

# ISRAEL

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Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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View of a field of pomegranate trees in Israel. Pomegranates are used in the Jewish ritual of the new year because they supposedly contain 613 seeds, and by eating the pomegranate Jews display their desire to fulfill the 613 commandments written in the Torah. | Photo: Mila Aviv/Flash90

## God is Faithful to His Promises

### ■ Rev Henk Poot

Christians for Israel Netherlands

*“See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.” Isaiah 60:2-3*

In the end, darkness will cover the earth. And indeed, the darkness has come. A spirit of wickedness is blowing through the world. Here in the West, the name of God has been banished from public life. People wander through the world unconnected to their creator, not knowing where they are going. Some don't even know who they are anymore. Paul writes at the beginning of his letter to Rome: *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him nor gave thanks to Him”*. And in this darkness, hatred and enmity flare up against the people of God. It has even come to the

point where the United Nations is lifting Jerusalem like a burdensome stone. People prefer the lie, no matter how obvious the lie is, to the truth—and even churches cry out that the Lord's inheritance must be broken to achieve world peace. It reminds me of *Psalm 130*: The longing of God's children for the dawning of the morning in the dead of night. For the morning is coming, that is certain. As true as God lives.

Soon, the Jewish people will celebrate *Rosh Hashanah*, the beginning of the fall festivals. It is a day when even the light of the moon cannot be seen, so dark. But the Lord says: *“It is a day for you to sound the trumpets”*. Well over a hundred times on this day, the *shofar* will be blown. As a sign that we humans are creatures of God. But also as an alarm call that Israel is surrounded by enemies and that they must put their trust in God (*Joel 2:15-17*): *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord”*.

The *shofar* is blown to remind us that God is faithful to His promises and that the Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love (*Ps. 103:8*). And that He is the judge of all the earth (*Ps. 75*). Therefore, the Lord says that *Rosh Hashanah* should also be a day of jubilation and joy and full of hope.

Darkness is not the end, and so Isaiah speaks of the light breaking through and the glory of the Lord that will be seen over Israel. We know that the glory of God will be to be seen in Jerusalem when the *Messiah* comes, full of glory, full of grace and truth. As He appears, the *shofar* will sound for the last time.

That is also the message of the coming *Feast of Tabernacles*, the *Feast of Completion*, when His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives and the nations of the world will flock to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, when peace will dawn for Jerusalem and all the world.



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# The Nations are Gathering

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The city of Jerusalem is a major theme running throughout scriptures. There is the earthly Jerusalem, and there is the heavenly Jerusalem. The earthly Jerusalem is the focus of God's dealings and purposes with the Jewish people. The Bible speaks clearly about a conflict in the last days between the nations of the world and the God of Israel, in which the physical city of Jerusalem plays a central role. This conflict comes to its climax when the Jewish people are (at least in part) restored to the land, and the nations are 'gathered' against Jerusalem (*Zechariah 12-14*). Interestingly, it is the Lord who gathers the nations to fight against Jerusalem (*Zechariah 14:2*), and it is the Lord who fights against those nations (*Zechariah 14:3*).

When Israel was established in May 1948, it was immediately attacked by the surrounding Arab states. By the end of the War of Independence (mid-1949) Israel controlled only part of the former Mandate territory, including the 'western' part of the city of Jerusalem. Jordan occupied (and later tried to annex) East Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria (renaming the latter 'the West Bank of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan'). Under Jordanian occupation, the city was divided into 'West Jerusalem' and 'East Jerusalem', and all Jews were removed from the Old City and its environs.

It is important to note that 'East Jerusalem' is a misleading name, as it comprises the totality of the old city of Jerusalem and its environs—in fact, all the city of Jerusalem before its expansion in the 20th century. East Jerusalem contains all the most important Jewish, Christian and Islamic holy sites—such as the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, the Mount of Olives, and the church of the Holy Sepulcher.

In the Six-Day War (5–10 June 1967), Israel defeated Jordan and took control of the city. Since 1967, the Jewish people have—for the first time since the kingdom of Judah—sovereignty over Jerusalem. Israel has declared Jerusalem to be—and it

in fact functions as—the undivided capital of the State of Israel. The wall that divided the city under Jordanian occupation (1948–1967) was removed. Since June 1967, while there are 'Jewish' and 'Arab' sections of the city, the Municipality of Jerusalem manages the city as a whole.

However, since 1967, international opposition to Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem has grown. In 1980, the UN Security Council declared Israel's reunification of the city to be illegal and ordered all foreign embassies in Israel to be moved from Jerusalem. Today, most states still do not recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and have kept their embassies in Tel Aviv.

In fact, many UN member states are now demanding (a) that East Jerusalem become the capital of a State of Palestine, and (b) that all Israelis (military and civilians) be removed from East Jerusalem, as well as Judea and Samaria (referred to in the UN as 'the West Bank').

The status of Jerusalem has come to a head through legal proceedings over the past few years at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the UN General Assembly. For decades, many states have been calling for the creation of a Palestinian state on the territories that were occupied by Egypt (Gaza) and Jordan (East Jerusalem and West Bank) between 1948 and 1967. In December 2022, 87 UN member states adopted a resolution calling on the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion declaring that the Palestinian people have a right to sovereignty over East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, and that Israel's occupation of this territory is illegal.

On 19 July 2024, that is exactly what the Court did. An Advisory Opinion was delivered to the General Assembly, declaring indeed that Israel must remove its "presence" in these territories "as rapidly as possible", and that all Israeli "settlements" must be "evacuated".

Early September, on the basis of that Opinion, the UN's Arab Group, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

(OIC)—representing, collectively, nearly two-thirds of the UN's 193 member states—have submitted a resolution to the UN General Assembly. The resolution demands Israel to bring to an end without delay "its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory..., and to do so no later than twelve months since the adoption of this resolution". It also demands the "evacuation of all settlers" from the territories.

This resolution thus seeks the division of the city of Jerusalem, and the removal of all Jews from 'East Jerusalem', to pave the way for East Jerusalem to become the capital of an Islamic State of Palestine.

The resolution was adopted on 18th September, during a session of the 'Emergency Special Session' that was pushed through by the Arab, Islamic and Non-Aligned states. 124 states voted in favor, 14 opposed it, and 43 states abstained.

Israel refuses to give up control of Jerusalem and the West Bank without the negotiation of a peace agreement with the Palestinians, as envisaged (and required) by the Oslo Accords. The experience in Gaza since 2007 (Israel withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza Strip in 2005, and Hamas took over control there in 2007) has simply demonstrated that abandonment of territory currently controlled by Israel will inevitably embolden and strengthen Hamas and other Islamist *jihād* groups, committed to Israel's destruction and lead to further terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens.

The stage is thus set for a huge clash between Israel and the United Nations, in which the right of the Jewish people to live in the city of Jerusalem will play a central role.

Let's keep our eyes on Jerusalem, as we see Biblical prophecies being fulfilled before our eyes.

Most importantly, let us pray for the coming of Messiah who will rule over the nations on the throne of His father David (ie. in Jerusalem), in the midst of His people Jacob (ie. the Jewish people): *Luke 1:31-33*.

## Prayer Points

### Israel

- Many people in Israel struggle with trauma and grief. The reasons are diverse: because family members or friends have been killed, because they have been injured by this war, because people in their families have been taken hostage, or because they have been evacuated. Pray for comfort.

### Israel and the Nations

- In July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a non-binding opinion: the Israeli presence in the Palestinian territories is considered illegal, and Israel must withdraw from these territories and compensate those affected. This 'legal' opinion is not only politically motivated but is legally unsound and one-sided. Pray that the ICJ may see what is truly just and act accordingly.

- The Iranian regime plays a huge role in spreading and encouraging hatred of Israel and anti-Israel propaganda. Pray that God will put an end to the terror of the Iranian regime.

### Christians for Israel

- Give thanks for the work our Christians for Israel team in Ukraine does amongst the Holocaust survivors. The circumstances are difficult, especially in the midst of war. There also is a lot of poverty among the Holocaust survivors. Pray that many people will be helped.
- It is our task to support and comfort Israel (*Isaiah 40:1-2*). Pray that the Churches will stand around Israel in word and deed.

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

# Iran-Israel Conflict is Existential

## ■ Wim Kortenoeven

Former Member of Dutch Parliament | Middle East Specialist

Iran is about a thousand kilometres from Israel, with Syria and Iraq in between. The countries have no territorial, economic or other 'rational' disputes between them. Nevertheless, the Iranian regime has branded the Jewish state as a mortal enemy to be destroyed.

That Israel must be destroyed has been official Iranian government policy since the Iranian revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Its background is Islamic, and to carry out the death sentence, Iran and a series of allies have created a 'ring of fire' around Israel.

### 'Little Satan'

Iran's death sentence on Israel is rooted in Shiite-Islamic end-time doctrine. In it, the United States is the 'Great Satan' and Israel the 'Little Satan', that need to be destroyed by Muslims, after which Islamic world peace can be imposed. In the original Shiite dogma, which is much older than the United States, only Israel is the focus of destruction. Israel must be exterminated by an international Islamic force commanded by the mysterious 'hidden' Twelfth Imam, the so-called 'Mahdi'. This Muslim leader, persecuted by other Muslims, is said to have disappeared in an Iranian well some 1150 years ago but will resurface in the end times.

### Genocidal Announcement

The Shia death sentence on Israel (and the Jewish people) is irrevocable and dovetails perfectly with similar doctrines in Sunni Islam. One of the best-known of these is this genocidal announcement, based on a statement by Islam founder Mohammed and used by Hamas and other sections of the Muslim Brotherhood: "The time of judgement will not dawn until the Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them; in consequence of which the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees. And every tree and [every] rock will [then] say: 'O Muslim, O slave of Allah, behind me, is a Jew, come here and kill him!'"

The Islamic death sentence on Israel and the Jewish people have been openly and unabashedly propagated for decades, in particular by Iran and all known Islamic terror organisations, but also from mosques in the Western world. Since 7 October last year such propagation has been voiced at numerous US and European universities, with countless non-Muslim 'useful idiots' loudly endorsing the antisemitic verdict.



For residents of northern Israel, the 'ring of fire' is a daily reality. Since 7 October, Hezbollah has been firing rockets almost daily with the aim of causing as much death and destruction as possible. As a result, tens of thousands of residents have had to leave their homes and be relocated. | Photo: Flash90

However, the announced murder of the Jewish state and its inhabitants has not received the international censure and punishment one would expect in the post-Auschwitz era.

### The EU and Hamas

In some cases, concrete Islamic-terrorist violence directed against Israel and/or Jews has admittedly been punished by the international community with sanctions. But the underlying unwavering genocidal intentions have generally been disregarded.

For instance, the EU placed the 'terrorist wing' of Iranian-backed Hamas on the European list of terrorist organisations in 2001, after an endless series of horrific bombings of Israeli civilian targets. Only two years and another long series of bloody attacks later, the so-called 'political wing' of the terror organisation was also listed, the ideological wing that preaches and exports genocidal ideology. But that was not mentioned, let alone condemned, when sanctioned.

The European door always remained and remains ajar for Hamas. For instance, if Hamas were to reconcile with the PLO and take its place in a Palestinian national unity government to lead a yet-to-be-founded (second) Palestinian state. The openly genocidal Hamas programme, which incites Palestinian Arabs against Jews and the Jewish state through education and the media, among others, was left untouched in practice. Its propagation and operationalisation was and is even generously sponsored by the EU and its member states, as in the case of the work of the Hamas-collaborating UN agency UNRWA.

### Iran Also Went Unpunished

Iran's official genocidal intentions towards the Jewish state were also virtually uncriticised and completely unpunished by the international community. UN and EU sanctions did emerge because of Iran's illegal nuclear weapons programme, as it threatens regional stability and international interests. The EU also imposed sanctions because of the human rights situation in Iran itself and Tehran's supply to Moscow of suicide drones used en masse against Ukrainian civilian targets.

But Iran's death sentence on the Jewish state and its inhabitants has never been put on the agenda for debate or resolution by the UN or the EU. The EU claims to be a 'community of values' and the UN was created to prevent international aggression and genocides. With great regularity, Tehran is visited by European foreign ministers. However, there is no indication that even the slightest displeasure was expressed during those visits by the moral heirs of Holocaust guilt about Iran's intention to finish the job that once begun in Europe.

### Indifference

In that climate of international indifference, Iran, by arming and activating Islamist militias, has been able to create a 'ring of fire' around Israel almost unhindered, with the ultimate aim of eliminating the currently militarily and technologically superior Jewish state. Not overnight, but through a relentless war of attrition from all sides that the Jews in the Land of Israel will simply not be able to sustain militarily, politically and economically.

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## Short News

### Giant Moat Discovered in City of David



During the extensive excavations taking place at the City of David—the original city of Jerusalem located immediately south of the Temple Mount—a new discovery has been made. Archaeologists found a dry 30-metre moat, which served as a means of defence. The moat separated the Temple Mount from the City of David. According to the Israel Antiquities Authority, the moat was "one of the monumental fortifications that protected the kings of Jerusalem." | Photo: Flash90

### UN 'Overlooks' Israel

Seven years ago, the UN declared the 'International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism' this year on 21 August. To mark the occasion, the visitor centre of the UN's headquarters in New York hosted an exhibition on terror victims across the globe. The aim of the exhibition is to make people aware of the human stories of victims and survivors and the impact of a terror attack. Various terror attacks and countries were featured, but there is no place for Israeli terror victims. Outgoing UN ambassador of Israel Gilad Erdan: "Some terror victims are apparently more equal than others."

### Bees and their Diet



An unbalanced diet of honey bees delays the moment when bees start feeding their young, how often the bees feed them and disrupts the care they give to their young. This has been revealed in recent research by Israeli scientists at the Hebrew University. The findings may help ensure that the ever-shrinking bee populations stabilise again. Bees are essential for fertilising crops. | Photo: Flash90

## Short News

## Twice as Many Gazans Breached Border



Some 7,000 Gazans participated in the Hamas-led Oct7 assault on southern Israel, according to new Israel Defense Forces estimates. That is double the number of Gazans, as previously believed. The data is based on an in-depth investigation conducted by the IDF's Gaza Division. Terrorists breached the border at 119 points, around double the figure of 60 breaches previously reported. Both terrorists and Gazan civilians participated in the mass killing, kidnapping, looting, destruction and other atrocities.

| Photo: Flashgo

## Award for ZAKA's Work

Emergency relief organisation ZAKA, which helps in case of terror attacks, accidents and disasters, has received the 2023 Shield Award from Israeli Health Minister Rabbi Uriel Buso and the ministry's CEO, Moshe Siman Tov. Rabbi Uriel Buso said in his speech: "You are all motivated by compassion and a mission. The presence of volunteers ensures that the system will operate correctly and efficiently." Moshe Bar Siman Tov added: "The choice to give the award to you had already been made before 7 October, but is now deserved by the volunteers twice as much."

## Red Fabric Identified



A piece of 3,800-year-old scarlet-red textile has been discovered in a cave in the desert of Judea. The find is special because the piece of fabric was dyed red with paint that was made of the scarlet worm, a tiny insect. Its particular colour is mentioned in the Bible. The piece of fabric found is the oldest evidence of fabric dyed with this colour. The fabric was found in the Judean Desert in 2016. | Photo: Israel Antiquities Authority

## Anglican Archbishop Insists Israel Surrenders

■ James E. Patrick  
Christians for Israel UK

Few were surprised on 19 July when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its long-awaited Advisory Opinion that Israel's presence is 'illegal' in the so-called 'Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem'. But more shocking was the statement on 2 August by Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby, in which he not only approved of the ICJ's conclusion, but insisted that governments all over the world act immediately to enforce it.

The Archbishop is from the evangelical arm of the Church of England, and is himself of Jewish descent, with a history of positive attitudes towards Israel and the Jewish people. In 2019, he wrote the foreword to the official Anglican doctrinal paper about Christian-Jewish relations, *God's Unfailing Word*. This paper clearly repented for the history of

Christian antisemitism, rejected replacement theology, and recognised (*Chapter 5, pp. 74-87*) the ancient and enduring connection of the Jewish people to the land, within certain theological limits.

However, Archbishop Justin has evidently been influenced much more strongly in recent years by personal encounters with Palestinian Christians. His statement expresses his agreement with their belief that their 'future and viability' depends entirely on the State of Israel removing itself from 'Palestinian' lands. Yet he seems just as blind as they are to the real reason for Palestinian suffering, especially Christians. Oppressive Islamist rule in those areas has driven out most Christians, while at the same time inciting terrorism against Israeli civilians of all ethnic groups, which only forces Israel to impose more and more restrictions.

Muslim theology insists that any Jewish self-government in that land is

illegitimate and must be resisted by violent means. So the Palestinian submission to the ICJ asserted their 'right to self-determination' from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. The Archbishop's statement calls for their 'right' to be realised, but he must be unaware that the West Bank is only a first step for them, since they deny Israel's right to exist anywhere in the land.

Most importantly, Archbishop Justin ignores the repeated inclusion of 'East Jerusalem' in the ICJ Advisory Opinion. How could he possibly justify forcing Israel to surrender the Old City to the Palestinians, if he knows that Jews were ethnically cleansed from their holiest places under Jordanian rule (1949-1967)? We must pray for the Archbishop's eyes to be opened to these political but also historical, legal and biblical truths that the ICJ has completely ignored.

Continued from page 3

## Iran-Israel Conflict is Existential

The continued burning of the 'ring of fire' must lead to severe and lasting disruption of the Israeli political and social order, to the depopulation of parts of the country (as has already been the case in the north since October 2023) and ultimately to a mass Jewish exodus and the dissolution of the 'Zionist project'. According to the same plan, an operational Iranian nuclear weapon should prevent Israel from attacking the Iranian director of the elimination plan.

The plan was hatched by Iranian general Qassam Suleimani, commander-in-chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which can best be compared to the German SS of the time. Suleimani was eliminated with a targeted missile strike by the United States on 3 January 2020. But in the meantime, Suleimani's successors implemented his encirclement plan.

## Peaceful Solution Impossible

The 'ring of fire' is formed by Hezbollah in the north; Iran and a number of Tehran-controlled Syrian and Iraqi militias in the east; Hamas and Palestinian Jihad in the south; the Yemeni Houthis in the southeast; and the PLO and Hamas in the heart of the Land of Israel. This uncompromising coalition arrayed against Israel receives political, financial and organisational support from two state actors: NATO member Turkey and Qatar.



This is one of over 300 rockets Iran fired at Israel last April, hoping to inflict as many casualties as possible. As if by a miracle, not a single missile struck a target. Meanwhile, Iran threatens daily to hit Israel in the heart with a multiple of this number of missiles. | Photo: Flashgo

The Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah movement is the most formidable component of the 'ring of fire'. Founded over 40 years ago by the IRGC, Hezbollah is the de facto ruler in Israel's northern neighbour.

Despite UN resolutions demanding that Hezbollah be disarmed and removed from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah has transformed southern Lebanon into a giant above- and below-ground military stronghold in recent decades. This while under the watchful eye of the UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL, whose sole task was to prevent that from happening. Hezbollah has some 100,000 well-trained and armed men and an arsenal of between 150,000 and 200,000

rockets capable of shelling all of Israel. Like Iran, Hezbollah has exclusively ideological/religious reasons to destroy the Jewish state as well as wanting to commit genocide against the entire Jewish people. Significant is the 2002 statement by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah: "If they [the Jews] all gather in Israel it saves us the trouble of going after them worldwide."

