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Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Members of Israel's new Knesset together with President Isaac Herzog, just before the end of 2022. | Photo: Flash90

Israel's Controversial New Government

Israel's new government was sworn in on 29 November 2022. It contains more religious party members than Israel has ever had. All five coalition partners of PM Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party are religious parties. Several Likud politicians are 'religious'.

That unity of Bible-based faith and the fact that this coalition has a majority of 64 out of 120 seats in the Knesset could make this government even more stable than recent governments. From 2009-2018, Netanyahu ruled with coalitions of parties that were ideologically

much further away from Likud. None of these coalitions turned out to be able to serve the full four-year reign.

Netanyahu's new government resulted from the Knesset elections held on 1 November last year. Before this, Netanyahu's political rivals had ruled for a year with a coalition perceived as 'anti-religious' by believers in Israel. This further exacerbated the political divisions between secular and religious Israelis.

Since Netanyahu's new coalition took shape, secular media in Israel and abroad, in particular, have sought to

portray it as 'ultra-right-wing', 'ultra-nationalist', 'undemocratic' and even 'theocratic'.

Already, there has been much controversy in Israel surrounding this government. There have been large demonstrations in Tel Aviv against the government's proposed judicial reforms. One Minister in the government has had to resign after the Supreme Court ruled that his appointment was unreasonable. Pray with us that this government will transcend divisions and that God's glory will take shape in Israel.

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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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Crisis in Israel-Political or Spiritual?

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

Israel's new government, led by Prime Minister Netanyahu, comprises a coalition of several right-wing political parties. The main members of the coalition are Likud (headed by Netanyahu), the Religious Zionism party led by Bezalel Smotrich, and the Otzma Yehudit Party of Itamar Ben-Gvir. Smotrich has become Minister of Finance and has been given responsibility for Israel's civil authority in Area C of the West Bank. Ben Gvir has become Minister of Security. Smotrich and Ben Gvir are widely branded as 'ultra-nationalist' and 'extreme right'.

One suspects they will be only too happily misused by those who are already intent on Israel's credibility and international standing

Among the key clauses in the coalition agreement between Religious Zionism and Likud are a commitment to pass a law designed to reduce judicial checks on executive and legislative power, a vaguely-formulated commitment to annexing the West Bank to Israel, legalisation of dozens of unauthorised settlements, and the provision of large funds for road building and public transport in the West Bank.

In mid-January, Minister of Justice Yariv Levin (Likud) announced reforms that will alter the existing relationship between the executive, legislature and judiciary. The planned reforms include measures that will significantly limit the power of the Israeli High Court. This reflects the view of many in Israel that the court—an unelected body of jurists—has, over recent decades, assumed too much power.

Key aspects of the proposals will:

- allow the governing coalition to 'override' Supreme Court rulings by a simple majority of 61 votes in the 120-member Knesset; the overriding legislation could only be struck down by a unanimous ruling of all 15 justices;
- end the Supreme Court's ability to revoke administrative decisions by the government on the grounds of

'reasonability';

- require a 'special majority' in an expanded bench of justices to strike down laws and/or decisions deemed to contradict Israel's quasi-constitutional Basic Laws;
- enable government ministers to install political appointees as legal advisers in their ministries; and
- give the government a greater say in the appointment of judges.

It is important to note that Israel is a Parliamentary democracy on the British model. It does not have a written constitution. It only has one house of Parliament (Knesset); there is no upper chamber. The coalition of parties that

forms the majority in the Knesset also forms the government (executive). The President has very limited powers. Thus, there are (compared with some other democracies) relatively few inherent checks and balances on the power of the Knesset and government. Many feel that the judiciary's wide powers promote democracy by providing an essential rein on the risk of abuse of power by the executive. Others feel the court has infringed democracy by enabling a college of unelected judges, on the basis of subjective views, to strike down laws and measures passed by the elected legislature and government.

The government thus says the reforms will 'restore' Israel's democracy, while its critics assert that the proposed reforms will destroy democracy in Israel, paving the way for a 'democratic dictatorship'.

These proposals have led to a political crisis. There have been violent demonstrations. Opposition leaders have accused the government of treason. Opposition Leader Yair Lapid vowed to wage "a war over our home." At the same time, Benny Gantz, the defence minister until two weeks ago, warned that the

judicial overhaul could lead to "civil war" and urged the public to lawfully take to the streets, declaring: "It's time to go out en masse and demonstrate; it's time to make the country tremble."

These are disturbing scenes. One suspects they will be only too happily misused by those who are already intent on destroying Israel's credibility and international standing.

This comes at a time that Israel is under increasing pressure in the international community. For example, late December, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to seek an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice about the legality of Israel's 'occupation'.

There is something paradoxical about Israel that perhaps many in the land do not appreciate. God is restoring His people to the land for a specific purpose: in order to live in unity, in accordance with His law, under His authority—as a witness to the nations of God's sovereignty and love for the whole world.

Seen from a spiritual perspective, the essential question is thus not how wide the judiciary's powers are or whether the government has too much power. No institution, person or system will ever be perfect.

The core issue is one of the heart. It is whether the people—as a whole, together—Jews and non-Jews—are genuinely seeking to live in unity, serving the God who is bringing the Jewish people home. This is the spiritual crisis facing the people of Israel.

Therefore, let us, as non-Jewish Christians outside the land of Israel, refrain from becoming embroiled in Israel's political crisis. Instead, let us hope and pray that, in the coming days and weeks, Israel's people and political leaders will put aside personal, and even political differences, and seek the common good of the nation, living in accordance with God's laws.

As crisis after crisis engulfs the earth, the other nations of the world desperately need Israel to play the leadership role for which it was established and to which it is called.

Prayer Points

By C4I Prayer Team

Israel

- Pray for wisdom and insight for the new government of Israel under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu. Pray that they will be guided by wisdom from God and not by international criticism.
- In 2022, twice as many Jews (74,000) immigrated to Israel compared to 2021. Give thanks for this huge increase. Pray that many Jews choose to make *Aliyah* this year. Pray also for Jews from Russia and Ukraine, that it remains possible to leave for Israel.

Israel & the Nations

- Since Israel's new government took office, there has been much criticism from the international community about its right-wing character, which resulted in a very negative press worldwide. Pray that many will stand up and choose to support Israel and pray for unity among Christians in taking a stand for Israel.
- 'He (Nebuchadnezzar) was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was

drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone He wishes' (*Daniel 5:21*). Pray that God will appoint other leaders in Iran who will abandon enmity with Israel.

Christians for Israel

- 'All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal' (*Psalms 119:160*). Give thanks that it's possible again to organise meetings and conferences in various countries around the world. Pray that these gatherings also attract people who haven't heard the message of God's faithfulness to Israel before.
- The outbreak of war in Ukraine made it a very intense year for Koen Carlier and his team. Give thanks for the thousands of Jews they were able to help by offering comfort, food, shelter and transport to Moldova, from where they could leave for Israel. Pray for the safety of the team, that they may receive strength to cope with all challenges.

For daily Prayer Points, go to our website www.c4israel.org.nz

Israel Cracks Down on PA Over 'Legal and Political War'

■ Charles Bybelezer

Authorities confiscated the VIP passes of top Palestinian officials and are withholding taxes and tariffs collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to hold Ramallah accountable for last month's 'distorted' UN resolution on Judea and Samaria.

Israel on Sunday, 8 January 2023, revoked the VIP pass of PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, in line with a Cabinet decision last week to sanction Ramallah in response to the UN's passage, at the PA's behest, of a resolution asking the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to weigh in on the legal status of Judea and Samaria.

Border officials stopped al-Malki as he crossed from Jordan into the PA and confiscated the travel document allowing him to expedite or altogether bypass normal security checks in Judea and Samaria.

"In the diplomatic sphere, the Security Cabinet convened last Thursday and decided on a series of measures against the PA for advancing a radical anti-Israel decision at the UN," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"These steps include sanctions against senior Palestinian officials, the offsetting of terrorist funds and the freezing of Palestinian construction projects in Area C, which contravene the explicit commitments that the PA has taken upon itself.

"We have established a different government with a different policy, and

everyone will see this," added Netanyahu. Ahmed al-Deek, an aide to al-Maliki, told Reuters that the Palestinian diplomat "will continue his job with or without the card."

The official PA Wafa news agency reported that Ramallah was "considering a legal and political response to the vindictive measures," which al-Malki claimed violate international law. He added that "work is underway to build an international public opinion against the occupying regime by exposing its crimes before the countries of the world."

The decision to retaliate against Ramallah came a week after the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling on the ICJ to "render urgently an advisory opinion" on Israel's "prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of Palestinian territory."

In response to the PA's ongoing 'political and legal war' against the Jewish state, the Security Cabinet decided to withhold taxes and tariffs collected on behalf of and transferred to the PA in an amount equal to that which Ramallah paid to terrorists and their families in 2022 under its 'pay-for-slay' policy. An additional sum of nearly \$40 million was deducted from the same PA pool of funds to be disbursed to Israeli victims of Palestinian terrorism.

The Knesset had previously passed legislation mandating such deductions. However, the Bennett-Lapid government repeatedly found loopholes to delay its implementation.

Netanyahu had said that the 'disgraceful'

UN move would not obligate or restrain his government, adding: "The Jewish people is not occupying its land and is not occupying its eternal capital Jerusalem. No UN resolution can distort this historical truth."

Meanwhile, the Israeli Defense Ministry suspended the entry permits to Green Line Israel of three other senior PA officials after they participated in a homecoming ceremony for a convicted terrorist released from prison. The three officials, including an assistant to PA chief Mahmoud Abbas, arrived in the Arab Israeli town of 'Ara, in northern Israel, to greet Karim Younis, an Israeli jailed for murdering IDF Cpl. Avraham Bromberg on the Golan Heights in 1980.

The three men were identified as Mahmoud al-Aloul, deputy chairman of Fatah's Central Committee, Azam al-Ahmad, and Ravhi Fatuh.

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir announced the cancellation of a regulation implemented by the previous government that allowed any lawmaker to meet with jailed Palestinian terrorists. Ben-Gvir said that he took the step after "concluding that these visits resulted in incitement and the promotion of terrorist actions."

The policy will now revert back to that of the past when only one legislator from each political party was permitted to meet with imprisoned terrorists, and under 'appropriate supervision.'

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Short News

Sustainable Apparel Reduces Pollutant Emissions



The final stage in textile production, fabric finishing, is the most polluting step in textile production. In this process, the fabric is dyed and/or coated with antibacterial, odour-repellent, water-repellent, UV-blocking or other substances. German company Brückner Textile Technologies, which supplies a quarter of the world's textile finishing machines, has collaborated with the Israeli technology company Sonovia to develop a textile finishing machine that uses sound waves to give fabrics the desired properties. This technology uses much less water and energy than conventional processes and significantly reduces pollutant emissions. It also makes garments more durable. The first jointly developed SONOfix machine was recently installed at Delta Galil Industries in Galilee to produce underwear and sportswear for brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein and Adidas. Sonovia plans to supply additional machines to textile mills in Taiwan and Central America that produce apparel for brands such as Adidas, Nike, The North Face, Decathlon and Lululemon.

Pakistani Cotton Found in 7,200-year-old Israeli Village



Archaeologists excavating a 7,200-year-old village in Israel have found cotton from what is now Pakistan. The find is considered one of the earliest records of cotton in the ancient Near East. The site in the Jordan Valley already held "amazingly well-preserved organic material," archaeologist Danny Rosenberg of the University of Haifa explained. The new finds involve microscopic cotton fibres. Until now, historians have assumed that fabrics in the region at that time were made of flax or linen. The cotton find therefore points to the importance of Tel Tsaf as a trading centre, which is also supported by other finds. In recent years, archaeologists have found pottery from Iraq or beads from Anatolia and Africa. "Tel Tsaf was a kind of hub where a lot of trade was done, and many people from all over the world met." | Photo: Lightstock

Valley of Dry Bones

Holocaust Remembered

On 27 January—official International Holocaust Remembrance Day—the Shoah was commemorated in many different ways around the world.

For some people, the creation of the State of Israel in 1948—three years after the end of the Second World War—was a fulfilment of the prophet Ezekiel's prophecy about the valley of dry bones. The Jewish nation rose out of the ashes of the Shoah. Israel lives—*Am Yisrael Chai!*

Dutch Christian artist Otto de Bruijne recently made a special painting about it. "I made more than 30 drawings: Ezekiel lying on his side near a model of the besieged city of Jerusalem, how he was not allowed to mourn when his wife died. I made an image of the merkava, the mysterious chariot of heaven with the angels, and large paintings about the nations attacking Israel, the new temple, the promise of a new heart, and the temple stream.

Bible reading, designing images, working them out, each time an adventure. But somehow the Holy Spirit is also involved. Don't ask me how...

Tears

But it happened very clearly when I got to the prophecy (in *Ezekiel 37*) about the valley with the dry bones of death. Where is that valley? Is that future? Has that already happened? Naturally, out of intuition, I started with the railway tracks and the gate of the Auschwitz concentration camp. The black gaping hole... While painting, seven chimneys emerged above the building. And then... tears. Out of those chimneys came black dots, it didn't stop. I may have touched twenty thousand of them. And I got tired of it, but in reality there were six million of them. Each dot a person, a child, an elderly person. The dots became shapes: arcs, lines, circles. Then something like ribs, legs, arms, heads. Then they became skeletons, and they grew into human shapes, and the seven braces became seven arms of the menorah. People took on colour and grew with the seven arms of the candlestick: dancing, singing, praying, working, loving.

Resurrection

This painting became the Word for me: the valley of the barren bones of death is the Shoah. And the menorah is the



resurrection of the millions who were killed: Israel is resurrected.

Rarely have I painted in such a way, hour after hour, from dot to man, from chimney to menorah, reflecting on the darkest night of God's people."

Otto de Buijne's beautiful paintings inspired by the prophet Ezekiel are to be seen in the Israel Centre in Nijkerk, Netherlands.

The Israeli Canary in the West's Cultural Coal Mine

■ **Melanie Phillips**

5 January 2023. The attacks on Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount excursion defy reason.

Those scratching their heads over the way Western liberals have lost all connection with reason over issues of race, gender and Western 'colonialism' might usefully look at the reaction to Itamar Ben-Gvir's visit to Jerusalem's Temple Mount this week.

Here was a Jew walking for 15 minutes on the site that is most sacred to Judaism. He did it without fanfare or media attention, early in the morning when the compound was almost empty and didn't pray there or say anything to stir up trouble.

Yet his visit provoked uproar with claims that it was an extremist act, that it was likely to spark a new terrorist war and even—this from a Ha'aretz columnist—that Ben-Gvir was leading Israel 'on the road to hell.'

In any sane universe, this is simply unhinged. Ben-Gvir was fully entitled to be there. He did nothing out of the ordinary. Other Israeli Jews, including government ministers, regularly visit the site.

The people actually responsible for inciting violence over the Temple Mount are the Palestinian Arabs. Since the 1920s, they have been provoking fanatical religious hysteria and the murder of Israelis with the wickedly false claim that the Jews were either storming or planning to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Similar claims were made in 2022 when Palestinian Arabs turned Al-Aqsa into an ammunition store from where they hurled rocks down at Jews praying at the Western Wall and attacked Jews making their way there.

The reason is that, as the site of the Jewish Temple that was the focus of Jewish religious life in ancient Israel until it was destroyed in 70 AD, the Temple Mount stands at the very centre of the Jews' unique entitlement to Jerusalem and the land.

That's why the Palestinians have tried to destroy the archaeological evidence that has been dug up at the site over the years. They attempt to wipe the Jews out of their own history in the land—centuries before the first Arabs or Muslims invaded it—in order to support the laughably bogus claim that the Palestinian Arabs were its indigenous people.

Yet this use of the Temple Mount for incitement, violence and religious supersessionism draws no condemnation from the Western left. They do not acknowledge that this aggression, which strikes against Judaism itself, is the real cause of the Middle East conflict.

Instead, the Biden administration condemned the Ben-Gvir excursion as an "unacceptable" and "unilateral" action that "undercut the historical status quo." Not only was this untrue, but the status quo, which Israel has upheld, is itself unacceptable.

The status quo prevents Jews and Christians from praying at their own holy site; it restricts non-Muslims to entry through only one of 12 gates while Muslims can use all the gates; it forbids Jews from drinking from the water fountain in the compound because of the claim that Jews are 'unclean'.

While falsely asserting that Israel is attempting to drive Muslims out of their holy site, the Palestinian Arabs bellow that no Jew is to be allowed to set foot on the Temple Mount with what Palestinian Authority chieftain Mahmoud Abbas described as 'their filthy feet'.

This odious racial discrimination and violence draws no condemnation from the Biden administration or the Western left. Instead, it is Ben-Gvir who is accused of racism.



Itamar Ben Gvir arrives to visit the Temple Mount, at the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City on Tisha B'Av, 7 August 7 2022. | Photo: Flash90

The Oslo Accords state: "The Palestinian side shall ensure free access to, respect the ways of worship in and not make any changes to, the Jewish holy sites."

