this prophecy, a coalition of nations gathers against Israel under the leadership of a figure known as Gog from the land of Magog. Among the nations listed as part of this alliance is Persia.

This reference to Persia may correspond to modern Iran. Glashouwer suggests that current tensions between Iran and Israel could potentially align with the broader pattern described in Ezekiel's prophecy. Nevertheless, he stresses that the exact details and timing of such events remain uncertain. Prophetic texts often contain symbolic language and should not be treated as precise predictions of contemporary



| Photo: Canva AI

political developments.

The book of Jeremiah also includes a prophecy concerning Elam. Historically, Elam was located in what is now southwestern Iran. In Jeremiah's prophecy, Elam experiences judgment and upheaval, followed by a promise of restoration. Glashouwer suggests that this passage might indicate a period of significant change or turmoil affecting that region. Yet he also cautions that the prophecy may have had an earlier historical fulfillment and therefore should not be interpreted too narrowly.

In addition to political and historical analysis, Glashouwer emphasises that the Bible speaks about the spiritual conflict behind world events. For example, the book of Daniel refers to the mysterious figure described as the 'prince of Persia.' In Daniel's vision, this spiritual being opposes a messenger from God for twenty-one days. Many theologians interpret this passage as an example of spiritual forces influencing earthly kingdoms.

For Glashouwer, this idea helps explain why conflicts surrounding Israel seem to recur throughout history. He argues that the struggle involving Israel is not merely geopolitical but also spiritual in nature. In his view, the biblical narrative portrays Israel as central to God's plan for humanity, which means that the nation often becomes the focus of global tension and opposition.

The discussion also touches on the significance of modern Israel's existence. Glashouwer notes that the re-establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 is widely viewed by many Christians as the fulfillment of biblical promises about the return of the Jewish people to their ancestral land. This restoration, he suggests, has renewed interest in prophetic passages that mention Israel and the surrounding nations.

Nevertheless, Glashouwer warns against using prophecy as a tool for predicting exact political events. Instead, he encourages viewers to approach biblical prophecy with humility and careful interpretation. Prophetic literature often contains symbolic imagery and complex historical references, which makes it difficult to draw direct connections between ancient texts and modern geopolitical situations.

In the final part of the interview, Glashouwer shifts the focus from conflict to hope. While many prophetic passages describe wars and turmoil, they ultimately point toward a future in which God restores peace and justice. According to Christian theology, the culmination of biblical prophecy involves the coming of the *Messiah* and the establishment of God's kingdom. Studying prophecy should inspire faith and reflection rather than speculation or fear. The purpose of prophecy, Glashouwer argues, is not simply to predict political developments but to remind believers that history ultimately unfolds according to God's plan.

The Sermon

In this series, we examine the Beatitudes and how they guide us in experiencing true happiness in God's Kingdom.

The Sermon on the Mount is the first of five major discourses given by Jesus in the Gospel of *Matthew* (chapters 5 to 7). In it, Jesus explains the constitution of the Kingdom. As a teacher, He was sitting on the mountain teaching His disciples, while the people who had flocked from all over the country (see *Matthew 4:25*) remained at the foot of the mountain. This is reminiscent of the time when Moses received the *Torah* on the mountain and taught it to the elders of the people, who waited at the foot of the mountain.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with eight 'beatitudes'. Actually, there are nine, but in the last one the disciples are addressed directly, while the first eight are stated in general terms, in the third person.

By contrast, the Beatitudes as recorded in Luke, are all direct statements. Luke mentions four Beatitudes (*Luke 6:20-22*) at the beginning of a speech that he situates on a 'level place' (*verse 17*) and is therefore called the 'Sermon on the Plain'. Three of these correspond to the Beatitudes in Matthew. One ("*blessed are you who weep now*") is different. This brings the total number of Beatitudes to ten—a beautiful biblical number. God spoke Ten Words on Sinai and at creation.

What does 'blessed' actually mean? There are

various Hebrew words that could be the basis for the Greek word '*makarios*'. The most obvious is the word *ashrei*, which we know e.g. from *Psalms 1*, which sings the praises of those who walk in the way of God's commandments. Then you will prosper: "*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked ... but finds pleasure in the law of the Lord.*" That is to say, those who gladly do God's law, think about it, and fill their lives with it. Then you will prosper. You could almost say that circumstances do not matter. You feel good about it.

Ashrei is related to the Hebrew word *osher*, which means happiness. So, 'blessed' actually means 'happy'—ten times happy, if we take all the beatitudes together. We hope to reflect on this in the coming series.

The Mystery of Israel and the Gentiles

■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

In this article we continue our study of Romans 11, focusing on the ‘mystery’ referred to in Romans 11:25.

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” Romans 11:25-27.

In the Old Testament the word ‘mystery’ (ἔκρυπτος—μυστήριον/mysterion) appears only in the Book of Daniel. The meaning of the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar are a mystery, which “the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers” of the Babylonian King are unable to decipher (Daniel 2:27). Daniel and his trusted companions ask the ‘God of Heaven,’ and He reveals to Daniel the meaning of the dream, the mystery, ‘in a night vision’ (2:18-19). During the course of the story the King realises: “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery” (Daniel 2:47 ESV).

