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Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid hold a joint press conference at the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem on 20 June 2022. | Photo: Flash90

Israel's Political Turmoil

Israel is heading again to elections – the fifth election in less than four years.

On 30 June 2022, Israel's 24th Knesset (Parliament) was disbanded. The Prime Minister for the past year, Naftali Bennett, stepped down as PM and was replaced by Yair Lapid, who will remain Prime Minister until the elections, which will be held in October.

In an emotional speech, Bennett announced that he was withdrawing from politics. He handed over leadership of the Yamina party to Ayalet Shaked and will not run in the next elections.

This was the most unusual government in Israel's history. It comprised parties from across the political spectrum.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect was that the coalition government included the Ra'am Party (United Arab List), an Islamic/Arab party which is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Many predicted the coalition would not last long. It lasted a whole year.

Some have praised the government as a unique attempt to bring unity across the political spectrum and for including an Arab party in the government. Others have criticized it as a dangerous experiment, unworkable and unable to make major decisions because of diverging interests.

Former PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who has headed the

opposition over the last year, has been a vicious critic of the government, which was formed on the platform of ousting Netanyahu. Netanyahu seems to be preparing to run again in the upcoming elections.

The political landscape in Israel has become more splintered, and the culture more polarised and divisive.

As this edition of *Israel & Christians Today* shows, Israel faces many threats, both internal and external. Perhaps most alarming is that it is believed that Iran is possibly now capable of producing nuclear weapons.

Now, more than ever, Israel needs unity and a strong and stable government that can make the necessary decisions to remove the threats the nation faces.

"But you, mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for My people Israel, for they will soon come home. I am concerned for you and will look on you with favour; you will be ploughed and sown, and I will cause many people to live on you—yes, all of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will increase the number of people and animals living on you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I will cause people, My people Israel, to live on you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children." Ezekiel 36:8-12

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Coming Home to Israel from Ethiopia



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

Colophon

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

Mission

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

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Funding the PA is Hypocritical

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The world needs Israel in many ways. But are we willing to recognise this?

When Israel was established in 1948, it was very weak. Emerging after the horrors of the Shoah and facing massive Arab opposition, the State of Israel was created through the sheer will of the Jewish people to fight for their national existence.

Europe, as usual, sat on the fence and watched as the miracle unfolded.

The Arab states tried to destroy the Jewish people, but miraculously Israel was established and survived. The Arab states grew richer through their massive oil and gas discoveries. They kept attacking Israel. After the last major attempt to destroy Israel failed in the 1973 'Yom Kippur' war, the Arabs used their dominance in oil, plus the threats of Palestinian terror, to blackmail the West into complying with their demands. Europe succumbed. Thus began Europe's policy of appeasing the Arab world and pressuring Israel to give in to Palestinian demands for statehood in the territory that had been promised as a Jewish National home.

Today, the tables are turning. Israel is becoming a major global player. Europe, in contrast, is in dire straits – economically, politically, and spiritually. Gradually, Europe is discovering that it needs Israel more than Israel needs Europe.

The latest example of this is the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Israel, Egypt and the European Union on 15 June that will see Israel export its natural gas to the EU.

Following Putin's invasion of Ukraine, Europe is suddenly faced with a massive problem of finding alternative energy supplies.

The Eastern Mediterranean, as a whole, including Israel, has immense gas reserves that have been estimated to reach 10.8 trillion cubic meters of gas or roughly 5 per cent of the world's gas reserves. This amount of gas has been estimated to be roughly equivalent to 76 years of gas consumption by the EU.



Israeli PM Naftali Bennett meets with European Union Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, on 14 June 2022. | Photo: Haim Zach/GPO.

Israel has already signed gas export agreements with Egypt and Jordan. The latest deal with the EU envisages Israel sending gas via pipeline to Egypt, which has facilities to liquify it for export to Greece, Italy and other EU countries by tankers.

The EU and Israel are exploring further possibilities of cooperation. Two ways in which Europe plans to work with Israel, EU President von der Leyen said, is to lay the EuroAsia Interconnector, the world's longest and deepest underwater power cable, connecting Israel to the EU electric grid via Cyprus and Greece. The other is the EastMed Pipeline, the world's longest, also from Israel to Cyprus and Greece.

Von der Leyen was recently in Israel. Receiving an honorary doctorate from Ben Gurion University, she spoke nice words about EU-Israeli cooperation and the need to confront antisemitism. "Europe and Israel are bound to be friends and allies... the history of Europe is the history of the Jewish people," said von der Leyen.

But the same day, von der Leyen visited Palestinian Authority leader Mohammed Shtayyeh in Ramallah, promising to renew EU funding (240 million euros per annum) to the PA after funding had been ceased due to concerns about Palestinian

incitement to terror. This just shows that the EU wants to have it both ways.

Renewing funding of the PA is outrageous when the PA continues to incite Palestinians to kill Jews. In 2021 alone, Ramallah distributed 841 million shekels (\$240.75 million) through its 'Martyrs' Fund.' *Palestinian Media Watch* has calculated that the PA spends 33.34 times more per capita paying terror rewards than it spends on health services for the Palestinian population.

In other words, the EU's financial support to the PA is being re-channelled euro-for-euro to reward Palestinians for killing Jews.

The EU is also continuing efforts to renew an agreement with Iran, which is on a fast track to achieving nuclear capabilities and has sworn to wipe out the State of Israel.

In this light, von der Leyen's condemnation of antisemitism is thus hypocritical.

Suppose the international community really wants to confront antisemitism. In that case, it must stop funding the PA and its related institutions until they terminate their 'pay-for-slay' policy and show they accept and support the existence of the Jewish State of Israel.

Prayer Points

By C4I Prayer Team

Israel

- Pray for a blessed summer for Israel. Pray for the protection of Israel against attacks from Gaza with fire balloons. Pray for protection against forest fires. Pray that many tourists will come to Israel and be impressed by the land and God's chosen people.
- Give thanks that God is bringing His people home to the land of Israel and that God's faithfulness to Israel is eternal. Pray that the Jews who have returned to Israel from Ukraine will soon feel at home and that they will receive good help when they are struggling with traumas.
- 'On that day, I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication' (*Zechariah 12:9-10a*). Pray for this outpouring of the Spirit of grace over Israel.

Israel & the Nations

- Recently, a high-ranking general was assassinated in Iran. Iran assumes that Israel is responsible and is seeking

revenge. Iran released a list of names and photos of five Israelis who could be potential targets of an attack by the Iranian regime. Pray for the protection of Israel against Iran's revenge.

- 'The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?' (*Psalms 118:6*).
- Pray for all Jews living outside Israel. Often they have to deal with antisemitism and do not feel safe in their country. Pray for the protection of these Jews and pray that they may be a blessing to the people around them.

Christians for Israel

- Even though we may not hear as much in the news about the war in Ukraine at the moment, the battle for the country continues, and the work of Koen and Ira Carlier and their team is still very important. Pray for a blessing on their work and pray that they will be able to provide food for the Jewish communities and help many Jews return to Israel.

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

Who Killed Abu Akleh?

Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

Ballistics expert criticises US investigation: “To base a whole case on one bullet is completely wrong from an investigative point of view”.

The death of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on 11 May is front-page news again. In early July, media around the world reported the results of an American ballistic investigation that had taken place in the US Embassy in Jerusalem.

However, the results of the US investigation seemed to be fuelled by political considerations, as we shall see.

It has been almost two months since Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed in a gun battle between Palestinian terrorists and Israeli army (IDF) soldiers in the town of Jenin. And still, it remains unclear what exactly happened. The death of the Palestinian journalist led to serious violent riots in Arab towns in Israel and to new shootings in Jenin, which is known as a stronghold of terror.

Unsubstantiated Conclusions

The Palestinian Authority (PA) and Al Jazeera were quick to accuse the IDF of deliberately killing Abu Akleh, an experienced journalist who often worked on the front lines.

This conclusion was drawn despite the lack of a forensic crime scene investigation at the place where Abu Akleh was hit in the head and where she succumbed to her injuries. Such an investigation is standard procedure in the Netherlands, the United States and Israel.

From the outset, the PA rejected an Israeli proposal to set up a joint forensic and ballistic investigation that would be attended by American experts. The PA also refused to release the ‘Israeli’ bullet it claimed had killed the Al Jazeera journalist.

Al Jazeera later published a photograph of the bullet which, it claimed, had killed Abu Akleh. That was on 16 June, and they hastened to link it to the IDF again because it was a 5,56 calibre bullet. The IDF uses this ammunition for the M-16 rifle, with which many of its soldiers are equipped.

However, this ‘observation’ by the PA and Al Jazeera left out two things. First, the M-16 rifle is also massively used by the PA security service, but also by Palestinian terrorists who steal the weapons and then smuggle them into Judea and Samaria. Secondly, statements from the IDF and others have shown that the closest soldiers were snipers. However, these snipers do not use the M-16 rifle and always fire a single shot. During the firefight, however, multiple salvos were clearly audible.

Media Investigation

Several media outlets (official and alternative) have published investigations since the incident, providing evidence to either prove that the IDF was responsible for Abu Akleh’s death or not.

Pro-Israel blogger ‘Elder of Zion’, for example, regularly wrote blog posts in which he provided new material which



Mural for Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh who was shot and killed on 11 May 2022. | Photo: Flash90

would prove the innocence of the IDF. The blogger focused on video recordings and forensic audio material, which showed that there were Palestinian gunmen on the rooftops close to where Abu Akleh died.

American Conclusion

This week it was definitively revealed that the Abu Akleh case is being misused for political purposes. The PA finally decided to release the bullet that “killed the martyr Abu Akleh” for investigation by American experts. That investigation was eventually conducted at the US Embassy in Jerusalem and was reportedly also attended by Israeli experts.

The US State Department then issued a statement late on Monday saying that no definitive conclusion could be drawn on exactly where the bullet came from. This was due to the fact that the bullet was badly damaged.

The same statement then said that the American investigators had also been given full access to the investigations that the IDF and the PA were carrying out and, in the case of the IDF, are still carrying out. According to the State Department, the US security coordinator in Israel had concluded that ‘it was plausible that gunfire coming from IDF positions was responsible for the death of Shireen Abu Akleh’.

This part of the statement clearly showed that there was a political reason for the US security coordinator’s conclusions.

Israeli Expert

Lior Nadavi is an expert in the field of ballistic forensic crime investigation and previously worked for the Israeli police. He said the following about the ‘investigation’ in the US Embassy in Jerusalem:

“To put a whole case on one bullet is wrong from the investigative point of view,” he said. “You need to start with the crime-scene investigation, and many details are missing, at least for us in the public. For example, what was Shireen’s position at the moment she was hit: Was she facing Israeli soldiers? Was her back facing them or her side? She was standing

next to a wall; were there any bullets that hit the wall? That can be checked, and the bullet that hit her could have been a ricochet, and then the whole story takes a turn.”