At both the Temple Mount and the sacred Jewish site of Joseph's Tomb in Nablus, which is under the control of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Arabs have repeatedly broken this pledge.

For years, Jews visiting Joseph's Tomb have been attacked by Arab rioters and gunmen, most recently on 21 December 2022, when Jewish worshippers and the soldiers guarding them came under heavy gunfire.

Yet this draws no condemnation from the Biden administration or the Western left. Instead, there are veiled threats that the US will punish Israel for having Ben-Gvir in its government.

In the same way, successive Democratic administrations and other Western liberals have held Israel responsible for the Arab war against it on the grounds that Israel is 'illegally occupying' Palestinian land.

This is geopolitically illiterate. Only the Jews have a legal, historical and moral entitlement to this land. The Jews are its only extant indigenous people, and the Palestinian Arabs are its would-be colonial occupiers, declaring that 'not one Jew' will be allowed to live in the state of Palestine.

Yet this attempt to erase the Jews from their own country and even from their own history is ignored by the 'anti-racist' Western left, who instead accuse Ben-Gvir of promoting ethnic cleansing.

In a savage tweet this week, Sen. Ted Cruz said that the Biden administration's 'pathological obsession' with undermining Israel was endangering the national security of America and its allies.

The administration's attacks following the Ben-Gvir visit, Cruz said, will convince Palestinian officials that compromise is unnecessary because Democratic administrations "will coerce our Israeli allies into making dangerous concessions." The administration, he added, consistently seeks to undermine Israel's security and sovereignty while pouring more than \$1 billion into Palestinian areas and "bringing officials from the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization to Washington DC."

This perverse behaviour by Western liberals, aided by Israeli leftists who fan the flames by even more hysterically promoting these lies and appeasement, hugely incentivises further Palestinian rejectionism and violence. It also actively emboldens Israel's existential foes among the world's tyrannies and kleptocracies who use United Nations resolutions and 'lawfare' to try to bring Israel down.

Just imagine if America said that these Palestinian lies and incitement have to stop, that Israel has law and history on its side and that the only aggressors in this war are the Palestinian Arabs who want to destroy the Jews' right to their country and historic identity.

The Palestinians' strategy of extermination would collapse overnight because the main reason this war never ends is the West's support for their cause.

The result is the unique and insane situation in which Israel is forced to fund people who continue to build an infrastructure of genocidal warfare that they periodically unleash against Israeli civilians, in which so-called allies prevent Israel from taking measures essential to defend its people against mass murder; and in which the same so-called allies now have the gall to tell Israel that the composition of its government doesn't meet with their approval.

Israel, however, is not the only example of a looking-glass world in which aggressor and victim, right and wrong, truth and lies have been turned on their heads.

Many are observing similar denials of reality and character assassination in the West's culture wars and are concluding that the world has simply gone mad.

Israel's new Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, may turn out to behave badly or unwisely. Ben-Gvir and the other two 'extremists' in Israel's government may promote the fanaticism or recklessness with which they are associated. If they do so, they will deserve to be criticised.

But just as happened with former US President Donald Trump, such a rational, evidence-led approach is vanishingly unlikely. To liberals, there are simply no facts or evidence that can reframe the way they view the Netanyahu government: That it has crossed over to the dark side from which there can be no return.

Antisemitism repudiates reason. Anti-Israelism repudiates reason. It's well known that the Jews are always the canary in the cultural coal mine.

Today, anti-Jewish bigotry is both symptomatic of and fueled by a far broader and deeper phenomenon. We can see this in the madness of identity politics. The West, having produced the age of reason, is now intent on destroying it.

Melanie Phillips, a British journalist, broadcaster and author, writes a weekly column for JNS. Currently, a columnist for The Times of London, her personal and political memoir Guardian Angel has been published by Bombardier, which also published her first novel, The Legacy. Go to melaniephillips.substack.com to access her work.

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Seven Phases of the Holocaust

■ Kelvin Crombie

Researcher & Author

Introduction

In March 2018, Rev David Pileggi of Christ Church, Jerusalem, asked me to undertake a research project relating to Jewish people who were involved with the Church during the period of the Holocaust. This group of Jews were officially classified as 'non-Aryan Christians' by the Nazis, but often saw themselves as Jewish Christians or Hebrew Christians, while to their detractors they were known as converts or *meshumaddim* (traitors).

Irrespective of their classification, there was a considerable number of such Jewish people spread throughout Europe, involved in the Church at different levels and capacities. In most instances these Jewish Christians underwent the same persecution suffered by their Jewish brethren, and many of them (possibly into the tens of thousands) were also murdered.

Discovering There Were a Number of Interconnecting Phases

The sheer volume (and darkness) of the material being read, and observed during four on-field research trips to archives and 'the killing fields' of Europe, overwhelmed me, forcing me to develop a system in order to digest and collate this information.

While reading a book entitled *From Gurs to Auschwitz* (the life story of a Jewish woman named Maria Krehbiel-Darmstadter, a 'non-Aryan Christian'), I was intrigued why a Jewish person from the western part of Germany was transported, together with thousands of others, to southern France and primarily to a detention camp at the base of the Pyrenees named Gurs. Sometime later they were transported back north to the death camp at Auschwitz. It just did not make any rational sense—if indeed anything about the Holocaust makes rational sense!

It was then that I became familiar with the Nazi scheme to transport the Jewish people under German control in 1940 to the French colony of Madagascar. My interest was now piqued. After further research on the so-called Madagascar Plan, I began to see that this was actually just one phase in the Nazi attempt to make Europe *Judenfrei*—Jew free.

From that point onwards I was able to recognise that there were other phases, culminating in the Nazis 'final solution' to the so-called 'Jewish problem'—which was total genocide.

Thereupon I developed a working model based upon seven phases which culminated in the decision to murder eleven million Jewish people in Europe and surrounding regions, including the Middle East. These were not seven distinct phases, as there was overlap between them. This model has greatly assisted me to better understand a very complex and complicated subject.

Seven Phases of the Holocaust

- **Phase One: Until 1933—Foundation of the Nazi worldview.** When the Nazis came to power on 30 January 1933 they already had an established worldview. This worldview had been conditioned and prepared by a number of streams or sources during the previous hundred or more years, and included historic anti-Semitism in the Church. A central component of this worldview was that Germany was to be made *Judenfrei*—Jew free.
- **Phase Two: 1933-1939—Intimidation, exploitation and emigration.** Once the Nazis took power they began to exploit and intimidate the Jewish people with the goal of getting them to emigrate from the German Reich. This goal only partly succeeded. That Hitler detested the Jewish people is clearly evident in a speech he made on 30 January 1939 in which he alluded to "the annihilation of the Jewish race throughout Europe." Did he, at that stage, contemplate their physical annihilation, or was it merely their removal from Europe?



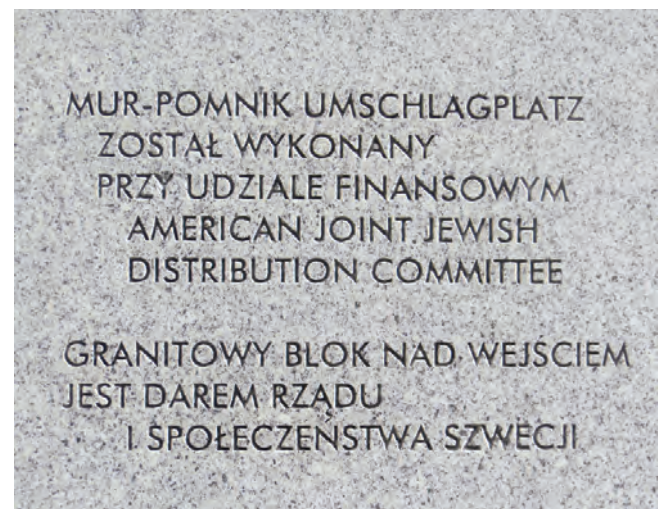
Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. | Photo: Unsplash

- **Phase Three: 1939-1940—The Lublin and Ghettoization Plan.** When the Germans invaded Poland they 'inherited' another 3 million or so Jewish people. The plan was to place them in ghettos in larger cities and ultimately to move them to a region of Poland near Lublin, which would become a large Jewish ghetto. This plan was partially implemented.
- **Phase Four: 1940-1941—The Madagascar Plan.** With the conquest of the Netherlands, Belgium and France, the Nazi regime inherited another 550,000 Jewish people. It was then decided to remove these, as well as those from Germany, to the French colonial island of Madagascar. When Adolf Eichmann drew up a plan it included the deportation of all 4 million Jewish people under German control. Britain, whose navy ruled the sea lanes, though, could not be defeated thereby rendering this plan obsolete.
- **Phase Five: 1941 (22 June)—The Eastern Plan.** As part of Hitler's grand plan for gaining *lebensraum* (living space) the Germans invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Indiscriminate shooting of some Jewish people was sanctioned at this point, while it was also planned that Jewish people from Europe would ultimately be transported further East into Russian Asia. Encouragement was also given for local pogroms against Jewish people.
- **Phase Six: 1941 (30 July)—Initial implementation of genocide.** Following a directive from Herman Goring on 31 July 1941, the SS and other units began indiscriminately shooting Jewish men, women and children throughout occupied areas of the Soviet Union. SS leader Himmler then ordered that other forms of mass murder be developed. From late 1941 murder by gassing, including in gas vans, began to be employed. Five specialised death camps were established for gassing, namely Chelmno, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzec—for the systematic murder of all the Jewish people in Europe.
- **Phase Seven: 1942 - 1945—Complete implementation of genocide.** This plan to murder 11 million Jewish people in Europe and surrounding regions was formalised at a conference at Wannsee House near Berlin on 20 January 1942. While mass shootings would continue in many areas, large numbers of Jews from throughout Europe were thereafter transported by train to the death camps of Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Auschwitz. Throughout this period hundreds of thousands of Jewish people were also incarcerated in ghettos, and concentration camps and used as slave labour where many were executed, or died of starvation, sickness and beatings.

By the time Auschwitz was liberated on 27 January 1945 the gassings had ended. But many more died thereafter through death marches and deprivation in camps mostly in Germany. Thankfully the Nazis were defeated by May and were not able to fully implement their demonic plan in total. The United Nations in 2005 designated 27 January as *International Holocaust Remembrance Day*.



Hebrew Christians in CMJ Warsaw congregation, pre-1939. Most of these people were murdered. | Photo: Conrad Schick Archive, Jerusalem



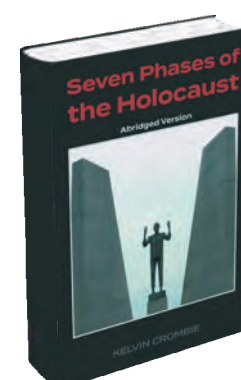
Umschlagplatz, Warsaw Ghetto

Conclusion

Three lessons being learnt through this research are: (1) There is no human way to understand the Holocaust, leaving me with the words of *Jeremiah*: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (*Jeremiah 17: 9*). (2) One's faith, prestige or position in society made no difference—if you were Jewish you were earmarked for death—including in most instances, the Jewish Christians. If the totalitarian Nazi regime didn't want you, then nothing could save you.

(3) Signs and symptoms from that terrible period are still evident today. The challenge for us today is to discern these signs, and to then seek for God's wisdom as to how best to act against them.

© Kelvin Crombie 2023. More complete details of the *Seven Phases of the Holocaust* will be provided in a forthcoming publication of this name. Details of other publications on the subject matter can be obtained through kelvin@heritageresources.com.au, various branches of CMJ (Church's Ministry among Jewish People) or Christians for Israel.



What preceded the founding of Israel—Part I Israel's Secular Legitimacy is Much Older than 75 Years

■ Wim Kortenoeven

Author, Journalist and Former Politician

According to the Jewish calendar, the State of Israel will celebrate its 75th anniversary on 26 April 2023. The regained Jewish independence was declared on 14 May 1948, according to the Gregorian calendar. This marked the first phase of the prophesied Jewish return to the Land of Israel after nearly two thousand years of exile. That national restoration had long before been proposed by influential European non-Jews and legitimised by non-Jewish states under international law.

Viewed properly, the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Israel is an absurdity. After all, the (restored) Jewish state is rooted in a statehood tradition going back more than three thousand years. It was King Saul who, from Hebron, united the tribes of Israel into a unitary state, with the lands of *Yehuda* (later called 'Judea' by the Romans) and *Shomron* ('Samaria') at its core. It was Saul's successor David who established Jerusalem as the capital of that Jewish federation, and it was his son Solomon who built the first temple there. During that period of Jewish boom, the most basic civilisation was far from penetrating Western Europe, and most of the Netherlands was still a marshland where the animal-skin-clad inhabitants lived in sod huts.

Christian Zionism

It was only 2,600 years after the start of David's reign, in 1585, that The Hague became the 'Dutch' seat of government. And Amsterdam, founded in 1275, did not become the capital of the Netherlands until 1808. The Jewish return had been propagated by numerous prominent European non-Jews, mostly 'Christian Zionists', since the early nineteenth century. And they naturally projected it onto the cradle of Jewish civilisation: Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. Those voices rang out long before the Jewish 'political Zionism' of

for the "return of the Jews to their original land". It was not his intention that they should establish their own state there but settle there "at their own expense and risk" and submit to the local government. At the time, the Land of Israel was under the Egyptian-based governor Mohammed Ali, who had rebelled against the Turkish-Ottoman sultan in 1831.

Shaftesbury was primarily driven by the idea that the Jewish return to Zion would hasten the return of Christ. But he also saw it as the cheapest and most efficient way to colonise Syria. According to Shaftesbury, its benefits,

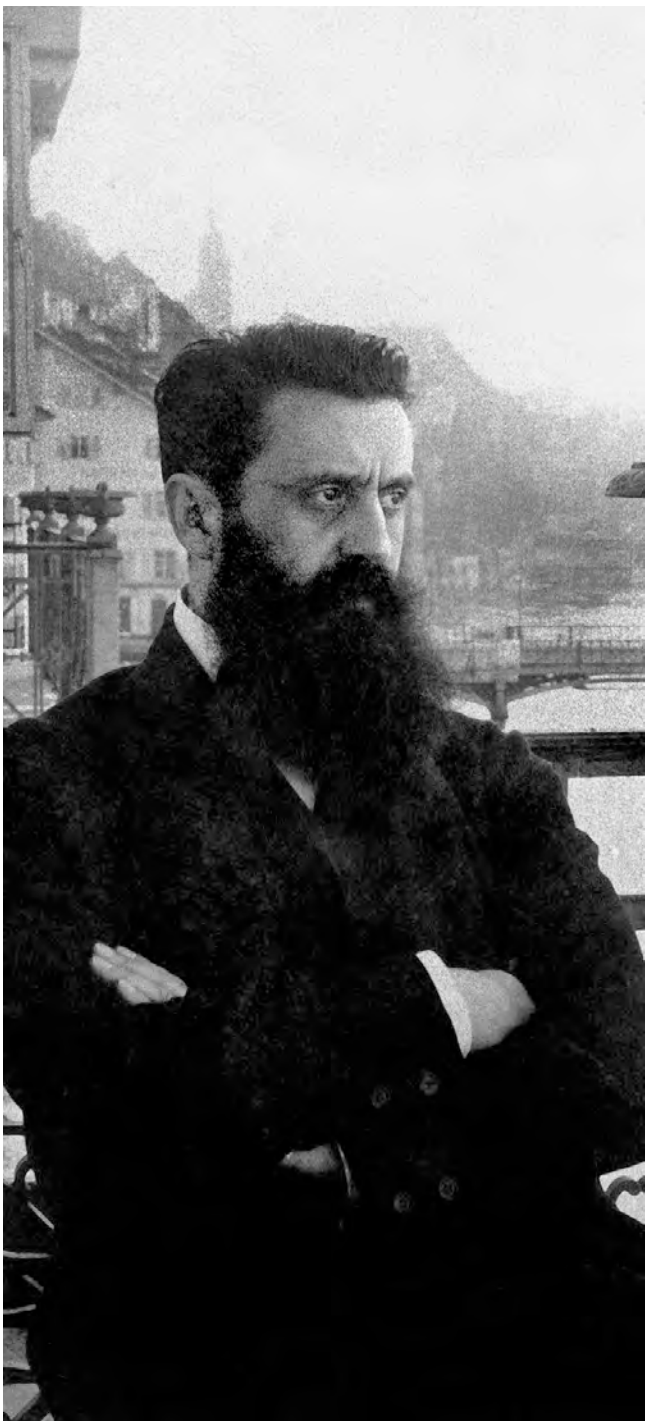
The Jewish return had been propagated by numerous prominent European non-Jews, mostly 'Christian Zionists', since the early nineteenth century.

secular Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl gained a foothold (in 1897). And in the early twentieth century, their logical premise was explicitly, formally and ethnically endorsed by the international community.