Every ‘mystery’ in a biblical sense requires an interpretation. A human being is not able to explain a mystery by himself. No person, solely on the basis of his own experience or logical thought, can understand a mystery. In order to understand a mystery, a direct word from God, a divine revelation (ἀποκάλυψις/apokalypsis), is necessary. Thus, in the Book of Daniel, God is simply referred to as the One who ‘reveals secrets’ (2:29,47).

In the New Testament, the use of parables and symbols is also referred to as a ‘mystery’ (μυστήριον/mysterion). Thus, Jesus speaks to his disciples ‘in parables,’ for it is given to them ‘to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’. Paul calls what the Bible says about marriage a ‘mystery’ and interprets them as a parable for the relationship between Messiah and his body (Ephesians 5:31-32). In Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, several ‘mysteries’, that is, images or symbols, are explained to the seer John (Revelation 1:20; 17:5,7).

But here, in Romans 11:25, the Apostle Paul employs neither a comparison nor an image when conveying a ‘μυστήριον/mysterion’ to his Gentile Christian readers in Rome. Rather, he refers to the second chapter of his first Letter to the Corinthians. There he speaks of “God’s wisdom hidden in a mystery, which the [one, true] God decreed before the ages for our glory” (verse 7).



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In Colossians 2:2-3, Paul calls the Messiah Jesus, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, the “mystery of the (one and living) God”. He explains this ‘mystery of godliness’ in more detail to his disciple Timothy: “He was revealed in flesh, justified in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).

In Ephesians, Paul calls God’s plan “to unite everything in the Messiah as head, both, what is in heaven and what is on earth” the “mystery of his will” (Ephesians 1:9-10; compare also Ephesians 3:8-10). In chapter three he explains the “mystery of Messiah” (verse 4) “which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy Apostles and prophets in the Spirit” (verse 5): “The Gentile nations are co-heirs with Israel and part of the body of Christ. They are partakers of the promise in Messiah Yeshua through the gospel” (verse 6).

To the Colossian Church, Paul goes into raptures about the “wealth of the glory of this mystery” that Messiah is now no longer merely to be sought in Israel, but also found “among the Gentiles”: “Messiah in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:25-27). At the end of Romans, Paul focuses on “the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for eternal times, which has been, however, disclosed now through prophetic writings according to the command of the eternal God”. This mystery is “to make known the obedience of faith among all the Gentile nations” (Romans 16:25-26; 1:5-6).

Paul also talks about the μυστήριον/mysterion) that, “not all of us shall fall asleep, but all of us will be transformed, suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, at the time of the last trumpet.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Finally, this word is also used in the context of the person of lawlessness, whom the Lord Jesus will “consume with the spirit (breath) of his mouth” (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8). In our current context in Romans 11:25, the Apostle describes God’s action with regard to Israel as a ‘mystery’.

“It is a fact that of all the writers of the New Testament, only the Apostle Paul writes of the great and extensive mysteries of God” (Schacke, 255). The Apostle admonishes the deacons of the Church to “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Timothy 3:9). He refers to himself as a “servant and steward of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1) and asks for intercession “that the word may be given to me when I open my mouth to proclaim the mystery of the gospel boldly” (Ephesians 6:18-19). At the same time he is aware of the fact that it is “the mystery of Messiah for which I am also in bonds” (Colossians 4:3).

To the prophet Daniel the knowledge of the mysteries of God was one step in his remarkable political career. But the gifted statesman knew: “My wisdom does not exceed the wisdom of any living” (Daniel 2:30). The revelation of a mystery is always a sign of God’s loving attention, never a proof of human achievements.

In Memoriam

Yochanan Visser

At the beginning of March Christians for Israel received word that our valued analyst Yochanan Visser passed away. For many years, Yochanan devoted himself with great dedication to keeping readers informed and providing them with insight into developments in Israel and the Middle East.

With great dedication and a keen eye for detail, Yochanan kept readers of *Israel & Christians Today* and the Christians for Israel website informed

about developments in Israel and the Middle East. Especially in the period following the attack of 7 October 2023, he maintained blogs in which he closely followed and analysed the events surrounding the war in Gaza.

Yochanan believed that true dialogue starts with a willingness to listen and, where necessary, to change one’s perspective. This requires courage—one he exemplified and hoped to inspire in his readers.



Liberation and Restoration

■ Kees de Vreugd

Theologian | Christians for Israel
International & Editor | Israel & the
Church

Pesach celebrates the liberation from the bondage of Egypt. The People of Israel were slaves of the Pharaoh in Egypt (*Exodus 1*). But the Lord heard their cry and delivered them from Egypt and brought them to the land that He had promised to their forefathers (*Exodus 6*).

The exodus from Egypt is the foundational experience of the People of Israel. It is remembered every year, not just as an event in the past, important as it may be, but as a personal experience of every Jew in every generation. One of the rules of telling the story on *Pesach* is that each person must see himself or herself as if they had personally left Egypt. And so, in many communities it is customary to share personal experiences of liberation at the *Seder* table (*Seder*, lit. 'order', is the Hebrew term for the *Passover* banquet on the first evening of *Pesach*: families gather around the dinner table, tell together the stories of the exodus according to the *Haggadah*, i.e. the texts that comprise the liturgy of the evening, and share the meal, including the *matzah*—unleavened bread—and four cups of wine).