Nadavi also said that X-rays of the woman’s head and the autopsy report could have determined whether Shireen had been hit by this particular bullet or not.

“They could have taken any bullet from the scene and said it came from the Israeli side,” Nadavi said, adding that “the bullet is supposed to break apart when it hits and cause greater damage. The fact that this didn’t happen means it could have hit something and then lowered its velocity... There are so many variables in this case that we just don’t know”, the Israeli expert said.

Nadavi gave his explanation of the flawed US investigation during a Zoom conference organised by Media Central in Jerusalem.

Politics Determines Investigation Result

I attended this conference and heard from another expert that the American investigation gave him the impression of an attempt to save both the cabbage and the goat.

The Americans wanted to take the sting out of the conflict between Israel and the PA over Abu Akleh’s death before President Joe Biden’s visit to Israel on 13 July, according to the expert.

The claim that the IDF was presumably responsible for the gunfire was intended to appease the PA, while the first part of the statement showed that the Israelis were right about the bullet and the forensic investigation.

The PA issued a statement on 3 July saying that the conclusions of the Americans were wrong, that the bullet that finally killed Abu Akleh was not damaged at all. In the same statement, the PA said they would go to the International Criminal Court in The Hague over the matter. They have said that before, but it will not surprise anyone if this time, too, the threat is not carried out.

Short News

Israel Offers Jordan Assistance After Aqaba Port Disaster



Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz offered assistance to Jordan following a chlorine gas leak at the Aqaba Port on 27 June, which killed 13 people and injured 251. The yellowish gas was released when a tank filled with 25 tons of chlorine for export to Djibouti exploded after falling from a crane. Gantz also tweeted his condolences to Jordan, saying, “Our hearts and thoughts are with those killed, and we pray for the recovery of the injured.”

When inhaled, chlorine turns into hydrochloric acid, which can lead to internal burns, as well as drowning through a reactionary release of water in the lungs. | Photo: Screenshot Twitter

Polish Man who Rescued Jews From the Nazis Dies at 102



Jozef Walaszczyk, part of the Polish resistance during the Nazi German occupation of Poland during WWII, recently passed away at the age of 102. During the war, Walaszczyk had been staying in a hotel with a Jewish woman when the German Gestapo searched the premises. He only then discovered she was Jewish and helped her hide and distracted the Germans by playing sick. The Gestapo later arrested the woman, Irena Front, and another 20 Jews. Walaszczyk arranged to bribe the Germans to release the Jews; he was able to get a kilogram of gold in a number of hours and saved their lives, according to the Institute of National Remembrance, a Polish state historical body.

He also hired 30 Jews to work at a potato-flour factory and kept them alive by bribing a German official. Most of the Jewish workers he employed survived World War II and the Holocaust. | Photo: YouTube

More Female Authors

The National Library of Israel released the figures for 2021. The figures show an upturn in the Israeli book market. It is noteworthy that, for the first time, female authors published more books than their male counterparts.

Palestinian Propaganda

■ Akiva van Koningsveld

Editor | Honest Reporting

The EU has recommenced funding to Al-Haq, a Palestinian NGO linked to terror organisation PFLP. Rather than calling for transparency in the use of public funds, Western journalists are promoting a narrative that perpetuates misleading claims made by the authoritarian rulers in Ramallah.

On 1 July, the European Union stated it would release a grant to Al-Haq, a Palestinian NGO with long-standing links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Even though the PFLP is designated a terrorist organisation by the EU, the United States and Israel, Brussels' decision barely made a ripple in the news cycle.

The announcement came just weeks after the European Commission decided to renew funding to the terror-supporting Palestinian Authority government in the West Bank.

Background: European Aid Delayed Over 'Antisemitic and Violent' Palestinian Textbooks

The EU's funding for the Palestinian Authority was held up for months while representatives from multiple European countries pushed to condition financial support on the PA, making changes to the 'problematic and hateful' books used in Palestinian schools. Part of the European aid goes towards the salaries of civil servants who create and teach the controversial curriculum.

Following the publication of a 194-page study by the independent Georg Eckert Institute one year ago, which concluded that PA textbooks contain "antisemitic narratives and glorification of violence," the European Commission (EC) assured members of the European Parliament that urgent discussions were taking place between EU representatives and the PA Ministry of Education. This is to ensure that the Palestinian leadership would act to remove 'questionable content' from books to be produced in 2021.

Furthermore, students are taught that one of the 'rules of jihad' is to die as a martyr while killing infidels and that they should sacrifice themselves for their homeland and 'redeem it with blood.'

Olivér Várhelyi, the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, reportedly demanded: "clear process indicators" as to the PA's commitment to ending incitement, which then triggered a drawn-out 'consultative process' in Brussels, delaying the approval of the entire aid package. PA Minister of Foreign Affairs Riyad Al-Malki subsequently called Várhelyi's request 'unacceptable' to Palestinians since "...placing conditions on the funding embarrasses them internationally."

Meanwhile, a report analysing PA textbooks for the 2021-22 semester published in January this year by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) — a non-profit watchdog group that monitors educational resources for extremist materials — found that, in spite of Ramallah's promises about curriculum reform and the ostensible implementation of 'monitoring processes,' the original problems identified still persist.

Amongst other issues, IMPACT-se discovered that study materials present Jews as 'devious, treacherous and hostile' people who control 'global events through financial power.' Furthermore, students are taught that one of the 'rules of jihad' is to die as a martyr while killing infidels and that they should sacrifice themselves for their homeland and 'redeem it with blood.'



A Palestinian class at the Salem School, East Jerusalem (illustrative). | Photo: Flash90

Brussels Approves 'Unconditional' Support Package, Critical Journalists MIA

Despite the lack of progress, on 13 June, the EC voted to authorise aid worth €224.8 million (\$231.4 million). "I am very glad to announce that the EU funds for 2021 can be disbursed rapidly," Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told a press conference in Ramallah, adding: "All the difficulties are gone." The EU's 'Direct Financial Support to Recurrent Expenditures of the Palestinian Authority 2021' includes some €55 million (\$56.6 million) for salaries and pensions of PA civil servants — including those who write textbooks.

On Facebook, PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh thanked Von der Leyen for the EC's decision to resume 'unconditional assistance.' This is the same Palestinian leader who has gone on record saying that he would not allow "any concessions about the educational curriculum," calling the textbooks "part of the dignity of the Palestinian." Responding to questions from *The Jerusalem Post*, an EU official on 14 June also confirmed

civil servants saw their salaries cut by 20%, and hospitals in East Jerusalem slowed down, forced to turn away some cancer patients for lack of funds."

Unreported: The Palestinian Authority's \$270.75 Million 'Martyr's Fund'

Indeed, the articles simply echoed claims by PA Prime Minister Shtayyeh, who in March said that the holdup had a "negative impact on the ability of his government to meet its obligations towards the underprivileged families that receive social benefits, as well as on the salaries of the public employees and the work of the various institutions."

As such, *Euronews*, *The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Monde* failed in their journalistic duty to provide readers with the unvarnished facts. Specifically, it is the Palestinian Authority that is largely to blame for the 'dire consequences' facing its subjects.

Just weeks ago, PA President Mahmoud Abbas vowed to maintain the so-called 'Pay-for-Slay' policy, a scheme that provides salaries to those who commit violence against Jews and Israelis, as well as their relatives. And there's a built-in incentive plan: more money is doled out to the terrorists who cause the most bloodshed.

As exposed by *Palestinian Media Watch*, in 2021 alone, Ramallah distributed 841 million shekels (\$240.75 million) through its 'Martyrs' Fund'. The NGO calculated that the PA spends 33.34 times more per capita paying terror rewards than it spends on health services for the Palestinian population.

Yet the media did not even broach the point that the delayed EU funding for hospitals in eastern Jerusalem amounts to €13 million (\$13.2 million) and that — if the PA were to stop rewarding terrorism — the PA could match Brussels' donation almost twenty times over, ensuring the continuation of cancer treatment for years to come.

Alternatively, Abbas and Shtayyeh could support "the underprivileged families that receive social benefits" for five years.

The botched reporting seemingly fits a pattern. News outlets also failed to speak truth to power in their reporting on the resumption of aid to Al-Haq on 1 July, with Politico Europe blatantly omitting readily available evidence of the organisation's ties to terrorists.

So, which European outlet will be the first to scrutinise the channelling of taxpayers' euros to organisations that incentivise or have links to terrorism?

To read the full article and for more information:
<https://honestreporting.com/journalists-lap-up-and-peddle-palestinian-propaganda-as-european-union-renews-unconditional-aid-to-pa/>
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that the 27-country bloc does not "impose reforms on our partners."

However, Brussels' pandering to Palestinian demands did not generate headlines in any of the major European publications, even as members of the European Parliament tabled questions to the Commission.

Instead, journalists uncritically parroted Ramallah's framing of the issue.

For example, *Euronews*, on 14 June, published a piece titled, *Brussels to 'rapidly' release delayed EU funds for Palestinian schools and hospitals.* The article noted: "Even if the disagreement honed in on the specific issue of textbooks, it obstructed the release of the whole package of financial aid, including healthcare funds."

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, described by some as Germany's equivalent to *The New York Times*, on 15 June likewise asserted that Commissioner Várhelyi's stance had 'dramatic humanitarian consequences' while noting that the Palestinian Authority has denied the allegations regarding its textbooks.

Leading French newspaper *Le Monde* went a step further, claiming that only Israel and 'Israeli pressure groups' have 'accused' the PA of inciting hatred. According to the prominent daily, "120,000 poor families did not receive their quarterly allowance, Palestinian

President Biden's Israel Visit

■ **Andrew Tucker**

International Editor | Christians for Israel

President Biden's long-awaited and much-discussed three-day visit to Israel in July, en route to attend a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Saudi Arabia, served to highlight both the magnitude and imminence of the threats facing the West and the degree to which many (including, apparently the US Administration) are willing to believe that appeasement of terrorists has any chance of success.

The first thing to note was Biden's meeting with the PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas. President Biden stated on his arrival that US support for Israel is deep and unwavering. The US and Israel even announced a strategic alliance. But at the same time, Biden's visit signalled support for the PLO's zero-sum demands and unwillingness to confront the PLO's continuing rejection of Israel's right to exist. The US will provide over \$500 million in aid to the Palestinian territories. Biden visited a Palestinian hospital in East Jerusalem and is planning to upgrade the status of the Palestinian Affairs Office at the US Embassy in Jerusalem and place it under the direct supervision of the US State Department. This signals that the Biden Administration rejects Israel's claim to sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem and is unwilling to confront Abbas's ongoing payments to Palestinian terrorists for killing Jews ('pay-for-slay').