Geopolitical Considerations

One of the best-known earlier Christian Zionists was the British statesman Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885). In 1840, he published an appeal in the daily newspaper *The Times*

including the undermining and partition of the Turkish-Ottoman Empire, would "benefit the entire civilised world". These religious and geopolitical considerations dovetailed well with those of the British political establishment. And they laid the foundation for later political British support for Zionism.



Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland. | Photo: GPO



In 1799, the French General and later Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte issued a statement calling for the national restoration of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. | Photo: History Extra

Napoleon Bonaparte

Shaftesbury is sometimes cited to 'prove' that European political Christian Zionism preceded Herzl's Jewish political Zionism. This is true in itself, but even long before Shaftesbury, many other non-Jewish European intellectuals had been calling for a national restoration of Israel. In April 1799, for instance, French General Napoleon Bonaparte issued a declaration of support laced with Biblical references to "the rightful heirs of Palestine". This was on the eve of his invasion of what was then Turkish-Ottoman-controlled Palestine. The document should have been officially declaimed in Jerusalem. But thanks to a British maritime intervention in support of the Turkish defenders, the French invasion stranded near the Mediterranean port of Akko in May 1799.

Crusades

Nevertheless, 1799 is seen as the year when Europeans, for the first time since the Crusades, returned to the Holy Land with great ambitions. In the following period, competing European powers France, Britain, Germany and Russia each established religious, economic and

the British cabinet published on 2 November 1917 by British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour, which promised the Jewish people 'a national home' in Palestine. Less well-known is that on 4 June that year, France's top diplomat Jules Cambon had already issued a declaration in which the French government officially declared itself in favour of "national Jewish recovery in the land from which the people of Israel were expelled so many centuries ago."

San Remo and Mandate

As Britain captured Palestine and France captured other parts of the Turkish Empire, Balfour's declaration became more politically relevant than Cambon's. In April 1920, the victors of World War I held a conference in San Remo, Italy, to discuss the division and future of the conquered Turkish territories. The Balfour Declaration was adopted as an official policy document, and the right of Jews to settle anywhere in Palestine was confirmed under international law, i.e. in all areas between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River as well as the region across the Jordan. This right of settlement was

The Balfour Declaration was adopted as an official policy document, and the right of Jews to settle anywhere in Palestine was confirmed under international law, i.e. in all areas between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River as well as the region across the Jordan.

political power bases in the Palestinian part of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. The largely desolate area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea was almost literally broken open and awakened. This also created locally essential conditions for large-scale Jewish immigration and Jewish national recovery.

French and British declarations

During World War I, Britain and France conquered large parts of the Ottoman Empire, including the territories of Palestine and Syria. This created opportunities for international political recognition of the Jewish return, even though, organisationally and numerically, it was in its infancy at the time. Well-known is the declaration of

subsequently reaffirmed by the League of Nations (the forerunner of the UN) in the Mandate for Palestine assigned to Britain.

Banned for Jews

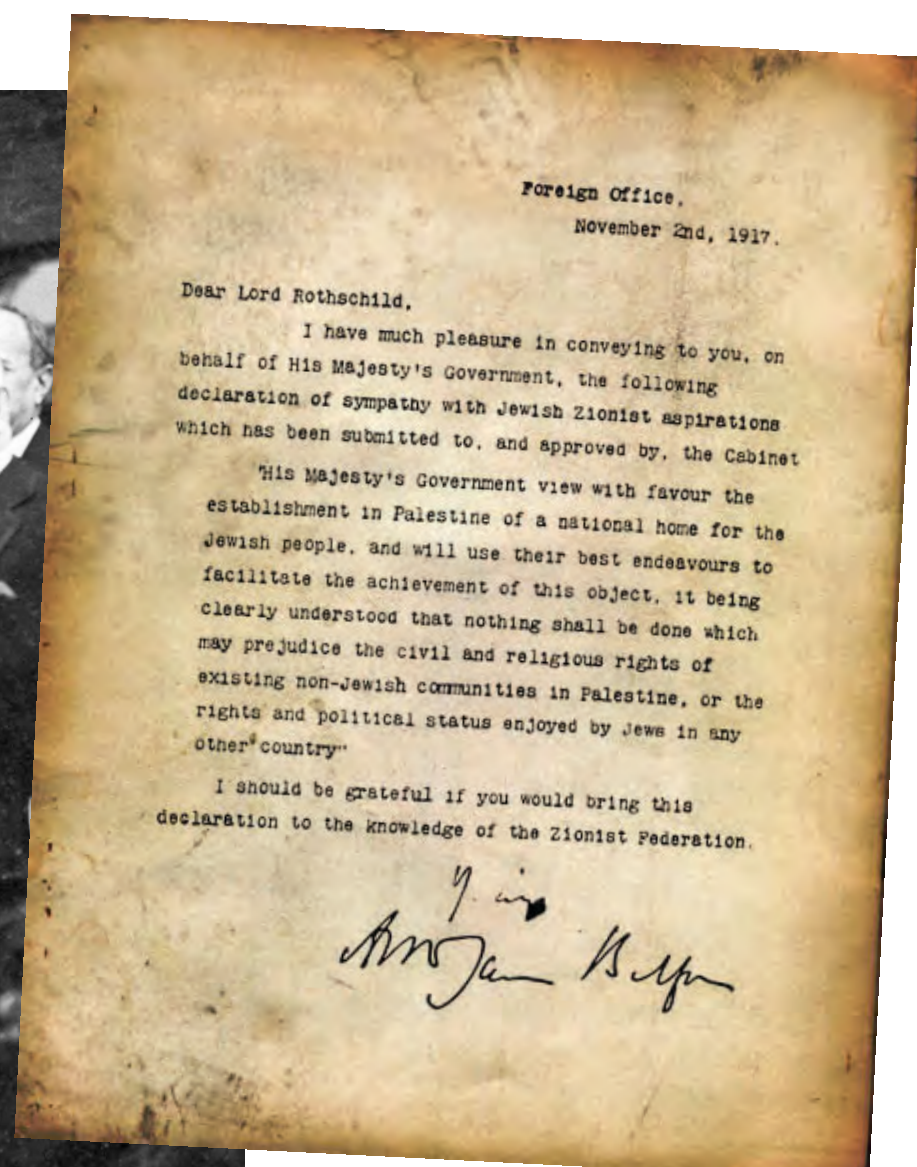
London was also instructed to facilitate Jewish emigration to the area. In 1922, however, the Jewish right of settlement for the region across the Jordan River was unilaterally revoked by London. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was later founded there. Jewish right of settlement in the area west of the Jordan River (including Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem) was never negated by the League of Nations or, subsequently, the UN.



Lord Balfour. | Photo: GPO



Participants in the San Remo conference. | Photo: GPO



The Balfour Declaration. | Photo: GPO

How a Small Gift Makes a Huge Impression



■ Leon Meijer

Chairman | Christians for Israel International

With bare hands, a four-year-old girl is digging a hole in the ground. Another girl places a tulip bulb in the hole. Together they cover the bulb with soil and continue their work. The girls are wearing hearing aids. In daily life, they receive help from Smaya, a medical daycare centre in Bnei Barak, an orthodox Jewish city in Tel Aviv.

In the north of Israel, on the Lebanese border, we see twenty-year-old soldiers putting their guns aside and getting down on their knees. Holes are being dug; tulip bulbs are being planted and covered with soil. Within a week, this same ritual takes place at more than fifty locations all over the country.

150,000 Tulip Bulbs

In November, two Christians for Israel teams visited Israel and distributed over 150,000 tulip bulbs. In every place the teams visited, they sat with the people, explaining that Christians for Israel represent thousands of Christians worldwide. Christians who learned from the Bible that God loves His people and made everlasting covenants with them. These Christians like to follow the Lord in His love for His people. And what do you do when you love someone? You bring flowers.

Reminder

The flowers we bring need a little more attention and patience than regular flowers, but they also give the

opportunity to do something together. While planting the tulip bulbs, you have the most wonderful discussions. And long after the teams have left Israel—as the tulips start to grow and blossom in early spring—people are reminded (again) that all over the world, there are Christians who love the people of Israel.

Open Arms

Several years ago, Christians for Israel Netherlands took the initiative for the so-called ‘Tulip Tour’, and it has become an annual event. The tulip bulbs are being sponsored by Christians who love Israel. Their donations make it possible to order the bulbs from Dutch tulip horticulturists. The bulbs are then shipped to Israel in large containers. Upon arrival, they are packed in smaller boxes. During the Tulip Tour, each team visits as many communities, Christians for Israel projects, schools, kindergartens, army bases and absorption centres as possible. The programme is being put together with the help of Israeli contacts of Christians for Israel. And everywhere the teams come, they are welcomed with open arms.

I have visited Israel many times, but the Tulip Tour is something special. On a normal visit, you drink tea or coffee and speak with the host. During the Tulip Tour, you not only drink coffee or tea, but you also get down on your knees, plant the bulbs together and have the most wonderful conversations. Small talk with four-year-olds, encouraging talks with soldiers, comforting talks with people of old age, impressive talks with new immigrants

who sometimes had to flee their country. Often, we see tears in the eyes of the people we visit. It touches their hearts that we make an effort to visit them, that we remind them of God’s love, and that there are Christians around the world who love them.

Longing for Zion

During the recent Tulip Tour, all visits were special, but I will highlight two visits. Beit Alfa is a village close to the Gilboa mountains, where Saul and Jonathan fought the Philistines. It also houses an absorption centre for new immigrants from Ethiopia. At the centre, they start to learn Hebrew and get used to living in a modern Israeli society where houses have kitchens and toilets. We were welcomed with Ethiopian coffee and Injera, Ethiopian flatbread. Young and old walked with us to the garden, and as I got down on my knees, I looked around me and was surrounded by Ethiopian immigrants; a people who have longed for Zion for centuries. Here we were, digging in the soil of Zion, planting flowers, knowing that God intended His people to be planted back in Israel.

Coming Generation

Close to the springs of the Jordan River in northern Israel, we visited a school where children learn to dance. Full of joy and sweetness, the children walked—many barefoot—to the garden to plant the tulips. Israel’s coming generation learns that God loves them and cares for them as a flower in the garden.

| Photos: Christians for Israel International

“This is a New Revelation to Me”- Part 2

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

A pastor from Bangalore, India, recently proposed to us that he was prepared to organise conferences, on the subject of Israel, designed for pastors, in three different cities in India. “Your message about Israel is important for India, and pastors here are eager to learn about Israel”, he told us. As a result, conferences have been held in Bangalore, Pondicherry and Chennai in November. In the previous edition, I wrote about Bangalore.

In Pondicherry, a local church bought a parking garage and converted it into a church. Over 200 pastors attended the conference. Rev Willem Glashouwer explained that the Kingdom of God will come from heaven to the earth when Jesus returns. Dr Conrado Lumahan, from the Philippines, spoke about why Christians should stand with Israel. I spoke about the role of the Messiah, as revealed in the Bible, relating to the current return of the Jewish people to their homeland Israel.

In Chennai, a city with over six million inhabitants, we held our conference in a church that looked more like an industrial warehouse than a church. The pastor told us they have four church services every Sunday with over



2,000 visitors each. The church congregation is growing every year. Over 180 pastors attended our Israel conference. They were all touched by the biblical message regarding the significance of Israel and the Jewish people in our Christian faith. One of them told us with tears in his eyes: “I need to repent for never preaching about Israel in my Sunday sermons”. All pastors receive a copy of the book ‘Why Israel’, translated into their own regional Tamil or Telugu language.

India is number ten on Open Door’s ‘World Watch List’



of 50 countries where Christians are persecuted. Some pastors told us that they were personally beaten by radical Hindus in the past. But all of them are eager to go on with church planting and spreading the gospel of Jesus without regard to consequences. It was impressive to meet these pastors and to witness how the message about Israel touched them. Together with pastors from the city of Hyderabad, we are now preparing similar conferences there in 2023. Our Christian brethren in India need our prayers and support. | Photos: Christians for Israel



The Statistics Speak for Themselves

■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director | Christians for Israel NZ

Greetings from a very wet and bedraggled Auckland! During a rare pause in the rain, we bring you this, our first edition of *Israel and Christians Today* for 2023. Thank you so much for joining us, we trust you will enjoy the articles, news and information our team has worked hard to source from all around the world. As we look forward to 2023, there does seem to be a cautious optimism in the air. Will we finally get a 'normal' year, free of pandemics and panic? Or will there be yet another interruption, bringing us to a standstill once again. Watching the floods devastating parts of Auckland and northern New Zealand it is easy to become a little despondent.

But it will be a fantastic year. 2023 sees the nation of Israel celebrate 75 years since its (re)establishment. *Aliyah* continues to increase as Jews from all around the world migrate to the Promised Land, and Israel continues to grow. In spite of the horrendous abuses taking place around the world, tens of thousands of our Jewish brothers and sisters are returning to their ancient homeland. This is tremendously encouraging to those of us watching the promises and prophecies in scripture.

The war in Ukraine features prominently in our news media. Whilst there are tragic events and horrific human rights abuses taking place in many countries around the world, the situation in Russia seems to take precedence. The age of the internet, mobile phones and social media sees pictures, video and narrative distributed around the planet in seconds. From the comfort of our own homes, offices, phones, we are able to see images for ourselves, clearly showing events in the war-torn Ukraine in real-time.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has strongly condemned Russia's attack and invasion of Ukraine with a total of six separate resolutions during 2022. North Korea, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Iran and the US were each condemned with one each. Indeed, *UNwatch.org* informs us that there were a total of 13 UNGA resolutions passed during 2022.

Oh, and 15 against Israel.

Yes, 15¹ against the tiny Jewish State, and 13 against the rest of the countries in the world.



A beautiful winter sunset view of ancient ruins and countryside in Tel Lachish, the Northern Negev Desert, Southern Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock

Sound familiar?

In fact, from 2015 to 2022 the UNGA has passed 140 resolutions against Israel, compared to 68 for the rest of the world. The United Nations Human Rights Council from 2006 through 2022 has adopted 99 resolutions against Israel, 41 against Syria, 13 against Iran, 4 against Russia, and 3 against Venezuela.

...from 2015 to 2022 the UNGA has passed 140 resolution against Israel, compared to 68 for the rest of the world.

There is no other country in the entire world where all citizens have equal protected rights, minority communities have strong representation, and the religious and cultural freedoms of vastly different communities are fiercely protected, and yet where other countries accuse it of apartheid, dictate where it should have its capital city, and subject it to continuous permanent condemnation.

In our own country, not only are there huge political and diplomatic disparities, but we have a handful of citizens—albeit tired and irrelevant—actively campaigning against Israel with a continuous barrage of lies and vitriol.

The statistics speak for themselves. Countries waging war on others, committing acts of genocide, responsible for the oppression and even deaths of countless people don't come even close to receiving the level of condemnation levelled at Israel; A tiny piece of land the size of Canterbury, NZ. Those of us who have been privileged enough to visit the Holy Land have been able to see for

ourselves the vast difference between the lies perpetuated by Israel's enemies, and the reality 'on the ground'.

So? Thank you. Thank you for taking the time to be informed, to understand the truth about Israel. Whether you are just curious, a long-time supporter, or even perhaps have joined us in a Study Tour of Israel to see for yourself, we trust you will continue. We know that God certainly hasn't given up on Israel, we won't either.

"There were "16 resolutions on Israel. However, the resolution titled Assistance to the Palestinian People is more balanced than the others and is adopted by consensus. Therefore, it is deemed non-condemnatory."
www.unwatch.org

2023 CALENDAR—WHILE STOCKS LASTS

To celebrate Israel's 75th Diamond Jubilee this year, Christians for Israel NZ have produced a commemorative calendar.

2023 Israel Calendar—Celebrating 75 years of Heritage

- Shows Biblical/Jewish festivals
- Shows Israeli holidays
- Displays Western and Hebrew dates
- Shows New Zealand public holidays
- Celebrating 75 years of Heritage is shown through the decades since 1890, and is based on what each era has given Israel in the modern era.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS COMMEMORATIVE CALENDAR



Order your **CALENDAR** online at www.c4israel.org.nz or email your request to info@c4israel.org.nz or simply ring us **09 525 7564** or **021 127 7214**

Pay by internet banking (put your name and **CALENDAR** as the reference). Bank account details are on page 16 or our website.

What Israel in 2023 means to Jewry, Christians and the World

■ Joanna Moss

As I think about Israel's 75th anniversary several keywords come to mind: **miracle, immigration, longevity, power and demographic shifts, new Jewish face, Holy land, water, trade and inventions.**

Shifting Sands of Jewry

The late 19th and 20th centuries saw major shifts in world Jewry that had previously been static. Europe had been the Jews' major home for centuries. But that was about to change. The mass exodus westward, primarily to the United States, combined with the *Shoah*, the rebirth of Israel and subsequent expulsion of North African and *Mizrahi* Jews, would make America the new centre of World Jewry. Imagine in 1880: only 3% of Jews lived in America and Israel combined! Of the two, Israel is the one that keeps growing. The American Jewish community is treading water, facing an absolute, not relative decline. Its communities have been facing a major shake-up in nature with declining Jewish literacy and hollowing in Hebrew and Hebrew religious studies and increased assimilation with non-Jewish culture. Intermarried and non-affiliated Jews are increasing in number, as is the small but insular ultra-Orthodox community, via high birthrates. Israel is now the largest

Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Mizrahi lines are becoming blurred. However, these distinctions still matter for religious Jews in terms of politics and religious traditions.