The *Pesach* experience is expressed in many ways in the liturgy. *Pesach* lasts seven days; the first and the last days are 'holy convocations'. It is remarkable that, on the *Shabbat* falling in the intermediate days of the feast, in the synagogue service, the *Haftarah* (reading from the Prophets) is *Ezekiel 37:1-14*—the vision of the valley of the dry bones. Obviously, the plain meaning of the prophecy is



Table served for *Passover Seder (Pesach)*. | Photo: Shutterstock

about the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian exile. People had lost all their hope (*verse 11*). If hope is lost, all is lost. They felt like being dead in a foreign land, far from the holy city and the temple. In that situation, *Ezekiel* was bringing a message of hope, because God would interfere and return the exiles to Jerusalem—a new *Pesach* experience.

However, it has also always been understood, both in Judaism and in Christianity, as a prophecy of the resurrection of the dead. The ancient rabbis in the *Talmud* discussed the question whether the vision is to be understood literally ('in truth') or as a parable. The answer should be: yes! It is both. As concluded in the *Talmud*: 'In truth, it was a parable.' Jewish understanding never separates the

spiritual from the material. The liberation from Egypt is both physical and spiritual. It is going from the land of bondage to the land of freedom; from slavery to serving the Lord. The return from the exile in Babylon is designated as life from the dead (*Romans 11:15*). The restoration of Israel thus becomes a metaphor for the resurrection of the dead. And conversely, in the end of time, the resurrection of the dead will be a sign of the final restoration of Israel. In contemplating that, we also consider the absolute unity of Jesus with His people Israel. If the New Testament understands Jesus' life and ministry, culminating in His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave, in terms of the biblical history of Israel, then His resurrection is also proleptic of the restoration of Israel. Or in other words, in His resurrection, the restoration of Israel is vindicated.

Today, I believe, we cannot read this chapter on the resurrection of the dry bones without bearing in mind the *Shoah* and the establishment of the State of Israel, three years after the *Shoah*, as a new *Pesach* experience in our times. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, has an artwork that connects the *Shoah* to the prophecy of the dry bones. The mass graves of Europe were opened, and the bones were collected and brought to life in the newborn State of Israel. "Our hope is not lost"! is a key line in the national anthem of Israel, which is aptly titled '*Hatikvah*', the hope—a true reversal of the hopelessness of the exiles in Babylon.

Israel is coming home, again. No war or hostile treatment of the nations can stop that. *Messiah* is gathering His people, restoring them to the Land, and to God's covenant.

Biblical Roots By David Nekrutman

Why Passover is Your Memory

For many Christians, the word '*Passover*' triggers a mental shortcut straight to the Upper Room. The Exodus? That is often filed away as 'Jewish History'—a dusty chronicle of someone else's ancestors wandering a desert 3,300 years ago. But there is a massive spiritual cost to viewing the Bible strictly as history: History is what happens to others; memory is what happens to me. Think of a family photo album. No one points to a picture and says, "There is a documented historical account of a 20th-century graduation." They say, "That's me." The Bible consists of photographic textual memories. When you view these sacred texts as your own identity rather than data points, the disconnect vanishes.

Biblical memory isn't about nostalgia; it is a past episode lived in the present moment for the sake of the future Kingdom. On *Passover*, we aren't just reading about ancient slaves; we are experiencing the transition from the bitter taste of bondage to the fresh air of freedom. This isn't what happened to 'them'; it is what is happening to us.

Once we feel that freedom, we must confront its responsibility. In modern society, freedom is often defined as 'doing whatever I want.' However, this paradigm rarely aligns with God's will.

A free God created human beings in His image, hoping they would freely choose Him to actualise His will in the world. God knows the danger: unchecked freewill often views others as transactional entities used to gratify immediate desires. At its extreme, this becomes the tyranny of Pharaoh.

Passover, like the other holidays in *Leviticus 23*, acts as a cyclical period to reflect on these 'Big Ideas.' If the New Year asks us to reflect on God as King, *Passover* asks us what it means to be truly free subjects.

The foundation of this freedom is how we use our time. The biblical sense of time goes beyond the construct of past, present, and future; it is the belief that every moment is an opportunity to sanctify His will.

For the Christian, *Passover* is an invitation to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Jewish people in the original redemptive moment of sacred history. We don't just 'study' the Exodus; we join the narrative. By embracing the Exodus as our own foundational memory, we recognise that our faith is rooted in a God who breaks chains and calls a people out of darkness.

On *Passover* evening, we become storytellers in a shared covenant. We celebrate the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ensuring that this inclusive narrative of liberation continues until the day of ultimate redemption for all.

The Bible Speaks

The Mountain of Expectation

"On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem." *Zechariah 14:4*

The prophet Ezekiel witnesses how the Glory of God leaves the temple and the city of Jerusalem and settles on the Mount of Olives (*Ezekiel 11*). The exile of Judah begins. But he is also allowed to prophesy about the return of the Lord to the new temple at the end of time (*Ezekiel 43:4*). The words of God sound powerful: "This is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the Israelites forever."

Another prophet, Zechariah, also speaks about this. He tells how God is inflamed with zeal for Jerusalem, and that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives when Israel is threatened (*Zechariah 8 and 14:4*). And that is why it is not without reason that Jesus reveals to His disciples here what will happen in the future and how there will be signs in the heavens before the great day of the Kingdom arrives.