Next, there is the problem of Iran. In an interview on his first day in Israel, Biden



US president Joe Biden, Prime Minister Yair Lapid and Israeli president Isaac Herzog at the welcoming ceremony at Ben Gurion Airport on 13 July 2022, for his first official visit to Israel. | Photo: Flash90

stated that "[t]he only thing worse than the Iran that exists now is an Iran with nuclear weapons, and if we can return to the deal, we can hold them tight. I think it was a gigantic mistake for the last president to get out of the deal." Biden's statement that a military option "is not ruled out" seemed hardly credible, given that Iran is now capable of producing nuclear weapons. Moreover, as the US itself announced, it is well known that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) is deeply involved in supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, Iran, Russia and Turkey are boosting their alliance, which includes support for the Assad regime in Syria.

In this context, it is hard to imagine that any "deal" with either Iran or the PLO is

going to divert either of them from pursuing their declared aims of undermining and destroying Israel.

As so often has been the case since its establishment in 1948, it is Israel that has to face reality and do the hard work of actually confronting those who threaten its existence.

One commentator has noted: "The US president is coming to the Middle East because he is weak, so Israel should remember that it is strong."

It might be more appropriate to remark: the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is strong, and He has promised to look after His people in the land if they will trust in Him and look to Him for their safety and protection.

Short News

Dedication of Lion of Judah Bronze Sculpture



Recently a special sculpture of the Lion of Judah was dedicated in Jerusalem after a 16-year journey from Texas to Jerusalem. The statue is located at Bloomfield Park just behind the King David Hotel, between the Old City and new Jerusalem. It was a gift of American Christian artist Max Greiner Jr. With this Lion, Greiner wanted to honour the God of Israel, and it was his dream to give it to Israel as a symbol of friendship and love between Christians and the People of Israel. "My goal with this realistic yet stylised lion composition was to visually communicate majesty, dignity, strength, and courage while also expressing shalom."

| Photo: Shutterstock

Lebanese Journalist Speaks Out

Journalist Nadim Koteich said in a TV interview that Lebanon should join the Abraham Accords and make peace with Israel. Since the Abraham Accords, more and more Arabs from countries surrounding Israel are speaking out in support of relations and peace with Israel. The fact that the journalist dared to express his opinion suggests that the desire for peace is perhaps more widespread among the Lebanese people than previously thought.

Israel Envoy Elected Vice President of UN General Assembly



In a significant achievement for Israeli diplomacy, Israel was elected vice president for the coming year's UN General Assembly session. This means that the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan, will chair General Assembly meetings and take part in setting the agenda for its deliberations once he begins his role in September when the General Assembly convenes.

"I will now be representing Israel in a position at the heart of the United Nations. Nothing will stop me—and I mean nothing—from fighting the discrimination against Israel," said Erdan. | Photo: Flash90

Ben & Jerry's 'Victory' is Hollow

■ **Naomi Grant**

Director of Communications | Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)

Now is no time to rejoice with ice cream but to continue holding Ben & Jerry's accountable—this time, for indoctrination.

Jewish organisations far and wide, the State of Israel and even American politicians have rejoiced over Unilever's decision to sell Ben & Jerry's to a local franchisee, thereby resuming the sale of its ice cream in the West Bank. While it is nice to see a major company standing up to BDS and indirectly contributing to the Israeli economy, this widely hailed 'victory' against the BDS movement and antisemitism comes with many caveats.

American Quality Products owner Avi Zinger previously enjoyed exclusive rights to Ben & Jerry's in Israel before his license was not renewed due to his continuing to sell in the West Bank. Following his win in an Israeli federal court, Zinger will resume sales in all of Israel in perpetuity in Hebrew and Arabic. But not in English.

A lawsuit was also filed against Unilever this month in the United States, alleging that it had "concealed a boycott of Israel by its Ben & Jerry's ice-cream brand that shaved billions off its stock market value," reported JNS.

Due to violations of state anti-boycott laws, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas had divested a combined \$1 billion in pension-fund investments from Unilever.

However, Ben & Jerry's founders said they still believe it is "inconsistent with Ben & Jerry's values for our ice cream to be sold in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," which is completely missing the point.

Jews have lived in Judea and Samaria (what is today called the West Bank) for about 3,000 years; only in recent history—from 1948 to 1967—were Jews prohibited from living there, which was apparently long enough for antisemites to concoct a patently false narrative about the land belonging to 'Palestinian' Arabs.

In other words, Unilever is off the hook in the eyes of Jewish organisations and Ben & Jerry's boycotters for any controversy because they sold Israeli rights to the Ben & Jerry's brand and put out a feel-good statement that doesn't even directly condemn antisemitism; rather, it condemns "any form of discrimination or intolerance" and asserts that "antisemitism has no place in any society."

The statement doesn't even stand against BDS; it says, almost as a disclaimer: "We have never expressed any support for the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS)

movement and have no intention of changing that position," instead of actually taking a stand against BDS.

Perhaps the worst is yet to come: Ben & Jerry's apparently now requires new employees to watch videos on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at least one of which features Human Rights Watch Israel-Palestine Director Omar Shakir.

Shakir was expelled from Israel and participated in a June 2021 conference that also hosted participants from the likes of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Refusing to sell ice cream in certain areas (limiting options for the Arabs whom the company purports to champion, no less) was not enough; Ben & Jerry's has now implemented an indoctrination system into new employee orientation. They somehow found a way to politicise something like ice cream, previously among the least politicised, least controversial industries on Earth.

Jewish Insider reported on Ben & Jerry's new system of indoctrination on 13 June; it seems likely that Ben & Jerry's knew Unilever was about to sell brand rights in Israel, enabling the sale of ice cream in the entirety of the country, and acted preemptively.

Published by JNS on 1 July. Republished with permission.

The Joseph of Mariupol

■ Marijke Terlouw

Christians for Israel Netherlands

During Rabbi Mendel Cohen's recent visit to the Netherlands, I had the opportunity to speak to him. His hometown Mariupol, the extremely besieged city in Ukraine, does not exist anymore. Some buildings are still there, but can one speak of a city? And its citizens? Perhaps the sight of the city provides the best representation of its population. Wiped out, damaged, desolate and without hope.

Can you tell us what kind of city Mariupol was?

Rabbi Mendel Cohen recounts with some melancholy: "It was the ninth-largest city in Ukraine, with a metal industry, located on the coast. As a Jewish community, we had a daycare centre, a school, a synagogue, and a *mikveh*; there were courses, and we gave a lot of help to the people. It was a city on the rise that welcomed you. The city no longer exists."

You were not in Mariupol when the war broke out. How did that happen?

"I had had corona some time before - it was very serious. I was then treated in Israel. I was back in Mariupol, but to recover, I needed surgery in Israel, and I kept postponing it. Everybody knew about the threat, but nobody thought there would be a real war. So in February, I went to Israel to have surgery. A few days later, the war started."

What did you feel or think when you heard about it?

"It was a torn feeling. On the one hand, I was happy and relieved for my family because they were with me in Israel and, therefore, not in danger. But my thoughts, my heart and soul were in Mariupol. It's terrible to feel caught between two worlds. You keep thinking: are the people still alive? How are they coping? Do they have enough food? And because contact was impossible, the uncertainty remained. There was no water, no electricity, no natural gas, or internet. Very rarely we received a short text message. But basically, we knew nothing."

Yet you found a way to help?

Chief Rabbi Jacobs of the Netherlands sat with us during the interview and said: "He was like a Joseph to the people. Sent ahead to care for the people of Mariupol from that very place." Rabbi Cohen: "The question of the people was: how do I survive, and, how do I get out of here? I want to say something about both. Thanks to Christians for Israel, many have been able to survive. Because we have been receiving food parcels through Koen Carlier for years, we have an active community in Mariupol. Not just names on a list, but people who are

part of the community. We had already received four extra deliveries food parcels 'just in case'. Many were able to survive thanks to those parcels.

Getting out of Mariupol was extremely difficult and dangerous. At the beginning of the war, I tried to arrange a bus. I didn't care about the cost because a person's life cannot be expressed in money. I offered \$100,000 for anyone who wanted to drive, but nobody dared. Still, we managed to find a way. One by one, people came to a safer area, using all kinds of routes. So we started hearing more and more about the situation and what the options were. It was as if the 'doors of grace' were opening. As a result, hundreds of people were able to leave. Hundreds. Christians for Israel also helped the Jews of Mariupol. As soon as they were in a safer area, you helped with shelter and transportation, with the first steps to Israel."

Can you tell us more about the situation in Mariupol now that the city is no longer besieged, but the war is not yet over?

"About fifty families have remained in Mariupol, for different reasons. But it is mainly elderly and sick people and their families. A small ray of hope is that you can now buy some supplies again at shops in the city. It's not much, but it's something. They try to live, but they depend on everything. The place is in ruins. I don't see any future. So I really hope that these people will also decide to make *aliyah* (leave for Israel)."

Is it still possible to help now that the area is occupied?

"Yes, certainly! Actually, even more help is needed than before. There is nothing left. The people are totally dependent on aid, far more than before the war. But fortunately, they can withdraw money again and buy something. That's how we can help people."

You are a man of faith. In what way have you seen God in these difficult times?

"There were so many miracles", and while Rabbi Cohen says these words, I see and hear that, beneath all the worries and sadness, the evidence of God at work in the chaos is a certainty for him that cannot be questioned. "A lot of people died in Mariupol. But then I also heard about the very old people, the survivors of the Holocaust who managed to escape, people who miraculously got away, and about the many people who assisted us. The miracles were many."

If you would like to view the livestream interview with Rabbi Mendel on YT, here is the link: www.c4israel.org/video/mendel-cohen/ or scan the QR code.



Exodus from the North

■ Rev Oscar Lohuis

Christians for Israel Netherlands

"So then, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where He had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land." *Jeremiah 23:7-8*

In the 1980s, some three million Jews still lived in the Soviet Union. For hundreds of years, they had been exposed to barely hidden antisemitism. In the 19th century, many Jews, therefore, left Eastern Russia for Ukraine. There was also a flood of Jews settling in Palestine.

The Soviet Union almost never allowed Jewish citizens to emigrate to Israel. Those who applied were rejected, so they were called 'refuseniks'. If a Jew did manage to leave the Soviet Union, it was world news.

Exodus

In *Isaiah 43*, we read that God says to the north: "Give!" and in the prophecy from *Jeremiah 23* (see above), it is said that days will come when people will speak of an exodus from the land in the north. In addition to all the countries from which the Lord will bring His people back into the land, the 'land of the north' is mentioned here specifically and separately. Therefore, it is a particularly striking fulfilment of biblical prophecy that since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, more than a million Russian Jews emigrated to Israel in just a few years.