All things considered, therefore, there is no peaceful solution to this conflict. To survive, Israel is condemned to put out the 'ring of fire' by force and cut off the Iranian head of the snake before Tehran will be able to have operational nuclear weapons.

## Av: Tragedy & Triumph, Sorrow & Celebration

### ■ Rabbi Tuly Weisz

Director | Israel 365

*“Thus said the lord of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth month, the fast of the seventh month, and the fast of the tenth month shall become occasions for joy and gladness, happy festivals for the House of Yehuda; but you must love honesty and integrity.” Zechariah 8:19 (The Israel Bible)*

The month of Av, the fifth month on the Hebrew calendar, is a month of mixed emotions. In the Bible, it is the month in which the spies brought back their evil report (*Numbers 13-14*).

Aaron, the first High Priest and brother of Moses and Miriam passed away at age 123 on the 1st of Av in the Jewish year 2487 (1274 BCE). It is the only date of passing explicitly mentioned in the Bible (*Numbers 33:38*).

*“Aharon the Kohen ascended Mount Hor at the command of Hashem and died there in the fortieth year after the Israelites had left the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month.” (Numbers 33:38)*

But it is most well-known for being the month in which the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (*II Kings 25:8-9*).

*“On the seventh day of the fifth month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards, an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Yerushalayim. He burned the House of Hashem, the king’s palace, and all the houses of Yerushalayim; he burned down the house of every notable person.” (II Kings 25:8-9)*

The name of the month, Av, literally means ‘father’. It is customary to add the Hebrew word *Menachem*, which means ‘comforter,’ to the name of the month because this month is associated with many tragic events, including the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. Together with this addition, the name of the month means that despite whatever tragedies we might experience, our Father in Heaven is always there to comfort and console us.

Yet the month of Av isn’t all bad. Despite the terrible tragedies that occurred, Av also contains one of the happiest days on the Jewish calendar. According to Rabbi Simeon, son of Gamliel, “There were no greater festivals for Israel than the 15th of Av and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement).”

How can we make sense of this month? Why does it contain the saddest day of the year as well as one of the happiest?

This progression from intense mourning to great joy finds expression in a number of ways during this month. In addition to the 15th of Av being considered such a happy day, there is a Jewish tradition that the *Messiah* will be born at this time. In fact, the Jewish sages relate that the *Messiah* will be born on the very day when the Temples were destroyed: the 9th of Av. This teaches us that the tragedies and suffering associated with the 9th of Av will turn into joy with the coming of the *Messiah*.

In other words, even at the beginning of exile and the destruction of the Temple, God promises that one day the *Messiah* will come. The statement of the sages is not really about predicting when the *Messiah* will be born, but pointing out that even in total darkness there is light in the distance. Or that contained within the destruction itself are the seeds of redemption.

This movement from destruction to redemption is also



A model of the second Jewish temple in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

expressed in the transition from the 9th of Av to the 15th of the month. The *sages* teach that a number of events occurred on the 15th of Av, including the end of God’s decree that an entire generation of Jews would die in the desert before entering the land of Israel, the permission for members of different tribes to intermarry thus ending a painful division between the tribes of Israel, and a rescinding of the decree made by King Jeroboam that the tribes of the kingdom of Israel were not allowed to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. The 15th of Av is, therefore, a day of renewal and reconciliation.

The *sages* teach that “when the month of Av arrives, we decrease our happiness.” Although Av is currently a time of mourning, there is hope on the horizon. Redemption is coming soon, and the temporary mourning of the month of Av will transform into permanent rejoicing. As the prophet Zechariah writes:

*“Thus said the lord of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth month, the fast of the seventh month, and the fast of the tenth month shall become occasions for joy and gladness, happy festivals for the House of Yehuda; but you must love honesty and integrity.” (Zechariah 8:19)*

*—Rabbi Tuly Weisz is the founder of Israel365 and the editor of ‘The Israel Bible’, the first Bible dedicated to highlighting the relationship between the Land and the People of Israel. Rabbi Tuly is a columnist for*

*Israel365news, the Jerusalem Post, Fox News and Newsmax, who writes passionately about Israel, the Bible and Jewish-Christian relations. Rabbi Weisz served as the Rabbi of the Beth Jacob Congregation in Columbus, Ohio before making Aliyah to Israel. Rabbi Tuly lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife and is blessed with six children.*

## Confronting the 9th of Av after Oct7

### ■ Sara Labaton

Shalom Hartman Institute

*(An excerpt).* In the immediate future, there will be many days and dates that will remind us of 7 October 2023. *Tisha B’Av* will remind us that we are obliged to mourn this latest massacre of Jewish innocents in the same way we have done for other ones, stretching back generations. In late October, *Simchat Torah* will ask us how and when to resume dancing—whether for the *Torah* or for the Nova Festival—after violence disrupts joy. Next April, *Yom HaZikaron* will situate 7 October in a broader narrative about the State of Israel, still vulnerable but with immense reserves of power and success that prior generations of Jews lacked. The period stretching from *Yom HaShoah* through *Yom Haatzmaut* will remind us that in the

middle of the 20th century, Jews re-entered the arena of history with the awesome responsibility that entails. Of course, the date of 7 October, this year and into the future, will serve as a marker for the world and will help us recall that Israel is part of the family of nations.

It will take time and compromise to settle on the most salient meaning of 7 October, for Israelis, for Jews worldwide, for Palestinians, and for the rest of the world. How we commemorate 7 October, and the analogies we deploy to make sense of it, will inevitably shape this process. We must make sure to undertake this task with intention, precision, and responsibility.

Read the whole article on <https://www.hartman.org.il/confronting-the-ninth-of-av-after-the-seventh-of-october/>

## Something Big is Going On

### ■ Bryce Turner

Executive Director | Christians for Israel  
New Zealand

In *Zechariah 12*, God declares: “I will make Jerusalem like an intoxicating drink that makes the nearby nations stagger when they send their armies to besiege Jerusalem and Judah. On that day I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock. All the nations will gather against it to try to move it, but they will only hurt themselves.”

‘Intoxicating drink’ has another connotation in much of the world, definitely here in New Zealand. It ideally describes the stupor that so many seem to be in as they protest in support of... well... in support of just about anything that is against Israel. When faced with the absurdity of their claims and shown the blatant lies they parrot, they continue as if... intoxicated. The totally irrational bloodlust that is screamed from megaphones and graffitied on walls reflects an evil insanity beyond

rational earthly explanation.

New Zealand is about as far away from Israel as one can easily go, and yet Israel (mainly anti-Israel) continues to dominate in the news media, in conversation, and in the increasing number of slogans illegally stuck on public buildings. The truth, and respect for factual accuracy or even basic integrity, are totally irrelevant. Watching the political soap operas playing out in countries around the world, most spectacularly in the current USA electoral buildup, it seems obvious: **something big is going on!**

Like so many nations that used to be known as ‘Christian’, those of us who still read our Bible and still listen to God are a rapidly diminishing share of the NZ population. Even smaller—less than 10,000—is the Jewish community here. As followers of the same God, the Jewish and Israel-supporting Christian community grow ever closer as we stand



Israel support march for the hostages in Auckland, New Zealand, 14 September 2024. | Photo: Karin Horin

together in the face of the predicted evil. *Zechariah 9* offers much perspective on the events we are seeing right now.

*“But I will defend My house against marauding forces. Never again will an oppressor overrun My people, for now, I*

*am keeping watch.”*

I can’t help but notice also, “Gaza will writhe in agony”.

The end of the race seems to be looming, but rather than sit back and wait—it’s time to sprint to the finish line!

## We Love Israel

### ■ Shanti Pandey

National Coordinator | Christians for Israel  
Nepal

Let me start by providing some general perspective on how Nepal as a country sees Israel. In terms of foreign affairs, Nepal has a very good diplomatic country-level relationship with Israel. Nepal has supported Israel internationally since the establishment of diplomatic relationships in 1960. We understand there have been some exchange programmes at the government level where the government has been sending its officials to learn from Israel mostly with defence and agriculture. At the country citizen level, many youths across the country are going to Israel—some going to obtain a good education, particularly in the agricultural sector, to learn valuable farming techniques. Many sustain their livelihood by work within families as caretakers and on agriculture land.

### The foundation of my belief is the Holy Bible.

Regarding Christian people and our community, rather than Israel being an aggressor or invader, for most of us there has been a great aspiration to one day, at least once in a lifetime, to visit Israel. We regard Israel as a holy and

promised land chosen by God. We would like to see first hand where Bible events took place and to be present at each and every place where Jesus has walked and other important events in His life.

However, the recent conflict between Palestinians/Gaza with many children casualties has raised some question marks. But again, when it comes to the country ‘Israel’—we simply love the country and always want to stand by its side and continue to pray for Israel and its people, especially the Jews as God’s chosen people. A number of prayer movements are being run in churches and in groups.

Personally, as a Christian, I believe in the Trinity the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The foundation of my belief is the Holy Bible. I believe that the Bible is completely trustworthy and is the word of God that He revealed to the Jewish people. There are a couple of Bible verses that I always remember and ponder when it comes to ‘Israel’. While ‘Jesus’ is the only begotten son of God, Israel is God’s firstborn born (see *John 1:14* and *Exodus 4:22*). Also *Zechariah 2:8*, the great judgement of God upon the nations will eventually come, in accordance with what they have done to Israel, because Israel is the apple of God’s eye. As a believer, we always stand for Israel and continue to pray for Israel and Jews as God’s chosen people.

### The Bible Speaks

#### Zephaniah 3:14-17

*Sing, Daughter Zion;  
shout aloud, Israel!*

*Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,  
Daughter Jerusalem!*

*The Lord has taken away your punishment,  
He has turned back your enemy.*

*The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you;  
never again will you fear any harm.*

*On that day*

*they will say to Jerusalem,*

*“Do not fear, Zion;*

*do not let your hands hang limp.*

*The Lord your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.*

*He will take great delight in you;*

*in His love He will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing.”*



We find the beginning of this beautiful promise in the Greek translation when the angel Gabriel greets Mary. In the Gospel, Mary, the mother of Jesus, also symbolises the Jewish people, as the Messiah was born from Israel. What is particularly striking about this promise is that God ultimately comes as King among His people. Moreover, the focus is on the great joy—not just the joy of Israel, but the Lord’s own rejoicing over Zion and His people. | Photo: Flashgo

## Looking for the Coming of *Messiah*

### ■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Chair | Christians for Israel Austria

I visited Israel a few months ago with a group of young adults from Austria with the intention of listening, helping where needed by doing voluntary work, meeting with families of hostages, soldiers and evacuees and showing our love and solidarity by being present in our beloved Israel, a country in collective grief. That visit deeply impacted me and my fellow travellers. Stricken by the hatred of the world, the first question we were always asked was: "Are you Jewish?" When hearing that we were Christians who had come to Israel during the current war to show our love, resulted in deep and heartfelt gratitude being expressed to us, leaving us feeling very humbled. Standing on the grounds

of the Nova Music Festival, surrounded by photographs of beaming young faces and visiting the memorial of the burnt cars a few kilometres away, made us understand the magnitude of evil and hatred which had overcome Israel on 7 October. Nothing could have prepared me for this. Instantly, *Psalm 121* gained a deeper meaning than ever before. Yes, our help is from the Lord and from the Lord alone, the Creator of heaven and earth. He is our only rock, our fortress and our salvation. When evil shows its ugly face so blatantly, He is our only refuge.

In Austria, we are witnessing a profound change in the relationship between Christians and Jews. More and more pastors have begun to investigate the history of their church and its location and have begun to repent in the presence of the chief Rabbi and local Jews. There



Olim in Kibbutz Or haNer, near Gaza, who have just returned after being evacuated. | Photo: C4I Austria

is a new level of trust and friendship growing, and more and more Christians are beginning to realise that we have much more in common than what

divides us. We need each other. We both are longing for peace and the coming of Messiah, who will bring peace on earth and an end to war and suffering.

## Israel Shall Be Saved



The Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem with the Hurva Synagogue. | Photo: Shutterstock

### ■ Frank van Oordt

Executive Director | Christians for Israel Netherlands

*"But Israel shall be saved by the Lord With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever." Isaiah 45:17*

In September I was privileged to open a new wing at the Shalva Centre in Jerusalem together with Dutch Chief Rabbi Jacobs. Funds for the wing were raised last year to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the State of Israel. Care of the most vulnerable people at this institution sets an example for the whole world. The new ward was built during the current war and was named after my father, Karel van Oordt, the founder of Christians for Israel. I had been asked to pick the text for the plaque, and chose the text above. We see the restoration of Israel and words of the prophets come to life. For better, but also for worse. On 7 October, the whole world saw evil without a mask. The

consequences are visible every day. The text from Isaiah is in the chapter where Isaiah prophesies about King Cyrus, under whose command the Jews returned from Babylon. A decision of the leaders of the world underlies the restoration of Israel. Similarly, decisions of the nations underlie the creation of the State of Israel. Against the odds, the Jewish state is developing to this day. The shock of 7 October has plunged Israel once again into a struggle for its existence. World leaders are focusing on the Heartland: Judea and Samaria and, above all, Jerusalem. Will Jews be allowed to live there? Can the Hurva Synagogue, which is filled with people every *Shabbat*, remain a Jewish place of worship? The text from *Isaiah 45:17* speaks of endless redemption. It does not come from people; it comes from the Holy One of Israel. When God gives the King His jurisdiction, and He will judge, the mountains will bear peace and the hills righteousness. That is the sure hope we look forward to.

## The Tide Will Turn

### ■ Luca Hezel

Executive Director | Christians for Israel Germany

7 October saw not only the unleashing of the kind of genocidal Jew-hatred that many deemed extinct at long last after the Holocaust but also brought the intense spiritual conflict engulfing Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount into the open.

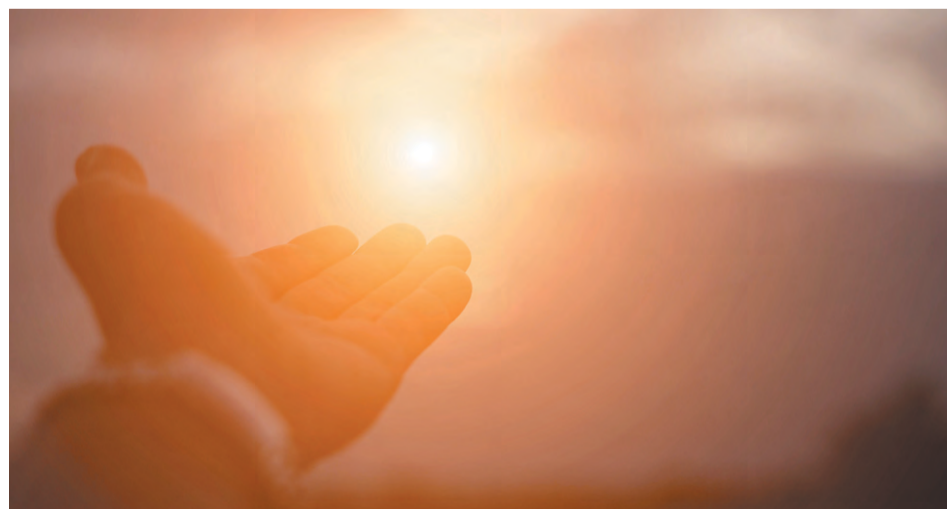
The stark reality that became visible in its aftermath not only revealed evil forces at play but also the existence of good forces: Real friends such as many Christian believers worldwide and the functioning of the Abraham Accords, which on 13 April received their baptism of fire in defending Israel against Iranian missiles, drones and cruise missiles.

But the overwhelming majority of nations and people on earth currently

still view Israel in a negative light, and the United Nations, in their systemic bias against the one Jewish State, tries to tighten the screws, shackle and corner Israel in its fight for survival.

The general trajectory and prospects of the chain of events unfolding before our very eyes since this decisive 'black Sabbath' would be decidedly negative from an Israeli and Jewish perspective; if not, the Word of God would give a clear testimony that the tide will be turned! In *Zechariah 2:14-15* the prophet encourages the Jewish people that ultimately Messiah will come to their rescue:

*"Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the Lord. "Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become My people. I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you."*



| Photo: Shutterstock

# Too Many Church Leaders Remain Silent

## ■ James E Patrick

Christians for Israel UK

The past year since 7 October in the United Kingdom has been distressing in many ways, especially the slander against Israel and resulting attacks on our Jewish citizens. The huge public anti-Israel protests, masquerading as pro-Palestinian, have intimidated not just the Jewish community but also fair-minded British people all over the country. But that is where a seed of hope can be found.

A church leader I know well, who has not been known for pro-Jewish statements, admitted in the first church prayer meeting after 7 October that he could feel the hatred in a local protest even as he cycled past. For the first time, he led the church in a focused time of prayer for protection over the Jewish

people. And a few weeks later, he himself attended a three-hour seminar I gave on “A biblical view of the war in Israel”. He thanked me afterwards, saying, “It blessed me being there! It was very informative, and I’m so glad I came along.” He was pleased that I would be joining a solidarity march against antisemitism in London.

Far too many church leaders remain silent, misled by the media and afraid of causing division in their congregations, but I sense a growing grass-roots support in the UK for the Jewish people. More contacts are being made between Christian and Jewish leaders, more help is being given to support *aliyah*, sadly increasing from the UK, more prayer is happening, and the church is waking up to the need to speak truth regardless of persecution.



Illustrative photo. | Shutterstock

Just as Israel is being forced to depend on God alone for protection, the church is entering a season of purification so that it stands on God’s word without

bowing to the world. Times of shaking are sent to fix our trust firmly in the coming unshakable kingdom of God.

## Love Hashem

### ■ Mandy Worby

Christians for Israel Australia

The first prayer Jewish children learn is *Shema*. “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

The next verse, 6, is God commanding His people to learn those words and embed them on their heart. This love of God would keep their heart, mind, soul and strength focused on God and Him alone, not wasting their faith on the world and their false gods.

Throughout most of 2023, we were heartsick over the friction and fighting between Israelis over the tribalism of the political left and right, and as each month passed, it only got worse. The concern was that Israel was heading for civil war, and Ian (my husband) and I were so worried about where Israel was heading.

Then, 7 October happened. The arguments on the left and right vanished overnight. Israelis united, and they became a force against the world. We were devastated by Oct 7 but so encouraged by the Israeli response and national unity, reaching out to help each other, and their politics was insignificant.

Right now, God’s people are almost back to the state they were in on 6 October 2023, tearing each other apart over political ideologies... left vs right... and it’s become dangerous. They are at war, and their enemies are watching, laughing and waiting for another chance



Jewish man holding Tefillin. | Photo: Shutterstock

to strike, repeating 7 October.

Again, our hearts are breaking over the growing divide in Israel. Some have asked where God was on Oct 7... He was right there among His people calling on them to remember His initial command... Hear O Israel... the Lord is God, the Lord is one. Love *Hashem* with every ounce of your being, because the obvious fact is that Israel can’t and shouldn’t put their trust in the nations of the world.

We can’t change the attitude of the world, that’s God’s domain, we can only change our own.

It’s our prayer that God will turn the hearts of all His people to Himself, and that they’ll remember *Shema* and once again, embed their love for Him in their heart, and turn to Him for wisdom, guidance and protection.