Based on: <https://www.c4israel.org/news/biblical-significance-of-the-mountain-of-olives/>

Operation Epic Fury: Was the War between Iran and the US/Israel Inevitable?

■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

Note: We are temporarily departing from our Israel and Iran series—dealing with the past and future—to focus on the war that broke out on 28 February 2026).

It was the *Sabbath* morning in Israel when the air raid sirens were activated, beckoning the population to their closest bomb shelter. War had broken out between Israel and its archenemy, Iran. Operation Epic Fury (US name) had begun. For the first time, Israel was not fighting alone but alongside its great ally, the United States. Comparisons have been frequently made between Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Sir Winston Churchill with US Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Donald Trump. If the current leadership wins its war as World War II leaders won theirs, the comparison will hold.

Iran has never been weaker: high inflation, no public support... It has sustained much damage in two recent wars.

Operation Epic Fury was meticulously designed and flawlessly executed. With the failure of negotiations, Israel and the US sincerely believed that Iran was a growing threat, so they swung into action. Israel sent out two hundred flights, and each plane had two targets each. In amazingly swift speed, the allies sank Iran's navy and took control of its airspace. With one attack, they destroyed the bunker of the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, killing him and forty eight other targeted leaders. Three days later, the allies bombed the Assembly of Experts meeting where the next supreme leader was to be chosen.

As of this writing, Israel and the US continue to pursue their military objectives.

Why War?

The Islamic Republic of Iran was established in 1979 after abolishing the Persian monarchy, which lasted twenty-five-hundred years, all the way back to Cyrus the Great. Their goal was to establish a theocratic, fundamentalist, puritanical Shiite Islamic republic. The regime that would expand into the Sunni Arab Muslim world, destroy Israel, and into the rest of the world (minus the United States).

Ali Khamenei was Supreme Leader from 1989. For the previous eight years served as the country's President. Patient,

ruthless, and tireless in the goal of fusing political Shiite Islam with the power of a nation-state, Khamenei focused on nothing else. He was a dedicated revolutionary.

Like his mentor and predecessor, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, he constantly emphasised the following:

- Shia Islam is the one true religion.
- Iran, like ancient Persia, is ordained for hegemony.
- Only a high-ranking Shiite cleric is qualified to run the country as the Supreme Leader and must not be questioned.
- Nuclear power is Iran's right. For this reason, the clerical regime would never forsake its nuclear programme. It spent decades in time and \$1 trillion in money to get to this point. Regime supporters would be outraged if they abandoned it now.

- Khomeini and Khamenei both saw America and Israel, the great Satan and little Satan respectively, and as impediments to Iran's goals. Their soon and quick demise was declared repeatedly.

Iran fought a dirty, bitter, costly war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq (1980-88). Khomeini provoked Saddam's initial invasion, and though the war could have ended after two years, Khomeini's stubbornness stretched it out to eight. The war cost one million soldiers and gained nothing. Khomeini was dead in less than a year, leaving his successor with a broke, unsettled, and drifting nation.

Khamenei's response to this challenge was the development of the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps). Under his leadership, the IRGC has grown into an economic and military powerhouse. They serve the Supreme Leader alone and are fiercely, even fanatically, loyal to him. It is this group that must be dealt with if Iran is to break completely free from the dictatorial clerical rule it has been under for nearly fifty years.

Was This War Inevitable?

Critics of Operation Epic Fury like to say that Iran was not an imminent threat, and this was Trump's 'war of choice.' Question: Iran cannot attack the US mainland presently (so it is attacking US

military bases in the Middle East). Should it wait until Iran has nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles that can reach the continental United States before attacking? Or wait until Iran deploys EMP technology that can knock out the nation's power grid for months and years?

The war between Iran and Israel/US started in 1979. From then there have been weekly public demonstrations chanting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." And Iran has backed up its bellicose rhetoric with action. The key weapon to spreading the revolution is terror. Iran's 'Shia Crescent' are subservient nations between Iran and the Mediterranean who will protect its interests. The 'crescent' is really a terror empire consisting of Iraq's Shiite militia, Syria's Assad regime (now deposed), Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza and the Houthis in Yemen. These proxies have been conducting terrorist attacks around the world, including Australia and the UK. Twice, Iran has targeted Donald Trump for assassination.

The recent pre-war negotiations had the following American demands:

1. Iran is to cease its nuclear enrichment programme. The fear is that if Iran gets the bomb, it will use it.
2. Cease its ballistic missile programmes.
3. Stop funding the terror proxies and terrorist activities globally.

What are the chances that the ruling mullahs are prepared to agree to these conditions? Their current rhetoric and past actions don't provide much hope. While Iranian leadership can be surprisingly pragmatic, they can be unbending with the fundamentals, even if it risks the apocalypse.