Prophetic Symbol to Christians

Christians will be increasingly divided by Israel: those who see it as an ongoing, prophetic fulfilment of their faith and the scriptures and those who oppose it on social justice grounds. In the middle ground lie those who come to Israel for pilgrimages, walking in the steps of Jesus. Thus Israel's doors must remain open. Like the Jews, biblical literacy is key to revelation. You don't know what you don't know. Youthful ignorance combined with popular culture appear to be a major barrier to Israel support.

Fighting antisemitism and its counterpart, anti-Israelism, have emerged as vital roles to be played by both Jews and Christians alike as the latter steps up to the plate with deeper understanding at a time when both issues are rising.

World Beacon of Democratic Hope

When plans were drawn up for Israel's institutions, Israel was to be a democratic state. That was perhaps, a natural state of affairs for the *Ashkenazi* Jews from Western Europe and the United States/Anglo world. It was not what the



| Photo: Lightstock

Israel No Longer a Novelty

In the early years people questioned Israel's survival. But as the years ticked by with no major wars, queries dissipated. Israel was here to stay. Global acceptance followed? In demographic terms, Israel turning 75 represents three generations. Early arrivals and emerging-state-era births are now firmly in the 'old' category. Few recall a time when Israel did not exist as a nation. It was the 59th UN member

Water as a Lifeline

All nations need food and water. In the Middle East, water is sorely lacking. Thanks to historic, strategic investment, today Israel has a water surplus and is exporting both water and water technology. But it still needs rain and snow on the mountains. Water may play a larger and more strategic role in future as global supply and quality dwindle. *Mayim chaim* literally.

Importantly, Israel made the Hebrew language come alive by adopting it early on, rather than Yiddish or another language. Hebrew is no longer just a religious language understood by a few.

community of Jewish people, having surpassed America and will soon represent more than 50% of global Jewry. Arguably, Israel is now the centre of the Jewish world. But it remains to be seen how willing American Jews are to acknowledge that fact. Americans have invested huge sums into Israel's physical and cultural infrastructure with the expectation that Israel will be more like a Western, democratic nation and feel their voices must be heard accordingly.

New Life to Jewry

New nations need time to establish themselves. Rome wasn't built in a day. Similarly, immigrant groups take time to find their place in a new society. Putting it simply, Israel has breathed new life into global Jewry. Importantly, Israel made the Hebrew language come alive by adopting it early on, rather than Yiddish or another language. Hebrew is no longer just a religious language understood by a few. That decision provided a base, along with the ancient homeland, as a backdrop. The new culture took time to emerge and is not static. Hebrew as a medium gave rise to literature, art, music, dance, philosophy and, more recently, film as a vehicle to convey culture. Israeli Jews are creating something new, not just a Jewish state and not just by sheer numbers or military service. Climate and location play a part too. Today many Israeli families have mixed origins, and the

USSR hoped for. However, spare a thought for the *Sephardim* and *Mizrahi* Jews who made *Aliyah* to Israel, and more recently, those from Russia, the former Soviet states and Ethiopia. They had lived in their communities as distinct minorities with few political rights. Democracy was foreign to them. Yet they have embraced Israeli democracy.

Realignment & Acceptance

Post the Six-Day War, leaders of the Arab League issued the 1967 Khartoum Resolution: The Three No's, which set in stone Israel-Middle Eastern relations for the next 50 years. They are: NO peace with Israel, NO recognition of Israel and NO negotiations with it. Cracks appeared following the peace agreement with Egypt, then Jordan. More recently the Abraham Accords have shattered the intent of the Resolution. We now have a division between those who accept the Khartoum Resolution and those who don't. Apart from time, three things have changed: Israel's relative strength—now a military powerhouse, Israel has much to offer other nations and thirdly, the threat of Iran trumps other concerns. In the process, the Palestinians have been relegated to the sidelines facing obscurity. They are becoming increasingly unhappy but have limited power and leverage over their Middle Eastern donors who have become tired of their demands.

nation after all. But it goes further; people aged under 60 don't know the struggles of the early state, the miracles or Israel's history. For them, the dominant issue has been the Palestinian conflict, if anything.

Trade and Inventions

Israel's global diplomatic push coincided with the opening up of trade with new countries, including Africa. Symbolically, trade shifted from commodities to technology. Israel's superior technology and opportunities made it a focus and a desirable partner. Sometimes this had an added Christian dimension. Sadly, so far, trade has not been followed by diplomatic votes in the UN.

American-Israel Tug of War

On the face of it, Israel is the United States' key Middle Eastern ally, not just the regional beacon of democracy, but the conduit of American foreign policy. It is also the largest donor of military aid. But like much of modern aid it is 'tied' and represents money to be spent on the donor nation's industry and is thus more akin to a domestic subsidy than international aid *per se*. America gains huge amounts from the alliance in terms of strategic know-how, intelligence and the testing of weaponry. It's clearly not a one-way street. So far, Israel relies on American military aid. But for how long?



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Support of Illegal Construction Undermines International Law



Az-Za'ayyem, a Palestinian village east of Jerusalem, with Ma'ale Adumim, an urban Israeli settlement in the background. | Photo: Shutterstock

■ Andrew Tucker

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

The EU is supporting Palestinian take-over of Area C— in conflict with the Oslo Accords and international law.

In the June 1967 Six-Day War, Israel gained control of the Eastern part of Jerusalem (including the Old City) and Judea and Samaria—territory that had been illegally obtained and controlled by Jordan between 1949 and 1967 and became known as the 'West Bank'. Since then, the West Bank has been in dispute. Israel claims sovereignty rights and has declared willingness to trade 'land for peace'. Important steps were taken in the 1990s when Jordan abandoned its claims to East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Israel entered into the Accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Under the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established, and the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C. Pending a final status agreement (which has never eventuated thus far), the PA would govern Area A, there would be joint Israeli-PA control in Area B, and Israel was to have full civil and military control over Area C.

By assisting the Palestinian Authority to build illegal constructions in Area C, the EU is breaching the very international law it claims to promote.

In a recently-leaked internal European Union policy paper, which created an uproar in Israel, European bureaucrats propose options to 'contain' Israeli settlements (which are perceived as illegal) and 'reinforce Palestinian presence in Area C'.

In fact, this was nothing new. It is well known that since 2012, the EU has spent hundreds of millions of euros to enable the PA to erect more than 20,000 buildings in Area C, in contravention of Israeli law.

For decades, the European Union has claimed that its foreign policy is grounded in European and international law. And yet its policies concerning Israel and the Palestinians—such as those concerning Area C— undermine the very law it seeks to promote.

In our recent study, *Two States for Two Peoples?*, published by Sallux, we expose how the EU uses international law as a cloak to justify policies that advance Europe's political and economic interests.

Following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the European Economic Community entered into an agreement with the Arab world. Europe was desperate to obtain secure access to Arab oil and to be rid of Palestinian terror on European soil. The Arabs promised both. In return, they demanded that Europe allow Arab/Islamic immigration into Europe and support Palestinian rights. The nine European states, influenced largely by De Gaulle's

antisemitic pro-Arab attitude, were only too ready to comply.

The result was the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD): a set of institutions and policies implementing deep Europe-Arab political and economic ties.

The European 'two-state' policy, developed in 1980, is based on the *quid-pro-quo* of the EAD.

In essence, the EU argues: international law requires a Palestinian state to be established within the '1967 lines', subject only to minor territorial adjustments. East Jerusalem must become the capital of the Palestinian state. However, rather than reflecting international law, this policy conflicts with international law.

First, Israel was justified in 'annexing' East Jerusalem after the 1967 Six-Day War and has legitimate territorial claims to the West Bank. The '1967 lines' were not a border but were merely Armistice Lines.

Second, the Palestinians have a right to self-determination but not a right to statehood.

Third, Israel was entitled in 1967 to treat Judea and Samaria ('the

West Bank') as occupied under the international law of belligerent occupation. In so doing, it never abandoned its sovereignty claims to the territory.

Fourth, the Oslo Accords entered into between Israel and the PLO in the 1990s are binding treaties. They divided the West Bank into three areas: Areas A, B and C. Pending a final status agreement, Israel retains jurisdiction in Area C with regard to security, public order and all issues related to the territory, including planning and zoning.

True, the Oslo Accords require the parties to treat the whole of the West Bank as a 'single unit' and not to change its status. However, the Oslo Accords do not require the creation of a Palestinian state.

By assisting the PA in building illegal constructions in Area C, the EU is breaching the very international law it claims to promote.

This hypocrisy is not only immoral; it is fuelling Palestinian extremism. It must stop.

The report *Two States for Two Peoples?* can be accessed here: <https://www.thinc.info/eu-two-state-policy-review/>



Calendar Themes

Throughout this year, we will be elaborating on the themes of the C4I 2023 Israel Calendar—celebrating the Diamond Jubilee—75 years of Heritage.

Introduction: 1890-1900s | First Aliyah



Although Jews have lived continually in the land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*), the first *Aliyah* marked a new beginning. From 1882-1903, 25,000 Jews came from Russia and Rumania and 2,500 from Yemen. The European Jews were driven by ideology choosing Israel over USA/Canada. Most settled in Jaffa or Jerusalem with Christian support. But some established new agricultural settlements namely Rishon le Zion and Zikron Yaccov. They received substantial sums from Baron Rothschild to ensure viability. Conditions were tough.

January: 1910s | WW1 & Balfour Declaration



Israel had been a neglected wasteland under Ottoman Rule with few occupants and absentee land owners. In reading our WW1 history you can get a feel for life in Israel a century ago and the varied people our soldiers encountered. Water and malaria were major issues. It was the Kiwis who told the residents of Rishon le Zion about the British Balfour Declaration foreshadowing future statehood.

February: 1920s | Taming the Desert



Immigrant Jews were town-dwellers, not native farmers due to land restrictions imposed upon them. Agriculture was a necessity for survival and the conditions were harsh. Pooling of resources and know-how was important. Right from the beginning technology played a key role in Israeli agriculture, possibility thinking and problem solving attitudes continue in agriculture today. Drip irrigation is a prime example. Agricultural jobs encouraged Arabs to move to Israel for work and opportunities.

Embassy News

Israel's Youngest
Professor of Medicine

Congratulations to Professor Abdulla Watad - Israel's youngest professor of medicine, at just 35! Prof Watad's message for the doctors of the future: "To be successful, you need four things - the will, defining a goal, hard work, and a mentor who believes in you. Believe in yourself and know that you can go far."

Israel Remembers



The Embassy of Israel in New Zealand and the State of Israel remembers the devastating Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption. The magnitude of the eruption and tsunami was immense—the implications of which are still felt, one year on. Immediately following the disaster, the Embassy of Israel in New Zealand, provided aid to Tonga with crucial supplies, such as food for children and school equipment. Looking to the future, we are excited to explore new collaborations between Israel and Tonga through our Ambassador's visit to Tonga later this year.

Negev Forum

The meeting of the Negev Forum steering committee opened Wednesday 11 January in Abu Dhabi, with the participation of delegations from the six member countries: the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, USA and Israel.

The Israeli delegation, led by MFA Director General Alon Ushpiz, included representatives of the ministries of agriculture, health, security, intelligence, tourism, energy, education, the economy, the Water Authority and the National Security Council.

At the meeting, the delegations prepared the #negevforum foreign ministers' summit, which is expected to take place in the coming months in Morocco with the participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs - Eli Cohen. Within this framework, the working groups will compile a list of projects in the fields of health, regional security, education and tolerance, water and food security, tourism and energy.

The Negev Forum was founded at the Negev Summit in Sde Boker in March 2022, as part of the #AbrahamAccords implementation process, with the aim of presenting concrete projects in the fields listed above.

Temple Mount Visit an Assertion of Indigenous Rights

Dr Sheree Trotter

Retired Economist & Author

In what parallel universe could the visit of a Jewish politician to Judaism's most holy site be considered controversial?

To those uninitiated in the Orwellian fantasy world of Palestinian politicking, a Jew praying at the site of Israel's ancient temples seems as natural and unremarkable as the wetness of water or the 'Catholicness' of the Pope. But to those indoctrinated into the Palestinian narrative, the visit of an Israeli politician to the most holy site in Judaism is seen as highly provocative, risking a violent Palestinian reaction and deserving of a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council—the world body tasked with monitoring the world's sensitive hotspots. While the violent uprising did not occur, the UNSC did indeed meet. Never mind the Russia-Ukraine War, the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran or nuclear weapons development by Iran and North Korea. All these were apparently trumped by an Israeli politician having the audacity to visit Judaism's most holy site.

"Jews are undeniably the indigenous people of Jerusalem, a claim supported by historical, archeological and genetic evidence."

Israel's new right-wing National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's thirteen minute peaceful visit to the Temple Mount was described by Arab states as "storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque courtyard." The false accusation that the visit was an attempt to change the status quo and the general outrage directed towards the incident ignores the fact that Jews have a right to visit the Temple Mount according to the agreement between Israel and Jordan following the 1967 war. Israel had gained control of the Temple Mount, but her leaders chose to preserve the status quo regarding the Al-Aqsa compound, thus giving custodianship responsibilities for administration and religious arrangements to Jordan, while retaining responsibility for security and public order. Many now regard this concession, offered in the hope of alleviating the conflict, as a mistake.

Jews are only allowed to visit the Temple Mount at specified times, taking a predetermined route. They must be accompanied by security. Jews are prohibited from praying at the site considered the centre of Judaism. These restrictions are not only absurd but highlight the fact that an outdated, discriminatory system is being imposed on Jews in a way that can only be seen as antisemitic.

Ambassador Alan Baker, Director of the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center and the head of the Global Law Forum, points out:



Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Israel. | Photo: Lightstock

"A status quo that perpetuates an ancient and outdated social structure that no longer exists, that practices religious discrimination and denies or restricts rights of worship, is blatantly incompatible with accepted international norms and concepts of equality, human

rights, freedom of religion and worship, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding, and cooperation."

In addition, preventing Jews from visiting and praying at their most holy site is a direct violation of their indigenous rights under the 61/295 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

As I have written elsewhere, "Jews are undeniably the indigenous people of Jerusalem, a claim supported by historical, archeological and genetic evidence." Jews clearly fulfill the criteria of indigenous peoples, according to the UN's definitions: self-identification; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; strong links to territories and surrounding natural resources; distinct social, economic, or political systems; distinct language, culture, and beliefs; resolve to maintain and reproduce ancestral environments and systems as distinct communities.

Both Solomon's Temple, destroyed by Babylonian colonisers in 586BCE, and the Second Temple, destroyed by the Romans in 70CE, stood on this site, the holiest in Judaism. It is here, according to Jewish tradition, God collected dust to create Adam and, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, Abraham offered his son Isaac to God in an act of obedience.

When Muslims conquered Jerusalem in the seventh century, their holy places were built atop the destroyed Jewish

temples, a colonising act of Jewish erasure. In recent decades the Palestinian leadership has somewhat carelessly but successfully constructed a narrative that denies the Jews historical connection to their homeland. Not content with the cultural appropriation of Jewish history, they have taken a further step in refashioning themselves as the indigenous people of the land, in contradiction of all historical evidence.

The restrictions imposed on Jews visiting their holy sites are violations of articles of the 61/295 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically articles 2,8,11,12, 25.

These articles assert the right of indigenous peoples to 'be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity'; '...the right to practise and revitalise their cultural traditions and customs; '...the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites'; '...the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories and redress for 'any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities'.

If the restrictions imposed on Jewish people were directed towards any other group, whether it be Muslims praying at Mecca, Catholics praying at the Vatican, or my own Māori people offering prayer at our sacred places, there would rightly be an outcry. Yet, for some reason, the world has no compunction in restricting the religious and cultural practices of one particular people group. This is surely unbridled antisemitism.

Dr Sheree Trotter is an historian, founder of the Indigenous Coalition for Israel and co-director of the Israel Institute NZ. www.indigenouscoalition.org



What Really Changed in 1945?

■ Perry Trotter

“One day the SS announced over a megaphone, ‘The war is over. You are free.’ We just stood there, terribly tired, exhausted in every way—physically, spiritually and emotionally. No one smiled. Where could we go? There was no place to go. We didn’t want to go home, to the non-Jews. They never embraced us, never said a word to spare us. We stood there. It was trauma.”

These are the words of Giselle Cychowicz, a Holocaust survivor we photographed and interviewed in Jerusalem in September 2019. Bright and animated, and still working as a psychologist at 92, her liberation on 8 May 1945 from one of Gross-Rosen’s subcamps seemed a vivid memory.