Since the exodus from Egypt (3,400 years ago), there has never been such a massive move of Jews to the Promised Land as this one. Therefore, this exodus from the land of the north is also compared to the exodus.

War

Since the beginning of the (new) war in Ukraine, there has also been a considerable flow of Jewish refugees from the north towards the Promised Land. Even at this moment, this prophecy is being fulfilled.



Top left: Rabbi Mendel Cohen. Top right and bottom left: Destruction in the city of Mariupol. | Photos: Christians for Israel

To the Promised Land

■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors in Ukraine | Christians for Israel

From devastated Mariupol to the Promised Land. Christians for Israel staff visit Jewish elderly who recently made *Aliyah* from war-torn Ukraine.

In early July, Alina (team member of Christians for Israel Ukraine) and Anemone (C4I Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors & Elderly Sponsorship Programme Ukraine) visited Jewish refugees from Ukraine who we helped return home to Israel - with your support. We will share some of the beautiful encounters with you.



Svetlana and Boris together with Anemone in Israel. | Photo: C4I

“There is a God, and He does miracles”

“There really is a God,” Svetlana exclaims when we visit her in her still sparsely furnished flat in Ramat Gan and ask how she escaped from Mariupol (Ukraine) with her husband, Boris. “There is a God, and He does miracles.”

In mid-February, at the urging of her son, who lives in Kharkov, the two decided to join him for a few days for some medical examinations that had been due for some time. “And then suddenly it was war. My Boris is so ill; he couldn’t have run. And so we escaped the whole horror of Mariupol.”

Via Dnepropetrovsk, the couple reached Romania, and from there, they flew on to Chisinau, the capital of Moldova. “We were on the road for five days,” Svetlana reports. Her daughter came to Israel with the youth *Aliyah* 30 years ago and now takes care of everything.

At the thought of Mariupol, Svetlana quickly wipes away the tears that are welling up. “We had just received a food parcel from you. We told our neighbours where to find it. It kept half our apartment block alive when people had to hold out in the basement for weeks!”

“For the rest of our lives we will be grateful for what you did”

Galina speaks without even pausing about the events of her escape from Mariupol (Ukraine), so troubled are her memories. She fled with her brother Valentin, who C4I has supported for years - and with her two grandchildren. Alina knows their story. She brought the family safely across the border just a few weeks ago.

The grandchildren, who were actually already living in Israel, were visiting their grandma in Mariupol when the war started. “I went to a basement, my brother was somewhere on the other side of the city, and my grandchildren were somewhere else at that moment in a third basement. It was terrible; we couldn’t get out. We didn’t have a connection for a long time. In the basement, there was no water, no light, and no toilet.”

At a certain point, Galina dared to run outside; she managed to load her phone for a few minutes and received instructions from Valentin on where to go. “Then air raids started again. But I didn’t care about anything anymore. Thirty thousand perished in our city - it also doesn’t matter what happens to me, I thought. Only after I arrived at my brother’s I could tell him that my grandchildren were stuck in another basement.”

“One of the most difficult things was that there was no fuel,” Valentin comments when he returns from the

kitchen. All my friends chipped in; everyone donated a little for fuel. That’s how we got 20 litres - as much as was needed to get to town again.”

With great difficulty, he managed to find someone who would go with him to the centre of the city once more - hoping for a lucky break to find Galina’s grandchildren. “The house was already destroyed. But the children were still holding out in the basement. We pulled them out in a flash,” Valentin recalls. “After driving a few meters, we came under fire. We had to jump out of the car and lie flat on the ground. They shot at the car, but we made it through unscathed. Miraculously, the car still worked when we jumped in during a pause in the fighting.”

Via Zaporozhe, the family was eventually taken to C4I’s emergency shelter in western Ukraine with other refugees. On the C4I bus to the border, they were accompanied by Alina.

“It was an incredible drama,” Alina recalls. “At the border, they wouldn’t let grandma out with the grandchildren because she didn’t have the children’s papers. These were with the mother. Standing there, in borrowed clothes which were much too big, like from the Leningrad blockade, the children couldn’t go any further! Even some border guards were in tears at the sight of them.”

Begging did not help - Valentin had to travel on without his sister - first to Chisinau. Galina had to return to the C4I shelter with her grandchildren. Eventually, they were brought to the Polish border, where their mother picked them up on the other side of the border with the necessary papers. Today they live in Bat Yam.

“I hardly recognise Galina and Valentin,” Alina tells me. “They’ve gone through a real transformation. Such a difference! They’ve gotten years younger!”

“Alina, you were so helpful to us at the time!” Galina says when bidding farewell. “You encouraged us so much! We would have gone crazy otherwise! But you helped us. Thank you, and thanks to our Rabbi Mendel - we will be grateful for what you did for the rest of our lives!”



Alina with Valentin and Galina during their encounter in Israel. | Photo: C4I

The Almighty is our Hiding Place

■ Koen Carlier

Aliyah Field Worker | Christians for Israel Ukraine

The special military operation started by Russia on 24 February has been ongoing for over five months now. Although everyone thought that Ukraine would be overrun in one or two months, the reality is different on the ground.

At the beginning of the war, thousands of Jews fled from the violence to neighbouring countries and from there to Israel! We were prepared for this months in advance. Therefore we were able to help many Jewish refugees with our large and smaller evacuation buses, shelters and transportation to neighbouring countries.

In June, it was slightly calmer, but now that residential areas, shopping centres and office buildings are being targeted frequently, we once again see an increase of requests to help with evacuations, especially from young mothers with children and elderly people over 60 years old who are not required to stay in Ukraine under the mobilisation laws.

On Thursday, 14 July, Vinnitsya in western Ukraine was hit by rocket attacks from the Black Sea, killing 25 people, including three small children who happened to be in the area. There are still more than 40 people missing and more than 90 seriously wounded.

During our evacuation trips to the East, we regularly heard explosions but never imagined that rockets would land on Vinnitsya, which is very far from the front line.

On that day, two minibuses were on their way with Jewish refugees from Mariupol and from towns near Donetsk to our shelter in western Ukraine. Among them was a young mother with two small children and Svetlana, a bedridden and weak old lady of 89 who had survived the Holocaust.

Svetlana unfortunately had a heart attack and passed away in Moldova before she could fly to Israel. Her daughter and another family member, who was travelling with Svetlana, stayed in Moldova for the funeral before continuing their journey to Israel.

The war is far from over, and: ‘Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north and save yourself to Zion’ remains a reality for many. For as long as we can, we will continue to help in a practical way, knowing that the Almighty is our hiding place!



89-year-old Svetlana with her daughter on her way to Moldova. | Photo: C4I

Emergency Campaign Ukraine Continues

The war is still a daily reality for our team in Ukraine. We continue our help to the Jewish communities in Ukraine and assist Jews that want to flee to the Promised Land. Your prayers and support are very much appreciated.

Your support for our emergency campaign is still very important! Any amount is welcome! To donate, complete the coupon on page 16.

Transport for a Jewish refugee

\$ 110 NZD

Transport for a small family

\$ 635 NZD

One bus

\$ 6315 NZD

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL NEW ZEALAND

Singapore Celebrates 74th Anniversary



Ambassador Sagi Karni with our VIP guests. | Photos: C4I Singapore



His Excellency Ambassador Sagi Karni and Kenneth Khoo of C4I Singapore cutting the birthday cake.

■ Kenneth Khoo Christians for Israel Singapore

What a joy to be able to organise this very special event. The Israeli Embassy in Singapore has not been able to organise this celebration for the last three years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This event was held at the YMCA Singapore on 14 May 2022 and we were privileged to have His Excellency, the

Israeli Ambassador join us for this event. We were also blessed with the presence of the General Secretary and CEO of the YMCA, Ms. Wu Mei Ling.

We had 120 brothers and sisters that joined us in this event and they all came from different churches in Singapore.

We began the evening with showing the corporate video of Christians for Israel International. We then played the

SOS Ukraine video showing what our brave heroes in Ukraine did to bring the Jews back to their homeland and fulfilling God's prophecy that He will bring His people back home to the Holy Land.

Ambassador Sagi Karni expressed his thanks to Christians for Israel for inviting him to attend this celebration. He invited all guests to Israel and ended by reading *Psalms 122* in English and Hebrew.

Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast 2022

■ Cornelis Kant Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

Over 300 Christians from 38 countries gathered in Jerusalem in June for the sixth annual Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. The gathering follows the biblical command to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem as it says in *Psalms 122:6*. Jewish rabbis and Israeli Members of the Knesset also attended this two-day Prayer event in Jerusalem. Every year this prayer event takes place upon invitation by Members of Knesset. This year Mrs Tatiana Mazarsky and Mrs Gila Gamliel were our guest hosts in the Knesset.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog welcomed the audience with a video speech and expressed his gratitude to the Christian communities for standing with Israel.

Several Christians for Israel leaders attended this prayer event. "Through prayer, we can change things," Chiara Canciani from Christians for Israel, Italy, commented. She added: "We can change history and ask God to do His will on earth. Because it's written in the Bible, we should pray for the peace of Israel and the peace of Jerusalem. So, this is an assignment that God gave us."

Former US Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann, and co-founder of this prayer event, said: "We are trying to be obedient to the Word of God, which is to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We've seen miracles because of those prayers, and I have no doubt we will see further miracles this time as well,"

A variety of speakers addressed the audience, including Albert Veksler, director of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast and Joel Rosenberg, writer. Former US Ambassador David Friedman thanked Christian Zionists for their role in prayer for Israel and standing with Israel. He highlighted the importance of the Christian community's stand with the Jewish people and the State of Israel: "Israel now is a strong country. It's a moral country. It is leading the



The surprise visit of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. | Photo: Christians for Israel International

world in so many ways. And much of that is because of the support it gets from the outside. And no one supports Israel like the Christian Zionists."

A special guest and speaker this year was Nick Vujicic of Life Without Limbs ministry: "We know how close Israel is to God's heart and that all of us are praying. We're here representing the Christian worldwide community to let our Israeli friends and brothers and sisters know that they are not alone, that we stand with them," He added: "It's a privilege and an honour to further the bridge between Christians and Jews because we all know that without the Jewish faith, the Christian faith is not there whatsoever."

As a complete surprise, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the event for a short time and

addressed the audience. Afterwards he asked Nick Vujicic to pray. An impressive moment for all of us.

Rabbi Yehuda Glick told us that over the last decade an increasing number of Jews and Christians visit the Temple Mount to pray there, even though this is officially not allowed by the Muslim administration of the Temple Mount. He called upon all Christians worldwide to come to Jerusalem and to pray on the Temple Mount.