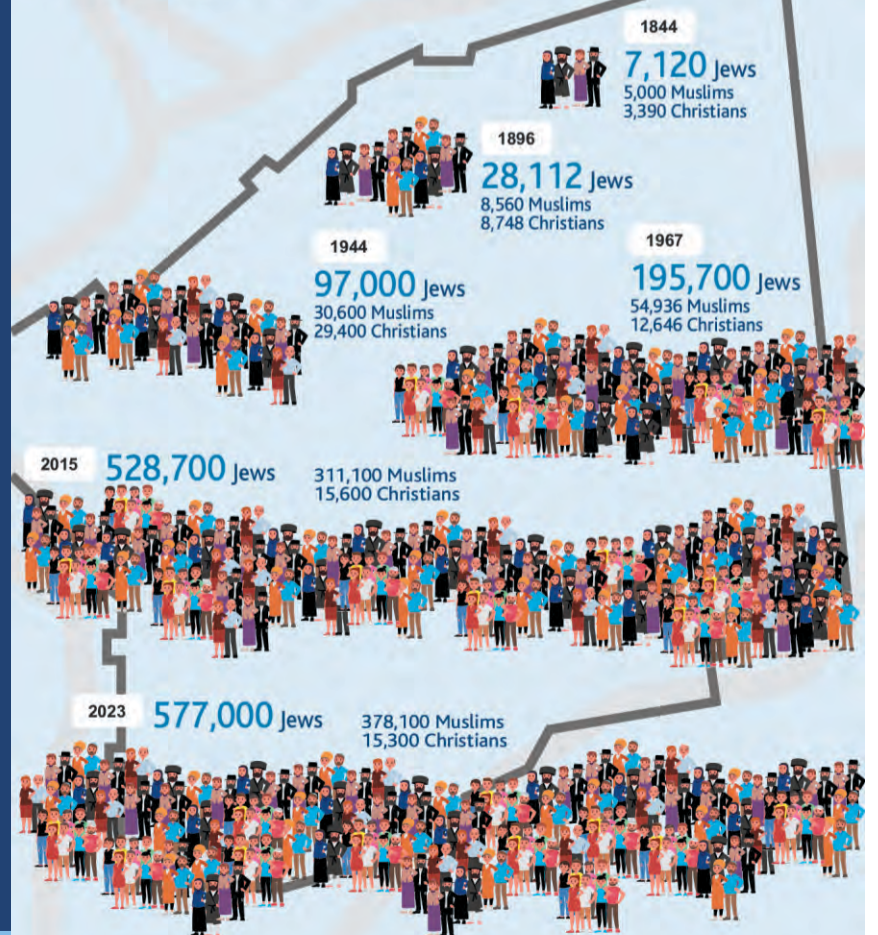
Iran has never been weaker: high inflation, no public support, forsaken by Russia, China, and the proxies. It has sustained much damage in two recent wars. Plus, Iran has a super serious water shortage. The timing for a military strike seemed ideal.

The question is: did Donald Trump choose to start a war or simply choose the timing to end it? You decide.

With the Jewish holiday of *Purim* which coincided with the start of the war, it looks like the modern-day Mordecai will defeat Haman, "For such time as this" (*Esther 4:14*).

Facts Speak

Population of Jerusalem through the Centuries



Short News

Investment in Eilat's Water Supply



Israel plans to significantly expand the water supply in the southern resort town of Eilat. The national water company Mekorot plans to increase the capacity of a desalination plant and build additional infrastructure. The project will cost approximately 800 million shekels and is expected to double the supply of drinking water in the region in the coming years. According to Israel's Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, the expansion is necessary due to population growth, tourism, and agricultural development in the area. With this investment, Israel also aims to strengthen its reputation as a global leader in water technology. Through efficient desalination, the country can produce sufficient drinking water for residents and businesses despite drought conditions. Work on the plant's expansion has now officially begun. | Photo: Flash90

2nd Temple Period Workshop

Archaeologists in Jerusalem have made a remarkable discovery: a workshop where stone jars were produced about two thousand years ago. In a cave on the slopes of Mount Scopus, researchers found hundreds of unfinished jars and remnants of production waste. According to the Israel Antiquities Authority, the workshop dates to the Second Temple period. The find provides new insights into the daily life and religious practices of Jews during that time.

Israel 8th in Global Happiness Survey

Israel ranked eighth in the latest World Happiness Report published in March, maintaining its position for the second consecutive year. Israel's ranking has steadily improved since 2021. Israelis have a sense of meaning and purpose, which contributes to their overall satisfaction with life. Notably, Israelis under 25 were the happiest group within Israeli society, ranking third globally in their age group. This contrasts with many other Western nations. Young Israelis appear to be much more grounded compared to their international peers.

European Jews: Beginning of Jewish Immigration—Part 2

■ Edda Fogarollo

Historian | President | Christians for Israel Italy

In the previous article we explored how rising antisemitism and violent pogroms in Eastern Europe convinced Jewish thinkers that emancipation alone was not enough. Facing persecution and insecurity in the late 1800s, figures like Leo Pinsker (a loyal subject of the Russian Tsar) began to argue that the Jewish people needed a homeland of their own to ensure safety, unity, and national self-determination.

The need for a 'homeland' was felt in France a few decades earlier, where the new era unfolded by the French Revolution enabled Jews to enjoy judicial equality and rights as well as filling important political posts. For example, the Jew Adolphe Crémieux was twice elected as minister. He was sent to Syria in 1840 together with another famous exponent of European Judaism, the Englishman of Italian origin Moses Montefiore, in order to follow the unfolding of a case known as the 'Damascus affair'. This involved some Jews being accused of ritual homicide.