In the month prior to our encounter with Giselle, we visited Auschwitz in Poland and Le Chambon sur Lignon in the South of France. Although it is less than a day’s journey from Auschwitz to Le Chambon, they may as well occupy different universes.

In 1945 the world emerged from war. What came to be known as the Holocaust was brought to an end.

Auschwitz was a product of Europe’s most culturally, scientifically and educationally advanced society. In contrast, Le Chambon and the surrounding towns were home to mostly simple peasant farmers and villagers. Led by Protestant Pastor Andre Trocme, the people of Le Chambon were characterised by courage, compassion, and a willingness to defy authority in order to live according to conscience. As a consequence, the 5000 people in the Le Chambon area were able to shelter and rescue 3500-5000 Jews.

If there is tragedy associated with Le Chambon it is that its ethos was not replicated throughout Europe.

In 1945 the world emerged from war. What came to be known as the Holocaust was brought to an end.

What Really Changed in 1945?

Did ordinary Europeans repudiate the Jew hatred that for centuries had manifested in economic, social and religious discrimination?

Were the masses of willing accomplices brought to account or at least filled with remorse?

Did the philosophers who influence society from above, abandon their intolerance of Jewish distinction and particularity?

Did theologians reject the toxic and incoherent supersessionism that for centuries had driven Christian persecution of Jews?

Was there a change of heart in the Muslim leaders so keen to see Hitler’s policies implemented in their own lands?

Were the western political and military leaders who knew what was happening to European Jews and yet chose to do little or nothing—were they brought to account?

Of the many nations that chose to close their doors to Jews fleeing certain

calamity, how many were willing to acknowledge their moral failure?

Did the philosemitism and courage of Le Chambon begin to permeate other European cultures?

The answers to these questions are disturbing, confronting and relevant. If Giselle Cychowicz’s liberation was joyless, it was because she recognised a change in the facts on the ground carried few implications for the state of European hearts.

The Holocaust was unique and that very uniqueness must be fiercely defended. And yet it stands in a series of historical events that form an essential context. Namely, millennia of persecution, marginalisation and antagonism toward the Jewish people. Indeed, antisemitism has come to function



Giselle Cychowicz. | Photo: Perry Trotter Photography

as a social constant, as reliable as gravity, as unrelenting as the waves of the sea.

Enemies have been many and friends have been few. And the character of friends like those of Le Chambon is ultimately only proven in times of peril. The Shoah taught us that those considered friends are worse than irrelevant if they will not act.

Another painful lesson of the Shoah is that when an entity declares its genocidal intentions it must be believed. In the 1930s, some of Europe’s brightest minds chose not to believe the obvious - that European Jewry was destined for disaster. The act of seeing the unmistakable, bore just too great a price. And the call to think the unthinkable, required vanishingly rare courage.

Thus, as we commemorate the liberation, we must with sobriety recognise that in the broader context it represents a mere punctuation, an abeyance in a state of Gentile hostility extending three and half millennia. There was but a momentary pause in the virulent Jew hatred that reinvents itself from age to age.

Too little changed in 1945. And if we have a debt to those who perished it includes a willingness to think honestly about the

causes of the Holocaust. And a call to honour - and even dare to emulate - those who act in the spirit of Le Chambon.

It is not sufficient merely to remember. If the need arises, we must be willing to think what many deemed unthinkable, and to see what many refused to see. And having thought and having seen, we have a debt to act.

Parts of this article have adapted from a speech given at Auckland Hebrew Congregation.

Perry Trotter is founder of Holocaust And Antisemitism Foundation, Aotearoa New Zealand, a non-sectarian charitable trust with donee status. www.holocaustfoundation.com

Introducing Yael Holan

In our October 2022 edition, we introduced Yael Holan, new Deputy Chief of Mission. Here’s more of her story.

Israel’s Embassy has a new Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). Her name is Yael Holan and this is her first posting, but not her first career. Prior to entering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officer cadet training programme, Yael was a Hebrew teacher. Now she has three roles: DCM, Consul and Head of Administration. Her mission includes speaking to schools and groups about Israel.

Born on Kibbutz Megido in the Jezreel Valley, Yael grew up in Zichron Yaakov, one of the charming, European-style towns of

the First *Aliyah* about halfway between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Being a grandchild of two Holocaust survivors from Hungary and the Czech Republic impacted her Zionist views and confirmed the need for a Jewish state. Yael visited the camps as a 16-year-old participating in events there.

Teaching shaped Yael’s life from an early age as she taught her French immigrant grandparents Hebrew and explored learning themes. Later she went on to do a Masters in Public Policy (MPP) in Education at Tel Aviv University. Her love of language teaching from the basics drew her to young immigrants in Israel, mostly lone children from Africa. There she was able to take

them from zero Hebrew to High School matriculation. It was not all education and a lot of pastoral care was needed. Africa remains dear to Yael and she has spent time volunteering in Tanzania.

More recently Yael had a truly Kiwi Christmas holiday experience driving with her visiting parents in a campervan around the South Island in good weather and meeting Israel supporters. She loved it.



Situation Vacant: Office Manager

Are you looking for an opportunity to use your bookkeeping, financial, promotional, and administrative skills in a Christian mission organisation focused on Africa’s unreached? Africa Inland Mission seeks a mission-minded person with proven Christian character and excellent bookkeeping, public relations, and administrative skills to run our New Zealand office, based in Onehunga, Auckland. This part-time position supports our gospel workers serving in various countries and the NZ Board. Interested?

Contact: Christine Turner
0274 123 898
christine.turner@aimint.org

Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 (Part 2)

■ Hugh Kitson

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

On 31 October 1918—exactly one year after the Allied victory at Beersheba and the War Cabinet meeting that decided on the Balfour Declaration—the Ottoman Turks surrendered and World War One on the Eastern Front came to an end. At 11am on 11 November 1918 the guns on the Western Front, too, fell silent and the war finally finished.

The War to End all Wars

The carnage of the previous four years had been unprecedented. Many hoped that the Great War, as it was then known, would be 'the war to end all wars'. To ensure that end, the victorious Allied powers called a peace conference in Paris, which commenced in early 1919, at which a series of treaties were signed, including the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Sèvres.

On the eve of the Paris Peace Conference the leader of the Zionist Organisation, Chaim Weizmann (who would later become the first President of the State of Israel in 1948) met with the recognised leader of the Arab world, Emir Feisal, son of Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca. They came to an agreement that has since been virtually expunged from the annals of history—perhaps deliberately.

Detractors of the concept of a Jewish national home in Palestine prefer to call attention to two agreements that are alleged to have been made before the Balfour Declaration—one from 1915 and the other from 1916.

1915: The McMahon-Hussein 'Agreement'

In 1915, while Sir Henry McMahon was the British High Commissioner of Egypt, he entered into correspondence with Feisal's father, Sharif Hussein, to bring about a universal Arab uprising against the Ottoman Turks. In return McMahon is alleged to have promised Arab independence in territory that was under Ottoman rule. The correspondence became known as the 'McMahon-Hussein Agreement'.

Many hoped that the Great War, as it was then known, would be 'the war to end all wars'.

The Arab uprising, led by T E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) was only a partial one and, according to the late Professor Isaiah Friedman, the correspondence between McMahon and Hussein contained more disagreement than agreement, and was never finalised. Years later, Sir Henry McMahon wrote in *The Times*:

"I felt it my duty to state, and I do so definitely and emphatically, that it was not intended by me in giving this pledge to King Hussein to include Palestine in the area in which Arab independence was promised. I also had every reason to believe at the time that the fact that Palestine was not included in my pledge was well understood by King Hussein."

1916: The Sykes-Picot 'Agreement'

The other agreement, known as the 'Sykes-Picot Agreement', was made the following year. It was a secret memorandum between Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, who were British and French diplomats respectively. The intention was to come to an agreement regarding the spheres of control that Great Britain and France would have over the defeated Ottoman Empire. In reality, it was a plan by Britain and France to colonise much of Ottoman territory.

Palestine, under this plan which was counter-signed by then-British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey and later

made public, would have been under international control. Absent from the agreement, which had no legal validity anyway, was any mention of a reconstituted Jewish homeland, even though the Zionist aspiration was well known to both governments. For this reason, the opponents of the right to self-determination for the Jewish people in their Promised Land like to promote this 'agreement' (as well as the one from 1915) in their attempt to discredit the Balfour Declaration.

At the end of 1916, Prime Minister Asquith and Foreign Minister Grey resigned and were replaced by David Lloyd George and Arthur James Balfour, respectively. They abandoned the Sykes-Picot plan, although the maps that Sykes and Picot had drawn up were later influential in determining the boundaries of the Mandates.

1919: The Feisal-Weizmann Agreement

The Paris Peace Conference commenced on 18 January 1919. The agreement that Chaim Weizmann and Emir Feisal signed in London on 3 January was crucial to what was presented in Paris (and decided on at the San Remo Conference the following year), even though Feisal and other Arab leaders later reneged on it. The preamble to the agreement acknowledged "the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and (realised) that the surest means of working out the consummation of their natural aspirations is the closest possible collaboration..."

Article 3 of the agreement stated: "In the establishment of the Constitution of Palestine, all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government's Declaration of 2 November, 1917 (i.e. the Balfour Declaration)."

Article 4 began by stating: "All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale, and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants on the land..." Feisal added a proviso to the agreement in Arabic in his own handwriting: "Provided the Arabs gain their independence, else I shall not consider myself bound by one word of this agreement."

The Paris Peace Conference

On 6 February 1919 the Arab delegation, led by Emir Feisal, presented their claims to the Principal Allied Powers at the Paris Peace Conference. In presenting the territorial claims for the Arab independent states, he left Palestine out, saying: "Palestine for its universal character, he wants to leave to one side for the mutual consideration of all parties interested." So, at that point Feisal was complying with the agreement he had made with Weizmann.

Three weeks later, on 27 February, Chaim Weizmann and the Zionist Organisation presented their claim for the Jewish right to re-constitute their ancient homeland. Their territorial claim included all the territory to the west of the Jordan River, as well as a strip of land on the east of the river where the 'two-and-a-half tribes' of Israel had historically dwelt. The eastern boundary of the Jewish homeland, according to Weizmann, would be immediately west of the Hejaz railway, which ran from Damascus through Amman and down to Medina in Saudi Arabia.

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 went on for the whole year. A series of treaties were signed, including



A painting of the Arab delegation presenting its case at the Paris Peace Conference on 6 February 1919. Emir Feisal is standing near the left, US President Woodrow Wilson is seated second from the left, British PM David Lloyd George is second to his right and Arthur Balfour is seated extreme right. | Photo: Imperial War Museum

those previously mentioned. As part of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had to renounce its title to all conquered territory as well as all of its colonies outside Europe. The treaty also decimated Germany's military power and required it to pay punitive war reparations. Many (especially the Germans themselves) believed that the conditions imposed on Germany were unfair. Many also believed that this was a factor in the rise of the Nazis that resulted in World War Two.

The Treaty of Sèvres—the Dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire

The Treaty of Sèvres disbanded the Ottoman Turkish Empire and required it to surrender title to all territory outside Turkey itself. The Principal Allied Powers were well aware of the genocidal policies of the Ottoman Turks towards the racial and religious minorities living within its empire. During the Great War the Turks had massacred well over a million Armenians, Syrian Copts and Maronite Christians, as well as expelling 11,000 Jews before the outbreak of the war. The Principal Allied Powers recognised that the dismembering of the Ottoman Turkish empire was essential for the safety of its population, especially non-Turkish minorities including Christians and Jews.

The Turks later refused to ratify the Treaty of Sèvres and, in 1923, it was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne. The Principal Allied Powers adjourned dealing with the former Ottoman Empire territories to a special conference to be held in San Remo, Italy, in April 1920.

Hugh Kitson is a documentary filmmaker who has made many films about Israel. His films about the British Mandate for Palestine include "The Forsaken Promise"—a three-part series (Hatikvah Film Trust 2006) and "Whose Land?" Part One, presented by Colonel Richard Kemp (Title Deed Media 2017)—see www.whoseland.tv. Part Two is still in production.

This article is the second in a six-part series exploring the significance of the British Mandate for Palestine for today. Part 3, 'The San Remo Conference of 1920,' will follow in the April issue of Israel & Christians Today.



Was the Temple Really Located on the Temple Mount?

■ Pastor Enoch Lavendar

Living Way Christian Network |
Melbourne, Australia

In recent years, Bob Cornuke and Dr Martin Young have proposed that the Temple was not actually located on what we today call the Temple Mount.

While the idea certainly is novel, is it really plausible in the light of Biblical and archaeological evidence?

Dr Martin Young's Temple Theory

In 1867, archaeologists made the stunning discovery that the original City of David was located to the south of—and outside of—the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Taking this research further, Dr Martin Young suggested that:

- The Temple needed water to rinse away the sacrifices. It therefore had to be located close to Jerusalem's only water source—the Gihon spring in the City of David.
- Furthermore, Dr. Young pointed to Jesus' prediction of 'not one stone being left upon another'. He proclaimed that the massive stones left in the Western Wall contradict Jesus' words if the Temple Mount was the site.
- Therefore, the Temple must have been located in the City of David and not on the Temple Mount.
- Finally, building on references from Josephus, Dr Young made the case that the massive structure today known as the 'Temple Mount' was rather the Roman Fortress of Antonia.

The implications of this theory when it comes to Bible Prophecy are dramatic. If this theory was true, it could open the way for the rebuilding of the Temple without sparking World War Three!

While proponents of the theory are excited about this possibility, does it actually fit the Biblical and archaeological evidence?

The Biblical Evidence

The Scriptures are very clear that the Temple of Solomon was built on Mount Moriah. *2 Chronicles 3:1* tells us: "Now

Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

Does Mount Moriah Fit with Dr Young's Theory?

UK based Bible teacher Pastor Derek Walker points out that the City of David is hardly a mountain. It is surrounded by mountains but is situated lower down than the surrounding areas—and is therefore to start off with a poor fit for 'Mount Moriah'

Furthermore, Mount Moriah is first mentioned in the story of Abraham going to sacrifice his son Isaac on this mountain. Derek Walker points out that if Mount Moriah was located inside the City of David—as necessitated by this theory—then at the time of Abraham, it would have been inside the city of Salem where Melchizedek was serving as priest. However, the Biblical account gives no indication that the sacrifice of Isaac was taking place inside a bustling city!

Finally, the Scriptural account tells us that the Temple of Solomon was built on a threshing floor on Mount Moriah. Threshing floors were places where the wheat was threshed and separated from the chaff—and the worthless chaff would blow away in the wind. Therefore threshing floors were not generally located inside a city—as the chaff would go everywhere in town! Threshing floors would often be located on higher ground outside a city to facilitate for the wind to gently blow away the chaff, leaving only the precious grain behind.

Further contradicting Dr Young's theory, *2 Chronicles 5:2* tells us that the Ark of the covenant was taken "out of the City of David" to the Temple built by King Solomon.

It would appear that the Scriptural account contradicts the view that the Temple was located in the City of David.

Archaeological Evidence

The Temple Mount is the fuse in the



Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Israel. | Photo: Unsplash

Israeli/Muslim conflict and due to its extreme sensitivity, archaeologists are unable to carry out archaeological digs at the site. Nevertheless, archaeologists have found compelling evidence linking the Temple Mount to the original Temple location.

One of the most compelling pieces of evidence is known as the 'Stone of Trumpeting'. This stone was inscribed in clear Hebrew with the words 'to the place of trumpeting' and was found among other stones that the Romans had thrown down from the Temple Mount to the pavement below. While Young and Cornuke assert that the Temple Mount was a Roman garrison, it is hard to see what a stone with this inscription would do in a Roman fortress!

As Jesus was gazing at the magnificent Temple buildings (*Matthew 24:1-2*), it is true that He said: "not one stone will remain upon another." And while the Temple buildings were destroyed as foretold, the gigantic retaining wall that upheld the huge Temple Mount plaza remains standing to this day. While a completely destroyed Temple Mount as suggested by Young and Cornuke could fit Jesus' prediction, the current Temple Mount with its retaining wall intact does

not necessarily contradict Jesus' words.

Finally, Dr Young's theory asserts that the Temple needed a source of water to wash away the sacrifices. However, the Jewish records tell of how the Temple was supplied independently with water via an aqueduct, overcoming the reliance on the Gihon spring. In addition, critics of Young and Cornuke have pointed out that building the Temple over Jerusalem's only water source and polluting it with the blood and guts of thousands of sacrifices would hardly have been a good idea!

In short, I believe that both the Scriptural and the archaeological records better support the traditional view of the Temple Mount rather than the more recent Young and Cornuke theory.

X Marks the Spot

God decreed in the Scriptures that He would place His heart and His eyes at the site of the Temple forever (*2 Chronicles 7:16*). I believe this explains why there is such an intense religious power struggle over this site and why Christians and Jews have been forbidden from praying at the site.

Let us pray for God's name once again to be glorified on the Temple Mount as we look forward to the day that our Messiah will return to His Temple.