Since its beginnings in 2017, the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast has grown tremendously, and it's been held in 15 nations including the US (in Dallas), Rome, The Hague and Tallin in Europe, and Kampala and Ghana in Africa. It is always encouraging to attend this prayer event, to join in prayers, to listen to good speeches and to meet many brothers and sisters worldwide.



CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand
and
South Pacific Edition
August 2022

Israel Returns to the Polls

■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director | Christians for Israel NZ

Israel will hold legislative elections once again on 1 November to elect the members of the 25th Knesset. On 30 June, a bill was passed to dissolve the Knesset, following a number of legislative defeats that saw the governing coalition without a majority and unable to function. The coming election will be the fifth since April 2019, and one can only imagine the feeling in Israel as voters face the electoral process once again. Inside our NZ insert, Joanna Moss brings us an analysis of this next phase in the Israeli electoral saga.

Aside from the frustrations, instability and tension, it is important to also recognise that this situation could only arise in a dedicated democracy, the only true democracy in the Middle East. Whilst Israelis may groan at the thought of facing yet another election, Palestine Media Watch warns that Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas has continued to implement fundamental and strategic changes to the Palestinian political system, effectively now making it a dictatorship. The PA parliament – which has not operated since 2006 – is completely dismissed. Despite promises of elections, none have ever materialised, and the Palestinian Authority Constitution (the ‘Basic Law’) has been abandoned as Abbas’ source of executive power in favour of the constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Fatah – which he leads.

Our team has worked hard to once again bring you the facts and commentary, presenting a side of Israel-centric events that is simply not reported. Our NZ insert, especially, brings this home so our readers can determine the truth for themselves. Faced with constant promotion of blatant anti-Israel lies and deception, including here in New Zealand, Dr Sheree Trotter shares a piece entitled ‘Addressing the False Narrative’, and International Law specialists Prof. Gregory Rose and Mr Andrew Tucker give a considered commentary on why Palestine is not even a State. Given the recent report exposing the antisemitism and incitement of hatred in UNRWA schools, it is difficult to see how new generations in the PA territories will be any less violent in their drive to destroy Israel. As long as the rest of the world ignores the ridiculous double-standards being used to demonise and delegitimise Israel, while terrorist organisations camp out on Israel’s borders largely unopposed, and whilst such hatred is being taught to successive generations of PA



Justice Minister Gideon Saar and Minister of Defense Benny Gantz hold a press conference announcing they are merging their parties ahead of the upcoming election, in Ramat Gan, 10 July 2022. | Photo: Flash90

and Gaza students – directly funded by UN-member nations – peace still seems a long way off.

As Israel will (hopefully!) be announcing the members of its Knesset in November, our Israel Study Tour 2022 in association with Rhema Media should be winging towards Tel Aviv. Taking New Zealanders to visit the Holy Land with the very best itinerary, logistics and guides that we can possibly provide is an important part of our work. With so much uninformed or just plain deceitful ‘information’ being masqueraded as ‘facts’ about Israel, we have come to recognise that there is simply no better way

information about our next Study Tour.

In an encouraging move, we are delighted to learn that New Zealand has been accepted as an Observer by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Whilst the New Zealand government has not given any indication at this stage of any movement towards adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, it is nevertheless a positive step. Perry Trotter of the Holocaust and Anti-Semitism Foundation has written on this recent move. We also bring a fantastic study from Keith Buxton, and a very interesting application on the ‘9th of Av’ from Enoch Lavender.

The coming election will be the fifth since April 2019, and one can only imagine the feeling in Israel as voters face the electoral process once again.

to show people the truth than to actually take them there – to see for themselves. We have been hugely encouraged by the number of our fellow New Zealanders ready to visit Israel after such a long period of uncertainty, and we know that our Israeli brothers and sisters are looking forward to welcoming us back. Watch this space for more

As always, we are extremely grateful for your ongoing support as we strive to bring the truth about Israel and God’s ongoing work there. We trust this will be a blessing to you. Thank you so much for your time, do enjoy this edition of *Israel and Christians Today*.

OUR 2022 TOUR IS NOW FULLY BOOKED

Expressions of Interest for
Journey to Israel 2023

Our tour to Israel in November this year is now fully booked.

If you would like to join our 2023 tour, please contact us with an ‘Expressions of Interest’.

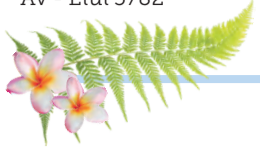
Please email info@c4israel.org.nz with your name(s), and contact details, with ‘EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST 2023’ in the subject line.

We will advertise our 2023 tour when details are confirmed.

CHRISTIANS FOR
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Here We Go Again...

Joanna Moss

Going, going, gone. Yes, Israel's government did indeed collapse as so many had predicted. Now comes the next phase – the interim government heading into another election campaign. In a surprise move to some, PM Bennett handed over the reins to newly-minted PM Yair Lapid and swapped roles, according to the coalition agreement. Then Bennett announced his retirement from politics shortly before President Biden arrived. Ayelet Shaked is now heading Bennett's Yamina Party.

Israel is about to go into the summer recess, which means the Knesset won't be sitting for an extended period. Things had got rather ugly. Many Israelis will be thrilled that the infighting in the chamber will stop. Meantime government must go on governing, albeit in an interim capacity with limited powers. At least they passed the budget. This instability does not bode well for Israel's security position or international standing, let alone the cost of another election estimated to be NIS 2.9 Billion (\$USD 840 Million)

But unlike NZ, the election cost is borne disproportionately by the small-medium-sized businesses (43-53%) because each election requires a day off work. Remember, in Israel, the weekend is half Friday for some, but mainly only Friday night and Saturday. Imagine the uproar if a suggestion were made to vote on Shabbat. Curiously, many vote in advance and use Election Day as a day off with family. However, at least it cuts down on voting lines.

System or People to Blame?

But what of the collapse and move to yet another election? Is it the fault of the system or more a case of bickering MKs who just can't seem to make it work? You know the two Jews, three opinions argument. After all, like NZ, it's a case of voting for the party based on the party list and then forming a coalition of 60-plus MPs. There are no constituent seats in the Knesset. It's ideology, not the area you live in, that counts. On paper, forming a government in Israel should be straightforward; after all, the voting public is decidedly right-wing, so it should be a case of just how right-wing the government is. Not so. The current government reinvigorated the Left by making it the keystone party, and, with the support of the milder of the Arab parties, got the coalition across the line. The first time in history, an Arab party was in government, representing a sea-change in Israeli politics. Arab voter turnout is traditionally relatively low. (Like the Maori seats here), meaning either the voters saw no point in voting, were happy with the government or didn't like their politicians. But this could change.

Could an Election be Avoided?

Theoretically, if the current politicians could put together a new coalition, it could happen. The President would have to be satisfied. But they voted to dissolve Parliament, sealing their fate. There is an inbuilt disincentive as Lapid would have to agree to step down, a position an interim PM is unlikely to want because being PM gives you extra media coverage and profile.

Israel's Voting System

A test of a voting system is whether it suits the make-up of society and national character. In many ways, Israel's voting system suits the country. There are many different distinct groups within Israeli society based on heritage and religion or lack thereof, with different positions on key issues. These groups form political parties around charismatic leaders and then make alliances with other parties. Being a party leader is important for profile. Only some parties hold primaries for their party lists. It's a very representative and flexible system with scope to chop and change politicians and alliances; thus, parties come and go. People who like stability and major parties would not be impressed, but for a diverse and rapidly growing society, it seems to work on paper.



Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Yair Lapid and outgoing Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, exchange their seats at the parliament following the dissolution of the Knesset, at the assembly hall of the Israeli Parliament, in Jerusalem, on 30 June 2022. | Photo: Flash90

For those who would like an overview of the election back-drop, try this clip - "*Understanding Israeli Politics: Right, Left, Elections, Netanyahu & Everything in Between | Unpacked*" <https://youtu.be/55UxLCjHwlc>. From the comments, even Israelis thought it was a good summary! It begins with identifying the "Tribes of Israel" by whether you are Jewish or Arab, religious or secular, live in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv or a working-class area.

The Elephant in the Room

The current ruling coalition is punctuated by those who will and those who won't sit with former PM Benjamin Netanyahu; mostly, they won't. So the next question is whether Netanyahu will remain the leader of Likud, the largest party or will someone else take over? Various names have been raised, like Yuli Edelstein and Nir Barkat, the former mayor of Jerusalem, but they have died down. Another option is whether Netanyahu would consider stepping down or at least aside as PM, but perhaps retaining the Foreign Affairs portfolio? Whether that would be agreeable to others remains a question. Former PM Netanyahu has held the reins for more years than any other person, and some feel his time is over. The question is whether he does, and it does not look likely. Like many charismatic leaders of long duration, they believe they are indispensable and tend to cannibalise any competition within and thus make the party faithful more dependent upon their success. He may be banking on capitalising on the failures of the coalition in garnering extra support. But he cannot go on forever. One day the political landscape in Israel will be post-Netanyahu.

Key Issues

The key issues will be who is tough on security and can primarily handle Iran and the situations on both the northern border and Gaza. Netanyahu is positioning himself as the king of security. Then there's the question of the American relationship and the Abraham Accords. Israel remains dependent on US military aid. Another issue is the Settlements – will the government annex any part of Judea and Samaria? Or be forced into a Two-state solution favoured by the Liberal Left in both the US and Israel. Domestically, the big issues are the cost of housing and inflation on an already expensive living base.

Is the Threshold Set Right?