After his return to Paris, Crémieux was astonished to discover that numerous French leaders showed antisemitic attitudes and wondered where this might lead in other European countries where Jews did not enjoy the same equal rights as in France. These circumstances made him more aware of the need to rebuild the ancient native country of the people of Israel. And so he actively participated in the establishment of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. Founded in 1860 thanks to the initiative of a group of six well-known Jewish people in Paris and the help of Crémieux, who later became the chairman, the Alliance aimed to make up for the lack of a central social structure within the Jewish community and had the mission to become a "centre of moral progress, religious solidarity and protection for all those who suffer because of their condition of being Jew".

And so Zionism turned out to be an ideology awaiting a leader: establishing some settlements in remote areas of Palestine did not mean laying the foundations for a national state.

After the foundation of the Alliance, Crémieux threw his weight behind the project of Charles Netter for the creation of an agrarian school in Palestine with the aim of teaching agriculture to the Jews and preparing them for the rebuilding of their nation. "If you accept my proposal," Netter wrote, "this will represent a great leap forward. You will show the public that the Jews can work the land, and you will reclaim possession of the Holy Land, where our ancestors proclaimed the uniqueness of the Creator." In 1870, Netter travelled to Constantinople and obtained a decree from the Ottoman Sultan authorising him to purchase about 3,000 dunam (roughly corresponding to 3,000 hectares) of land on behalf of the Alliance. The latter provided 100,000 francs for the construction of the agrarian school, called *Mikveh Israel* (Hope of Israel), and to ensure its functioning during the first three years.

The Beginning of Jewish Emigration From Eastern Europe and the First Zionist Associations

In Russia, following the terror and violence ignited in 1881, a new policy of repression was introduced with a set of laws and decrees that further discriminated against the Jews and isolated them from the rest of the people. Thousands of Jewish farmers were forced to abandon their fields in search of better security in the cities while those who had the means could



Mikveh Israel, before 1899. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

leave for other lands from the port of Odessa—heading for the US, Canada, South America or Western Europe with the hope of finding a better life. This marked the beginning of mass emigration between 1881 and 1914 when about 2.5 million Jews left the lands of the vast Russian empire.

During this period, a small number of emigrants decided to establish some agricultural settlements in Palestine. In order to facilitate this movement, various secret associations emerged under the umbrella of *Chovevei Zion* ("Those who love Zion"), which later became part of *Chibbath Zion* ('Love for Zion'). Among the by-laws of these associations, founded by students of St Petersburg, was the rule: "Every son of Israel who acknowledges there is no salvation for Israel unless he establishes a government in the Land of Israel is accepted." Among the associations were members of Bilu, students of the University of Kharkov who gave the Zionist movement a certain pioneer mysticism when they left for Palestine. Once there, they started to work as day labourers for the agrarian school and, with great effort, managed to survive. Life was not

easy either for them or for those emigrants of other Zionist associations: apart from the hard work on the rough terrain, they also had to endure difficult relations with the Arabs along with continuous suspicion by the Turkish government.

Poverty and disease, especially malaria, were endemic. Survival was only possible thanks to the subsidies granted by those who supported the Zionist cause from Russia, who collected enough funds to support as many as 15 to 20 families a year, and later contributions from Poland and Western Europe came. But the money collected was still not enough to sustain the dream of emancipation, though the programme of immigration had managed to send some 20,000 to 30,000 people to the Land between 1881 and the beginning of 1900.

However, many of these eventually returned to Russia or moved to the West. Hardship emerged both within the *Chovevei Zion* and in Palestine because of the Turkish government. The wave of emigration worried the Ottomans who suspected Russian conspiracy to establish a bridgehead in their territory and finally forbade Russian Jewish immigration and land purchase in the region. And so Zionism turned out to be an ideology awaiting a leader: establishing some settlements in remote areas of Palestine did not mean laying the foundations for a national state.

Myth: 'Israel Occupies Land Belonging to Another People'

■ Bryce Turner

Executive Director | Christians for Israel New Zealand

Faced with a barrage of misinformation, distortions, and blatant lies, supporters of Israel are constantly challenged to defend their position. We begin a feature addressing this issue, bringing information and resources to combat these myths. Oscar Lohuis of the Netherlands has written specifically on this topic, and we thank him for permission use his work in this section.

Myth: 'Israel Occupies Land Belonging to Another People'

Many believe that Israel is occupying land that rightfully belongs to the Palestinians, and that the Jews have taken this land from another people. But who exactly are the Palestinians?

From the 1960s onwards, Yasser Arafat, the Egyptian-born (!) leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), began to hijack the term 'Palestinian'. By this, I mean that he attempted to define only the Arabs who fled Israel in 1948 and their descendants as 'Palestinians'. In 1948, when the State of Israel was established, about 750,000 Arabs—encouraged by neighbouring Arab countries—left Israel. Much of this was not an expulsion, but rather the result of the surrounding conflict, leaving these Arabs as refugees.

It is noteworthy that until the mid-20th century, it was primarily Jews in Palestine who called themselves 'Palestinians', not Arabs. For instance, one of the Jewish Zionist newspapers in Palestine was called *The Palestine Post*, which later became known as *The Jerusalem Post*. Additionally, the Jewish football team from Palestine, which participated in international competitions, was known as the 'Palestinian football team'.