Ottolenghi Wows Chefs

True to form, a number of middle-aged women, some with husbands in tow, and chefs, donned their finery to attend a *Conversation with Ottolenghi* on 27 January at Wellington's Michael Fowler Centre. It was his second appearance in New Zealand, having served up a similar dish in Auckland on 25 January. The two-part show was hosted by Australian food writer Alice Zaslavsky who accompanied him on his Australasian tour.

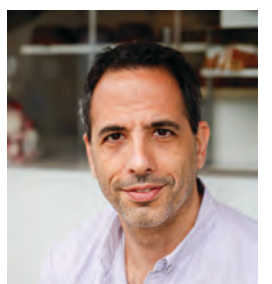
Technology ruled. He's Israeli, so it was a

smart phone participatory event. The show began with a giant QR code. People scanned the image to build a New Zealand word picture of Ottolenghi's food. Then came conversation and quiz. Yotam Ottolenghi described his childhood in Jerusalem, growing up as the son of two academic parents, one German-Jewish and the other an Italian-born chemistry professor. They set high expectations and he is obviously under a lot of pressure to perform. Food was not his parents' career

choice for him. Timing played a part in his choice as he was able to view and sample authentic cuisine from many different newly-arrived diaspora Jewish groups in Jerusalem while growing up, giving him an entrée to global cuisine. He has taken that theme and played with it in his *Ottolenghi Test Kitchen (OTK)* now in a wider culinary context, creating fusion cuisine.

In the second half demonstration he set up a challenge whereby the audience built up a six-layered dish using thematic foods

based on smart phone answers to three choices per layer as a recipe idea. Then he made his own dish using the same choices with explanations for comparison. Finally a group of six from the audience voted their preference under blind testing. For the record, it was a tie.



Greetings from the Ends of the Earth

Raphael Jordan

Christians for Israel Fiji

On 24 January 2023, Christians for Israel Fiji (C4I Fiji) paid a visit to the Honourable Prime Minister of the Peoples Coalition Government of Fiji. The visit also marked the Peoples Coalition Government's first month in Office. Firstly, C4I Fiji would like to acknowledge God for the open doors that gave us the opportunity to meet Hon Prime Minister Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka.

The reasons behind the visit were first to congratulate Hon Prime Minister Rabuka on his elevation to lead once again (after a lapse of 23 years). The Peoples Coalition Government was constituted after the 2022 National General Elections and sworn in on Christmas Eve 2022.

The Prime Minister is a devout Christian, pro-Israel and still has many Jewish friends abroad and domestically.

The C4I Fiji took the opportunity to encourage Hon PM Rabuka and the Peoples Coalition Government to support Israel at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

C4I Fiji presented the PM with a huge Israeli Flag, and a few copies of the books—*Why Israel? Why Jerusalem? Why End Times?* Along with other C4I Fiji gifts.

The visit was successful in that C4I Fiji were able to relay to the PM the message of the importance to comfort Israel (*Isaiah 40:1—Comfort, comfort my people says your God*) and to show support and love towards Israel externally. The team felt that the message was well received.

Hon PM Rabuka also shared a Bible verse in which he said, "Leadership in one sentence". It's taken from the Old Testament, the *Book of Micah 6:8 NIV*. What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

The PM told us a remarkable story. A Jewish man who fought during World War I, named Joske (Joske's thumb) also went by the name Brewster (as in Brewster Street in Suva) to hide his identity and out of fear of being captured by Jew-haters. Brewster Street faces Suva Harbour. The street's centerline points straight at the centre of the base of Joske's Thumb. This is truly an amazing Jewish connection to Fiji.

The members of the C4I Fiji team who visited the PM at his office were: Former National Leader C4I Fiji, currently Head of Business for Bred Bank in Honiara, Solomon Islands, Lepani Makubuna, and his wife, Salote Makubuna (Secretary), President Tomasi Biumaiwai, Ana Rokomokoti and husband, and C4I (Fiji) National Leader, Raphael Jordan. | Photos: Apenisa Talemaierika



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Believing Without Israel - Part 3 *How Israel Disappeared from our Christian Faith*

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

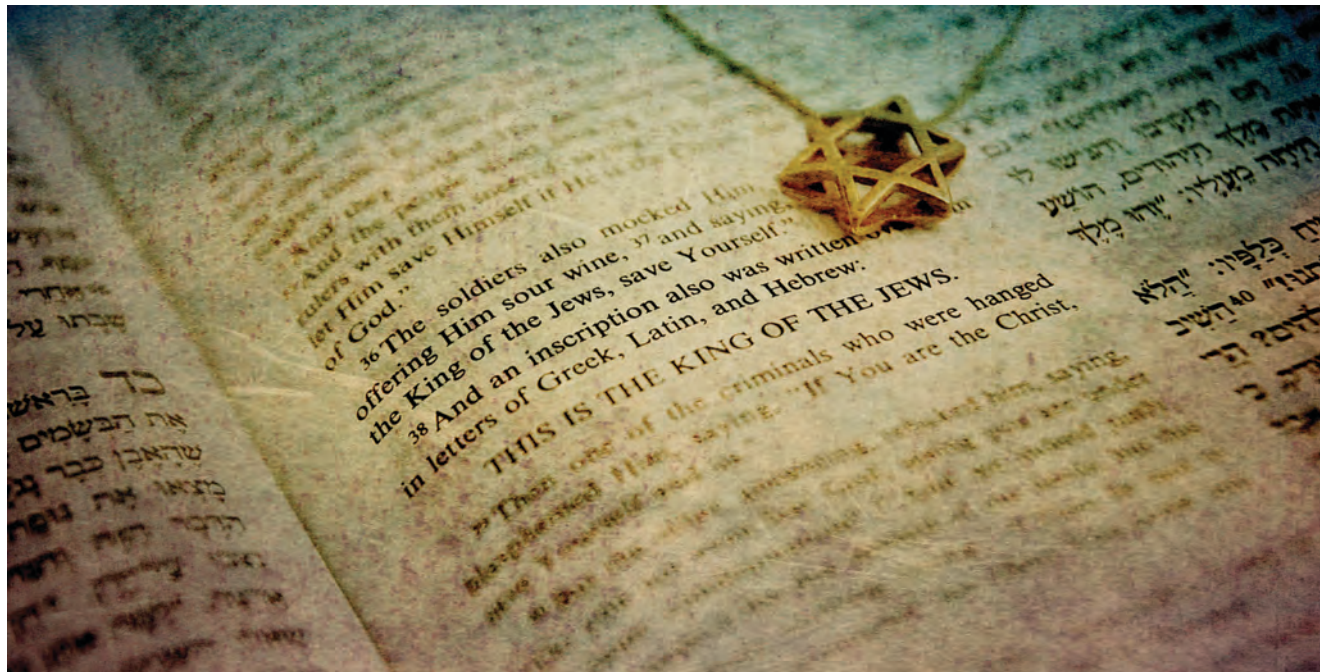
In this new series of articles Rev Cornelis Kant explains how it happened that the role of Israel was seen as insignificant in the development of our Christian faith and in the history of Christian theology.

Destruction of the Temple & Jewish Diaspora

In the year 70 AD, the Roman army invades Jerusalem and destroys the city and the Temple. Many thousands of Jews are slaughtered in a gruesome way. Jewish boys and girls are sold as slaves, and many flee abroad. The Temple service comes to a definitive end and the Jewish dispersion, the Diaspora, begins. This news also reaches the Christians in the various congregations around the Mediterranean Sea. It touches them deeply. Many see it as a judgment of God on the Jews. It feels like a confirmation of what they have always thought: God is executing His judgment on the Jews as punishment, because they rejected and killed Jesus. The covenant with Israel would have been definitively broken. Israel has ceased to be God's people, so they thought. The Christian church is now the only and true people of God.

Replacement Theology

This perspective has had a profound impact on the further development of Christian theology. It has been called 'replacement theology': the Christian church has replaced Israel's position as God's people. It is astonishing



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II:49. It is, of course, unfair to attribute this to the entire Jewish population of Israel, let alone the many thousands of Jews who were already living outside Israel at that time. Besides, Jesus Himself said: "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it

state: "crucified under Pontius Pilate". That is, if you want to speak of guilt, because in the end Jesus' death was already determined by God's plan of salvation. Even before creation, the coming of Jesus was already included in God's plan of salvation. So it is ultimately pointless to speculate in a legal sense about the question of guilt for Jesus' death. Nevertheless, this perception of the Jewish guilt of Jesus' death has deeply influenced attitudes and thinking about Jews within the Christian church, as we will see in the following articles.

...This shows that it was God's eternal plan that Jesus Christ should die and rise for our salvation. It was therefore part of God's salvation plan for the world.

to see how, in a relatively short period of time, Christians in this first period of the church were able to set aside the multitude of Bible passages about God's eternal love and faithfulness to His people. The aversion to the Jews was apparently stronger than the biblical testimony of God's plan for the Jewish people. One might pose the question: what is left of Paul's thorough explanation in his letter to the Romans?

The Killing of Jesus

Is it true that the Jews killed Jesus and thereby brought about God's eternal judgment on themselves? No, this is not true at all, and for several reasons. The Jewish Council wanted the Romans to crucify Jesus. They were afraid that the movement around Jesus might cause an uprising against the Romans which would lead to bloodshed. High Priest Caiaphas explains this in *John*

down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father' (*John 10:17*).

God's Everlasting Plan

Paul even clarifies that God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (*Ephesians 1: 4*). This shows that it was God's eternal plan that Jesus Christ should die and rise for our salvation. It was therefore part of God's salvation plan for the world. It is quite remarkable, then, that we would reproach the Jews for this. Besides, Pilate, who was then the Roman governor, said after having interrogated Jesus: "I find no guilt in this Man" (*Luke 23:4*). So he could have released Jesus, but had Him scourged and crucified in spite of it, and hypocritically washed his hands in water as a sign of his innocence. So you could say that Pilate, as a Gentile, was at least as guilty of Jesus' death. The old creeds of the Church also



Megillat Esther

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

Megillat Esther is Hebrew for the 'scroll of Esther'. There are five books in the Old Testament traditionally referred to as 'scrolls': *Ruth*, *Song of Songs*, *Lamentations*, *Ecclesiastes* and *Esther*. They are linked to the various feast and memorial days. But only *Esther* is traditionally read from a *kosher* scroll, which is a parchment scroll, handwritten with ink, in the classical Hebrew script, just like a *Torah* scroll. Only *Esther* is invariably referred to as the *Scroll of Esther*. This will probably have to do with the popularity of the story and of the feast.

One notable difference from a *Torah* scroll is that *Esther* scroll is rolled on one stick, while a *Torah* scroll has two. This is purely practical, as the *Talmud* describes. A *Torah* scroll, of course, is much larger.

Moreover, a piece is read from it every week. Then it is easier to roll it through on two sticks, so that it can be closed where one left off.

An *Esther* scroll, on the other hand, is actually a letter (*Esther 9:20 and 26*) and is therefore read like a letter: all at once. This happens on *Purim*, twice, on the eve and in the morning. The scroll is first completely unrolled and neatly folded on the lectern, to be read aloud.

The precept (*mitzvah*) for *Poerim* is that you must hear the *Esther* scroll read aloud, preferably in the synagogue. Moreover, you must hear the reader immediately and not through a phone, live stream or microphone. When reading aloud, therefore, it must be absolutely silent so that not a word is lost. Absolutely silent... except when the name *Haman* drops. Then as much noise as possible is made, with rattles and by stamping your feet, to drown out that name.

In practice everyone reads along, in his/her own

scroll, or in a printed Bible. There are four passages that are jointly read aloud by everyone, after which the reader repeats them again, to ensure that everyone has heard them. These are known as the four 'verses of salvation'.



Recommended Reading

Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn by Daniel Gordis (2016)

By Simon Smelt

Daniel Gordis delivers with this book. An influential and well-known writer and blogger on Israel, he writes with vigour and clarity. At 585 pages, including six appendices, 38 pages of notes, ten useful maps, and lengthy 'works cited', this is neither a quick guide nor a plodding history. But it is concise.

Gordis describes the Jews' return to their homeland as "one of the great dramas of human history" and "like a fairy tale." He writes in sufficient depth to bring out the drama and tensions and deftly summarises complex events. He gives each of the main characters a brief bio and provides a feel for the street through popular songs and poetry.

Gordis remarks that he is not writing a military or economic history. So, there are no details of tank battles but economic pressures on the early state are well described. He centres his story on politics and political decision-making amidst competing factions, a divided populace, scarce resources, military threats and unreliable allies. He provides a page-turner on the struggle for independence, on Ben Gurion's determination to build a nation and the new Jewish man from often unpromising material, and on the shifting dynamics of the multi-fold divisions in Israeli society: Arab and Jew, religious and secular, Sephardic and Ashkenazi, settler and city dweller, Sabra and immigrant.

Gordis brings out the huge ongoing challenges after independence: the overwhelming influx of refugees into a poverty-stricken and barely functioning state, the lack of shared experience, knowledge or common ground between the various peoples most of whom lacked understanding of democracy. He gives nuance to the shifting fault lines as the nation develops and grows and suffers various military, economic, political and population shocks and setbacks.

Inevitably, the book has limitations. The period prior to the emergence of Zionism receives light coverage: the impact of the Russian revolution and subsequent civil war on the lands where most Jews then lived gets half a sentence, the Holocaust a paragraph. Gordis writes from a secular perspective: here is the redemption of Israel but the Lord is not an active participant. He discusses the Arab side but as secondary. He refers casually to the 'Palestinians', without explaining that prior to 1967 the term was used to indicate location not ethnic identity. Jewish groups and products were referred to as 'Palestinian' during the Mandate period: the 'Palestinian companies' within the British army, the 'Palestinian Post' newspaper, and so forth. Arafat's drive for a Palestinian man to match Ben Gurion's new Jewish man is unremarked.

The novice prepared to tackle a weighty tome should be entertained and well-informed; the more knowledgeable will find surprises and fresh perspectives.

The Origin of Messiah



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■ Johannes Gerloff Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

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

"From them comes the Messiah according to the flesh" (Romans 9:5)

The fact that Christ, according to the flesh, stems from the Israelites, and that the Israelites are both the home and the people of Messiah, is the "final and highest of Israel's prerogatives". Because "salvation is of the Jews," as Jesus himself emphasises (*John 4:22*), "they were separated as a peculiar people, and preserved amidst all their afflictions".

That our Lord Jesus Christ is born a Jew was not only for Martin Luther, but already for Paul, more than just a historical coincidence. Jesus Christ cannot be separated from His Jewish people and background. It was not by accident that God put in all the effort and took two thousand years to create the cultural, national and spiritual environments into which He sent His Son.

This is not just a question of an historical-cultural background through which we might better understand Biblical texts. We are not even just talking about messianic prophecies which have been tangibly fulfilled in history. Towards the end of this series about the privileges of the Jewish people, it's all about Messiah

Himself, about His Jewishness, that is, about the very identity of Messiah Yeshua. The biological descent and the historical fact of Jesus' coming from Judaism are by no means theologically irrelevant.

Whoever tries to strip Jesus of His Jewishness in order to create a redeemer that is 'more relevant' for other cultural environments, is in imminent danger of fabricating a god according to his own standards and imaginations and, thus, of falling into idolatry. Whoever consciously dismisses Israel as irrelevant or even secondary should beware lest they all of a sudden also lose Messiah Himself - and with Him the only way to the Father. For of Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites," comes not least Christ Himself "according to the flesh". And this is by no means a coincidence! "The fact of Jesus being born Jewish permanently binds all those from the nations who believe in Him to God's history with his people".

In all this, Paul does not say that the Jews were once Israelites, sometime in the past. Rather, they are Israelites to this very day. The title of honour 'Israel', including all its riches and privileges, is valid up to the present time. Marquart writes: "The Apostle writes and preaches after the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, after the rejection of Jesus as Messiah by the Jews, after 'the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom'. This present

tense is present tense in the face of the cross of Christ, not denying its relevance and importance".

Similarly, Klaus Wengst observed the use of the term 'brothers' in *verse 3 of chapter 9*: "With this terminology [Paul] refers exclusively to people from the churches. If he uses it in this case for Jews who do not believe in Jesus, then this is worthy of special notice". This professor of theology from Bochum University in Germany thinks it "probable, that Paul consciously upgrades his countrymen according to the flesh by calling them 'brothers'. He thereby sets the Church and the Israel that does not believe in Jesus in analogy to each other". Wengst concludes: "It is not about what once distinguished Israel but is no longer valid. Rather, it is about what distinguishes the people of God now and in the future from all other nations".

The focal point and objective of the uniqueness and riches of Israel, however, are not human beings, but the one—

**...who is God over all, forever praised!
Amen. (Romans 9:5)**

Thus, Paul slides from theology into worship. In this way he directs the attention from the gifted to the giver of all spiritual gifts. Furthermore, he prepares the way for the text that follows. There, Paul emphasises the absolute sovereignty of the Creator. He is indeed and unquestionably God.