As Messiah said, “I say to you, you’ll not see Me until you say, ‘blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’” Matt 23:39

## Good will Triumph

### ■ Siew Fong

Christians for Israel Singapore

The 7 October 2023 massacre triggered daily and then weekly prayer meetings for Israel in our church in Singapore. We had to learn very quickly to intercede for a people embroiled in a war marked by a deluge of disinformation, distorted values and unimaginable wickedness. Today, the Israel-Hamas war is in its 334th day with no end in sight.

Are we in despair? Absolutely not! Because we realise that many prophecies are being fulfilled right before our eyes. We are confident that good will eventually triumph over evil as God unfolds His redemption plan for the world. We are horrified that tens of thousands turn up at anti-Israel

protests chanting “From the River to the Sea”, calling for the nation’s annihilation, but this global opposition against Israel had been prophesied by *Zechariah 12*. And in *Joel 3*, we read that God will judge the world for dividing His land— exactly what the United Nations intend to do with its ‘two-state solution’.

Despite the ongoing war, more Jews are returning to Israel than before, fulfilling God’s promise to regather His people back to Israel. The stage is being set for the return of our *Messiah* for the final showdown with the god of this world. We know Jesus will certainly win!

Therefore, we press on, watching and praying towards that glorious day!



Panoramic skyline view of the Old City of Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock





CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand  
and  
South Pacific Edition

October 2024

# Help Needed!

## ■ Bryce Turner

Executive Director | Christians for Israel NZ

As this paper arrives in your mailbox, we will be approaching the 12-month anniversary of the horrendous attack on Israel. There are still over 100 hostages being kept in Gaza, of which two-thirds—we hope—are still alive. Whilst the numbers attending anti-Israel protests in New Zealand has diminished a little, the viciousness has increased. Here in New Zealand, we have people protesting, screaming, yelling, boycotting foods, standing outside cafeterias and businesses with obscene placards, all in the desperate bid to convince other New Zealanders to buy into the blatant lies.

A number of things can be observed about the people doing the screaming and the protesting. Firstly, research and facts don't seem to bother them. Supposed numbers of casualties in Gaza range between 40,000 and 200,000, all from supposedly reputable sources. Apparently, almost all are women and children. Secondly, the protesters don't seem to have jobs. No matter the time of day or night, they are there waving placards, screaming, yelling, with fresh batteries in their megaphones. Israel, and those who support Israel, are accused of all sorts of horrible things, genocide, murdering babies, slaughtering people ruthlessly. Yet no one acknowledges who started this, who is still holding the hostages, and who is still firing rockets into innocent Israelis.

One of the latest campaigns has been a deliberate attack throughout supermarkets in New Zealand, putting stickers—illegally as far as I'm concerned—on hummus products manufactured by Obela—a company part-owned by an Israeli firm. Aside from the abhorrence of people sneaking into supermarkets and putting stickers on my food, Obela makes fantastic hummus! I highly recommend it!

So, in the face of such actions, what can we do about it?

Since the war started, Christians for Israel New Zealand has doubled its efforts to support Israel, and the Jewish and Israeli communities in our own country who are bearing the brunt of some horrid behaviour. Our work in educating and informing people has escalated dramatically—in spite of often increasing opposition. We are active on some 6+ social media accounts, combatting lies and hate being circulated, by sharing truth.

Our first small team was on the ground in Israel three weeks after the attacks, standing in solidarity with our Jewish friends—putting our 'money where our mouth is!' We filmed, interviewed, shared, but mostly worked, standing alongside a people reeling from such unspeakable horrors, but still standing! Our second team—a joint mission with our C4I Australia colleagues—similarly allowed us to show people the truth of what had actually happened. Our travellers could see, feel and hear the pain and suffering, but also the determination and resilience of this remarkable nation. We were again able to serve, to help out practically, but—perhaps more importantly—to stand in solidarity with such hurting people.

Back here in New Zealand we have stood firm. Along with many of our colleagues from other pro-Israel groups throughout the country, we have attended vigils, held protests, and stood with Jewish and Christian supporters. We have written to politicians, produced videos—especially with materials we filmed in Israel—and offered education, facts and evidence, that exposes the vile anti-Israel publicity campaign being mounted.

A year ago, we had no idea this was the future, not like this, not yet. A year ago, the smattering of anti-Israel protesters around the country occasionally reared their heads. Now they graffiti, gather outside businesses, cafes and public buildings, screaming slogans and yelling accusations that have about as much factual basis as the Loch Ness Monster.



A year ago, we would speak to and engage with people throughout the country and encounter some opposition from time to time. The anti-Israel sect of Minto's minions were annoying, but weren't a huge threat. Our time was spent mostly on positive promotion. How quickly we were forced to speak up against a rabid opposition in our own country, in order to let people know that there is another side; the truth. We have never before been through so many Israeli flags and materials.

It is exhausting, but it is what God has called us to do. It is wonderful to support Israel in peacetime, but it is essential to support Israel now.

As we approach the anniversary of the Gazan attack of Israel, be encouraged. These are very hard times, but God is clearly moving. We know there is still difficulty ahead, but we know who wins!

Thank you for your support that enables us to carry out this work. There are so many good causes to support, thank you for honouring God in supporting this one.

## CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL NZ

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## Setting the Scene—Part 1

### ■ Tony Kan

President | NZ Friends of Israel

NZ's response to 7 October 7 reflects much of how the rest of the Western world has responded. That response is a function of the six horsemen who are assailing western culture.

### The Six Horsemen Help Set the Scene

In our generation, six horsemen have been unleashed upon the Western World:

- 1. Critical Race Theory:** All the woes of the world are due to Caucasian white people.
- 2. Settler Colonialism:** All the woes of indigenous people are due to colonialism.
- 3. Neo-marxism:** Society is divided into oppressors and oppressed.
- 4. Linguistic Theft:** The meaning of words can be changed to suit, no matter what the word originally meant or by whoever first coined it.
- 5. The Big Lie:** The idea of creating a lie so audacious that everyone would believe because no one would be so brazen to say it in public if it were not true. Repeated enough times, the facts are rejected in disbelief.
- 6. Cancel Culture:** Anything that you deem unacceptable must be shut down, boycotted, and alienated. The result is civil discussion and debate becomes impossible because it creates a climate of fear. People stop speaking up for fear of losing their livelihoods, their friends, and their reputations.

The first three horsemen are beliefs championed by the progressive left. The last three are tools that prepare the way the horsemen fulfil their goals.

Here is the Palestinian narrative: The Jewish **white colonisers** are stealing the land from the rightful Arab indigenous peoples. Israel **oppresses** the Palestinian refugees through their checkpoints, searches and frequent forays to arrest **resistance** fighters fighting nobly for Palestinian **freedom**. Israel has built an **apartheid** state. Israel's response to 7 October is **indiscriminate, disproportionate, genocidal** and focused on **killing babies**.

Think carefully about how the horsemen combine to create this **mythical and libellous** narrative.

### The UN isn't Neutral, and it isn't Doing its Job

The UN was formed with some amazingly noble goals. For this reason, New Zealanders hold the UN and its work in very high regard. Indeed, much of what it does is good. But...

The world is made up of civilisations that don't always have the same values. We, being in the West, assume that our values are universal.

### Aren't Western values held by all? No.

Doesn't everyone value freedom? Aren't the ideas of freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, that all humans are equal, governments should be democratically elected, that the military, the police, judiciary and fourth estate should be independent from undue government influence, that life is precious and should be preserved; evident to all? But they aren't.

### The world has diverse values, and the UN is a democracy.

There are tyrannies out there that exist as long as those diverse values do not take hold among their people.

The UN is a democracy, and 56 of the 193 UN member nations are Muslim. Because of the idea of the Ummah, they feel bound to vote in solidarity with one another. Our experience with MMP in New Zealand shows that any 'party' that holds nearly 30% of the vote carries considerable influence.

### Nations with Muslim Majorities vote as a block in the UN.

The Muslim religion does not hold many of the values set out above.

In the case of Israel, its very existence is an affront to Muslim honour and dignity. Their honour and dignity cannot be restored until Israel is replaced with a Muslim government.

Thus, many of the resolutions promulgated through the General Assembly and sometimes through the Security Council are drafted and promoted by the Muslim lobby. Not surprisingly, the numbers of anti-Israel UN resolutions indicate that Israel is being unfairly treated.

But because most New Zealanders believe the UN is always true and noble, Israel becomes a pariah. After all, with so many anti-Israel resolutions, surely Israel must be a rogue state and needs to be rehabilitated.

### UNRWA's appeals for funding add to the perception that Palestinians are oppressed.

UNRWA, the UN body responsible for providing welfare to the Palestinians, has appealed for donations to provide humanitarian aid to Gazan civilians.

Its appeals often have photos of suffering children coupled with messages of potential starvation. This has added to the perception that Israel is oppressing the Palestinians.



Anti-Israel protesters in Washington, USA, 21 October 2023. | Photo: Shutterstock

### Campus Protests and BDS

The horsemen are powerful. The 'progressive' left, aside from the media and the civil service, is strong in the education sector. Consequently, they have ready access to gullible and naïve youth.

Our youth join our educational institutions to learn from their teachers and lecturers. Recruiting them for their political cause is an abuse of that trust.

Often, they join the Palestinian cause based on blind faith in their educators.

Unsurprisingly, teachers, lecturers, and students have copied the university campus encampment protests seen in the USA, but fortunately, they have not been allowed to endure.

The culture at pro-Palestinian/anti-Israel rallies is angry, intimidating, and belligerent, with rhetoric implying that the atrocities of 7 October are justified.

Because 7 October is justified in their minds, protesters dress and mask themselves like Hamas, wearing *Keffiyehs* to show their solidarity with Hamas even though the *Keffiyeh* was popularised by Yasser Arafat, a previous leader of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Ironically, Hamas summarily executed and butchered PA officials when they took power.

These student protests have also lobbied university investment arms to divest their holdings in arms manufacturers and to cut academic ties to Israel.

### The Wider Pro-Palestinian Lobby and BDS

The horsemen have had an effect on society outside of the education sector, too. Thus, the ideas that Israel is committing genocide and building an apartheid society are widely held and believed among the remainder of the pro-Palestinian lobby.

### Mainstream Media Coverage portrays Israel as a baby killer.

Many are also deeply swayed by our mainstream media (MSM) coverage in New Zealand, which has been selective and decidedly pro-Palestinian.

Most agencies seem prepared to accept whatever the Gaza Health Ministry (GHM) says at face value until it becomes clear that the figures are contrived.

Yet, it is an axiom of war that the first casualty is truth.

Every MSM report about casualty numbers should be reported conditionally. The conditions should be:

- GHM's figures do not differentiate between combatants and civilians.
- They cannot be independently verified.
- GHM is controlled by Hamas.

If you look carefully, one or more are often omitted.

Our journalists claim to adhere to the highest journalistic ethics. It's time that they walked the talk.

### 7 October was an event that occurred over one day. It can, therefore, quickly fade from public memory.

However, the ensuing war has gone on for months and may continue for years. During the first five months of the war, we saw daily images and footage of suffering, wounded, dying, and dead children.

These daily images horrified New Zealanders, leading many to believe Israel's response was disproportionate and reinforced beliefs that Israelis are oppressive and blinded by vengeful bloodlust.

# Iran in Support of Hamas in Gaza—Part 2

## ■ Dennis McLeod

Representative | Christian Friends of Israel NZ

In my last article, I discussed Iran's long-term goal of eliminating Israel. In this second instalment, I will look at recent examples of Iran's destabilising role in the countries surrounding Israel.

The war in Gaza continues with Iran's clear backing. One weapon used against Israel is the claim of starving Gazans. There is a massive amount of aid entering Gaza from Israel. People have filmed the Gazan food markets recently with its abundance of food, clearly showing that there is food. What the world does not see are the actions of Hamas towards food distribution to their people. Iran's proxy has been filmed not only stealing food but also killing Gazans trying to get the food. Food, or lack of it, is being used as a weapon of war. There is nothing new in this as it has been used throughout history.

Iran knows Israel will look bad if they can label Israel with that crime. The Biden administration, with Israel's backing, has decided to send supplies by ship into Gaza, using a floating pier near Gaza City. American ships bring supplies from Cyprus, unload them onto smaller boats as they near Gaza, and then onto trucks which drive down the pier and the Goods for distribution to the people in need.

No Americans will set foot in Gaza in case they are fired on. Recently, UN officials, along with Israelis, were inspecting the site to be used. They all had to take cover as Hamas fired mortars into the area in an act to stop the scheme going ahead. Hamas has not claimed responsibility for the bombardment but stated they will attack any attempt to build such structure being placed there by foreign troops. That is a clear message to prevent their own people receiving needy supplies, to keep the narrative alive that Gazans are in need and Israel is responsible for any humanitarian aid crisis.

The propaganda from Iran has been so effective in an antisemitic world that the International Criminal Court is issuing arrest warrants for many high-ranking officials of Israel, including PM Netanyahu. None have been declared against Iran for the October massacre or any other tyrants in recent history.

Hamas is refusing any offer that sees the release of hostages. In their thinking, the hostages are their bargaining chip for the release of thousands of terrorists. At the moment, they believe and tell their people they are winning the war. Reminiscent of Nassar in 1967, telling Jordan, come join us; we are winning and destroying Israel. Hamas leaders are



Palestinians buying food from the market in the Gaza Strip, on 13 January 2024. | Photo: Shutterstock

now on the offensive because they have the full backing of Iran.

Now, five European nations are talking of accepting a Palestinian state, as has Australia, and even New Zealand is telling Israel to back off. Donald Trump once said the two-state plan was the solution to the problem; now he is saying he is not so sure. It would be a case of peace, peace when there is no peace, just a cease-fire for a time.

As we go forward in prayer and support of Israel, we need look no further than the word of God. Israel will never be destroyed again. *Amos 9:14*. No weapon

formed against you will prosper. *Isaiah 54:17*. The Lord never slumbers or sleeps. *Psalms 121:4*. Bring all nations into judgment *Joel 3:2*. Bless those who bless you *Genesis 12:3*, and the list goes on. When will victory come? That I cannot answer, but what I do know is that we need to be praying for the peace of Jerusalem in preparation for the return of the Great Victor. *Psalms 122* states that the promises of God concerning Israel have not failed in the past and will never fail in the future. Whether this will be in our time or in a time to come, it will happen because He is honest and faithful. *Psalms 25:8*: Come Yeshua, come.

## 8 October 2023

## ■ Todd Vincent

ICEJ Northland

Most of us are tuned in to what's happening in Israel. We get updates through social media or other news platforms.

Here in New Zealand, we switch on the news and get updates on what Israel's facing; however, if the news gets too much, we can switch it off. We can distance ourselves from the horrors happening in Israel by putting our attention elsewhere. After all, it's over there, and we are here in New Zealand.

But what happens when you can't escape the horrors, you can't escape the daily stress and trauma.

Recently a few members of the Jewish community shared their hearts with a Christian audience in Whangarei. We were given a glimpse into the prolonged trauma facing the Jewish community.

One woman spoke firsthand of her experiences on 7 October. She happened to be in Israel on that dreadful day. She described the start of that day as just like many others in Israel. Sirens had gone off early in the morning, but friends and family were reassuring; this happens all the time, they said, soon the sirens will die down.

Unfortunately, this didn't happen; the sirens just kept on going. Reassurance from the locals started to fade as the reality of what was going on began to sink in. Reports of large-scale attacks ripping through the Israeli *kibbutzim* in the south began filtering through to the rest of Israel.

Our Jewish guest told us that fight-or-flight adrenaline took hold. Israelis were faced with terrifying choices. Only Israelis can really grasp the impact of that day. Fight-or-flight decisions were made all across Israel.

But she reminded us, it wasn't just that day. She told us that Israelis have had to endure this heightened state of alertness continually. There's no switching off like we do down here in New Zealand. There's no saying—well that's a long way away and I can turn down the volume whenever I want to.

To the Christian audience listening, our guest described it this way. She said we are all aware of PTSD; it stands for post-traumatic stress disorder, and sometimes it's called post-traumatic stress injury. But for many Israeli and Jewish communities worldwide, the 'post' is being replaced by 'prolonged'. For them, it's a prolonged traumatic stress. It never goes away.

For many Israelis and Jews worldwide, they find

themselves in a continuous 'the day-after' trauma. She told us that for many Jews, it feels like they are living 8 October every day. 8 October was when the full realisation of what happened hit home.

Many Jews had believed that the world would wake up to Hamas; they believed that the world would now see things clearly, that Hamas were murderous terrorists. Surely, no one could doubt Hamas' evil intentions after 7 October.

To the shock of many Jews, much of the world's media spent an obscenely short amount of time condemning Hamas. The mainstream media appeared reluctant to fully blame Hamas. Instead, the focus of their criticism quickly turned against Israel. This reluctance by the MSM to sufficiently condemn Hamas has caused real harm.

Day after day, Jews around the world and in Israel are caught continually on 8 October. 8 October has become one long day that never seems to end. The feeling of being anxious, on heightened alert, of feeling vulnerable never goes away.

The Jewish community needs our love and support. As *Isaiah 40:1-2* says, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem."



## Tauranga's Perfect Timing

When Roberta Christie got the word from the Lord to organise an event for Israel in Tauranga, she couldn't have known that it would be the same time that Israel was experiencing the largest onslaught of 300 rockets, drones and missiles, but He knew. Roberta worked with Ps Nigel Woodley and Yifat Goddard to form a group to host events in Tauranga; which will be held at least minimally on an annual basis. The next event will be in October. Graham Preston from Bethlehem College kindly allowed the group to use the Performing Arts Centre and it was filled with 500 supporters, far more than they anticipated.

In a God-honouring fashion, Roberta was determined that the event began with putting God first and having time to remember the lost and injured from the 7 October atrocities and

displaced Gazans. Prominent opera singer, David Griffiths, accompanied by his family, sang the *Hatikvah*, whilst Gaynor Schiff led her dance group with banners and tambourines. Speakers included Nigel Woodley, Yifat Goddard, Paul and Shulamit Ataya, Kevin Clout and Chris Archer.

Prayer and intercession were a key focus of the event. Led by Rev Iain Dickson and Aivi Puloka, Roberta Christie declared *Psalm 46* and the attendees joined in with *shofars* resounding. Roberta is part of ANZAC prayer groups and her Australian prayer partners provided covering and support over Zoom to add to the event.

For further information about their October Memorial service and any future events, please contact Roberta Christie on [rm.christie@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rm.christie@xtra.co.nz).



Yifat Goddard at the Tauranga event.

## Wellington Ups Hostage Profile



Wellington Run for their Lives group in front of Nancy Wake Memorial.

A Wellington group planning Sunday weekly hostage marches began in November 2023. Led by the Israeli community, the group includes members of both the Jewish and Christian communities. This group came out of the successful remembrance event held in Civic Square following the 7 October atrocities. Unlike other NZ groups, Wellington is part of an international network of *Run for Their Lives* groups instigated by American Israeli Rachel Goldberg, Hersch's mother; featuring major cities standing in solidarity, with a stipulation that the walk or run must be weekly and last longer than 18 minutes. Many participants wore the distinctive black T-shirt with red and white writing. In Wellington's case, the standard walk was an hour long and featured participants carrying images of the individual hostages with the word KIDNAPPED writ large in red across the

top. At a chosen site, participants shout out the same catch cry each week, "Run for their lives. Bring them home now, Wellington New Zealand", which is then shared globally. Part of the walk included marching past the food stalls in the Sunday market allowing interaction with the crowd. Many locals seemed genuinely puzzled over who was kidnapped. It seems that many hadn't heard about the 7 October atrocities. This was an excellent way to connect with people, keep the hostage issue alive and gauge support, with some spectators asking questions and many expressing solidarity with the cause. Several months ago some of the flags of the various 24 nations were added to highlight that it wasn't just Israelis who were kidnapped. Participants drew inspiration from the Nancy Wake story of the Wellington Jew who fought the Nazis in WW2. Marches are currently on hold.