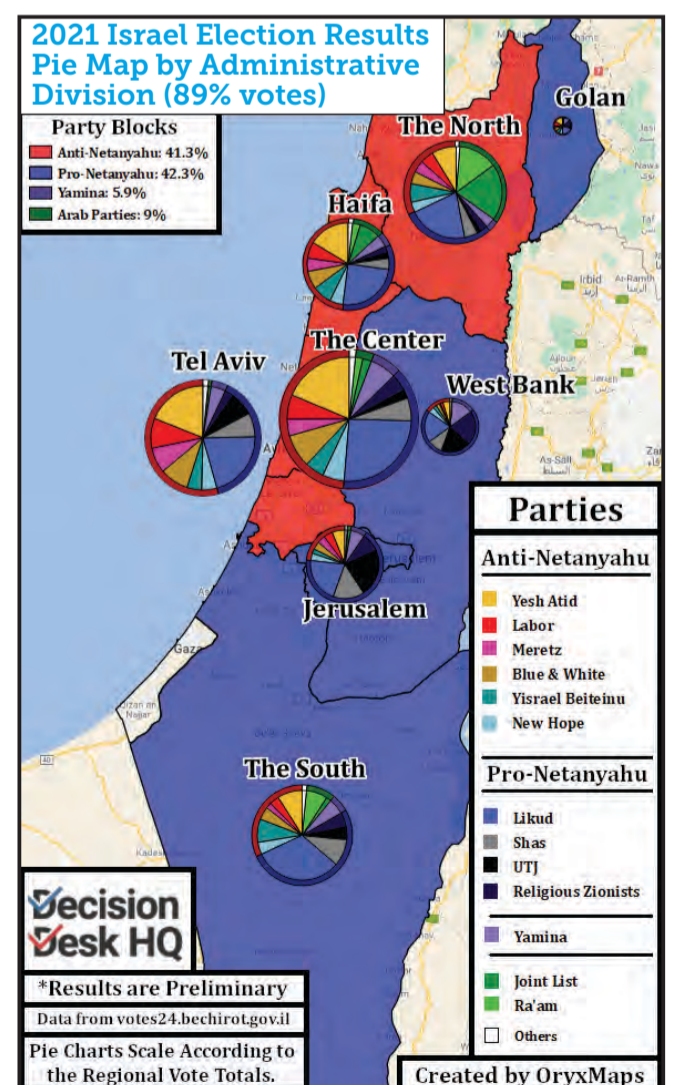
The party threshold matters because with many parties standing, several parties don't make the cut in every election and some just squeeze in. Currently, it is set at 3.25%, meaning four seats (NZ 5%). Previously it was 2% up from 1.5% and 1%. Forming alliances before the election can be very beneficial and help to get marginal parties over the line. Notice it's the same wasted vote issue we face in NZ. When it's tight, wasted votes can make the difference, as we see in Israel.

Can a Stalemate be Avoided?

Voter positions did not change much over the course of the last few elections reinforcing the stalemate. So the question is, have voters' opinions changed and/or will the politicians have a change in heart over whether they will sit with Netanyahu? The latter seems unlikely.

Expect a Brutal Campaign

Every vote counts in a tight election, and getting people out to vote is critical. Some may stay home in protest. Voter turnout by those who previously didn't vote could be a decisive factor. Expect fighting between similar parties and candidates vying for crucial votes in the centre and centre-right. Polls suggest the right-wing coalition could gain a decisive win. But a lot can happen before Election Day – 1 November. A week is a long time in politics, let alone months.



These are administrative regions. The Tel-Aviv region includes suburbs e.g. Orthodox Bnei Brak and the Jerusalem region includes commuter areas. It shows the significance of the Center split almost 50:50 Pro/Anti and the large size of the North vote with significant Arab component.



'Palestine' is Not a State

■ Prof Gregory Rose & Andrew Tucker

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

Many states have recognised 'Palestine' as a state, and some others (like Australia) are considering doing so. However, recognising Palestine as a state is highly problematic under international law.

Palestine isn't a State under International Law

First of all, 'Palestine' is not a state. While statehood recognition is primarily a political act, and states are free to recognise any territorial entity as a state, they should not do so if the entity in question does not, for some fundamental reason, qualify as a state under principles of international law.

The test of Statehood endorsed by customary international law is reflected in article 1 of the Montevideo Convention. A state consists of four elements: a permanent population, a defined territory, an effective government, and the capacity to enter into foreign relations. While these conditions are not necessarily exhaustive in all circumstances, and while the balance between them may vary in particular instances, it is clear that these four Montevideo criteria constitute the presumptive paradigm.

The key element is sovereignty or independence from the control of other states. It would take a formidable argument of exception, buttressed by clear proof, to displace the rule that the Montevideo criteria are required in order to display Statehood in international law.

This means that in order to be a state, an entity must be independent of other state legal orders. An entity that has consented to another State managing its foreign relations, or has granted extensive territorial governance rights to another State, may be said not to be 'sovereign' – 'a fortiori where the claimant in question never had those competencies to grant to third States.'

'Palestine' is clearly not (yet) a State under these general principles of international law, as was recognised in 2021 even by the International Criminal Court. The main issue is that the Palestinian Authority (PA) lacks independence and sovereignty over territory.

The Palestinian Authority was created under the Oslo Accords, which granted governance powers in Areas B and C to Israel. The PA has no control in Gaza, which is ruled by Hamas. Israel has full control over Area C in the West Bank. Even in Areas A and B of the West Bank, the PA's jurisdiction is limited under the Oslo Accords.

The Palestinians argue that the reason they do not enjoy such independence and sovereignty is because Israel is occupying their land. But that is a false and untrue position. The land does not belong to the Palestinians; its status is disputed and can only be resolved by a negotiated agreement. In Area A of the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority has extensive powers, and the only reason Israel is maintaining a military administration in the other parts of the West Bank (Areas B and C) is because the PLO consistently refuses every offer that is made to grant them more rights and freedoms.

Ignoring the governing principles of Statehood would pave the way to random acts of international recognition of States. There are many other examples of peoples or non-state actors claiming Statehood or independence. For example, the Basque in Spain, Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, Pattani in Thailand, Uighur in China, Maoris in New Zealand, and Aboriginals in Australia. If Palestine is recognised as a state, why should these peoples and entities also not be recognised as states?

Palestinians don't have a right to Statehood

It is, of course, a principle of international law that peoples have political rights to independent self-government. However, the legal principle of self-determination does not prescribe specific forms or structures for self-government. There will be different political outcomes in each instance.

In the limited context of decolonisation, colonised people have a right to Statehood. However, the



Illustrative: Protesters gather in Tel Aviv on 6 June 2020, to denounce Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank. | Photo: Times of Israel

Palestinian Authority is not a colony, and Israel does not claim colonial sovereignty. Outside the decolonisation context, people with a right to self-determination do not have an automatic legal right to Statehood. Sometimes it is argued that people in circumstances of extreme repression should have a right to secession. However, this is not a right existing as a matter of international law.

The Palestinian people's right to self-determination is thus not a right to Statehood under international law. Although Statehood is a political goal, it is not a legally prescribed requirement. This means that Israel is not obliged to achieve Palestinian Statehood. Neither is Israel nor any other State obliged to recognise Palestine as a State under the current facts and laws.

The Oslo Accords would be undermined

Recognising Palestine as a state would also breach the Oslo Accords. These agreements created the Palestinian Authority and gave Palestinians significant autonomous governmental independence in Gaza and Areas A and B of the 'West Bank'. The Oslo Accords are binding until either party abandons them (which is so far not the case).

Israel and the PLO agreed in the Oslo Accords on a pathway to achieve further Palestinian self-determination. The intention was (and remains) that negotiations would resolve outstanding issues in dispute (Jerusalem, settlements, borders, security etc.). The Oslo Accords do not specify what the end result of negotiations will be. They do not ensure that the Palestinians will achieve Statehood. The Accords do not even mention Statehood. Treating Palestine as a State, or encouraging the PLO, Hamas or Palestinian Authority to act as a State beyond the limited jurisdiction the Palestinian Authority has under the Oslo Accords would frustrate (render null) the Oslo Agreements and infringe Israel's rights under them.

Recognition would breach Israel's rights

Recognising Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank, Gaza, or East Jerusalem would infringe on Israel's sovereignty. Israel has legitimate (and legally strong) claims to territorial sovereignty over these territories. It has agreed to negotiate with the PLO with a view to possibly compromising its rights, but in the meantime, it has never abandoned its rights.

Uses and threats of Palestinian force undermine the rationale for recognition of Statehood

There is another very fundamental problem with Palestinian Statehood. States must be peace-loving to join the community of nations. They may not be admitted as members of the United Nations if they use force or threaten force against other States (UN Charter, Articles 2 and 4). The Palestinian Authority, Hamas and the PLO all promote 'jihad' and the use of force (both armed attacks and terror) to destroy a neighbouring state: the State of Israel. This is clearly illegal. Recognising these entities as a 'state' would undermine the premises of mutual respect and recognition, which was to achieve mutual peace, as originally conceived under the Treaty of Westphalia (1648).

Anti-Zionism, NZ & the IHRA Definition

■ Perry Trotter

Founder | Holocaust and Antisemitism Foundation | Aotearoa New Zealand

In recent decades it has been a go-to strategy for antisemites to clothe their hatred in the garb of anti-Zionism. In contexts where open hostility toward individual Jews and diaspora communities is frowned upon, antagonism toward the state of the Jews frequently wins a free pass.

As has been observed, antisemitism adapts itself to the values and perceived priorities of the period. The religious values of the Middle Ages and the racist ideas of the Nazi period have largely fallen from favour, thus providing less fuel for antisemitism. Instead it is the language and framing of social justice that presently help to keep the fires of antisemitism burning in the West.

Calumnies against Israel cast her as an international pariah, an apartheid state and a colonialist occupier displacing an ancient indigenous population. The facts of history and realities on the ground have done little to dampen the impact of a narrative that has now established deep roots in academia and mainstream media.

Thus the Holocaust and Antisemitism Foundation welcomes the recent announcement that New Zealand has been accepted as an Observer by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. While this does not mean that New Zealand has, or will, adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, it is a first and important step toward that goal.

Founded in 1998, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance is an intergovernmental agency seeking to strengthen and promote Holocaust education, remembrance and research internationally. To date 35 nations have become full members.

In regard to anti-Zionism, the strength of the IHRA definition rests in the examples included with the definition itself. Addressed directly are the right of Jewish self-determination and the double standards applied to the Jewish state.

More broadly, engagement with IHRA will strengthen the work of those seeking to protect and sustain a faithful telling of the events of the Holocaust, memorialisation, research, and the all important work of education.

We commend those who have taken the important step to take up observer status with IHRA.

Embassy News

In the Cook Islands



In June, Ambassador Ran Yaakoby concluded an incredible first visit to the Cook Islands, where he met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Culture. The Ambassador participated in a series of productive talks, focused on trade, climate, and the delivery of aid and agricultural training through MASHAV (*Israel Agency for International Development Cooperation*).

Independence Day



Ambassador Yaakoby was delighted to join in celebrating the 60th anniversary of Samoa's independence. Israel shares a strong bond of friendship with Samoa and looks forward to the continuation of our close diplomatic relations.

Agritech Dinner

Ambassador Yaakoby was delighted to participate in the Agritech dinner with Minister of Economic and Regional Development Stuart Nash MP at New Zealand Parliament. The event organised by Agritech NZ was attended by industry leaders to discuss the future of agritech and explore opportunities for international collaboration. Following the success of the Israel - New Zealand Agritech Summit earlier this year, we look forward to promoting further collaboration between Israel and New Zealand's agritech ecosystems.