The garden tomb where Jesus was buried. | Photo: Lightstock

In the Beginning: The History of Jerusalem—Part 1



Jerusalem 1900. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons



Kameel Majdali
Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

Thus say the Lord God; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her—*Ezekiel 5:5*

It is arguably the most famous city in the world—a household name even in remote places like the highlands of

Papua New Guinea or the jungles of the Amazon. It has four thousand years of history of which the first thousand was heathen, the second thousand Israelite, the next two thousand Gentile, and then after the June War of 1967, the city returned to Jewish/Israeli rule.

This six-part series will look at Jerusalem—historically and prophetically. When we understand Jerusalem, we better comprehend the will of God.

Bird's Eye View

The very first time Jerusalem is mentioned in the Bible by name is in *Joshua 10:1*. Adonizedek formed a coalition against the royal city of Gibeon, for having the audacity of making a league with Joshua and Israel. He is referred to as 'king of Jerusalem'.

Despite its lack of mention in the *Torah*, (the first five books of the Bible), Jerusalem is undoubtedly the chief city of the Bible. It's explicitly named 811 times. In addition, it has other names like:

- City of God (*Psalms 46:4; 87:3*)
- City of David (*2 Samuel 5:7; Isaiah 22:9*)
- Jebus (*Joshua 18:28; Judge 19:10*)
- City of Righteousness (*Isaiah 1:26*)
- City of Truth (*Zechariah 8:3*);
- City of the Great King (*Psalms 48:2*);
- Holy City (*Nehemiah 11:1*)
- Faithful City (*Isaiah 1:21,26*)
- Salem (*Genesis 14:18; Psalms 76:2*)
- Holy Mount (*Daniel 9:16*)
- Perfection of Beauty (*Lamentations 2:15*)
- Throne of the Lord (*Jeremiah 3:17*)
- Egypt & Sodom (*Revelation 11:8*)
- Zion (*1 Kings 8:1; Zechariah 9:13*).

When you tally up the references, it amounts to a 1000 times Jerusalem and its synonyms are found in Scripture. In contrast, the city of Babylon—the spiritual rival to Jerusalem—is cited 252 times.

The Glory of Zion

It is impossible to understand Jerusalem's significance without mentioning Zion. Are Jerusalem and Zion the same thing or are they distinct?

The name 'Zion' needs special emphasis. It is often associated with 'Zionism,' though ultimately it has a spiritual, prophetic side that is above politics. Zion has several meanings in Scripture,

depending on the context. The word is used 152 times in the Bible, along with 'Sion' nine times.

- Zion can mean the city of Jerusalem (*Psalms 87:2-3; 48:1-4*);
- Zion can mean the land of Israel (*Isaiah 51:3*);
- Zion can mean the Jewish people (*Isaiah 51:16*);
- Zion can mean Salem, which is equal to Jerusalem (*Psalms 76:1-3*).

Thus, while Zion's exact meaning is uncertain, it has become synonymous with Jerusalem, Israel, and the Jewish people. Significant as these points are, Zion goes to a whole new level when referring to Almighty God Himself.

Psalms 132 gives great insight into the significance of 'Zion.' We learn that God has chosen it (*verse 13*), desires it as His habitation (*verse 14*)—His local earthly address; He desires it as his final abode above all other places (*verse 14*); the lamp of God's anointed (David and Messiah, son of David) will be there.

In light of *Psalms 132*, and other Scriptures, Zion's greatest glory is this: It is associated with God's literal dwelling place on earth; His local earthly snail mail address. The phrase, 'The Lord Dwells in Zion' is found in the following verses: *Psalms 9:11; Psalms 135:21; Isaiah 8:18; Joel 3:21; Isaiah 33:5*.

In summary, Zion appears to be a royal city, or at least the royal section of the city, where the King of Israel will live. Zion/Jerusalem is a holy city, where the God of Israel dwells, too. Messiah is the Son of David and Son of God, the heir who will sit on David's throne and rule from the holy city.

Since God has chosen Zion for Him and His King to dwell, you can be sure that the forces of darkness will do their utmost to foil the divine plan. If it were possible, they will try to keep the King out of Zion. In *Psalms 2* and *Zechariah 12, 14*, we begin to see a picture of why the nations are so restive and concerned about Jerusalem. These passages are the beginning of understanding why Jerusalem is the burdensome stone. Either Zion will be God's capital or that of an anti-God, anti-Christ force.

The First Thousand Years (2000-1000 BC)

While the first millennium of Jerusalem was not in Israelite hands, it is mentioned by implication in the following events:

- Melchizedek, king of Salem, welcomed the patriarch Abraham after the slaughter of the kings. He was a priest of the Most High God (*Genesis 14:18-20*).
- Isaac's near-death experience occurred in the 'land of Moriah,' traditionally considered Mount Moriah, Jerusalem.
- Joshua's conquest of Canaan: Information was sparse, but we learn that Judah did not drive out the *Jebusites*, inhabitants of Jerusalem (*Joshua 15:63*) and neither did Benjamin (*Judges 1:21*);
- Alternatively, Judah destroyed Jerusalem by fire (*Judges 1:8*) but did not retain it. Then the *Jebusites* inhabited it afterwards.
- In short, neither Joshua, the judges, nor king Saul succeeded to capture and keep Jerusalem. That honour would be left for a man called David.

To be continued...

Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

Esther: The Holy Spirit

On the evening of 22 February, we will begin the Hebrew month of Adar—launching our annual Hebrew redemptive season. It includes the holidays of *Purim*, *Pesach* (Passover) and *Shavuot* (Pentecost). The first sacred text we read during this season is the Book of Esther. Not only was Esther written and canonised within *Tanakh* (the Hebrew Bible) by the *Ruach Hakodesh* (Holy Spirit), but the establishment of the *Purim* on the Jewish calendar was also done by the work of the *Ruach Hakodesh*.

The Book of Esther, for all intents and purposes, should not be in the Bible. It's a story that takes place outside of Israel after the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai, between the First and Second Temple periods. The book does not even contain God's name in it. If I were on the Bible Canonisation Committee Board, I wouldn't dare put Esther into the Hebrew Bible. However, the *Ruach Hakodesh* ensured that Esther was in the Hebrew Bible.

At first glance, the Book of Esther seems to be an exclusive Jewish experience and victory. It is, therefore, quite astounding that Esther remained in the Christian canon. Certain early Church fathers, and later, Martin Luther, argued for the removal of Esther from the Bible. It was just too Jewish! How does one explain Esther's canonisation in Christian Scriptures, as well as being used by a remnant of Christian brothers and sisters to "stand in the gap" for Israel (*Esther 4:14*)? The *Ruach Hakodesh*!

I humbly believe that Christians should celebrate *Purim* with the Jewish people. Although God's hand provided the military victory, it was both Jews and non-Jews who were the divine agents to win the war. Traditionally, *Esther 8:17* has been translated to invoke that a mass conversion to Judaism occurred— "... Then many of the people of the land became Jews because fear of the Jews fell upon them." My preferred translation is, "Then many of the peoples of the land anchored their destiny with the Jewish people because the remarkable God of the Jews descended upon them."

Due to the limited scope of this article, I cannot extrapolate the two Hebrew terms in *Esther 8:17*—*Pachad Ha'Yehudim* (traditional translation—'fear of the Jews') and *Mit'yi'hadim* (traditional translation—'became Jews') to understand how I arrived at my translation. Let's just say that the traditional translation reflected a late Second Temple period understanding of the verse when a more formalised conversion system was in place. However, an *Esther 8:17* live stream would show a move of God that took hold of a segment of non-Jews, and they recognised Him. This non-Jewish remnant decided to defend His people without conversion to Judaism.

I encourage my Christian brothers and sisters to study Esther this season. It is truly a *Ruach Hakodesh* holiday.

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

English Feast of 'Lots'

■ Dr GH Cohen Stuart

Theologian | Certified Israeli Tour Guide

The name *Purim*, *Lots*, is taken from the book of *Esther* 3:7. Ordered by, and in the presence of Haman, the lot (*pur*) was cast to determine the best day to extinguish the Jewish People. *Purim* celebrates the failure of Haman's plot (the final solution of the Jewish question). That single failure has never lost its horrible and shocking reality.

Steps

Purim is celebrated in steps, representing different aspects of the feast. The first step is set during the morning service on the *Sabbath* before the feast. The usual *Torah* reading is followed by a special reading from *Deuteronomy* 25:16-19. There, Israel is called not to forget to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven after entering the promised land. What is the connection with *Esther*? The last king of Amalek, mentioned in *1 Samuel* 22, was Agag. The Agagite Haman was his descendant.

The plot of Haman was a continuation of the cowardly assault by Amalek on Israel's rear, right after the exodus from Egypt (*Exodus* 17). The reading of *Deuteronomy* 25 reminds Israel that it is the most principal struggle in all of *Tenach* (the Hebrew designation for the Old Testament): "The Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation" (*Ex. 17:16*). It is not just a fight against (meanwhile extinct) Amalek, but a combat against any form of antisemitism—even until today.

When in the evening the celebration starts, the second preparation is also finished. Convinced of the seriousness of Haman's threat (*Esther* 4:14), *Esther*—through her uncle Mordechai—called on all Jews in Shushan, the capital of the empire, to fast with her for three days. Then she

risked her own life to save her people: "If I perish, I perish" (*4:16*). To commemorate this, *13 Adar* (in 2023 on 6 March) is a day of fasting. According to tradition, upon entering the throne hall, she said: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me" (*Psalms* 22).

Masks

The fast ends at sunset, when the 14th of Adar begins. Synagogues fill up with people. Many visitors are dressed up, often masked. That masquerade is a reminder that people often act different than who they really are. Haman, too, kept up the appearance of a loyal servant to King Ahasuerus, while in fact he was not just after blotting out the Jews, but in particular after royal power (hence his arrogant suggestion, *Esther* 6:6-9). Mordecai, by refusing to kneel for Haman (*Esther* 3:3) seems a rebel, but at the same time prevented a conspiracy against Ahasuerus (*Esther* 2:19-23). In the second part of the book, the masks fall.

This turns everything upside down. The day Haman had wanted to exterminate all Jews becomes a day of punishment for Jew-haters. In *Esther* 9:1, 'contrary' is used as a rendering of the Hebrew *wenahafoch hu*. Those words mean: it was reversed. When the masks are dropped, Haman turns out to be Jew-hater, Esther a Jewess, Mordecai her uncle, and the Jews loyal subjects of King Ahasuerus. Haman's accusation (*Esther* 3:9) of a people 'not fulfilling the king's laws' is belied.

Jews love to play with such masquerades. You poke fun at all kinds of 'news'. In Israeli newspapers, you no longer know what real facts are. In Jewish periodicals, but also in communal magazines, 'fake news' articles at *Purim*. At *talmudic* high schools, rabbis are made fun of by their students. Bad traits are exposed during hilarious performances.

Both in the evening and the following morning, the entire book of *Esther* is read. As 'the memory of Amalek' is to be blotted out, the name of Haman, when read, is made inaudible by trampling the feet and the noise of rattles and tooters. It causes young and old to attentively read the text.

The morning service is followed by a festive meal. During the preparations, neighbours and friends bring each other gifts and deliver food packets to people with limited income, so they can celebrate the feast (*Esther* 9:19, 22). From all neighbours you can expect plates with sweets and Haman's ears, the special *Purim* cookies. It is the only feast in Judaism where one is allowed to drink without limits, to the extent that one does not know anymore whom to bless or to curse, Haman or Mordecai.

Esther 9:15 tells that in the capital, Shushan, Jew-haters were allowed to be punished one day longer. In remembrance of this, *Purim* in Jerusalem (as a walled city) is celebrated a day later.

Victory

Pesach celebrates the Divine intervention in history. In the *Purim* story, the Jewish people act themselves. No name of God appears in the book of *Esther*, though hidden references were discovered in the text. Against the divine intervention of the exodus, *Purim* seems just a secular happening.

This least religious (?) of Israel's feasts is one of the most beloved, not just in secular, but especially in strictly religious circles. According to rabbis, *Purim* is the only feast that will be celebrated in the coming new world (*olam haba*): the victory over antisemitism and Jew-haters.

Dr GH Cohen Stuart is a theologian and in Israel a certificated tour-guide. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Marian.

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The Oslo Accords: A Failed Pursuit of Trust

■ Dr Sheree Trotter

Thirty years ago, on 20 January 1993, the first secret talks took place that would eventually lead to the signing of the Oslo Accords. Two Israeli academics and three Palestinian representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), met at the home of a Norwegian couple to begin negotiations. The secluded spot away from the public eye afforded the opportunity for discussions and relationship building, in an attempt to cultivate trust between the Israelis and Palestinians.

After months of talks, the 'Oslo backchannel' culminated in the signing of the 'Declaration of Principles On Interim Self-Government Arrangements' on 13 September 1993. The formal signing ceremony hosted by US President Bill Clinton, at which Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat shook hands, provided the perfect photo opportunity for a world eager to resolve the long-standing Israel-Palestinian conflict.

This historical moment marked a turning point in the relationship by initiating open, direct talks between Israel and the PLO. Letters of Mutual Recognition were exchanged in which the PLO recognised the existence of the State of Israel and Israel recognised the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, while core issues such as refugees, settlements, borders, Jerusalem and mutual security, were to be resolved at some future time by direct negotiation between the two parties.

Such was the initial euphoria surrounding the signing of the Oslo Accords that in 1994 Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat won the Nobel Peace Prize. Rabin also signed a peace treaty with Jordan in 1994. However, in November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a disgruntled Jewish extremist.

Leaders on both sides failed to take their people along with them and internal political opposition hindered progress. Commitments were broken and efforts to negotiate final status issues were fruitless. Violent outbreaks undermined trust. The attempt by Clinton at the 2000 Camp David talks, to broker an agreement between new Israeli PM Ehud Barak and PA chairman Yasser Arafat failed and the subsequent outbreak of the Second Intifada further dampened hopes for peace.

As Yossi Klein Halevi expressed in *'Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor'*,

The second intifada exhausted my capacity for outreach; I didn't think I could ever resume that journey in any form. I no longer wanted to hear your stories, your claims, your grievances. I wanted to shout at your hill: It could have been different! Partner with us, and negotiate a compromise! And look at me, acknowledge my existence! I've got a story, too.

Halevi, Yossi Klein. *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor*, p.15, Kindle Edition.

A key factor in the initial hopeful phase of negotiations was recognition of the need to build a relationship of trust. The Norwegians worked to provide an atmosphere that would facilitate friendly relations, where stereotypes could be overcome and the other party humanised. A policy of constructive ambiguity was pursued with the view to remaining ambiguous on key issues until the relationship was strong enough to face difficult decisions.

Thirty years on, the prospects for peace appear further away than ever. The Palestinian leadership has refused land for peace offers, including the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state in 97% of the West Bank with east Jerusalem as its capital, the dismantling of isolated settlements and land swaps for the remainder. They have rather chosen to pursue a path of demonising and delegitimising Israel with a litany of fabricated accusations, from settler-colonialism to genocide to apartheid. Terrorism has been ongoing.

Indeed at a recent celebration of the 58th anniversary of the launch of Fatah, which controls the Palestinian



Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat at the White House 13 September 1993. | Photo: GPO Photos

National Authority in the West Bank and is considered more moderate than the hardline Islamist Hamas party in Gaza, the party reasserted its commitment to undertake more terrorist activity in 2023. The Fatah statement expressed commitment to the 'path of comprehensive popular resistance', and to 'striving together with the Palestinian struggle forces to escalate, organise, develop, and expand [the resistance] against all the occupation's aggressive plots, with all types of resistance remaining open to our people'.

Significantly, the 58th anniversary is counted from Fatah's first terror attack against Israel in 1965—two years prior to the Six Day War, highlighting the fact that the resistance to the Jewish state is unrelated to the territory Israel gained in the Six Day War. Palestinian rhetoric and actions point to a stubborn refusal to accept Jewish presence anywhere in the land between "the River and the Sea".

A key factor in the initial hopeful phase of negotiations was recognition of the need to build a relationship of trust.

When in 1996 Israel followed through with Oslo commitments to pull out of Jenin and Gaza in 2005, these territories became bases for terrorist activities. Rather than engaging in direct negotiations, the Palestinian leadership has sought to internationalise the conflict, the latest example being the UN's push to have Israel brought before the International Court of Justice.

Not only is there no indication that the Palestinians are interested in pursuing peace with Israel, the Palestinian Authority has made little progress in setting up the structure and machinery necessary for achieving statehood.

No legislative or presidential elections have been held in the Palestinian territories since 2005. Abbas's presidential term was supposed to end in 2009. Twelve years later in 2021, an election was planned, but Hamas was poised to sweep the parliamentary election. This was widely seen as the real reason Abbas postponed the poll, while he cited Israel's refusal to allow voting in East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the conflict between Hamas and Fatah has continued, having begun prior to Hamas seizing Gaza in 2007.