## How Do We Reflect? The Power of Questions

### Julia Vincent

Pastor | ICEJ Northland

Can you believe that it has been one year since the 7 October attack on Israel? And one year on, how do we reflect? More specifically, how do we reflect on Israel's response to the events of 7 October?

It's important to think deeply, carefully and biblically. Why? Because our families, friends, churches and workplaces are also reflecting.

Their reflections, for the most part, are informed by mainstream media and the questions they ask. Questions that support a worldly agenda. An agenda recognised by Christians who love Israel, but by no means recognised by all. And it is these questions that are informing our communities.

And surprise, surprise, people reach a negative view of Israel. This is because the people behind the media, know something very important.

Questions are powerful! As is their absence. In the media, the person asking the questions controls the narrative. In a conversation, the person asking the questions sets the direction. As we know not all questions are equal.

Our media ask questions like, how can Israel be okay with so many civilian deaths? Is Israel being proportionate in its response? And they present questions from Gazans like, how can the world stand by and watch Israel bomb us, killing our women and children?

The media don't need to answer these accusatory questions. It's about planting doubt in people's minds. It's not too dissimilar to the serpent in the Garden of Eden asking, "Did God really say...?"

And then there is the equally powerful silence. I'm yet to hear our media ask the difficult questions around the use of human shields and the role of Hamas in civilian deaths, where all the aid money disappears to, or the role of the UN.

Questions are powerful. And as Bible-believing Christians, we know the power of a good question. And we serve a God who is not afraid to ask the hard questions. Like, where are you? Why are you angry? Why do the nations rage? Who do you say I am?

As Christians we may feel like we are on the back foot, believing that we must answer the media's questions. But who will question the accusers? Who will question their agenda? Who will uncover the motivation of their hearts?

This is a battle for truth. And good questions can uncover what really lies beneath, what motivates the heart.

So, I would like to ask you, the reader, what question do you think is on God's heart regarding the atrocities enacted against His people on 7 October? What questions would God ask of His church? And what questions would God ask of the nations?

## From Tel Aviv

By Yosef Livne, Former Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand



### Bring Them Home

By the time this article is published Israel will have crossed the one-year threshold since the massacre of 7 October.

At this point as I am writing these lines, we still have no idea where we are going to be—will the remaining hostages be freed? Will Galilee see the return of its residents? Or, heaven forbid, shall we find ourselves amid a regional conflict?

I am not a prophet and can't predict the future. Israel is immersed in an on-going conflict in Gaza and in the North. Day after day our armed forces are engaged in a momentous effort to drive Hamas if not into oblivion, then at least to render it incapable of threatening Israel. At the same time, and above all else, the fate of the hostages is paramount for almost all Israelis. A few days ago, the army revealed that the bodies of six hostages were recovered. The pain over their death penetrated the hearts of all of us. Every day all day, at work or at our leisure, often most of us cannot or will not forget our brethren. I am writing this column on a Saturday night, the first day of the new football season. I glanced at the TV screen and saw the public in one of the stadiums raising posters with the names and pictures of our hostages. We all hope that the negotiations that have been taking place over the last months will succeed and the joy of seeing our people back will lighten up our collective faces.

Up North, the hostilities continue without respite. Residents of the communities along the border cannot return to their homes, as Hezbollah keeps launching explosives across the border.

Schoolchildren in the North are still unsure if and where they will return to class come 1 September. Israel has so far shown great restraint in its reaction to Hezbollah's attacks. Are we heading towards an agreement or is our region facing the threat of a conflict that will extend further away from our borders. As a nation, Israelis have shown resilience in trying times in the past and we shall undoubtedly face any challenge to our country. We are encouraged by the clear-cut support of the US and other nations who have sent a clear sign to Iran and its cohorts that Israel shall not stand alone if attacked.

International support is something that all of us are grateful for. When we witness the heartwarming receptions of the delegates to the Democratic Party convention to the families of the hostages, we know that we are not alone. When we learn of the strong support of our Christian friends across the globe, and in this case New Zealand, we are fortified. Our struggle is just. The Israeli people wish nothing more than what so many nations enjoy naturally— to live in peace and security in our millennial homeland.

# Exploring Media Bias

Did you know... historically, Kiwis looked to the *BBC* for international news or *Reuters*, not relying on scant domestic sources often perpetuating local or international biases. But this is less true now following media funding and bias scandals. American channels were considered insular and now heavily skewed. Legacy media is dying globally. Increasingly, *Al Jazeera* is a prime source of international news with its big budgets, wide coverage and easy access. This is particularly true for Middle Eastern news, whether it is from *Sky* or other subscription services, such as *Freeview* or the internet. But many people don't think about the source or whether it has a particular bias. It's time for Kiwis to be more discerning about media, especially those who seek real news about Israel.

Some supporters have signed up for Israeli Amir Tsarfati's newsletter by email or his *Telegram*, *Instagram* or *X* accounts following his visits to NZ. He has 545,000 English language subscribers on *Telegram* globally. Interestingly, some media brands are not universal. *Sky News Australia* is fundamentally different to its British counterpart.

Most media channels are left-wing, and these days, they no longer provide both sides to a story as was the standard journalism practice in previous eras. Media commentators note the passing of true journalism. So now readers have to judge each item, discerning both the truth and the bias.

### Israeli Media

Israeli media is very polarised. There are many left-wing channels, which is surprising given that Israelis are more right-wing in political orientation, and some publications are specialised, such as those geared toward the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) audience. Traditional newspapers tend to have an internet arm. Most TV channels are left-wing, except *Channel 14*. In terms of English language publications, *Haaretz* is the most left-leaning newspaper and *Israel HaYom* is the most right-wing. The historic *Jerusalem Post* is published in English and French and has a centre-right orientation. Some newspapers are daily, and others are weekly; some are free, like *Israel HaYom*, which was established to counteract *Haaretz* and is available everywhere, whilst others are sold on newsstands or by subscription.

A July 2023 survey revealed that *Israel HaYom* is read by 29.4% daily, with *Yedioth Ahronoth* second at 22.4%. Minnows like *Haaretz* stand at 4.8%, *Globes* at 4% and *Maariv* at 3.9%. The prominence of *Haaretz* in international circles may be due to the large number

of left-wing American and Canadian Jews. It is published in Hebrew and English. *Israel HaYom* has an English-language website.

*Keshet 12* is Israel's most watched commercial TV channel followed by *NOW14*. Amazingly, 75% Israelis have pay TV subscriptions. *i24NEWS* is broadcast 24 hours a day in English and has a firm following amongst Israel supporters as does the centrist *Times of Israel* and *JNS*. *i24NEWS* broadcasts in four main languages—English, French Hebrew and Arabic.

### Global Media Wars

*Press TV*, established in 2007, is the Iranian government's international network broadcasting in English and French. It has been banned by many countries including the EU and UK in 2012. In June 2021, the US government seized the press TV domain name, shutting down this and other Iranian government media outlets.

Since the Ukraine War began, sanctions have been placed on *RT*, previously known as *Russia Today*, the Russian government media outlet, which began in 2005. European bans were instituted on the grounds of broadcasting blatant Russian propaganda. However, these bans have been largely ineffective as people could get around such bans. *RT* is broadcast in seven foreign languages, including Arabic. It is available to those with access to satellite TV.

### Al Jazeera Broadcasting Bans

*Al Jazeera* began operations in 1996. It is funded by the Qatari government and operates in multiple languages. Various methods have been used to stop their activities in the Middle East and beyond, and it's not just the moderate states that have done so. Concerns have been raised about biased coverage of the Gaza war and other Israel-related issues.

### Anti-Israel Bias

It's not just non-western media. Concerns have been raised against

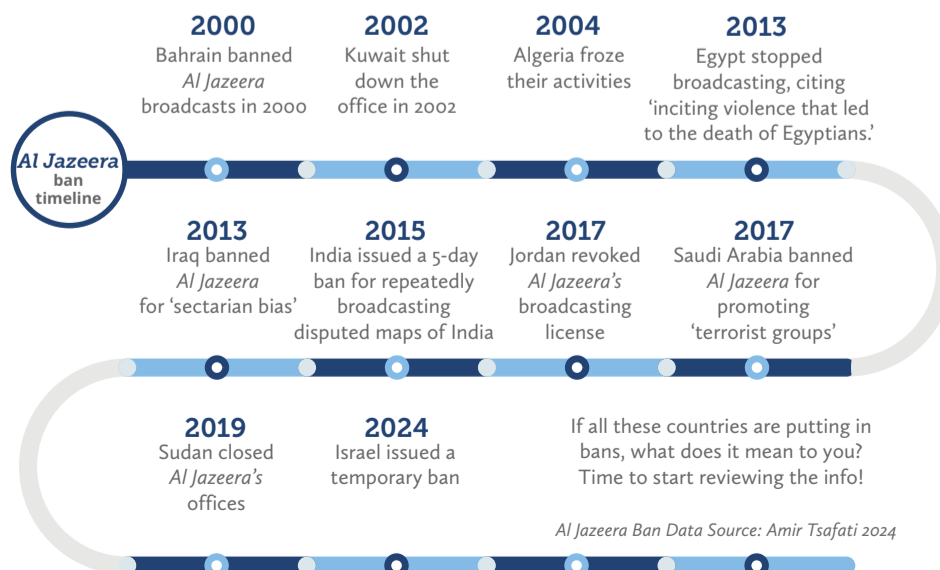
traditional global media heavyweights like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* with plummeting public trust ratings. *Honest Reporting* is one source that has been calling out global media anti-Israel biases, as has the *Anti-Defamation League*. This is a problem for European media as well. Pundits may claim it's just a question of defining the West Bank versus Judea and Samaria and illegal occupation versus disputed territory and the usual slogans. Sadly, it cuts much deeper, such as selective coverage of events, defining who is a terrorist and who is a civilian, and what is the source of data or a story. Many NGO's have failed to maintain neutrality, such as Amnesty International and *Medicins Sans Frontieres*. Telling the truth can be tantamount to risking your life in many nations. Activist journalism is the new name of the game. AI will be an increasing feature of news coverage.

### Talking Al Jazeera

It's time to talk about *Al Jazeera* bias and funding with your colleagues, family and friends. You'll be surprised few knew about the bans and Qatari government funding source. Open up a conversation like, "Did you know about media anti-Israel biases like *Al Jazeera*?"

### Attention Keyboard Warriors

Since 7 October, antisemitism has come out into the open in all sorts of arenas we could not have imagined. For example, Jewish artists and exhibitions featuring what might loosely be termed as Jewish motifs, are being excluded. Pro-Palestine stickers are ending up on products in supermarkets. A team of dedicated professionals is fighting back. But we need your help in alerting us to examples and incidences that require a professional response. Send details to [info@c4israel.org.nz](mailto:info@c4israel.org.nz) with a phone number and a photo or image where applicable.





## Ambassador's Farewell in Christchurch

The first of a series of farewell events was held in honour of His Excellency Ambassador Ran Yaakoby in August as he completes his term as Ambassador of Israel to New Zealand and Non-Resident Ambassador of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tonga this year.

Ambassador Yaakoby arrived in New Zealand in 2020. He presented his credentials to New Zealand's Governor-General, Dame Patsy Reddy, as he was officially welcomed to Government House and New Zealand.

The evening reception in Christchurch was hosted by the New Zealand Friends of Israel and held at Te Hapua: Haswell Centre. We are very grateful to the President of the New Zealand Friends of Israel, Tony Kan, Secretary Rebecca Marchand and everyone whose hard work resulted in a successful evening spent with the local community and friends.

*Ambassador Ran Yaakoby and Tony Kan speaking at the Christchurch event.*  
| Photos: Embassy of Israel in New Zealand



## The Righteous Among the Nations Award



Ambassador Yaakoby, assisted by New Zealand Friends of Israel President Tony Khan, presenting the *Righteous Among the Nations* certificate to Meira Smith de Bouter and her family.

During the Christchurch reception, the Ambassador held a very unique and special presentation of a certificate and a medal of 'Righteous Among the Nations.'

The honour of *Righteous Among the Nations* is given to non-Jewish people who demonstrated considerable personal courage and bravery in protecting and aiding the Jewish population during the Second World War.

The late Wilhelmina van Breda Beausar has been bestowed with this designation. Wilhelmina was living in the Netherlands during the war in Bilthoven, a village in the Dutch province of Utrecht. She answered a request to assist a young Dutch Jewish girl, Bertie Levin, to hide in her family home despite the great personal risk.

Bertie vividly recalled an occasion when the Gestapo unexpectedly arrived while she was dining with the family. Displaying remarkable composure, Bertie excused herself under the pretext of a school test and left the house.

Wilhelmina and her family courageously withheld any information during the ensuing interrogation.

Wilhelmina's bravery ensured Bertie's survival through the war. She was one of the fortunate few. Three-quarters of Dutch Jews were murdered during WW2. As a percentage, Dutch Jews perished at a higher rate than in any other Western European country. Bertie later provided her testimony to Yad Vashem, leading to Wilhelmina's recognition as *Righteous Among the Nations*.

Later in life, Wilhelmina moved to New Zealand, and several generations of her surviving family members live in Christchurch. Her granddaughter, Meira Smith de Bouter, collected the award on her behalf.

Wilhelmina's name and all of those bestowed the honour this year will be engraved on the walls of the Garden of the Righteous at the World's Holocaust Remembrance Centre, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel.

## Israeli Innovations Support Tonga

The Embassy of Israel to Tonga in Wellington and MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation) provided humanitarian aid to Tonga following the devastating volcanic eruption and tsunami in 2022. By 2024, it became clear that further support was needed for the Atata Si'i resettlement on Tongatapu, for the displaced community of 'Atata Island, which became uninhabitable following the disaster. In July 2024, a collaborative project of the embassy with MORDI Tonga and Pacific Grow was funded by MASHAV to set up HomeBiogas units for each household. The units turn organic waste into clean cooking gas and organic fertiliser. In addition, a drip irrigation system from the Israeli pioneering company Netafim was

donated to irrigate the village's vegetable field. The combination of an economical water resource from drip irrigation and the Home Biogas fertilisers should yield sustainable produce for the whole village.

Deputy Chief of Mission Yael Holan visited Atata Si'i resettlement, during her attendance at the 53rd Pacific Island Forum held in Tonga this August. She spoke to community members and the Town Officer, who shared the challenges of adapting to their new home on the main island, but were grateful that they still lived together.

We are excited to see our collaborative project come to fruition. The integration of Israeli technologies aims to enhance productivity, conserve resources, and build resilience against climate change.



Deputy Chief of Mission Yael Holan with the Town Officer and a Home Biogas Unit.



## 7 October, Context and Lessons Unlearned

### ■ Perry Trotter

Everything has a context. As in language, perhaps it is so in history, context determines meaning.

Events on and since 7 October have an essential context, whether one's historical view is months, decades or millennia. And because Jewish history is so well (and so painfully) documented, these events must be seen in the broader context of what Robert Wistrich called the longest hatred.

Many have made the observation that 7 October saw the greatest number of Jews slaughtered in a single day since the Holocaust. Of course, it is tragically true but my point here is to draw attention to the Holocaust's ever-present function as a kind of 'absolute zero' by which Jewish calamities may be measured.

Careful students of antisemitism have correctly been exceedingly wary of Holocaust comparisons and the crass and deeply disrespectful trivialisation that can occur when the memory of that pivotal event is invoked in consideration of other matters. 7 October, however, has for many demanded a revision. Comparisons are now made by a number of responsible Jewish commentators.

While the scale of the October tragedy was ultimately limited by Israel's belated reaction, Hamas' own declarations, then and since, have shown their intention

was for a massacre of a much greater magnitude.

As dreadful as 7 October was, it is its global aftermath that may ultimately prove to be the more significant factor in Jewish history. While many reasonably expected a short-lived 'moratorium' on antisemitism post-7 October, as even the most hardened haters experienced just an inkling of empathy for Jews in view of the mind-numbing atrocities they had experienced, it was not to be so. Instead, a firestorm of antisemitism was ignited. And that, even before Israel's military campaign against Hamas had properly begun.

If it were ever believed that the world learned the lessons of the Holocaust, recent events have bestowed on such a view the status of well-meant fantasy. During WW2 the Allies chose not to act even when the extent of Nazi atrocities was known. Jewish lives were shown to be of little account. Of course, the Jewish people now have a state and that state has a strong army. But Israel's campaign to ensure that Hamas can never again perpetrate a 7 October is met with immense international pressure to abort before that objective is met. Again, Jewish lives are apparently of little account.

For Hamas and its very many supporters amongst the Palestinians, the elimination of Jews and their state remains a force demonstrably stronger than death. Nevertheless, while more carefully and euphemistically framed, it is the expressions of support for Hamas from

Western academics, politicians and media that is the greater concern. Similarly, it is highly significant that Western leaders persist in their commitment to the diehard delusion known as 'the two-state solution'.

If Holocaust comparisons are no longer taboo, nor are comparisons with the 1930s. While academic boycotts of Israel are hardly new, academia has taken a significant step toward its own demise with Jewish professors increasingly finding life in the halls of (formerly) free enquiry untenable. When Jewish academics are no longer safe on certain campuses, it is difficult to not recall events in Europe nearly a century ago.

More generally it must be noted that increasingly it is no longer just Israel-related events, subjects or persons that are untouchable, it is enough that something is merely Jewish.

While antisemitism is of course a terrible trial for the Jewish people, it is also a test for the non-Jewish world. Context reveals, and in the tragic and bloodstained history that is the broader context of 7 October, we know it is a test in which the vast majority of Gentiles have fallen short. While there are many who understand and even sympathise with Israel's plight as it contends with the new old hatred, such friends are of little value if they will not act. In this dark period let us all seek the courage to stand, to speak and to take action.

**ISRAEL, ANTISEMITISM AND CIVILIZATIONAL COLLAPSE**

SATURDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2024, TAURANGA  
10AM-5PM, PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE, BETHLEHEM COLLEGE, 24 ELDER LANE, TAURANGA 3110

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The conflict in the Middle East and the recent global surge in antisemitism can be difficult to process, in view of competing narratives and contradictory worldviews. Along with the rise in ancient Jew hatred we are seeing an assault on foundational civilizational values. Is there a connection? Is Israel really "a white European coloniser, guilty of occupation, apartheid, ethnic cleansing and genocide against the indigenous Palestinians"? What does the Bible teach concerning Israel past, present and future?

**Join us for an all day seminar examining these issues from historical and biblical perspectives.**



**Dr Sheree Trotter** earned a PhD in History from University of Auckland with a thesis on Zionism. She will unpack many of the competing claims concerning the conflict and will address some of its historical and geo-political context. She will examine the role of academia and media in the

surge in antisemitism, and offer an indigenous perspective.

Sheree co-founded **Holocaust and Antisemitism Foundation**, and in 2023 completed an *Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy* scholars-in-residence course at Oxford. Sheree is Māori (Te Arawa) and co-founded the **Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem**.