Dead Sea Guardians

In July, the Ambassador, together with embassy staff, attended a SOLD OUT screening of the *Dead Sea Guardians* at the Roxy Cinema in Wellington which was part of the Documentary Edge Festival. We want to thank the team at *Doc Edge* for their support in continuing to include Israeli documentaries in their festival programme as well as all the people who came out in support of the festival



• Congratulations to @MFATNZ, who is the newest observer country to the IHRA!
#IHRAinStockholm
#TogetherForImpact

• In the effort to stop hate and Holocaust distortion, Israel will be President of the Intl' Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Addressing the False Narrative

■ Sheree Trotter

Author | Indigenous Coalition for Israel

At the end of May, Stuff published an article I wrote regarding the media coverage of the shooting of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. I was responding to an op-ed that referred to Israel's presence as a "settler-colonial occupation of other people's lands". I discussed the way in which the media was quick to accuse Israel of deliberately targeting Abu Akleh, while ignoring the context and background to the incident. This excerpt from the article addresses the false Palestinian narrative that dominates our news reporting.

How is it that the world routinely turns a blind eye to the murder of Israelis? Partly, it's due to a dominant narrative that posits Israel as a colonialist foreign occupying force that has progressively displaced an indigenous people through ethnic cleansing. However, this popular narrative bears little relationship to reality.

Jews are the indigenous people of the regions of Judea (Judea and Jew both derive from Judah, a son of Jacob/Israel) and Samaria, also known as the West Bank. It is in Israel that Jews had their ethnogenesis, developed their unique culture and maintained a continuous presence for more than 3000 years. This despite expulsions and dispossession at the hands of successive colonising powers.

In the 19th century Jews returned to their ancestral land in greater numbers and Europeans and Arab leaders alike recognised that the land belonged to the Jews. The British Mandate for Palestine came about in much the same way as Mandates for Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen - each carved from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, defeated in World War I.

Palestinians have recently commemorated Nakba which they argue was a "systematic transfer and replacement" of their people. However, for Israel, the war that broke out following the Declaration of Independence on 15 May 1948 was defensive and



Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed while covering a raid in a refugee camp in Jenin.

existential. Attacked by five Arab armies, the fledgling Jewish state fought for its life. Three years after the Holocaust, and during a period in which the world shut its doors to all but a few Jewish refugees, Israel had no other choice.

In contrast, the Arabs in British Mandate Palestine had options. The Arab Higher Command urged Arab inhabitants to flee to neighbouring states (in many cases their birthplaces or the homes of relatives), with the promise they could return once the Jews had been defeated. Or they could stay, as many chose to do, and become citizens of the new state. Today Arab Israelis serve in the highest levels of society.

Nor was the expulsion of approximately 850,000 Jews from Arab lands, where they'd lived for centuries, a systematic "transfer or replacement of Palestinians". Jews in Arab lands were viciously beaten or murdered, banished from homes and forced to leave behind property. The new Jewish state absorbed all such refugees.

While the Palestinian narrative garners western support, it is a political construct

based more on fantasy than fact. This narrative readily weds itself to classic anti-semitic tropes to demonise Israelis. In addition, religious ideology drives much of the hatred towards the Jewish state.

The recent clashes at the Temple Mount were incited by Palestinian leaders claiming that Al Aqsa Mosque was under threat, a proven tactic for inciting the masses. The recent axe attack occurred after a Hamas leader called for Israelis to be killed with cleaver, axe, knife or gun. Many Palestinians are brought up with an ideology of Jew hatred pushed from childhood, through school curricula and in the mosques. Incentivisation to kill Jews in a pay-to-slay policy drives some to become martyrs.

The only peace they envision is one in which Israel ceases to exist - that is what "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" means. With Iranian-backed terrorist groups Hezbollah, to the north, and Hamas, to Israel's south, and western commentators propagating a false Palestinian narrative, violence and contention look likely to continue.

Changing of the Guard

After 23 years of faithful service, NZ's Honorary Consul to Israel, Mr Gad Propper OBE, (pictured) retired in early 2022. The position of an honorary consul is a governmental appointment of an able and suitable citizen of another country (the host country) to represent that country's interests in the host country. Often such people have personal or business connections to the other country as well as language skills.

Mr Propper remains a senior businessman in Israel, holding a number of high-profile directorships and advisory roles, including Chairman of L'Oreal Israel and a member of the Board of Tel Aviv University and Tel Aviv Museum of Art, plus many chambers of commerce. Admirably, he was also Dean of the Consular Corps in Israel. NZ was

blessed to have someone of his calibre and dignity to represent us. Mr Propper is best known as the Osem CEO, coming from a prominent business family that started the large Osem food business. It's famous for the puffed maize peanut snack food Bamba, a favourite of locals and tourists alike. Such was his service that in the 2017 New Year's Honours list, Mr Propper was awarded an honorary ONZM.

His successor, Isaac Bentwich MD, accepted his appointment as New Zealand Honorary Consul to Israel on 16 June and took up the role on 1 July 2022. Dr Bentwich has long connections with NZ and even lived in Nelson. Currently, he is the founder and CEO of Quris Technologies, a biotech company, and the founder and Chairman of Ripples

Technologies. Prior to this, he founded and was CEO of CropX from 2013-2017, based in San Francisco, Rosetta Genomics and Pegasus Medical. CropX

technology is based on technology developed at NZ CRI Landcare Research.

Previously, he expressed interest in seeing better alignment of NZ and Israeli businesses, knowing both. He's not all work; spiritually, Bentwich authored a book on Gita, translating the ancient script as well as being a teacher of yoga and meditation.





Abandoning Fatherless Christianity

■ **Zac Waller**

Executive Director of HaYovel

Father figures are important. They play a very unique and powerful role. A good father stabilises, affirms, casts vision, and builds confidence. No other person could say, “See that goal, you can make it,” “You’re doing good,” or, “I’m proud of you,” and have the same impact.

Fifteen times in the Old Testament and seventeen times in the New Testament, Abraham is referred to as ‘father’. Even Yeshua the Messiah gives him that title in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (*Luke 16*), and the very first verse of the New Testament is very careful to show that Yeshua is a son of Abraham. Notice that the genealogy does not start with Adam or Noah.

Eleven times in the Old Testament and five times in the New Testament, Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is referred to as ‘the God of Abraham’. This is amazing. God uses Abraham’s name to identify Himself!

In *Matthew 8* and *Luke 16*, Yeshua equates sitting with Abraham to being in heaven! When you think of heaven, what do you imagine? God’s throne, Yeshua, and... Abraham?

Upon realising that she had been chosen to bring the Messiah into the world, Mary burst forth into song and proclaimed that God had “Helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.” (*Luke 1:54-55*)

When Zacharias’ mouth was opened, knowing that his son would usher in the Messiah, he proclaimed that God had remembered: “His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham.” (*Luke 1:72-73*)

Did you catch that? The Messiah had come to earth and Mary and Zacharias immediately connected Him to Abraham! Father Abraham is still very relevant even after the Messiah arrived!

Fifteen years ago, no one came to this beautiful place. Now, Christians and tour agencies are beginning to discover Israel’s mountain region and are insisting on visiting Israel’s

Now, here is the kicker. *Galatians 3:7-9* says, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

Wait! God preached the Gospel to Abraham? How could the Gospel have existed before Yeshua came into the world? I know that I need to believe in Yeshua, but do I also need to ‘believe Abraham’?

Yeshua, Mary, Zacharias, and Paul all understood something about Abraham that was critical to our faith. Let’s take a closer look at the Gospel passage in *Genesis 12*.

In these verses God makes seven promises to Abraham —He will make him a great nation, He will bless him and make his name great, he would be a blessing, those who bless him will be blessed and those who curse him will be cursed, and through him all the families of the earth will be blessed.

According to Paul, this is the Gospel! God’s master plan of salvation for the world was to find a man who was willing to follow Him, make him into a nation, and use that nation to bring blessing to the entire earth. Abraham was that man and that is why he deserves the title of ‘father.’ He is the father of our faith.

The climax of this great vision is to see all the families of the earth blessed. It reminds me of the verse from *Isaiah 11:9*; “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” It is interesting that the verse leading up to that says, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.”

For thousands of years all nations outside of Israel, with



Elon Moreh in Samaria. | Photo by HaYovel

very few exceptions (that didn’t last long), have cursed Israel—they have “hurt and destroyed in all God’s holy mountain.” Perhaps in order to reach the climax of God’s promises in *Genesis 12*, we need to understand what leads up to the climax.

Has Abraham become a great nation? Yes. Has God blessed that nation? Yes. Has Abraham’s name become great? Yes! Have the nations learned that when they bless Israel they will be blessed and when they curse Israel they will be cursed? No! Have all the families of the earth been blessed by Abraham? Yes, but not the fullness of blessing that we will see.

What would happen if all nations began blessing Israel? Would they be blessed? Yes! Would we see a world revival like we have never seen before? Yes; I believe we would!

Is it possible that we have been so focused on the blessings that we have received from Abraham and his descendants—salvation, the Messiah, the Bible, etc... that we have somehow missed the fact that if we stop blessing Abraham we will cut off the flow of blessing?

The two words usually translated as ‘curse’ in *Genesis 12:3* are actually two different Hebrew words. The verse could be better translated as, “And I will curse him who lightly esteems you.” Have we lightly esteemed the nation of Israel and brought a curse upon ourselves?

Elon Moreh is one of my favourite locations to visit in all of Israel. The view is absolutely stunning. You can see for miles and miles in all directions. To the east, you can see the mountains of Jordan. The vast Tirzah valley lies before you as you face north, stretching from east to west. To the west are Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal; to the south, Shechem and distant Jerusalem.

This is the Biblical entry point to the land of Israel. The children of Israel came out of Egypt and entered here. Jacob came from Laban and re-entered here. Abram left Haran with Sarai, Lot, all their possessions, and the people they had gathered in Haran, and they went to the land of Canaan. Abram came to Shechem, to the Oak tree (Elon) of Moreh.

And then, in that very spot, the same voice who spoke all creation into existence spoke to our father Abraham and said, “to your descendants, I will give this land.” (*Genesis 12:7*) At that moment, Abraham knew that this was it! Israel was the land and his descendants were the people whom God had chosen to bring blessing to the entire earth.

I believe it is time for Christians to have an Abrahamic, Elon Moreh encounter with God and understand the

gospel that He preached to Abraham. It is time to highly esteem Israel. It is time to honour the Jewish People. It is time to see the whole earth filled with the knowledge of our great God!

Yeshua died so that you could be adopted into Abraham’s family. Your father Abraham is waiting to embrace you in his arms! Leave fatherless Christianity behind and join Biblical Christianity, where Yeshua, the King of Israel, is your king and Abraham is your father.

Once you have embraced Abraham as your father, I think he might say something like this: “Let’s keep going until all the families of the earth are blessed. We can do it together. You’re doing well and I’m proud of you.”

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” (*Malachi 4:5-6*)

Ha Yovel Vision and Mission: The world is against Israel’s right to live in their biblical homeland.