Fatah faces a severe leadership crisis, charges of corruption and lack of public support. These factors add to general insecurity and the alarming rise in terrorist activity. Palestinian lawyers and other unions staged a series of protests in 2022. They challenged decision-

making processes, deep-rooted nepotism and corruption among senior officials.

In addition to the general corruption and incompetence of the PA, Palestinians lack basic human rights.

According to Human Rights Watch, the Palestinian leadership goes to extreme lengths in its persecution of journalists and activists. HRW documents more than 80 cases of torture and arbitrary arrests, some for nothing more than writing a critical article or Facebook post, others for belonging to the wrong student group or political movement.

Both the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in Gaza have in recent years carried out scores of arbitrary arrests for peaceful criticism of the authorities, particularly on social media, among independent journalists, on university campuses, and at demonstrations.

Further, a litmus test in the attitude of the government is what is taught to children. Sadly, Palestinian children are indoctrinated to hatred with a school curriculum that encourages violence, jihad, martyrdom, antisemitism, hate, and intolerance. This is further entrenched in Summer camps where children are encouraged to become martyrs and recruited to become child soldiers, a war crime. Palestinians are incentivised to terrorist activity with the families of 'martyrs' receiving financial rewards.

Israel for its part has shifted focus elsewhere in the Middle East, normalising relations with other Arab countries, beginning with Bahrain, the UAE, Morocco and Sudan.

Normalisation has opened new opportunities for defence and security cooperation, cultural and economic activity. Just as building trust was considered important in the Oslo process, developing relationships around common interests has been a significant factor in the success of the Abraham Accords. Seeing the others as cousins rather than foes, with a common descent from Abraham has been key in setting the stage for mutual cooperation. In addition, these Arab countries have grown weary of waiting for the Palestinians to progress towards peace and recognise that the Iranian threat is of greater mutual concern.

While a new paradigm for peace has begun in the Middle East, the Palestinian leadership has remained intransigent, still hoping to purge the region of all Jewish presence. Given that Israel is unwilling to oblige by disappearing from the pages of history, the conflict looks set to continue indefinitely.

Dr Sheree Trotter is an historian, founder of the Indigenous Coalition for Israel and co-director of the Israel Institute NZ. www.indigenouscoalition.org

Celebrating Israel's Successes

■ David Zwartz

Former Honorary Consul of Israel in New Zealand

It is an extraordinary and unique achievement by the young State of Israel—now only 75 years old—that in spite of major military, economic, and political threats to its existence from the very first day of being an independent nation, it has contributed so significantly to world culture.

True, Israeli cultural development started earlier than 1948. In particular, rapid development occurred in the 1920s with the growth of the *Yishuv*, the organised Jewish community in Eretz Israel, during the time of the British Palestine Mandate.

Also true, the Jews who arrived to found and build the modern State of Israel in Eretz Israel had behind them a history of outstanding cultural richness and variety in the many countries where they were forced to live during the previous 1900-odd years of exile in the Diaspora.

The tensions and excitement of creating a nation made up of scores of different ethnicities and nationalities brought a wave of creativity in every cultural field. Dance, song, literature (in the new and still-developing language, *Ivrit*—Israeli spoken Hebrew), film and art and crafts have flourished.

Dance in Jewish and Israeli culture dates back to Biblical times, with many *Torah* and *Talmudic* references. Western-style classical dance in Israel grew out of prominent Jewish involvement in Russian ballet, through the *Batsheva* dance company (which has visited New Zealand), to a wide range of modern dance creativity.

The Israeli *horah*, based on a dance from Eastern Europe, and popular in *kibbutzim*, became a symbol of the early days of agricultural and socialist reconstruction. It was often danced to folk tunes such as *Hava nagila*, a modern folk song written around 1920 and widely popularised by Harry Belafonte. Israeli folk dance today reflects the cultures of Israel's many different immigrant societies, culminating in the most recent Ethiopian *Beta Israel aliyah*. It is practised and enjoyed by dance groups around the world.

Large-scale post-1948 *Mizrahi* (Middle Eastern) Jewish immigration has also influenced pop songs, changing

their earlier *Ashkenazi* flavour to world-level Middle Eastern fusion style, featuring popular songwriters and singers such as Yemenite-born Ofra Haza and Tel Aviv-born Achinoam Nini (Noa). Ofra is in *Rolling Stone's* top 200 singers of all time. Male pop stars include Arik Einstein, Dudu Fisher, David Broza, David D'Or (who performed at WOMAD in 2008) and Aidan Raichel.

Israeli success at the international level is shown by its four Eurovision contest victories – Izhar Cohen and Alphabeta with *A-Ba-Ni-Bi* in Paris (1978); Milk and Honey with *Hallelujah* in Jerusalem (1979); Dana International (the first transgender person to win Eurovision) with *Diva* in Birmingham (1998); and Netta Barzilai with *Toy* in Lisbon (2018).

In mainstream classical music, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra is pre-eminent. It was founded as the Palestine Symphony Orchestra in 1936 and gained its international fame under the 50-year leadership of conductor Zubin Mehta. World-class Israeli violin soloists include Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, Shlomo Mintz (who gave master classes here in 2018), Gil Shaham and Miriam Fried.

With conflict continuously present in Israeli life—whether historically recent Holocaust memories or current internal and external confrontations—contemporary authors do not lack subject matter for both sensitive and strong poetry and prose. Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1888-1970) won the Nobel Literature prize in 1966 for novels reflecting the growth and transformation of the Jewish State during his lifetime. More recent outstanding writers include A B Yehoshua, David Grossman, Amos Oz (published in 45 languages), Etgar Keret (also a film maker), and historian Yuval Noah Harari, whose 'world history' books *Sapiens* and *Homo*



Yuli Edelstein, PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Itzhak Perlman, Stan Polovets, Natan Sharansky and Helen Mirren at the Genesis (*Jewish Nobel*) prize award ceremony. Jerusalem, Israel, 23 June 2016. | Photo: Shutterstock

deus have reached many readers in many languages.

Israeli books and scripts have inspired successful TV series such as *Fauda*, *Tehran*, *Absentia*, *Shtisel* and *Traitor*. The widespread artistic and cultural creativity described briefly here reflects a society which, compared to *Aotearoa* New Zealand, is tumultuous but at the same time has the 'feel' of a large family. Israel's sense of the bonds of *mishpoga* is like our sense of *whānau* (family). An interesting consequence of this is the strikingly large number of museums in Israel—over 230, more per capita than anywhere else in the world.

This links to Israelis' strong sense of history. When your forbears have lived in your country for thousands of years, a school pupil can (and does) pick up an ancient coin on a weekend hike, and archeological discoveries are almost everywhere, the pride of displaying your heritage is understandable. History, art, science and special subject museums range from the world-class Israel Museum in Jerusalem, displaying Dead Sea scrolls, and the ANU Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv-Yafo, showing 4,000 years of Jewish and Israeli creativity, to the local *kibbutz* museum. The range of topics and changing exhibitions, and the high quality of presentation, is dazzling.

David Zwartz ONZM was President of the New Zealand Jewish Council for seven years and Honorary Consul of Israel in New Zealand 2003-2008.

Music to Our Ears

■ Tal Hartuv

Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

Every country has their iconic bands, artists and musicians, and Israel is no exception. One of the first indigenous cultural trailblazers to establish the reputation of an indigenous musical and theatrical heritage, is the Banai family. More of a clan, the Banai siblings and cousins have all made their mark on Israeli culture, on the likes of music, art, literature and comedy.

Like many Jews who came from far-off lands, the beginnings of this popular and influential family is also extraordinary. At the end of the nineteenth century, the first Banais arrived from Persia (now Iran). The original doting parents came with three sons, aptly and succinctly named, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Upon arriving in the Land of Israel after a perilous journey, they were unable to find a place to live in the Old City of Jerusalem. Under the yoke of the negligent Turkish authorities, Jerusalem was filthy, overcrowded and disease was rampant. Disappointed but pragmatic, they settled down in the (now famous) Mahaneh Yehuda market, and began selling vegetables.

They were successful beyond their imagination. It wasn't long before they began investing in projects in Jerusalem.

First, they established a school and then, a synagogue, for the impoverished Persian Jewish community.

Just a few generations later, the Banai family continue to leave a deep footprint on Israeli culture. In the middle of the Corona pandemic, they had an idea to set up a virtual musical exhibition in the Tower of David Museum to display their family's amazing journey from Persia to the Promised Land. This was new ground. Not just because of the restrictions of lockdown but also because of history. With much attention given to the European Jewish community decimated in the Holocaust, the Banai family wanted to remind us all, that the history of the Jewish community of Shiraz, also was rich in culture and history. Persia was the place where Jewish poets, singers and actors were also in plenty.

For the exhibition, the Banai siblings banded together and used musical instruments from the Levant barely heard in Israel. In doing so they created a musical drama of pre-state Israel, the waves of *aliyah* up until the Jewish community in Jerusalem who lived and fought to see independence in 1948.

The family have made their mark as a native and cultural superpower. They are admired and cherished, because of

their extraordinary talent, and because it was from impoverished beginnings, that these Persian Jews flourished against all odds.

The music of the Banai's sabra-born generation struck a chord with sabras and with those who have been here for most of their life. This is because the Banai's did not have a Russian, Polish, Romanian or Yemenite accent. Theirs was seen as the 'authentic' accent, and they spoke with the 'right' diction. The love of a Hebrew, barren of a European or Arab accent, led one member of the Banai family, Yossi (pictured above), to record an album of Psalms. It became an instant hit.

He further went on to record every chapter in the Hebrew Bible. For months he sat in the studio, reading in 'Israeli' Hebrew, with perfect diction. For some, his is a local, indigenous Hebrew, a revived People-of-Israel Hebrew and one which hasn't been heard on the streets of Jerusalem for two thousand years. Whether that be true or not, whoever we are or wherever we have come from, listening to him read the words of the prophets, is music to our ears.



First Home in the Homeland

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

The Jewish people are returning home from the four corners of the earth. Once in Israel, it is important to integrate into society. For many, this is not an easy process, as it includes learning to speak Hebrew, finding employment and housing, and a school for the children. The First Home in the Homeland programme aids in this integration process.

Since 1989, thousands of families have been welcomed to Israel by the First Home in the Homeland programme, which was established by The Jewish Agency for Israel. The programme is run in kibbutzim, where families live for their first six to twelve months in Israel and study the Hebrew language. They learn more about Jewish history and traditions and receive assistance with their integration into Israeli society. More than forty kibbutzim participate in this programme.

Getting Settled

Olim (immigrants) are carefully matched with one of the participating kibbutzim in the Negev and Galilee, where a coordinator is assigned to introduce the family to the new community and helps them to get settled. For the first six months, the parents study Hebrew in *ulpan* (classes for adults) either three or five mornings weekly, while their children attend schools on the kibbutz or nearby. The smaller ones attend the kindergarten in the kibbutz.

Thousands Participated

After completing their integration process, they are given the option of extending their stay for another half-year; most *olim* use that extended time to find employment in

the area, continue in advanced *ulpan*, or join vocational courses. Each kibbutz also provides after-school care for school-age children six days a week and on holidays. Additionally, local recreation centres offer after-school sports, music, ballet, and the like. Following their initial experience on the kibbutz, participants are given the option of remaining on the kibbutz as residents, or applying for kibbutz membership. They may also opt to pursue life and employment in other areas of Israel. Thousands of men, women and children have participated in this programme and have now made Israel their home.

Olim from Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has turned lives upside down and destroyed homes. With the help of Christians for Israel and other initiatives, thousands of Ukrainian Jews made *Aliyah* and many of them have joined The Jewish Agency's First Home in the Homeland programme in Israel. As the war is continuing, more families are following. Also, many Jewish families from Russia have been coming to Israel in the past few months. In many kibbutzim, Russian and Ukrainian *olim* live together, eat together and their children play together. They are united through the fact that they are Jews and are saddened by the war that is raging between their two countries.

Celebrating Hanukkah Together in Israel

In December 2022, the end of Hanukkah coincided with Christmas. Hanukkah commemorates a holy miracle that happened more than two thousand years ago. Annually, it reminds the Jewish people that light always wins out over darkness. In the different kibbutzim participating in the First Home in the Homeland programme, this feast was celebrated together with the new *olim*.



The miracle of Hanukkah in a kibbutz in the Jordan Valley. All *olim* celebrated together.



(Left): In the Museum of Yarmukian Culture located in kibbutz Shaar Hagolan. Children received instructions on how to light candles for Hanukkah. (Right): Hanukkah celebration in kibbutz Ein HaShofet, Megiddo.



In kibbutz Revivim, Hanukkah candles were lit under the supervision of kibbutz 'veterans', those who have lived there for almost all their lives. "I can speak Russian", were the words an old lady began her speech with. "My father was Russian. We came here over sixty years ago, and I still live in kibbutz Revivim, which will celebrate its 80th anniversary this year. Imagine, I was born when it was established."

Emilia from Mukachevo (Ukraine) and her friend Alina from Saint Petersburg (Russia) lit candles together, and then everybody present started singing a prayer and helping themselves to Hanukkah treats, which the *olim* from Mashabei Sade and Revivim had prepared.



The festive Hanukkah table brought together *olim* from Russia and Ukraine in kibbutz Ein HaShofet and kibbutzim in the Eshkol area. "The light of human hearts can do more than the light of a candle", exclaimed Valeria Zakharova, one of the coordinators of the programme, when experiencing this familiar celebration.

| Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel

With your support, we can help many families to integrate successfully, so that they in turn can be a blessing to others. Costs to assist one person for one month in the First Home in the Homeland programme: NZ \$765. Please donate on page 16.

Overview of our projects

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

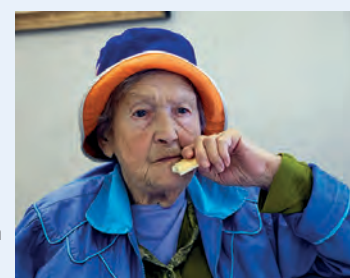
Aliyah

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



Hineni Soup Kitchen

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



Holocaust Survivors

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



Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

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



Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

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



Arab Christians

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



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, www.c4israel.org.nz



Just Some Old Documents

Koen Carlier

Aliyah Fieldworker | Christians for Israel Ukraine

Recently, we brought four ladies and two small children from Ukraine to Moldova, or at least that was the intention. Among them was Yana, a single mother, with her two young children and younger sister Alina, who has a mental disorder.

Normally, you can only cross the border when having an international passport. However, during wartime, you are also allowed to leave the country with a Ukrainian passport. At the border, however, it turned out that Alina's Ukrainian passport had expired. Therefore, she was not allowed to leave the country. After the gruff-looking Ukrainian border guard bluntly told Alina she had to go back, she started crying. Fortunately, one of our volunteers with a van was nearby, and he took Alina back to our shelter. My wife Ira immediately went with Alina to apply for a new passport.

Orphanage

Meanwhile, we were in Moldova and the atmosphere in the van was initially subdued, which is understandable.



Yana (left) with her two children. Behind her (wearing the black hat) stands Alina.

After all, Yana is like a mother to her younger sister and cares for her. We assured Yana that Alina was in good hands with us. And then Yana told her own story. At the age of five, she ended up in an orphanage because her father regularly beat Yana and her mother. Growing up in an orphanage is quite hard, but Yana also had to endure all kinds of antisemitic comments from other children, which she did not understand at the time. At the age of 17, she left the orphanage only to get married not much later. Unfortunately, her husband also proved aggressive and Yana and the (now born) children were regularly beaten. History seemed to repeat itself. In addition, Yana took care of Alina.

A New Life

After years without contact, Yana suddenly received a message from her father asking her to come and visit him. He was on his deathbed and gave her some old documents, saying: "With this, you can start a new life." Yana did not understand what he meant but asked no questions and left. Once home, she looked at the documents, and a birth certificate from 1911 showed not only her grandmother's name (Chava), but also her Jewish identity. Yana now understood why she was bullied so much in the orphanage.

Exit Visa

She contacted a Jewish organisation in Dnepr and was invited to come and



Alina in the snow with Natalia Kriszhanoviski, team member of Christians for Israel Ukraine.



Several times a week, Koen and his team members bring Jews to Moldova's capital Kishenov, from where they leave for Israel.

visit. The people examined the documents her father had given her, and it turned out that these papers allowed her to move to Israel to start a 'new life'. It seemed almost too good to be true. Yana wanted nothing more than to take her children and sister Alina with her as well. Miraculously, her ex-husband gave permission for the children to go. As soon as Alina receives her new passport, we will bring her to Kishenov as well. Together they can apply for the exit visa to indeed build a new life in Israel.

Shepherd

Yana trusts the Almighty that very soon, they will be able to leave the Diaspora and go to Israel for good. Yana's story touched us and shows that—despite everything—we may also see the mighty hand of the Lord in this. Like a shepherd, He calls the children of His people one by one to His land! | Photos: Christians for Israel

We continue our practical help in Ukraine to assist them with their Aliyah. Will you help? It costs NZ \$300 to assist one Ukrainian Jew to make Aliyah. Please complete the coupon below. Any amount is welcome!

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