**Perry Trotter** is a Bible teacher. He will address the assault on Judeo-Christian values, its relationship to antisemitism, and other relevant questions: Does the Bible explain why the issue of Israel is so divisive? Has the church replaced Israel, making her irrelevant? What should be our response to the surge in antisemitism?

Perry is the author of **Israel in the Biblical Worldview**, a book endorsed by several international scholars. He has experience in refuting replacement theology and Christian anti-Zionism. He is also a media producer whose work on the Holocaust has been shown in Berlin, Dubai, Australia and throughout NZ.



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## Calendar Themes

Throughout this year, we will be elaborating on the themes of the C41 2024 Israel Calendar: Symbols of Israel and significant festivals.



### October: White Lily

White is the colour of holiness and purity, so given God's call on Israel to be a holy people (*Ex 19:6*) it's not surprising that the national flower of Israel, the Madonna lily is all white. It is a very ancient flower. Such is its significance, the columns of King Solomon's temple were adorned with Madonna lilies and it was also found on the brazen laver.

### 2-3 Oct: Yom Teruah &

### 2-4 Oct: Rosh Hashanah

*Yom Teruah* is the Hebrew name for the Feast of Trumpets, the first of the final three *Moedim* (appointed days). The Bible tells believers to blow a trumpet. *Rosh Hashanah* is the beginning of the Jewish Civil New Year and is derived from the Babylonian calendar, not the Bible. This time last year the Jews were in the midst of *Sukkot* oblivious of what was to come.

### 11-12 October: Yom Kippur

*Yom Kippur* is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. Between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, Jews often examine themselves and repent.

### 16-25 October: Sukkot

*Sukkot* festival lasts eight days with *Simcha Torah* being the ninth day.

### 25 October: Simcha Torah

In previous years Israel supporters may have known that the Festival of *Sukkot* ended on *Simcha Torah*, but maybe not much more. It is supposed to be a joyous end to the festival when religious Jews focus on the joy of the gift of the sacred Torah and dance around the synagogues. For Israelis, this will be the day they especially remember the 7 October massacre.



### November: St Peter's Fish

Technically known as Mango Tilapia, a freshwater fish, is called St Peter's fish and refers to the fish that Jesus pulled the gold coin from its mouth. Similar to a flounder, it's a Galilean delicacy.

# Connecting Hearts: A New Path in Supporting Israel

## ■ Tehila Gonen

In the wake of the tragic events of 7 October 2023, since Israel has experienced an ongoing level of unprecedented suffering and collective heartbreak, it has become increasingly crucial for Christians to demonstrate their steadfast and personal support. A profound, yet often overlooked, way to show this support is by learning the Hebrew language. While it may seem like an overwhelming undertaking to most, learning Hebrew is not only achievable, but also deeply rewarding.

### The Power of Words

Words possess extraordinary power. They shape our perceptions, convey our emotions, and create connections between individuals. In times of crisis, language can bridge gaps. For those dedicated to supporting Israel, learning Hebrew transcends the mere acquisition of a new skill. It is an avenue for forging a deeper bond with people in need of empathy and understanding.

Mastering Hebrew enables Christians to engage more authentically with Israeli culture, history, and daily life. It fosters a greater appreciation for Jewish traditions and the incredible resilience of a nation that has faced untold challenges. Hebrew serves as a living link to Israel's heritage.

### A Message of Support

In the current anti-Israel climate, learning Hebrew communicates to Israelis that Christians are not passive observers but active participants in their

support. This earnest effort signifies a commitment to engaging in a genuinely supportive manner.

Acquiring proficiency in Hebrew helps counteract the ignorance and hatred that fuel antisemitism.

### Language as a Tool for Evangelistic Efforts

For Christians, supporting Israel is closely tied to their faith and mission. Learning Hebrew enhances this connection by providing a deeper understanding of biblical texts.

Additionally, language skills help bridge the communication gap with Israelis, demonstrating a sincere effort to connect. Basic proficiency in Hebrew enables Christians to convey the essential aspects of the Gospel and guide Israelis, and Jews alike, toward their *Messiah* from the *Old Testament*. This ability is enriching in both spiritual and community contexts.

### The Practicality of Learning Hebrew

Learning Hebrew might initially seem daunting, but it is entirely feasible and immensely rewarding. Hebrew provides a unique lens into a rich, cultural and historical heritage. By learning the language, you gain insight into the resilience of a nation that has endured significant hardships. Hebrew is not merely a communication tool; it is a gateway to understanding the experiences and values of the Israeli people.

It allows for deeper engagement with Israeli culture, collaboration with local

organisations, and more profound connections with Messianic congregations. It also enables learners to articulate the fundamental aspects of the Gospel and highlight the Messiah from the Old Testament with clarity.

For those considering learning Hebrew, I offer online classes that may suit your needs. Conducted via Zoom, these sessions are designed to fit various schedules, providing flexibility and accessibility. My approach integrates both biblical and modern aspects of the language, aiming to deliver a comprehensive and enriching learning experience, fostering personal growth and a closer connection to Israel. For more details or to explore this opportunity, please contact me at [learnhebrewnz@gmail.com](mailto:learnhebrewnz@gmail.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/learnhebrewnz](https://www.facebook.com/learnhebrewnz).

### Conclusion

In these challenging times, expressing solidarity with Israel involves more than mere words of sympathy. It requires actions that reflect a genuine commitment to supporting people facing profound challenges. Learning Hebrew is a heartfelt way to demonstrate this commitment. It represents an act of empathy, a gesture of support, and a bridge to deeper understanding. By doing so, you affirm Christian support and open pathways to share the message of the Jewish Messiah with God's chosen people in their very own language.



# Who Are the Druze?

The recent July massacre of 12 and maiming of 42 children playing on a soccer field in Majdal Shams reminds us of the complexity and diversity of people groups across the Middle East. Majdal Shams lies in the southern foothills of Mt Hermon in the Golan Heights, not far from the Syrian border. It is predominately inhabited by *Druze* people and known as a *Druze* village to Israelis who flock there for distinctive food and culture.

Interestingly, the *Druze* are neither Muslim nor Arab and theirs is an ancient religion dating back to the thirteenth century. Historically, *Druze* were based in the northern Levant—Lebanon, Syria and Israel. Currently, there are between 800,000–2 million *Druze* worldwide,

many having fled due to civil wars. Those who remain, guard their land jealously. In Israel, major *Druze* communities are found in the Golan, Carmel and Galilee regions. The *Druze* of these communities differ in their allegiance to the Israeli state. Due to the Golan Heights region being under Syrian control prior to 1967, some *Druze* held onto their Syrian allegiance, which is in reality tied more to the land and divided border communities. Israel facilitates this conundrum by making them permanent residents of Israel, rather than citizens, but opening the door to voluntary citizenship. Over time more and more *Druze* are taking up that option, especially the young. There are 143,000 *Druze* in Israel, who speak Arabic.

Religionists wear a distinctive white hat. Their faith is non-proselytising and very secret incorporating tenets and prophets of *Judaism* (Moses), *Shia Islam*, *Christianity* (Jesus), *Gnosticism*, *Zoroastrianism* and *Hinduism* including reincarnation. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law is their central figure. Marrying out is frowned upon, blocking passing on the faith. A multicoloured flag and star symbolise the beloved *Druze*.

Serving in the IDF is required for *Druze* male citizens and seen as a badge of honour. They are well regarded. Many have attained high ranks in IDF, politics and government and also in science and the professions. They serve as a shining example of the integration of a minority community in Israel.



## Four Great Covenants of the Bible—Part 1

■ Anna Pickett

**God's covenantal steps to restoration and redemption.**

Many Biblical threads lead to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and are worthy to be dwelled upon. Most of these threads are interwoven and together they portray why we are here, where we are going, and how we may reach the fullness of the purpose of our creation.

The purpose for creating mankind is revealed in *Genesis*. Under the authority of God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made men from the dust of the ground. Male and female, and in God's image, He made them. Thus, Adam and Eve were created to live eternally on this earth in the image of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

What does being in the image of God in mind and heart look like? As God is fully love, it must be the reflection of God's love first and foremost. What does such love entail? Surely it incorporates all the aspects of what the apostle Paul described in *1 Corinthians 13: 4-7*. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. These attributes can be portrayed in kingly and priestly roles. So, Adam and Eve in a kingly and priestly role were to reflect the love of God on earth.

For Adam and Eve to be able to fully reflect God, they needed to be provided with the choice between right and wrong, and good and evil. They were to uphold love and righteousness and refrain from selfishness and evil. To make this choice possible, God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, where the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil were. God said to them, of all the trees in the garden you may freely eat, but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die, and you shall return to the ground from which you are made, for dust you are and to dust you shall return. As we know under the influence of Satan, Adam and Eve did eat from that Tree. Satan deceived Eve. Adam, instead of trusting God and loving God above all, gave in to the temptation that Satan, through Eve, had put in front of him. Thus, through this transgression sin and death entered into them and their seed and became part of the human existence. Because of the pull to sin, all mankind has since had an inner struggle between good and evil. Adam and Eve and their offspring were no longer able to properly reflect the purpose of their creation, to eternally be in the image and likeness of God. Their lives now not only reflected a mixture of good and sin but ultimately also ended in death as God had foretold and as scripture also says; In Adam we all die. *1 Corinthians 15-22*

A curse had fallen on all mankind. The only beings who could fully reverse the curse on every human being were God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. Because God the Father and Jesus Christ are fully love, they desired to do whatever was necessary to redeem mankind from their curse. They covenanted a great redemptive plan for mankind in four progressive covenants. The feasts of the Lord celebrate the step-by-step application of this awesome redemptive plan as portrayed in four covenants.

Many readers will be familiar with the feasts of the Lord. How these four great covenants together show



| Photo: Shutterstock

the covenantal promises to fully reverse man's curse, is not so well understood. So, let's go and look at the covenants. But just before we do, let us reflect on what is a covenant.

A covenant is an agreement between people, or between man and God, to be upheld for as long as it is in place. A covenant is never to be taken lightly, and for that reason, it is sometimes called a solemn agreement. Some covenants are ratified with blood. Three of the four great covenants that we are going to discuss were ratified in this way.

There is another point that is very important to understand and that is, that these covenants were made with Israel. God elected Abraham and His descendants to bring forth the Son of God as the Son of Man. Through the covenants with Israel, including the Abrahamic covenantal promise to Abraham that through his seed all nations of the earth will be blessed, God's plan of redemption finds its fulfillment. (The word *seed* can be singular or plural and, in this case, it is both). Let us now go to two of the four great covenants and see what they are.

### The Abrahamic Covenant, The Covenant of Promise

*Genesis 17: 1-11* "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.' Abram fell on his face: and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you. You shall be a father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram, your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. I will establish My covenant as **an everlasting covenant** between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God, and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give to you, and to your descendants after you and I will be their God. Then God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep. Every male child among you shall be circumcised as a token of this covenant.'"

*Genesis 22:18* "Through your seed all nations on earth will be blessed."

In this eternal covenant, God covenanted that Abraham would have countless offspring that nations and kings would come forth from him and God would be their God. In his descendants all nations on earth would be blessed.

The land of Canaan was also covenanted as an everlasting possession for the descendants of Abraham.

**All of these promises are eternal.**

Let us now see, how God used the additional three covenants to fulfil the Abrahamic covenantal promises.

### The Covenant Mediated Through Moses (The Mosaic Covenant)

For Israel to be a nation under God they needed land and laws to live by. So, God instructed Moses to take the Israelites from Egypt, where they had resided because of famine, into their promised land, Canaan. On their way, God at Mount Sinai gave Israel His Law written on tables of stone. The apostle Paul describes this Law as being holy, just, good, and spiritual. *Romans 7-12*. "The Law reflects the righteousness of God." Alongside this Law of conduct, God also provided a system to deal with the people's transgressions. This system reflected the grace of God. Israel unitedly promised to fulfil the will of God and walk according to His ways. As we know, they walked contrary to God's will and have borne the bitter fruits of their transgressions. Why did Israel walk away from God, who was prepared to be in their midst and who was prepared to lead them, provide for them, bless them, and protect them?

It was because the majority of the people followed their hearts and minds, into sinful ways far from God and His ways. Thus, it was not a matter of knowledge of right or wrong but a matter of the will being pulled down by sin. Paul clearly describes this in the book of *Romans Chapters 7 and 8*. The Law of God, mediated through Moses, described the way to right living, blessings, and peace, but also clearly revealed, that it was not in the heart and mind of the Israelites to uphold it. The nation was clearly under the curse of sin and death and needed redemption.

The last two Covenants will be published in our December issue.



# Who are the Sheep and the Goats?

## ■ Yaakov Ben Yehoshua

Spiritual Leader | Beth Melekh International

The parable of the sheep and the goats begins, “And when the Son of Man comes in His glory (*Matthew 25:31*). The prophet Daniel tells us that the Son of Man is the *Messiah* who will have dominion over all people as King of a Kingdom that will never pass away (*Daniel 7:13-14*).

By using the title Son of Man, *Yeshua* (Jesus) knew that His Jewish listeners would identify it as a reference to the coming *Messiah* (*Mark 14:62-64*). *Yeshua* uses this title a number of times in referencing His second coming (*Mark 8:31; Mark 14:62; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev 19:11-16*).

In *Matthew 24:30-31* *Yeshua* quotes two key passages from the *TaNakh* (OT). First, *Zechariah 12:10-14*, which refers to the day when the people of Israel (chosen, empirical, ethnic, religious, *not the Church*) will mourn over God Whom they have pierced as they would mourn over a firstborn son (*John 19:37*). Second, *Daniel 7:13*, thus affirming His status as the Son of Man and the One who will gather Israel (empirical, ethnic), the elect, from the corners of the earth. This event happens prior to the separating of the nations in the parable of the sheep and the goats.

**We don't act righteously in order to win His approval, on the contrary, we act righteously because we have His approval.**

The calling and ingathering of Israel, the elect, happens prior to the gathering together of the nations. Why is this? It's because judgement comes first to the Jews and also to the *goyim* (nations) (*Romans 2:9*).

*Matthew 25:32* reads, “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

Although Israel is a nation, she is not included here. As we see from the context of this portion of Matthew's gospel, the *elect* people of Israel have already been gathered (*Daniel 7:13*) prior to this scene in the parable of the Sheep and Goats. *Yeshua* indicates in *verse 40* that the righteous acts of the sheep have been done to His “brothers and sisters”, fellow Jews. Israel (empirical, ethnic) is not part of the gathering of nations at the start of the parable.

Throughout the Bible, whenever God speaks to chosen, ethnic Israel (an ethnic noun) through His prophets concerning the nations, He is distinguishing the nations from Israel,

the Jewish people. Therefore, in this parable *Yeshua's* Jewish listeners understand that He is *not* including them in the gathering of the nations, whom they understand to be everyone other than Israel.

Sheep and goats are used as an example much like that of the wheat and the tares (*Matthew 13:24-30*). Anyone who has seen a picture of wheat and tares growing together will agree that it's very difficult to determine one from the other. The same is true of the varieties of sheep and goats herded in the land of Israel and throughout the Middle East. The point is that it is the farmer or the shepherd alone who is best equipped to identify one from the other.

Read *Matthew 25:33*: The symbolism here is simple, the right hand is the hand of strength, progeny, righteousness and power; whereas the left hand is a symbol of weakness, subjugation, loss and condemnation.

Read *Matthew 25:34*: Who are these sheep? They are ‘blessed of the Father’ and have been chosen to be His children ‘from before the creation of the world.’ They will ‘inherit the kingdom’, *Olam haba* (world to come), and everlasting life.

We know that no one can come to the Father except through the Son (*Yeshua*)

(*John 14:6*). We also know that followers of *Yeshua* are chosen from the foundation of the world (*Ephesians 1:4*). In addition, we know that those who have accepted *Messiah* have been promised eternal life (*John 3, 4*). Therefore, the sheep are Gentile disciples of *Yeshua*, the Gentile component of the Church (*Ecclesia: Body of Believers*). Put simply, the sheep of this parable are Gentile Christians who, as a result of their love for *Yeshua*, have, by His nature, acted properly toward His ethnic brothers and sisters, the Jewish people.

Read *Matthew 25:35-39*. Notice that the sheep are unaware of their many acts of righteousness. Why? Because as believers in *Yeshua*, we act from His life in us rather than from our fallen nature. We don't act righteously in order to win His approval. On the contrary, we act righteously because we have His approval. Thus, we act from Him and in Him as lovers of His ethnic brothers and sisters, the Jewish people. Notice that this requires action. When the Jewish people are attacked and



| Photo: Yaakov Ben Yehoshua

Christians fail to act to protect them, side with the enemies of Israel, or remain neutral, they prove themselves either to be grieving the Holy Spirit and in danger of discipline or devoid of the Spirit of God's Son. This will require repentance, or the result will be everlasting torment for those who act this way.

We should take great comfort in the fact that this parable does not threaten our eternal security, rather it shows us that we need not keep an account of righteous deeds or manufacture deeds of our own. Rather, we should simply live according to the Spirit of *Messiah* in us, our deeds being of Him rather than of our sin nature.

Read *Matthew 25:40*: It is true that we should act in righteousness toward all human beings. However this parable does not teach this as a general principle, rather it is addressing the specific acts of righteousness that believers who live among the nations perform toward the Jewish people.

Some will say, “The brethren Jesus (*Yeshua*) refers to here are all believers, because He says elsewhere, “Those who do the will of my Father in heaven are my mother and brothers” (*Matthew 12:46-50*). However, here *Yeshua* makes a clear distinction between those who act righteously (the sheep) and those who have been the recipients of that action (His brothers and sisters), therefore the sheep are the believers that act righteously toward the ‘brothers and sisters’ of *Yeshua*. In the context of this parable, the ‘brothers and sisters’ are Israel, the Jews, *Yeshua's* brothers and sisters by blood lineage, the ethnic progeny of Jacob the Patriarch, and *not* all Christians.

Read *Matthew 25:41-46*: This is one of

many times that eternal punishment is spoken of in the Bible. The Greek *aionion* literally, figuratively, metaphorically and allegorically means forever, perpetual, eternal and everlasting. That punishment is not hades or hell (*Sheol*) but the eternal fire that comes after the final judgement (*Revelation 20:14-15*).

We note that the unrighteous (goats) are as surprised as their counterparts. They call ‘*Yeshua Kurios, Lord*’, and are therefore Gentile people who believe they are Christians but are not.

How might *Yeshua* answer the modern Christian who asks, “Lord, when did we not help You?”

“When I was held hostage in Gaza, and you fed My enemies while leaving Me to be abused and murdered. When you didn't stand up for Me, while the nations verbally abused Me, and the majority of media sided against Me. When you rallied against Me in the streets and supported social justice NGOs that opposed My safety and My right to self-defence. When you hid beneath the guise of open-minded liberalism while I was bombed, stabbed and attacked from every side. When you posted your support of the genocidal cry of the Palestinian majority, who chant for My annihilation, saying, “From the River to the Sea Palestine will be free (of Jews)”, echoing the Nazi final solution. When you remained neutral, falsely claiming moral equity between Me and My enemies. People who rape Jewish women, lynch and murder Jewish civilians, cut off the heads of Jewish infants. When you denied My legitimate God-given right to live unharassed in the ancestral homeland of My tribe. That's when you rejected Me.”