I remember that one summer our neighbour's house was rented out by Israelis when they were on vacation. We got to know them and were engaged in animated conversations. At one point, the husband mentioned: "I am of Palestinian descent." I was looking at him, thinking, "he doesn't look very Arab." But then it clicked. What he meant was that his ancestors on his father's side had lived in Palestine for many generations. Jews in Palestine referred to themselves as Palestinians long before the Arabs did. Many Arabs identified primarily as Muslims or Mohammedans. The concept of a purely Arab Palestinian people has never existed. While the idea of an 'Arab Palestine' is widespread, it simply isn't historically accurate.

Palestine Three Hundred Years Ago

The composition of the population of Palestine at the end of the 17th century sheds significant light on the historical context of the region. In 1695, Dutch scholar Adriaan Reland—born in Utrecht—published a book in Latin titled *Palestine* illustrated on the basis of old monuments.¹ It is about the Palestine of that time. Reland was not only a philologist, but also a geographer, cartographer, and traveller. He was fluent in several European languages, as well as Arabic, Ancient Greek and Hebrew. In his work, he examined nearly 2,500 places and former settlements mentioned in the Bible. He also recorded the population size of these locations as they existed in his own time.²

Some of the most important findings and conclusions about Palestine at that time include:

- The land is mainly empty and desolate, with very sparse population. The most important and densely inhabited towns are Jerusalem, Acre, Tzfat (Safed), Jaffa, Tiberias and Gaza.
- The majority of the population consists of Jews and Christians. Muslims were a small minority, most of them Bedouins.
- Nazareth, the capital of Galilee, has about 700 residents—all of whom are Christians.
- Jerusalem has a population of about 5,000 people, nearly all of whom are Jews, with a small number of Christians.
- Tiberias and Tzfat are inhabited exclusively by Jews.
- Gaza has approximately 550 residents, half of them Jews, and half Christians. There were no Muslims living in Gaza at that time.
- In 1695, it is common knowledge that the land's historical roots are Jewish.
- None of the settlements in Palestine had names of Arab origin, except for the city of Ramla.
- Nearly all place names have Jewish origins, with some Greek or Roman (Latin) names.
- Jews are successful in agriculture, particularly in vineyards, olives groves and wheat production. Christians are active in trade and transportation. Reland only mentions Muslims in the context of nomadic Bedouins who occasionally come to cities as seasonal labourers in agriculture or construction.

Reland's book completely undermines modern claims about long-standing 'Arab Palestinian traditions', or the existence of an 'Arab Palestinian people'. One



Ottoman troops and Palestinians in Da'wud Street, Jerusalem, 1898.
| Photo: Wikimedia Commons

telling detail is the name Palestine, which Arabs today pronounce as *Filastin*. This name is not Arabic in origin at all. It is the Latin translation of the Hebrew word *Peleshet*, the term used by the early Israelites to refer to the Philistines. The Philistines were a seafaring people from the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, who settled along the southern coast of Israel around 1200 BC. Their main cities included Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, Ashdod and Ekron. The name Palestine is therefore not Arabic but Latin, and it refers to a non-Arab people, namely the Philistines.

In light of the composition of the population of Palestine around 1700, the modern narrative that Jews take land from the Arabs becomes extremely difficult to defend.

Mark Twain travelled to what was then called Palestine in the late 19th century, nearly two hundred years after Reland, and he described a very similar situation. Twain described a desolate and neglected land that was little more than a remote province of the Ottoman Empire. Beginning around 1840, increasing numbers of Jews began to return to and settle in Palestine. At that time, the land was still largely empty and undeveloped. As the Jewish immigrants began cultivating the land and revitalising the economy, more Arabs were drawn to the region. However, they are not the original inhabitants of Palestine. They are not 'The Palestinians'. 'The' Palestinians never existed.

The current so-called 'Palestinian people' is a modern invention. The population of Palestine was mixed, and Arabs and Muslims were by no means the only inhabitants of the land, and for many centuries, they were not even the majority.

¹ The book by Adriaan Reland (1676-1718) about Palestine, published in Utrecht in 1714, can be found in its entirety on the internet (in Latin):

Part 1:
http://books.google.com/books?id=jscUAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false

Part 2:
http://books.google.com/books?id=sZcUAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false

² Wikipedia- contributors. (2024, March 16). Adriaan Reland. Wikipedia. https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriaan_Reland

Oscar Lohuis' book can be purchased from Amazon.



Poster published by the Zionist Congress in 1925, encouraging visits to the 'Palestine Exhibition'. | Photo: GPO Israel



PROVIDING HELP IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.

Stand with Israel in Times of Crisis

Since the outbreak of the war between Israel and the United States on one side and Iran on the other, many residents in Israel have been living under the constant threat of rocket attacks. In large parts of the country, air raid sirens sound frequently, and people

are forced to seek safety in bomb shelters. Our partner organisations in Israel are working around the clock to provide critical support—delivering emergency aid to families, offering food assistance to the elderly and helping new immigrants build a life in

Israel under these challenging circumstances.

We are receiving many requests for help from Israel. With your help, we can reach more people in need.

Will you join us?

Help to New Immigrants

“When Will the Sirens Stop?”