## Settling the Land—Part 3

### ■ Simon Smelt

Retired Economist

The 1922 League of Nations Mandate to Britain was to establish “a homeland for the Jewish people” with the proviso that “nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” Britain separated Transjordan (now Jordan) from the Mandate territories, which instead became ‘Jew-free’.

The Land had enjoyed strong economic growth from the late 19th century onward, continuing into the Mandate period. Jewish immigration and capital investment, built on the old *Yishuv* of established Jewish settlements, provided the dynamism that broke centuries of neglect, depopulation, and rent extraction. Funds came through gifts from rich families, such as the Rothschilds, and charitable donations from ordinary Jews in the diaspora.

Most of the Mandate’s tax revenues, including land taxes, were raised from the Jewish community (four times more than from the Arabs by 1944), demonstrating that it was Jewish businesses and farms that were lifting Palestine from a subsistence economy. The electricity companies and bus lines were set up and run by Jews. Among the many spill-over benefits was the expansion of Arab citrus growing; the 1937 Peel Commission observed that this was substantially due to Jewish capital and know-how.

In 1914, Palestine’s population was 600,000 to 800,000, with 10% Jews. By 1944 it was recorded at 1.7 million, with 30% Jews. From 1919 to 1941, Jewish immigration averaged some 15,000/year, peaking in 1935 at 66,000. Less than 1,000/year Arab immigrants were officially recorded. Such numbers capture only a small fraction of actual movement. Palestine’s economy was growing far ahead of its neighbours and there were no physical, military, cultural or language barriers to Arab immigration. People could just walk across. By contrast, European Jews arrived by sea in ships through official channels. The 1930 Hope-Simpson Commission said the British practice of ignoring uncontrolled illegal Arab immigration displaced prospective Jewish immigrants. A 1939 survey stated, “It is well known that a considerable movement of illegal immigration occurs across the borders of Palestine... No allowance has been made for illegal immigration.”

Palestine was becoming less empty. Demographic study shows that the decline in Arab farmland per capita was primarily due to Arab population growth rather than displacement by Jews. By 1930 Jews owned some 1.2 million *dunams* of land (roughly 12% of total arable land): 40% purchased from foreign owners, 55% from local effendi, and 5% from small holders. Properties which had been in the hands of large and medium owners were converted into communal or small holdings; this helped end the semi-feudal land regime in Palestine which had stymied investment and modernisation. The 1922 Mandate conditions required cultivatable government land to be released to Jewish settlers; instead, half was released to Arabs, and 2% to Jews.

The inflow of Jewish and Arab immigrants combined with rapid social and economic change destabilised relations between the two ethnic groups. In 1929, the Hebron massacre of Jews, (including beheadings, castration, rape, and torture) was sparked by inflammatory pamphlets issued by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al Husseini, after Jews sang “The Wall is ours!” at the Wailing Wall. The long-established Hebron community were not oppressors, but al Husseini

knew how to tap depths of hate in an insurrection that is still celebrated today. The Husseinis were a leading Arab family and he was originally appointed as Grand Mufti by the British to counterbalance offices held by a rival family. The Husseinis, like other effendi, were major sellers of land to the Jews. Similarly, Abdel Hadi, who vowed to make Palestine “a graveyard for all the Jews in the country,” had facilitated the transfer of 30,000 *dunams* of land to Jews. “Arab nationalists who agitated against Jewish immigration by day and by night sold their land to the Jews,” as one diplomat put it.

The wider 1936-1939 Arab uprising, again led by al Husseini, was a reaction to a surge in Jewish immigration. Some 500 Jews and 250 British troops and police were killed; Arab fatalities exceeded 5,000, many the victims of Arab mobs. One Arab leader said, “Our rebellion has become a rebellion against the villages and not against the Government or the Jews.” However, the uprising was successful in cementing al Husseini’s position and caused the British to severely curb further Jewish immigration. They also allowed Jewish self-defence groups to train and arm. Meantime, with the tightening of the quota for Jewish immigrants, the Royal Navy intercepted illegal shipping.

The uprising was Arab and Islamic, not the revolt of a distinct Palestinian people. During the Mandate period, Jews, Arabs and the British indifferently used the term ‘Palestinian’ for local residents; Jews received Palestinian citizenship, the English language Jewish newspaper was *The Palestine Post*, etc. Radical Abdul-Hadi insisted to the Peel Commission “**There is no such country as Palestine. ‘Palestine’ is a term the Zionists invented.**” **In 1948, the Arab Liberation Army was unable to enlist many Palestinians; 90% were foreign volunteers. The invading Arab armies in 1948 intended to carve up the territory, not establish a Palestinian state. Only after the 1967 war was the term ‘the Palestinian people’ taken up. Zuhair Muhsin, military commander of the PLO, said “There is no such thing as a Palestinian people... the existence of a separate Palestinian identity serves only tactical purposes.”**

Post WW2, suggestions were made to ship Jewish refugees to Palestine. This later furnished the narrative that Europe dumped its ‘Jewish problem’ on the Arabs. In practice, Britain’s navy blockaded Palestine. Over 100,000 Jewish immigrants attempted to enter by sea. 1,600 drowned, and 50,000 were held by the British in concentration camps in Cyprus; many were turned back, and a few thousand succeeded. Bitter confrontations between British forces and Jewish insurgents in Palestine led to mutual executions of prisoners and the bombing of the British HQ in Jerusalem with over 90 deaths.

This was no cosy arrangement between Zionism and the British Empire. Senior British officials supported the Arab cause. Lt General Evelyn Barker, regional commander 1946-47, passed military secrets to his Arab mistress and said he loathed the Jews. His policing reflected his views. Lt General John Glubb formed Jordan’s Arab Legion and led them against Israel in the 1948-49 war.

The 1947 UN Commission’s plan for the Jewish state calculated boundaries based on demographics: its land borders were virtually indefensible and the Arabs retained most of the agricultural land. The plan was accepted by the Jewish side, not by the Arabs. Zionist leaders expressed their support for equal rights and for Arab participation in the new state. Israeli coins and stamps were inscribed in both Hebrew and Arabic. By contrast,



Shlomo Kramer in a British Mandate police uniform. | Photo: PikiWiki



Armoured bus used to protect against Arab attacks. | Photo: PikiWiki



Watchman of Jewish settlement (1930s). | Photo: Simon Smelt

the Arab League proclaimed “a war of annihilation.” With the British withdrawal and the invasion of Arab armies, the civil war turned into the 1948-49 War of Independence. The Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem was captured by Jordan and all Jews were expelled. An Arab commander commented “For the first time in 1,000 years, not a single Jew remains in the Jewish Quarter. Not a single building remains intact. This makes the Jews’ return here impossible.”

In the confusion, Jewish soldiers expelled Arab locals from their homes where heavy fighting was expected, while Golda Meir pleaded with Arabs in the North to stay. Massacres and violations occurred on both sides in the war but were not widespread. Arab leaders promulgated wild reports of Jewish atrocities, causing panic, and urged Arab residents to evacuate, giving a clear path for their armies. Over 500,000 Arabs fled Israel. In the wake of the war, over 500,000 Jews were expelled or fled from Arab countries to Israel, more going elsewhere. Thus, it was Arab nationalism—not European colonialism—that greatly reduced the Arab population and boosted the Jewish population of Israel.

Part 4 will summarize our findings.



# Jews in Muslim Lands—North—Part 4

## ■ Joanna Moss

In the last article (West) we looked at the experience of Magrebi Jews of North Africa. We saw how vastly different the colonial experience of the French, Italian and Spanish powers and WW2 forces made to the Jewish communities and their choice of final destination once forced to leave.

Now we turn to the North to the countries of Lebanon, Syria and Turkey including the ancient cities of Damascus and Aleppo in Syria and Istanbul in Turkey. The Ottoman Empire was kind to Jews overall. Many *Sephardic* Jews forced out of the Iberian Peninsula were invited to live in major cities across the Empire centred in Istanbul. Lebanon and Syria were part of the French Mandate given by the League of Nations at the same time as the British Mandate for Palestine based on colonial and ancient connections. Today only Jews remain in Turkey.

### Syrian Jewry's Proud Heritage

Syrian Jews form such an ancient community they are even mentioned in the Bible. The three main communities were based in Aleppo, Damascus and a smaller one in Qamishi near the Turkish border. The first two maintained close connections with Israel and were very religious regarding themselves as adjacent in importance to Jerusalem and as a centre of scholarship. Scholars translated the *Torah* into Arabic. Syrian Jewry is comprised of both *Mizrahi* Jews called *Musta'arabi* in Syria and *Sephardi* formed when Jews escaped the Iberian Peninsula from 1492 onwards. There was also an ancient small community of Kurdish Jews. Some Italian Jews arrived in the 18th and 19th centuries.

**Described as Arabised Jews, they maintained their own customs, had a strong communal identity and cherished their traditions. They were integrated, but not assimilated.**

Today Syrian-descended Jews number between 175,000-275,000 and there are 115,000 in Israel (40%), 75,000-90,000 in the USA and 40,000 in Argentina with smaller communities in the UK, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Panama *et al.*

Many Syrian Jews were merchants and traders moving goods across ancient overland trade routes. This all changed when the Suez Canal was opened up in 1869 and some Jews relocated to Cairo. It marked the beginning of a long exodus as both Aleppo and Damascus declined in importance. Some Jews took the opportunity to migrate to Western countries such as the UK and USA as well as Latin America and this exodus

continued right up until WWI. But the poor remained. The Mandate lasted from 1923-46 followed by Independence. Then came the 1947 UN Israel vote and a pogrom broke out killing many Jews and the Great Synagogue of Aleppo was burnt down including the famous Aleppo Codex, a catastrophe. From 1949-71 there were multiple coups and Jews faced heavy restrictions including being forbidden to get a driver's licence, travel and work in the government and most importantly, leave the country, especially for Israel. Many left illegally but faced torture if they were discovered and families bore the brunt. In the few respite period windows, Jews could leave, but they had to leave all their possessions behind. Life became increasingly unbearable.

In 1973, a Canadian widow called Judy Feld Carr began a risky, clandestine mission over 28 years to support the community and rescue 3,228 of the remaining Syrian Jews mainly through bribery, some were even in prison. In 1992, 4,000 Jews were allowed to leave as long as they didn't go to Israel. Many went to Brooklyn, New York, to join their families. Then in 2016, the last Jews of Aleppo were rescued.

Today the World Centre for Aleppo Jewry stands in Tel Aviv as a testimony to the once-great community. Syrian Jewish hymns and religious traditions are still practiced in the synagogues including a *Hannukiah* with two *shamesh* candles, one for *Sephardic* Judaism. The large, diversity of Syrian food can be found across Israel.

### Lebanese Arabised Jews

Jews were one of 23 minority groups in cosmopolitan Lebanon. The community

was never large, perhaps as large as 20,000, but probably around 14,000 centred in Beirut. They were Lebanese first and Jews second and mixed freely with the other groups, but lived in a communal area. Described as Arabised Jews, they maintained their own customs, had a strong communal identity and cherished their traditions. They were integrated, but not assimilated.

Foreign Jews began arriving in Lebanon in 1809 from Akko, then Greece and North Africa from 1837 followed by Syrian Jews and those from Iran and Iraq came 1900-1955 as business and trade opportunities opened up.



Edirne Grand Synagogue on the European side of the Bosphorus strait, is Turkey's largest synagogue and the third largest in Europe reflecting the significant historic size of Turkish Jewry. | Shutterstock

Under the French Mandate Jews were seen as a useful foil to Arab Nationalism, but the Lebanese Christians saw them as an impediment to independence. Jews were becoming squeezed. Post-1948, refugee Jews arrived in Lebanon from Syria and Iraq, but their stay was short-lived. Unlike other countries in the region, the Jewish population increased after Israel's independence.

The first civil war began in 1958; the Jews were safe but rattled. But then the Arab-Israeli wars created a huge, ongoing problem for them. In the 50s there were 7,000 Jews in Beirut. However, most fled in 1967 to escape sectarian violence to the USA, France and Canada. Next came the Second Civil War. In the 1980s the kidnapping of prominent Jews caused more to leave. By the time of the First Lebanon War in 1982, they were a hidden community. Today their community is lost.

### Prosperous Turkish Jews

The ancient Turkish Jewish community dates back to the time of Jesus. Numbers were bolstered by the arrival of the *Sephardic* Jews in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, who went on to shape and dominate the community centred in Istanbul. As the Turks were not interested in business, the Jews had free reign to develop commerce and use their global connections. This gave them enormous power and the status as the number one minority group. A head count tax was imposed. Yes, they faced restrictions like other minorities; such as being forbidden to serve in the military, but they were not onerous generally. By the 18th and 19th centuries Turkish Jewish business power was declining, being superseded by the Greeks. In 1923 the Turkish Republic was formed in the aftermath of the

WWI loss. It was then that wealthy Jews sought to find greener pastures elsewhere.

### Poorer Jews Forced Out

Things were changing for the Jews. 1934 brought the first pogrom followed by the 1942 wealth tax, so onerous, that many Jews were forced to flee the country. Others were put into camps when unable to pay. A total of 30,000 Jews left.

Although officially neutral in WW2, some 2,500 Jews were deported to European extermination camps and the government denaturalised some Turkish Jews. In past years Turkey has made a play of the positions offered to 500-600 prominent German and Austrian Jews in the Nazi era. In reality, only about 67 came. But those that did made enormous contributions to modern Turkey. Meantime, Turkey became a transit point for European Jews heading to Palestine in the 1930s and 40s. During the period 1923-48, 7,300 Turkish Jews went to Palestine, but over 1948-51, a whopping 34,547 Jews went there amounting to 40% of the community, with 10% returning soon after. Another pogrom occurred in 1955.

Turkish Jews lead the *Sephardic* community in Israel and their use of Ladino has had a powerful effect on this community historically. Turkey was the first Muslim-majority nation to recognise Israel in 1949 and prior to Covid, about 60 flights daily connected the two nations. Trade is very significant between them, but Israeli tourism to Turkey has declined enormously since Erdogan took over. Today the Jewish community is fairly assimilated, low profile and intermarried, numbering around 14,000-20,000 based on which measurement is used.

## Recommended Viewing

### Take Three Faiths by Joanna Moss

Making a documentary centred on an evolving issue requires quick action and a great deal of cooperation once the storyline is chosen. Third party film can be used to solidify the story, but you never know what will transpire. Sometimes the significance evolves, more so when key issues such as life and death are the subject.

*Mourning in Lod* is a documentary about three families in Israel with the three monotheistic faiths interacting, illustrating how each family expresses their cultural roots as well as their religion. American documentary queen filmmaker, Sheila Nevins, found the story and chose Israeli Hilla Medalia to make it.

The Arab Christian community is a tiny one in Israel. That is why it is so unusual for an Israeli documentary to feature all three monotheistic faiths. But in *Mourning in Lod* we see them in daily life and in worship, in death and mourning and in their attitudes towards each other, forgiveness and justice. They couldn't be more different.

Set in Lod, during the riots in 2021, it shows how intertwined Jews' and Arabs' lives can be. Lod is one of five mixed cities in Israel. The opening scenes show the riots and explore the midnight death of Musa Hassuna by a 'settler' who is subsequently acquitted on trial in self-defence, as told by Musa's widow. What was he up to? The next day, Yemenite Jewish electrician Yigal Yehoshua's car is struck by a rock in revenge, and he is killed. Later, Musa's family members are arrested and held for a long period pending trial. Yigal was a customer of Hassuna's electrical store, and the families knew each other. His body is placed on life support, and his Russian wife and family decide to donate his organs as many do. By traditional Jewish custom, the body must be intact when the *Messiah* returns, so this organ donation decision is shielded from Yigal's mother. Enter the Jerusalem-based Aweis Christian family with Randa, the matriarch awaiting a kidney transplant. Randa's daughter decides they must all go to Yigal's 30-day anniversary ceremony at the Yemenite synagogue to thank the family. At the conclusion, the Arabs angrily continue crying out for justice stuck in their grievance, the Jews mourn but focus on life and marvel at the equality of mankind—a Jewish kidney in an Arab body, and the Christians give thanks to God and man.

View on Fubo TV, Paramount+ & Apple TV.

## The Word of the Lord

### ■ Benjamin Philip Director | Hineni Soup Kitchen

Dear friends, as a practising Jew and director of the NGO Hineni in Jerusalem, I would like to share with you some of my thoughts concerning the current situation in Israel today.

According to the Jewish interpretation of the Prophets, the time before the final redemption will include periods like the times of Pharaoh. In those days, the Lord said to Moses, *"Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, so that I may place these signs of Mine in his midst. And in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and [that you tell of] My signs that I placed in them, and you will know that I am the Lord."*

As predicted, the nations have hardened their hearts against Israel like Pharaoh.

Even after the brutal killings of 7 October, many nations failed to condemn this brutal attack and continue to support Iran, its proxies, and terrorist organisations, while Israel's allies are restraining Israel in its defence.

In addition, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted 140 resolutions criticising Israel over its treatment of those who want to destroy Israel. Also, the United Nations Human Rights Council has resolved almost as many resolutions condemning Israel as the rest of the world combined, followed by a series of rulings by the UN International Court of Justice.

In short, the whole world is complaining that Israel is not acting in accordance with UN resolutions and the political, moral and ethical standards of the rest of the world.

Something that has been going on since Biblical times, whereby Israel has always been accused of acting extremely different, beginning with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who refused to take part in the worldwide ancient cultures of idolatry, child sacrifice, and other pagan practices.

Instead, Jews worshipped only one God by following His divine principles that guided them through the ancient pagan world and allowed them to survive thousands of years of oppression, expulsions, persecutions, and even a Holocaust by those same nations that are accusing Israel today.

This, while the divine principles that made us Jews so different for thousands of years, has become the basis of all major religions, nations, and modern ethical thinking worldwide, with a desire for justice, dignity for human life, social responsibilities, and peace.

Those values are the true Jewish legacy of contribution to those same pagan nations that have tried to destroy the Jewish people generation after generation for thousands of years and continue accusing Israel until today. Those nations are witnessing the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecies of the Jews returning to their promised land, from where they are again making significant contributions to the world, including its enemies, through its developing of world-changing technologies, innovating high-tech sector, advancement in science, medicine, agriculture, energy, communications, etc.

Despite these significant contributions, Israel and the Jewish people are being treated by the nations, in the same way as Pharaoh did in his time, confusing

many people in Israel and in Jewish communities worldwide and leaving many Jews to think that after 2000 years, perhaps appeasement to those nations and replacing their Biblical divine principles with the code of Humanism will bring acceptance or peace.

However, remember that after God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and now also the nations, He placed His signs in their midst, in order to make a mockery of the Egyptians, and so also the nations, so that all will know 'that He is the Lord'.

*"And it shall come to pass on that day that I will make Jerusalem a stone of burden for all peoples; all who bear it shall be gashed, and all the nations of the earth shall gather about it."* Zechariah 12:3

Therefore, we Bible-believing people, Jews, and Christians worldwide, must continue reading the Bible and praying to God. Only by doing so can we gain understanding, truth, comfort, hope, and strength, allowing us to be strong and to trust God, while inspiring Jews and Christians who may otherwise assimilate under the banner of 'Humanism'. Bible reading and prayer will remind them that God is testing us all with a world not unlike that of Noah and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Only our return to God and living by His divine principles can bring salvation and restore our world to its true divine purpose. Then (*Mica 4:2*) many nations shall go, and they shall say, "Come, let us go up to the Lord's mount and to the house of the God of Jacob, and let Him teach us of His ways, and we will go in His paths," for out of Zion shall the *Torah* come forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

These are some thoughts of a simple Jew who lives in Jerusalem.

## Facts Speak

### Hamas in their Own Words

**Hamas is a terrorist organisation driven by genocidal racism against Jews. Their goal is to destroy Israel. Don't believe us? Take their word for it:**

- "Now Hamas will discuss when we will wipe out Israel!" — *Yahya Sinwar, Hamas leader*
- "We must attack every Jew on planet Earth! We must slaughter and kill them." — *Fathi Hammad, Senior Hamas official*
- "For the Palestinian people, death has become an industry... This is why they have formed human shields of the women, the children, the elderly, and the *mujahideen*, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine. It is as if they were saying to the Zionist enemy: 'We desire death like you desire life.'" — *Fathi Hammad, Senior Hamas Official*
- "The Israelis are known to love life. We, on the other hand, sacrifice ourselves. We consider our dead to be martyrs." — *Ali Baraka, Senior Hamas Official*

- "Jews are the vilest and most despicable nation in history." — *Marwan Abu Ras, Hamas official*
- "Oh Allah, bring annihilation upon the Jews." — *Sheikh Dr Hamad Al-Regeb, Hamas official*
- "We will take down the border and tear out their hearts from their bodies." — *Yahya Sinwar, Hamas leader*
- "Hamas has just one 'no'—no to the existence of Israel." — *Osama Hamdan, Senior Hamas official*
- The October 7th massacre, "is just the first time, and there will be a second, a third, a fourth, because we have the determination, the resolve, and the capabilities to fight... The existence of Israel is illogical." — *Ghazi Hamad, Hamas official*
- "October 7th paved a wide highway towards the removal of Israel" — *Khaled Meshaal, Hamas leader*

**Share these quotes with anyone who thinks Hamas is massacring Israeli civilians to 'resist' any specific Israeli policy or action.**

# Believing Without Israel

## One New Man—Part 13

### ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

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

Paul continues his argument in his letter to the Ephesians, saying: *“That He might create the two in Himself into one new man, and so make peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, on which He killed enmity. And at His coming He proclaimed peace through the Gospel to you who were far off, and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. So you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens of the saints and household members of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Jesus Christ Himself is the cornerstone”* (Ephesians 2:14-20). Here Paul speaks of two becoming ‘one new man’, and of becoming ‘fellow citizens of the saints’. Surely that sounds like two becoming one now. Through Him, both have access to the Father. Surely you would say that the expression ‘enlargement theology’ would apply here. So how does that apply precisely?



| Photo: Flash90

**We have previously seen that all Israel will be saved because its Redeemer too will come from Zion. And that is Jesus Christ.**

With the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Christian church was added alongside Israel. Messianic Jews (Jews who believe Jesus is the *Messiah*), together with Christians from the nations, now form a new body: the church, the congregation, or the Body of Christ. All other Jews, and that is the vast majority (also called the ‘Israel according to the flesh’), are excluded. Messianic Jews then actually have a dual position: by their faith in Jesus they belong to the Body of Christ, and by their being Jews they also belong to the people of Israel. Those who adhere to enlargement or fulfilment theology now say that only Messianic Jews still belong to God’s (new) people. All other Jews are excluded and can only be saved through faith in Jesus.

Israel as God’s eternal covenant people, over whom God will always have mercy again, has then effectively been dismissed. The mistake made here is to assume that with the coming of the Christian church, Israel would have been finished. The age-old classical doctrine of replacement is apparently deeply embedded in our thinking and hard to dispel. Israel and the church both exist before the face of God. Jews do not transfer to the Christian church. No, on the contrary, we have become fellow citizens of the saints (the Jewish people). Although there remains a difference between a wild branch and a natural branch. We have previously seen that all Israel will be saved because its Redeemer too will come from Zion. And that is Jesus Christ.

#### Veil Removed

Most Jews cannot (yet) recognise that Jesus is the Messiah. Paul says there is a partial hardening regarding Jesus over the Jewish people. In several passages in the Bible, we read that this veil or hardening is something that is part of God’s plan in a sense that is unfathomable to us. One day, that veil will be removed—for the salvation of Israel itself. The prophet Zechariah also speaks of this: *“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn*

*for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn”* (Zechariah 12:10). It is particularly impressive to note here that the Spirit which God will soon pour out on His people will not be one of punishment or judgment, but a Spirit of grace and prayers. What a glorious prospect for Israel. And even recorded centuries before Christ.

#### Our Christian Veil

We make a big mistake if we think that only the Jewish people have a veil. Replacement theology has brought a huge blanket over Christianity over the centuries and up to the present day. Almost no church or congregation is exempt from it. We need our eyes to be opened and the veil over God’s plan of salvation with Israel to be removed. By the way, the Bible also speaks very strikingly about our veil:

*“The Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine. And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations.”* (Isaiah 25:6-7). Soon, when the Kingdom comes, at the great wedding supper, the Lord will remove the veil that still covers us as nations. Then we will witness fully what we do not yet see. What a great prospect.

### A Father in Heaven

In this series, we explore how the Lord’s Prayer is embedded in contemporary Jewish faith.

Jesus reminds His disciples of the most intimate relationship God has with Israel. Israel knows God as Father. This is how God made Himself known when Israel was in bondage in Egypt. *“My son, My firstborn is Israel”* (Exodus 4:22). God himself reminds Israel of this: *“Out of Egypt I have called My son”* (Hosea 11:1). And in *Deuteronomy 14:1*, Moses tells Israel, *“You are the sons of the Lord your God.”*

In other words, God’s fatherhood points to His love for His people, whom He delivered from slavery.

In Jewish prayers, God is frequently addressed as Father. That was true then and it is still true today. Even the early rabbis in the *Talmud* taught that you should turn your heart to your Father in Heaven.

In Jewish prayers, the composition ‘Our Father, our King’ often appears, as for example in the prayers of *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year). In these prayers, God’s love and God’s care for our existence is professed. God is a Father who knows all our needs. And to cite another contemporary example, the prayer for the State of Israel begins with the words *“Our Father in Heaven, Rock of Israel and her Deliverer.”*

Heaven, of course, is the dwelling place of God. By New Testament times, it had even become a

designation for God because then, as today, the Jews did not pronounce the Name of God. Hence when Matthew is talking about the Kingdom of Heaven, he always means nothing but the Kingdom of God, God’s rule in heaven and on earth.

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray: our Father. When you pray, you are never alone. You pray in common with others, even if you pray in your inner room (see *Matthew 6:6*). As noted before, God is Israel’s Father. When Jesus teaches His twelve disciples to pray to God in this way, it is also first and foremost a prayer of Israel. So when we pray this prayer, we pray with Israel, with trepidation, in wonder and in gratitude for His grace.

## Jesus Christ—Coming to Stay A Look at Zechariah 14

### ■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

*“Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10*

We recite this line every time we say the Lord’s Prayer. Do we understand what it means? We are asking... and declaring... that God’s kingdom is coming to earth, and that God’s will can override the will and ways of temporal earthly rulers. Just like it is in heaven.

Yet you can’t have a kingdom without a king. So in praying for the ‘kingdom to come,’ we are also implicitly asking for the Lord to come, too. Finally, you have to have a capital headquarters for the king and kingdom. Without question, it can be only one place: Jerusalem, the City of David, the City of God, and the City of the Great King (*Psalms 48:2; Matthew 5:35*).

Scripture is clear that God is coming to the earth. *Psalms 96:13: “Let all creation rejoice before the Lord: for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.”* God is going to judge the earth but not from His heavenly throne. He is coming down and judging earth from earth. See also *Psalms 98:9*.

### “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” Zechariah 14:2

While God is a master delegator, using angels and anointed people to carry out His will, Scripture teaches that God is personally coming to earth to fight, win, judge, and reign. His coming is more than a courtesy call; He is coming to stay.

One potent passage of Scripture about the personal return of the Lord to earth is found in *Zechariah 14*. A parallel passage is *Revelation 19*, where the ‘coming of the Lord’ equates to ‘the coming of Christ.’ If you recall, in *Zechariah 12*, God would make Jerusalem a ‘cup of trembling’ to the surrounding nations and a ‘burdensome stone’ for all people. A humble city of stone at the fringe of the Persian empire during Zechariah’s day, he foresaw 2,500 years ago that the holy city would become an international obsession. Modern history has borne this out.

*Zechariah 14* starts with the phrase: *“Behold, the day of the Lord comes” (14:1)*. This special day represents the transition from the rule of man to the reign of God, culminating in the Lord’s coming to earth. Jerusalem will be the centrepiece.

*“For I will gather all nations against*



Sunset sky over fields of the Biblical Ajalon Valley, mentioned in *Joshua 10*. | Photo: Shutterstock

*Jerusalem to battle” (14:2)*. Just as God put a hook in the jaw of Gog and brought him forth to his swift demise (*Ezekiel 38:4*), so the Lord will gather the nations to battle against Jerusalem, and it will be their undoing. The continuous and growing global antagonism—and antisemitism—against modern Israel will turn into military action. It will be a bloodbath.

*“Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (14:3)*. This is a remarkable scenario: first, the Lord will gather the nations to attack Jerusalem, which they do; then, He personally comes down and fights against those nations. The Lord knows how to fight and win. During the Israelite conquests of Canaan under Joshua, the Lord promised to be with them, go before them, and fight on their behalf. On the day that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still at Gibeon and the moon over the valley of Ajalon, it says in *Joshua 10:14: “And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel.”* God promises to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (*12:9*).

- Could it be that preceding the divine intervention in the battle for Jerusalem, the people of the city will receive the spirit of grace and supplications, look upon Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him as their only son (*12:10*)?
- Could this be the time Jesus foretold that Jerusalem would not see Him again

until it said *“Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39)?*

- Is this the time that *“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:26; Isaiah 59:20)?*

Then the most amazing things happen. After the Lord wins the battle for Jerusalem:

- He makes a victory ascent on the Mount of Olives, just east of the Old City. Great topographical changes occur: the mountain splits in two (*14:4*)
- From the Mount, living water flows westward to the Mediterranean and eastward to the Dead Sea (*14:8*).
- People will flee like in the aftermath of the great earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, *“and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with You” (14:5)*.
- It shall be a unique day, not the normal day and night cycle, for light will shine in the evening (*14:6-7*).

Then, the most important event happens. It is the answer to all our prayers, hopes, longing, and desires. *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever” Revelation 11:15*. No more crime, corruption, royal commissions, heavy tax burden, abuse of power, unrighteous rule. The Lord’s prayer has been answered, because:

*“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.” (14:9)*

God the King and His kingdom have come... to stay.

### Biblical Roots By David Nekrutman

#### Hineni

Since 7 October, I have been in triage mode in providing protective equipment to our first responders, humanitarian assistance to the survivors, and rebuilding some of the *kibbutzim* near the Gaza border. Christians for Israel has been a vital partner in these endeavours.

It was important for me, from the outset, that the communities who personally went through the worst tragedy since the Holocaust and the people protecting the country know that Jews and Christians, working together, have helped them. At this moment, we are bringing the residents of Kibbutz Kerem Shalom back home after living in hotels and temporary housing for nearly a year.

In grappling with why the Bible provided all the intricacies in building the Tabernacle, Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory provided an incredible revelational insight—*“It is what we do for God that transforms us.”* The building of the Tabernacle demonstrated the willingness of a nation to provide their generosity and skill. No one complained! In fact, the skilled workers said to Moses, *“The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done” (Exodus 36:5)*.

Until the directive of building the Tabernacle, every crisis was addressed by a miracle or Moses. When a perceived calamity hit the nation, they would rely on a miracle or their leader. When the predicament was not immediately addressed, they would complain. It took a building project to bring a nation together and glorify Him.

From a biblical perspective, we need to see ourselves as co-architects, under the sovereignty of God, in creating a just nation. The elaboration of the intricacies in the construction of the Tabernacle shows us that everything counts when we are building together.

In the context of rebuilding after 7 October, Rabbi Sacks’ revelational nugget was brought to life each day. Jews and Christians viewed themselves as co-architects in this ‘construction project.’ Socks, battery chargers, flashlights, garbage cans, various kitchen appliances, medical gear, farming equipment, portable toilets and showers and even kosher beef jerky were just some of the items that were needed since the beginning of the war. Nothing was too small or insignificant for people to help with the cause.

We will probably never know all the stories of individuals who helped Israel during this time. Thank God, He has the eternal memory to record these accounts. What I continue to witness every day is His spirit moving in people and their willingness to answer the call of what Abraham once said to God—*Hineni* (here I am).

# Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

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

Israel has three special celebration times in the autumn: New Year, the *Day of Atonement* (Yom Kippur) and the *Feast of Tabernacles* (Sukkot). *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year) derives from the Biblical 'day of the trumpet blast' (*Leviticus 23:24*), which heralds the seventh month. So why New Year? Because then is the beginning of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. In these two years, significant actions take place benefitting personal relationships within Jewish communities. The New Year also marks the beginning of the liturgical year (the festive calendar) beginning in spring with the month of *Nisan*, in which *Passover* falls.

New Year's Day is a solemn day, the day of divine judgement, and the beginning of ten days of repentance, during which divine judgement can still be reversed. *Yom Kippur* is the day when judgment becomes final. However, Israel knows that God is not only righteous but also merciful and hears our prayer. The long-drawn *shofar* blast with which *Yom Kippur* is concluded sounds like the trumpet of redemption. That is why *Yom Kippur* is a holy holiday, even though it is a full day of fasting with prayers that are full of awareness of guilt and shortcomings.

Immediately after *Yom Kippur*, preparations begin for *Sukkot*, which begins four days later in the evening. A tabernacle is built as a meagre shelter for a week: for seven days, you leave the comforts of your home behind and sit in the tabernacle, with only a canopy over your head, through which you can see the sky. This recalls Israel's journey through the desert because there man lived in utter dependence on God. When the apostle Paul speaks of the earthly tent (*2 Corinthians 5*), we are reminded of the tabernacle.

But *Sukkot* is not a sombre and subdued feast. On the contrary it is full of exuberant joy. There is a Biblical



Jewish children learning about the customs of *Sukkot* at a kindergarten. | Photo: Yossi Aloni/Flash90

command for this feast (*Deuteronomy 16:14-15*). Like the other two pilgrimage festivals, *Passover* and *Shavuot*, *Sukkot* is also originally linked to the harvest. In Israel, this is the conclusion of the season of fruit and especially grape harvests. The winter season begins when the rains fall.

It is remarkable that the feasts of autumn are not reflected on the Christian calendar. We celebrate *Easter* and *Pentecost*, which correspond to *Passover* and *Shavuot*. But *Sukkot*, the third major pilgrimage feast, seems to have disappeared from the church. Yet that is precisely the feast where, from the Jewish point of view, the gentile nations come into the picture. *Zechariah 14* is read during *Sukkot* in the synagogue, where it says that the nations will go up from year to year to celebrate the *Feast of Tabernacles* in Jerusalem. A total of 70 bulls were sacrificed in the temple during the *Feast* (*Numbers 29*). Jewish tradition explains that this was for the 70 nations of the world (*Genesis 10*). So,

*Sukkot* is (also) a feast for the nations.

After all, Jesus also celebrated the *Feast of Tabernacles* (*John 7*). With *Sukkot*, we see Jesus as the Hidden One (*7:1-13*), the Teacher (*7:14-36*), the Water of Life (*7:37-53*), the Light of the world (*8:12-9:41*) and as the Good Shepherd (*10:1-21*). The names Jesus bears here all refer to Israel's journey through the desert. As Water and as Light, as Shepherd and as Teacher: this is how we see Jesus depicted during the celebration of the *Feast of Tabernacles* in Jerusalem.

The *Book of Revelation* is like a liturgy for the feasts of the autumn, from the *Day of the Trumpet* (*Revelation 1*) to *Sukkot*, where the crowd, that no one can count, stands clothed in white before the Throne with palm branches in their hands (*Revelation 7:9*). Together with Israel (*Revelation 7:1-8*), the saved nations sing the praises of the God of Israel. We learn that with the *Feast of Tabernacles*. Are we ready for this in the church yet?

## In Memoriam



### Rev Jaap de Vreugd

On 6 August 2024, Rev Jaap de Vreugd passed away. In the morning, I had read *Psalms 121* together with his wife Dicky and children and grandchildren at his bedside, and we prayed for him. *Verse 8* (KJV) particularly impressed us:

"The Lord will watch over your going out [from this life] and your coming in [into the everlasting life of the age to come] from this time forth, and even forever more."

In the afternoon he passed away, a great loss for all of us. First and foremost for his wife, children and

grandchildren, who will truly miss him.

Also for all in the worldwide family of Christians for Israel. With great wisdom and thoughtfulness, he led the work of Christians for Israel in the Netherlands with determination as chairman of the Dutch Board. Having resigned from that role he then served as editorial board member of the Dutch monthly newspaper *Israel Aktueel* and of the theological periodical *Israel and the Church*. He gave direction to the development of biblical and theological reflection on Israel and the Jewish people—inspired by a vast reading and knowledge of the literature on Israel and Judaism. His personal contacts with many Jewish friends in the Netherlands and in Israel undoubtedly contributed much to an increasing mutual respect between many believers in Christianity and the Jewish people. He impressed many in Israel when he addressed his Jewish audience in fluent modern Hebrew in his speeches.

Born in 1945 he grew up in Katwijk (a village at the shores of the North Sea)

and studied theology at the University of Utrecht from 1964 to 1969 under a famous Dutch theologian Prof Van Ruler and others. He became a Dutch reformed pastor in Haaften 1970-1975; Bodegraven 1975-1982; Amersfoort 1982-2006. In 1978 he led a trip to Israel for the first time. Dozens more would follow, but that first trip struck like lightning. Especially during the visit at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, where the Lord God awakened in his spirit and his mind a deep understanding that God will remain faithful to Israel forever and that the Jewish people of today are still God's chosen people. Overwhelmed by that understanding he then committed himself for the rest of his life, even more than before, to Israel and the Jewish people.

He became involved in practical works in Israel, first with Nes Ammim, a kind of Christian kibbutz in Israel. Then later he took on leadership roles including becoming president of HGJB, a Dutch Christian young people movement. He was involved in

various official committees of the National Church in order to enhance a better theological and biblical understanding of Israel and the Jewish people (the 'Zicht op Israël-Bezinningscomité'). He served as a member and acting president of the Reformed Council for Church-Israel Relations. From the 1990s he served as a board member and later president of Christians for Israel Netherlands. He was involved in founding our Christians for Israel branch in Germany and C4I International. There followed many speaking engagements for Israel, articles in newspapers and theological publications in the journal *Israel and the Church* (of which he was editorial chairman from the beginning). He also published a book: *The Miracle Of Israel*. He maintained many personal contacts in the Jewish community in the Netherlands and in Israel. May his memory continue to be a great blessing and inspiration to us all.

By Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer, President | Christians for Israel International



# Naomi Shemer: A Poet who Loved the Land

## ■ Krista Gerloff

Author and Theologian

The popular Israeli poet, singer and songwriter Naomi Shemer is currently being commemorated in Israel. She died 20 years ago, but her work lives on, not only in her home country, but also worldwide.