Daniella (28) and her daughter Ilai (8) made *Aliyah* to Israel on 24 February from Argentina. For now they are living in an absorption centre in Karmiel and joined a special integration programme run by the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Daniella and Ilai were supposed to arrive in Israel just before *Purim*, and Daniella had told her daughter that *Purim* is always a wonderful celebration. Things turned out differently, however. Just four days after leaving everything familiar to them behind, Daniella and Ilai were confronted with the reality of war. Every time the air raid siren sounded, they ran down four flights of stairs to reach the bomb shelter in time. Inside the bomb shelter, Ilai kept asking, with tears in her eyes, “When are we celebrating *Purim*? What about my costume? When will those sirens stop?”

Exhausted

This is just one of the countless stories of Jewish immigrants (*olim*) who chose to come to Israel to build a new life, and who are now (again) confronted with the harsh reality of war. The Jewish Agency puts everything in work to support them during this difficult time.

Danielle Mor of the Jewish Agency explains: “Since the outbreak of the war between Israel, the US and Iran, people in Israel rush to shelters and safe rooms day and night. This is especially difficult for the elderly and families with young children. Furthermore, all of us are exhausted after more than two and a half years of war. The only hope is that the regime of terror led by the ayatollahs will be eradicated. This would usher in a new era of security, not only for Israel, but also for Europe, the US, and the rest of the world.”



Daniella and Ilai seeking safety in a bomb shelter. | Photo: Jewish Agency for Israel

Food Aid for Families, Seniors, and Holocaust Survivors

Offering Help

Families, seniors, and Holocaust survivors often struggle to obtain enough food. Through Colel Chabad, people in various cities across Israel receive hot meals every day.

In recent days, more than 12,000 meals were distributed in Jerusalem, Ashdod, Dimona, Beit Shemesh, and other locations. In addition tens of thousands of food vouchers are being provided to families, seniors, and Holocaust survivors, enabling them to purchase basic necessities on their own.



Rev Saleem (right) after packing food parcels.

Long Nights Filled With Fear

Nazareth, home to Rev Saleem Shalash and his ‘Home of Jesus the King’ congregation, is currently in the line of fire. Shalash: “The situation in Nazareth and in northern Israel has become extremely challenging. Almost every night, we are woken up four or five times by the sirens warning of attacks. Families run to bomb shelters or safe rooms time and again, sometimes just minutes after they have gone back to bed. The nights are long, exhausting, and filled with fear.”

Nazareth and the surrounding region are facing rockets from Iran and from Hezbollah in the north. Many families live in deep fear, and children in particular are affected by the repeated alarm signals and explosions. A father from Nazareth said: “My children ask me every night if the siren will go off again. I try to stay calm for them, but inside we are all very tired and afraid.” A mother said: “Sometimes the sirens go off four or five times a night. The children wake up crying, and we run to the shelter in the dark. As a parent, you feel helpless.”

Providing Basic Necessities

Because of the war, many people are unable to work normally, and some are losing their income. More families ask Rev Shalash and his team for food parcels

and other assistance. Shalash: “Right now, we’re also supporting public shelters in Nazareth and Haifa. We provide mattresses and blankets so people can rest, even if only for a little while. We also bring kettles, sugar, coffee, tea, cups, and spoons, so that the people spending long nights in the shelters can have something warm and comforting. An elderly woman told us: ‘The nights seem endless here. When someone brings a hot drink or a blanket, it reminds us that we are not alone.’ These small gestures mean a lot to families who may be sitting there for many hours.”



Colel Chabad food aid.



PROVIDING HELP IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.

Help to Victims

In times of war and terror, the aid organization ZAKA is on high alert, ready to provide assistance wherever possible. ZAKA's logistics centre is located in Beit Shemesh, where a rocket fired from Iran recently struck, killing eight people.

Shock

Marnix van Ede, who works for ZAKA: "I was in the area at the time. Just a few minutes later, it became clear how serious the situation was. The explosion struck an area near a synagogue and a bomb shelter, causing extensive damage. It was a huge shock to the community there. Our ZAKA volunteers were on the scene almost immediately. First and foremost to save lives and care for the victims, but also to treat the deceased with the utmost dignity, so that families could say their goodbyes."

Marnix: "One of our volunteers recently said, 'We always hope we won't be needed, but if a rocket strikes, we know we have to be there for the people who are most affected.' The recent period has once again shown how vulnerable daily life can be here."

At the same time, we also see tremendous resilience among the population. People try to continue with their lives while supporting and caring for one another. It is encouraging to know that people outside of Israel are praying for them and feel compassion for them."



ZAKA arrived quickly after the rocket attack to provide assistance.



Marnix van Ede (right) on the scene in Beit Shemesh. | Photos: ZAKA

Our partner organisations in Israel are ready to provide assistance wherever needed. Thanks to your support, we have already been able to provide a great deal of assistance. At the same time, the need remains great, and we are receiving many new requests for help from Israel. Your support makes a difference!

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

My donation for ministry costs, print & post

Emergency Campaign

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

Meals on Wheels - € 5 | US \$5 each

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 Ukraine and Moldova

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

Arab Christians

TOTAL DONATION

DONATION

\$.....

\$.....

TEACHING RESOURCES

Israel on Trial (Book) by Andrew Tucker

70 Questions About Israel (Book) by Chan Siew Fong

Israel 70 Years (One-off Collector's Magazine)

Jerusalem 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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To order these and other resources, go to www.c4israel.org/webshop



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