She was born Naomi Sapir on 13 July 1930. She grew up in Kibbutz Kinneret on the shores of the Sea of Galilee— whose eucalyptus groves she sings about with great feeling. Her family history is the history of the Jewish pioneers. They have been planting today's huge eucalyptus trees since 1912 and survived the battles in the War of Independence in Kibbutz Deganja.

Naomi Sapir went to school from Kibbutz Kinneret across the Jordan Bridge to Kibbutz Deganya. At the age of six, she started playing the piano that her mother had received as a gift and which was available to all the children in the kibbutz. Back then, such an instrument was something very special. She later studied at music schools in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem before returning to the kibbutz as a music and rhythm teacher. She wrote her first songs for children. In the army, she served in the cultural department of the 'Nachal' unit. Naomi then married the actor Gideon Shemer and moved to Tel Aviv with him.

For a time, she worked closely with the *Nachal* music band and other military bands. This environment was the fertile ground from which some famous Israeli singers and musicians came. Quite a few of the good old Israeli hits were written there. The sound of modern Israeli pop music makes some people long for those times.

The song '*Hoppa hey*', originally written for the central commando unit, won first prize at an international festival in Italy in 1960. However, her song '*Jerusalem of Gold*', whose title comes from old Jewish legends, is probably the best known. '*Yerushalayim shel zahav*' was heard for the first time at the 1967 Israeli song festival (*Festival haZemer veHaPizmon*) in Jerusalem, but not as one of the songs competing there. '*Yerushalayim shel zahav*'—along with four other songs—had been commissioned by Jerusalem's mayor Teddy Kollek and was intended to bridge the judges' consultation period.

When Naomi Shemer had already decided on this motif, she was overcome with doubt: "One needs to remember how grey and lacking in gold Jerusalem was then, and how one could not speak highly of it or have parades there. Like the saying "*Do not wake or rouse*" [*Song of Songs 2:7*], I was awestruck and asked myself: Of gold? Are you sure about the gold? And something answered me: Absolutely, of gold."

The festival was part of the independence celebrations. Three weeks later, during the Six-Day War, the Old City with the Temple Mount and the Western Wall fell back into Jewish hands. Under this impression, the poet added another verse to her song: "We returned to the water sources and the market, The *shofar* calls again on the Temple Mount in the Old City... And to the Dead Sea we go through Jericho again."

Later she was accused of having copied the melody. Initially, she vehemently defended herself against this accusation. It was only towards the end of her life that she wrote to her friend Gil Aldama that she had once been sung a Basque folk song. She had forgotten that. But somehow, the melody had subconsciously got stuck in her head. She later remembered this.

Obviously, this accusation has caused Naomi Shemer a

lot of thought—although it is rather natural and happens again and again that musicians are influenced and inspired by other melodies.

The Festival of Hebrew Songs, which at the time was all about originality, was first held in 1960 at the Tel Aviv Cultural Center and broadcast on Kol Israel radio and later on television. This festival existed for twenty years before it was discontinued due to Eurovision, on which Israeli singers were increasingly focusing. The originality of Hebrew songs remained for some time and was rewarded with prizes in Eurovision.

The Ein Gev festival has a much longer tradition. Kibbutz members had no opportunity to travel to the city or invite artists. Therefore, in April 1943, they began to organise a festival on-site with their own funds, at which classical music and Israeli songs were performed. Naomi Shemer presented her song '*Hakol patuah*' at this festival in 1993: "Anything is possible as long as we sing here like this." In 2002, the entire Ein Gev Festival was dedicated to her songs. The programme was hosted by her friend Ehud Manor, also a genius of Israeli-Hebrew song.

Naomi Shemer wrote songs for a wide variety of performers who made her work known worldwide— such as Shuli Natan, whose voice has been inextricably linked to the song '*Yerushalaim shel zahav*' from the very beginning. In 2002, she sang it again in Ein Gev.

But Naomi also sang herself time and again and was received with much love by very different audiences, whether children or adults. She has participated several times in events at the art school in Tel Aviv. She wrote the song '*Shanah Tova*' for the Jewish New Year, *Rosh HaShanah*: "Whether the year will be good, whether we forget disappointment, ultimately depends on us..."

In Naomi Shemer's songs, one repeatedly discovers biblical motifs, for example in the above-mentioned song about Jerusalem: "If I forget you, Jerusalem..." (*Psalms 137:5*). The Hebrew invitation '*Hallelu Yah!*'—"Praise the Lord!"—is a natural part of many of their songs.

The threat and military service of young Israelis are part of everyday life in Israel and are also expressed in some songs, be it the cheerful '*My soldier has come back*' or the sad '*We are both from the same village*', a song dedicated to a fallen friend that is still performed today on memorial days for fallen soldiers.

Naomi Shemer wrote many of her own lyrics and melodies but was also able to translate lyrics from other languages wonderfully. She translated some French chansons from her time in Paris into Hebrew, especially for the Israeli actor and singer Yossi Bannay, who also began his career in the Nachal military band.

At the request of singer Chava Alberstein, she was asked to write Hebrew lyrics for the Beatles song '*Let It Be*'. This was at the time of the difficult *Yom Kippur War*, and Naomi was keen to write something encouraging. She opted for the title '*Lu yehi*', which means "Let it be!" but rather still: "Let it become!" which is expressed in the refrain: "All that we ask, may it be done!" When Mordechai Horowitz, her second husband, heard this text, he thought it was too good for a Beatles melody and asked his wife to write her own melody. The result was '*Lu yehi*', a completely new song.

Shemer translated the poem '*Oh Captain, my Captain*'



Naomi Shemer in Jerusalem in 1967. | Photo: Boris Carmi/Meitar Collection/National Library of Israel/The Pritzker Family National Photography Collection/CC BY 4.0

by Walt Withman, which he had written after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, into Hebrew and dedicated it to the assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, although she did not share his political views. Meital Trabelski gave the song its very dramatic expression.

Naomi Shemer saw herself as a songwriter who writes for everyone. And that's exactly what she was. As the daughter of Jewish settlers who came to the land of Israel before the state was established, she was a convinced Zionist and loved the country. That is why she was also against any cession of territory and the evacuation of Israeli settlements on the Sinai Peninsula. For her, there was no difference between the Jewish settlement of Sinai, Judea and Samaria or the area around the Sea of Galilee. This made her political, whether she wanted to be or not. Her song '*Al kol ele*', which she wrote after the death of her brother-in-law and in which she asks for God's protection, became a protest song against the evacuation of Sinai, especially because of a statement in the second verse: "Please don't uproot what has been planted! Don't forget the hope! Bring us back, and we will return to the good land..."

In 1987, her life's work was honoured with the Israel Prize. Then, it became known that Naomi Shemer had cancer. Fellow friends organised a farewell concert in 1991. Shemer's melancholy song was performed there: "It's sad to die in *Tammuz*... when the peaches are ripe..." *Tammuz* is a summer month in the Hebrew calendar. Naomi said afterwards that her friends had not managed to see her off. Despite her illness, she actually lived for another 13 years before dying on 26 June 2004, the 7th of *Tammuz* 5764. She was buried in the cemetery of Kibbutz Kinneret on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

More than ten years ago, a new series of Israeli banknotes was developed depicting "portraits of outstanding Hebrew poets whose life stories, works, and activities are intertwined with the story of the rebirth of the Nation of Israel in its land." The image of Naomi Shemer was seriously considered but ultimately rejected.

Her love for the land of Israel and her connection with the lives of ordinary people appealed to many and still does today. Her lyrics express what Israelis call '*Israeliut*': their mentality, their thoughts and feelings, their innermost being.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup><http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/shemer-naomi> (27.05.2013)

<sup>2</sup><https://boi.org.il/en/economic-roles/banknotes-and-coins/> (16.07.2024)

# Pride Before a Fall

## Tal Hartuv

Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

**As with any war, in Israel's war against our enemies, there are events which are game-changers, for good and for bad. 27 July 2024 was one game-changer.**

*Shabbat* was not quite over when an Iranian missile sent by Hezbollah struck children playing on a football field in Majdal Shams, a Druze town on Israel's northern border. With utter horror, the nation of Israel watched as the emergency services were called in, and throughout the night, Israelis worked to gather the pieces of little people for their unthinkable burial.

That night was a reminder to Jewish Israelis that not only are the Druze a significant minority in Israel, many of whom serve in the forces, but that they are also exposed to the same savagery as anyone else. We are all Druze since then, not just in words. Israelis bought Druze flags and rushed to the Druze town to join the funeral processions. Coined now as the Madjal Shams Massacre—with even its own Wikipedia page—the murder of these children will remain, even after the war, as one of the most shocking events since the massacre of 7 October.

On 30 July at night, there was another game-changer when Israel executed justice by sending a rocket deep into the heart of a Lebanese city, taking out Fuad Shukr, a senior commander of Hezbollah who was responsible for the murder of the Druze children. They knew it was coming, as did we, but no one, not one Israeli, in their wildest dreams, foresaw that just six hours later, Ismail Haniyeh would be eliminated by a rocket launched from inside Teheran.

Haniyeh, who was filmed bowing to his inferior god in gratitude while watching footage of Israelis being murdered, was abhorrently coined as 'a moderate' and a



A delegation of Jewish mothers living in the Golan Heights at the Druze village of Majdal Shams, to comfort the mourning parents of the twelve children who were killed by a Hezbollah missile attack. | Photo: Michael Giladi/Flash90

'negotiator' by much of the Western politicians and media.

Social media was flooded with short clips of Israeli vendors dishing out free watermelon and candies to any passers-by. That day there were also extraordinary numbers of rabbis interviewed, a rare occurrence, on Israeli media. Their message was universal: Israel is expected to do justice, and that means reducing evil in the world. When we are successful at that, we should rejoice and thank our God that we were able to carry out His commission to us and do exactly that.

### For Iran, it is a Different Story

Israel is fortunate to have an Iranian Jewish community, fluent in Persian and Iranian culture. Many were called upon that day to offer their insights, which probably slipped by those of us who are not Persian. Hospitality is everything in the Middle East, and it is one of the main commandments of Judaism, too. Just as

in Judaism, in the Muslim world, when you host a guest in your house, even if you don't like them, it is paramount that you feed them, protect them, and never ask them to leave. Failure to protect and feed them is considered a disgrace.

Our Iranian-Israeli commentators informed their audiences that we should all imagine that this ethos of protective hospitality is even more important in Iran than in Israel. Greater the failure then greater the shame. Greater the

shame, then greater the rage.

At the time of writing, Israel is waiting for the raging response that Iran has avowed, born from their shame. It seems inevitable, and there is an edginess in the air. But no matter how tense it is here, when Iran does attack, unlike our enemies, we can hold our heads up high because as long as we continue to do the right thing, our pride will never be damaged, and unlike the Iranians, we will continue to hold our heads up high.



The young victims of Majdal Shams. | Photo: Michael Giladi/Flash90

## Six Murdered Hostages Found in Gaza



The faces of the six murdered hostages found in Gaza. | Photo: Doron Horowitz/Flash90

**The news that the six hostages were brutally murdered just hours before Israeli forces got to them, sent Israel into shock early September.**

Not since 7 October, has such collective anguish been felt. Alex Lubnov, Carmel Gat, Hersh

Goldberg-Polin, Eden Yerushalmi, Ori Danino, and Almog Sarusi were found in a tunnel 20 metres underground. Only Carmel Gat had lived to see 40, the others were in their twenties, save for 32-year old Alex Lubnov.

## Dream Becomes Reality for Adel



Left: Adel and her mother Chaya, right before departure. | Middle: The students are ready for departure! | Right: Emotional moments as parents say goodbye to their children. | Photos: C4I Ukraine

### ■ Koen Carlier Aliyah Fieldworker Ukraine

After months of preparation, Tuesday 3 September had finally arrived! Seventeen 14-year-olds were about to embark on their journey to Israel, where they will spend the next four years studying as part of the Na'ale programme.

We first brought the young people to our shelter in western Ukraine, where we checked their documents and gave them final instructions. They came from various cities in Ukraine, including Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro and Kiev. Two young people from Odessa went directly to Kishenov, the capital of Moldova from where their flight to Israel would depart.

It was an exciting but also frightening experience for the youngsters. The air raid sirens echoed across the country as dozens of rockets and drones were launched, causing widespread destruction in many cities, leading to numerous deaths and hundreds of wounded. This devastating war has been raging for over two and a half years now, with no end in sight.

#### Promoting Aliyah

Why are these young people leaving for Israel at such a

young age? Every year, the Jewish Agency allows hundreds of Jewish teenagers the opportunity to take tests and exams, and those who pass can study in Israel for four years at no cost—provided their parents give their consent.

#### An Emotional Moment

We had a heartfelt conversation with Chaya and her 14-year-old daughter Adel. Years ago, we had met Chaya at the Jewish school in Mariupol. Today we wished her 'mazel tov' as her eldest child prepared to leave for Israel with the Na'ale programme. Chaya said nothing, but a proud smile crossed her face. For parents, saying goodbye to their children is always emotional, especially amid the ongoing wars in both Ukraine and Israel. 'What if...?' they must wonder. Is this the last time I will see my son or daughter? The children likely share similar fears. Will I see my parents or grandparents again? As drivers and guides, we play an important role in these moments, offering friendly words and a helpful hand that can make all the difference.

#### Seizing the Opportunity

After leaving our shelter, a 330-kilometre journey in our large coach lies ahead of us, and of course the

border crossing between Ukraine and Moldova, which this time took four hours. Along the way, we spoke with many of the young people. Why had they chosen to go to Israel now? Weren't they afraid? Most were determined in their decision to seize this opportunity with both hands, eager to live and study in Israel.

This was also the case for Adel. Her mother had prepared her for this moment from an early age, emphasising the importance of returning to Israel since the Bible speaks so clearly about returning to Israel. "You will be the first of our four children to go to Israel, and your brothers will follow." For Adel, this departure was a dream come true—going to the land of her ancestors.

#### A New Future

At Kishenov airport, we were greeted by a representative from the Jewish Agency, who expressed gratitude to Christians for Israel for taking such good care of the young people over the past few days. Shortly after midnight, the flight departed with the seventeen young people, heading for a new future in Israel. The 'children' of Israel are coming home, helped by the nations, as foretold by the prophets of Israel.

## Will You Help Us Bring Jewish People to Israel?

For many years, we have supported Jewish people making *Aliyah* to Israel, no matter the circumstances. Our work continues thanks to the prayers and generous financial contributions of people like you.

#### Ukraine

We assist people in securing the necessary documents and provide transportation to the airport in Moldova. Cost: \$300 p.p.

#### India

We help Bnei Menashe (tribe of Menashe) with flight tickets to Israel. Cost: \$1460 p.p.

#### Ethiopia

We sponsor flights and support their integration Israel. Cost: \$3588 p.p.

#### Other Regions

We also facilitate *Aliyah* from parts of the world where, due to safety concerns, we are not able to share specific details.

#### First Home in the Homeland

Christians for Israel assists new immigrants (in Hebrew: *olim*) to integrate into Israeli society through the 'First Home in the Homeland' project. Young families are provided with a warm home on a *kibbutz* for their first six or twelve months in Israel while following an intensive Hebrew course.



This map shows the situation in Ukraine and how we bring *olim* to Moldova from where they fly to Israel.



## No One Will be Left Behind in Exile!

### ■ Koen Carlier Aliyah Fieldworker Ukraine

At the beginning of the war in Ukraine, over two and a half years ago, Faina Schnaiderman from the Vinnitsa region called her granddaughter Diana in Israel. Faina longed to join her in Israel, but felt hopeless due to a broken hip that doctors said couldn't be treated. She was desperate.

Diana advised her grandmother to contact the team of Christians for Israel in Ukraine, and she did. With a trembling voice, Faina asked if we remembered her—the elderly Jewish lady who hadn't planned on making the move to Israel. Of course, we recognised her sweet voice!

On 22 March 2022, we helped bring Faina, to the Ukraine-Moldova border alongside dozens of other Jewish refugees. Unable to walk due to her hip injury, Faina was placed on a stretcher. She was in good company as she was carried across the bridge over the Dniester River, which separates Moldova from Ukraine by brothers Roger and Frank van Oordt, Chief Rabbi Binyomin Jacobs from the Netherlands and myself. A distance of almost one kilometre. The journey continued to Kishenov by bus, where the group then flew to Israel. In Kishenov's shelter, we sang a Hebrew song together, led by the Chief Rabbi. Later, I met Faina in Israel, where she was recovering from successful hip surgery, with doctors optimistic about her full recovery.

At the time, Faina's daughter Liliya, granddaughter and great-grandson Nikita were still living in a village in eastern Ukraine. Faina's greatest wish was for them to join her in Israel. Not long after, we were able to bring them to the border with Moldova. However, complications with their travel documents delayed their departure. Months passed quietly until we received the heartbreaking news that Faina's granddaughter, Nikita's mother, had suddenly passed away. Nikita's grandmother, Liliya, became his legal guardian. Despite the bureaucratic challenges, their documents were finally in order, and their departure went smoothly at the border.

Later on, we received a photo from Israel that captured the emotional reunion of Faina with her daughter Liliya and great-grandson Nikita. It was a powerful reminder of the Lord's promise that no one will be left behind in exile and that the Jewish people will return weeping. We witnessed this when Faina left Ukraine for good, and again more recently when her family followed. Even as war continues in Ukraine and Israel, the return of the Jewish people from the four corners of the world to Israel, that tiny nation, continues!

*"Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide My face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord." Ezekiel 39:28-29*



Top left: Ira Carlier, Nikita and Liliya. Top right: Faina Schnaiderman. Bottom: Faina is carried across the Ukraine-Moldava border on a stretcher. | Photos: C4I Ukraine

It costs \$300 to help one person make Aliyah from Ukraine. Will you help? Every amount helps!

## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel



### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL NZ MINISTRY

- Israel Solidarity Tour
- Emergency Situation in Israel
- My donation for ministry costs, print & post
- thinc. (countering anti-Israel 'lawfare')
- Speak Up (funding for speakers)

### ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

- Aliyah - Ethiopia
- One person (Ukraine) - \$300
- One family (Ukraine) (5 people) - \$1250
- One bus (Ukraine) (25 people) - \$6250
- First Home in the Homeland - \$765
- Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - \$1460

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- Meals on Wheels - \$10 each
- Food Parcels in Ukraine - \$26 each
- Children at Risk - Jaffa Institute
- Hineni Soup Kitchen - \$15 per meal
- Holocaust Survivors
- Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)
- Arab Christians (First Baptist Church in Bethlehem)
- For Zion's Sake
- Israel Alzheimer's Centre

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### ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

- NEW: Christians for Israel 18-month Calendar Jul 2024-Dec 2025
- Christians for Israel NZ Israeli & Friends Cookbook
- BUNDLE DEAL: C4I Calendar & Cookbook
- Until—Fourteen Prophetic Horizons by Rev Willem Glashouwer
- The Jubilee: Discover the End Time Mystery by Enoch Lavender
- Why End Times? (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Why Israel? (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Why Jerusalem? (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Why is it so Difficult for Jews to Believe in Jesus by Cornelis Kant
- Israel: Covenants & Kingdom by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Behold He Comes by Rev Willem Glashouwer **Special \$45.00**
- The Signs of the Times by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Israel on Trial by Dr Matthijs de Blois and Andrew Tucker **Special \$49.95**
- Living a Life in Victory by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Towards the Establishment of the State of Israel by Edda Fogorollo

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Check out our website for a full list of essential resources

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