We bring Christians to Israel to serve the land and people, enabling them to connect with the land of their faith, restore Christian Jewish relations, and confirm Israel’s right to their ancestral homeland.

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If you want to partner with Ha Yovel in this glorious work and be the Christian foreigner the prophets wrote about, please reach us at: deon@hayovel.com or www.serveisrael.com

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CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL
NEW ZEALAND



Lessons for Life

- Facing Change, not with Fear but with Faith (part 1)

■ Keith Buxton

Former National Director of Bridges for Peace Australia

In recent years we have been and continue to be challenged by profound and often highly controversial changes affecting every area of life, such as politics and security, society and health, beliefs and values, education and morals. The prevalence and influence of rampant and frequently inappropriate social media opinions, 'woke culture' debates, and 'political correctness' certainly have not helped.

We will be helped however when God Himself calls us to make specific changes in life by adopting perspectives that He gives us in His Word. The following thoughts on facing such changes are drawn from the Torah portion 'Sh'lach' or 'Sh'lach Lecha', which was read on 25 June in synagogues throughout the world.

In my teaching I will be including a number of insights from Jewish rabbis and sages that shed some interesting light on this portion of the Torah. My focus in particular is to help readers learn from and be encouraged by what I like to call 'lessons for life.'

A brief overview of these three chapters in *Numbers - chapters 13-15*, will I think be helpful. This is the familiar and tragic story of a major crisis in the desert - the mission of the spies sent by Moses to scout out the land of Canaan as a future home for the Israelite people, and events that followed their report.

God instructs Moses to send twelve spies, one from each tribe, to discover what they can about Canaan. They are to report back on the quality of the land, the strength of the people who live there, and whether they live in fortified cities or out in the open. Moses also asks the spies to bring back some of the fruit of the land.

After 40 days the spies return from their mission and report to all of the Israelites their findings. They report that the land is indeed flowing with milk and honey, and they display samples of the wonderful fruit growing there.

But because of their lack of faith, He tells Moses that the Israelites will wander in the desert for 40 years and only their children, led by Joshua and Caleb, will survive and take possession of the land.

They say that the people who live there are strong and their cities are fortified. But ten of them have a negative outlook, declaring that "all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature... giants.... and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

They strongly discourage the people from entering the land of Canaan. But the other two spies, Caleb and Joshua, disagree and encourage the people to enter the land, telling them that with faith in God they can overcome every obstacle.

Sadly, the people side with the ten spies who give the negative report, even talk about returning to Egypt, and seem ready to stone Caleb and Joshua on the spot. God is angry at the Israelites and threatens to destroy them, but Moses intercedes for them and pleads with God to spare them. And God relents.

But because of their lack of faith, He tells Moses that the Israelites will wander in the desert for 40 years and only their children, led by Joshua and Caleb, will survive and take possession of the land.

Our Torah passage concludes with a few additional events and instructions, but we will note from among them only the command from God - in the final verses - that the Israelites wear *tzitzit*, or fringes, on the corners of their garments.



Artist's impression of the Spies Returning from Canaan, Numbers 13-25

There are three main issues that I want to address in this teaching. The first is that **change** is inevitable in life. This gives rise to the second issue, which is that change confronts us with challenges.

One of the particular challenges that this story presents us with is the need for us to deal personally with the **fear** that so often accompanies the inevitability of change. It is then that we discover the truth that God is with us in the experience of change, and through **faith** in Him and His Word we may experience the exciting future that He has prepared for us.

This Torah portion is perhaps the oldest spy story in history, and it begins with the wandering Israelites moving closer to the land of Israel and encamping in the wilderness of Paran, in the North-East Sinai Peninsula.

It was time for them to move into the land that God had

the turtle; he makes progress only when he sticks his neck out".

By and large, of course, the future is unknown; and it seems too risky perhaps to stick our neck out and step into the unknown - so we.... hold back. I'm reminded of the words of Jesus in *Luke 5:39* - "And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"

Neither Caleb nor Joshua could convince the Israelites that change was going to be OK. The people were gripped by the utterly false appeal of an imagined security back in the very land from which they had escaped, the land where they had experienced grinding persecution!

"Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." At least back there we know what to expect, they were saying. It might not be all that easy, but at least we know what's there. Amazing!

But are we so very different when confronted with significant change? We find comfort in familiar ways and familiar places. We can delude ourselves, however, and comfort turns out to be our enemy: we miss God's best.

God's people were terrified at the very thought of entering the land. Although it was clearly a land of much blessing (milk, honey, grapes), the people's focus was on their own welfare and comfort rather than the call of God upon their lives.

If you live totally for God, with the aim of pleasing and blessing Him, and bringing joy and blessing to others (and that pleases and blesses and brings great joy and glory to Him!), then know this:

Change will come; your life may well be hard; your risks will be great (at times you will fail) - but your joy will be full! You were created for this - to take risks for the cause of God.

Said the pioneer Christian missionary David Livingstone, "I'll go anywhere as long as it's forward." To balk at moving forward because it will thrust you into a season of change is to miss the joy that accompanies obedience to God. It's to miss the joy of living for God!

There was a very cautious man who never laughed or played;

He never risked, he never tried, he never sang or prayed.

And when one day he passed away his insurance was denied;

For since he never really lived they claimed he never died!

You must get involved to have an impact. No one is impressed with the win-loss record of the referee.

Continued on page 7

The 9th of Av Turnaround

■ Pastor Enoch Lavender

Living Way Christian Network | Melbourne, Australia

The 9th of Av is one of the saddest annual events on the Jewish calendar. On this day, the Jewish people mourn the destruction of Solomon's Temple, the burning of Herod's Temple, the crushing of the final Jewish rebellion against Rome, the expulsions of the Jews from England in 1290, Spain in 1492 as well as Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005 (which led to years of cross-border rocket attacks from Hamas). All these calamities have one disturbing feature in common: that they all 'happened' to occur on the 9th of Av.

It is as if the 9th of Av has been cursed in Jewish history. To understand this phenomenon better, let us take a closer look at the ministry of Jeremiah, the prophet and the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in his day.

The Destruction of Solomon's Temple

At the time of Jeremiah, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had consistently and stubbornly refused to listen to divine warnings of judgment.

We read in 2 Chr. 36:15-17 that God did not want judgment to come on His people, and 'rising early' He sent warnings – but the people mocked and despised the call to repentance. They persisted in their way until 'there was no remedy' and judgment came as foretold by Jeremiah and the other prophets – on the 9th of Av.

Looking back at the devastation of Jerusalem, Jeremiah records that God "has called an assembly against me to crush my young men;" (Lam 1:15). The word for 'assembly' here is 'moed' in Hebrew, meaning an appointed time.

Perhaps this explains how the 9th of Av became an appointed day of a curse that has followed the Jewish people through history.

The Time of Rejoicing is Coming

While much evil has happened on this day, the Scriptures foretell in *Zechariah 8:19* that the 9th of Av – known here as the fast of the 5th month – will one day be turned into a day of great rejoicing. How can this cursed day become a time of great joy?

The Jewish sages suggest that something truly amazing must be destined to happen on this day, perhaps even the coming of the Messiah Himself. The Messiah's return will indeed mark a period of 'restoration of all things' (*Acts 3:21*), including Him bringing in the final regathering of the



Jewish men pray at the Western Wall on the day of Tisha B'Av in the Old City of Jerusalem, on 17 July 2021. | Photo: Flash90

scattered Jewish people and the Messiah Himself reigning upon the restored throne of David in Israel (*Luke 1:32*). All the promises of God to the Jewish people will in that day be fulfilled, including her finally inheriting the complete land promised to Abraham.

But the greatest among all restorations that is coming will happen as the nation of Israel will look on 'Him whom they have pierced' (*Zechariah 12:10*), will mourn in repentance and on that day 'all of Israel will be saved' (*Romans 11:26*). Then He will comfort those who mourn in Zion (*Isaiah 61:3*) and turn their sorrow into joy. What a day it will be!

Making it Personal

Whether or not the Messiah actually returns on the 9th of Av, we know that one day God Himself will turn the great loss, sorrow and suffering of the Jewish people to joy. And where the nation of Israel has fallen into sin and departed from God's ways, we know that God has not abandoned His people and will one day lead them to repentance and restore them fully to Himself.

The message of the 9th of Av also brings hope to you and I as gentile believers. Some of us have endured great loss, yet the message of the 9th of Av is we believe in a God of restoration and hope. Others of us may have fallen into

sin and are living life under a cloud of condemnation and shame. Yet the God who has not given up on Israel despite her many mistakes has not given up on you and I either. And as we turn to Him and repent, He is truly faithful to restore us to Himself and to give us a new beginning. And in this way, our own personal '9th of Av' moments can be turned around into a day of great rejoicing.

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Continued from page 6

But getting involved in the game of life means you will face many unknowns and uncertainties and changes.

All of our plans for tomorrow's activities can be shattered by a thousand unknowns whether we stay at home, venture out onto the roads, or sail solo across the world's oceans. It's been well said that "you cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore" (French author André Gide).

Jessica Watson is an Australian sailor from my home community in Queensland who at the age of 16 became the youngest person to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around the world - a wonderful achievement. She left Sydney on 18 October 2009, sailed eastbound over the Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, eventually arriving back in Sydney just before her 17th birthday.

The reason for her journey? "I wanted to inspire people. I hated being judged by my appearance and other people's expectations of what a 'little girl' was capable of." This from someone who first had to overcome her fear of high seas.

My point simply is this. The risks and fears associated with change are built right into the very nature of our all too short lives. But the more you turn your back on the

inevitable changes that life brings, the more you die a little inside.... and you'll never inspire anyone.

Back to our Torah passage. A new chapter in their history faced the Israelites! Changes were inevitable - big changes. But God had given them some even bigger promises, and rock-solid assurances that He would be with them.

This raises an interesting thought that we will pick up later when we consider the place of faith in God's promises. You see, our need to check things out for ourselves may in fact reflect an underlying doubt that God really has everything in hand. Our trust in Him is shaky at best.

When faced with significant change in our lives we are prone to want to have all the i's dotted and the t's crossed. And so we organise everything ourselves - and we leave God out of the equation.

Resh Lakish, generally recognised as a giant of Torah study, interpreted the words *Sh'lach Lecha*, translated simply as 'send' in *Numbers 13:2*, to mean that God gave Moses discretion over whether to send the spies.

Sh'lach Lecha actually means 'send for yourself' or 'send on your behalf'. Resh Lakish read Moses' recollection of the matter in *Deuteronomy 1:23* that "the plan pleased me well" to mean that agreeing to send the spies pleased

Moses well - but not God.

God would have known what would be the tragic outcome of the spies' mission. Certainly He would have wanted the Israelites to advance into Canaan trusting totally in His promises and embracing the changes inevitable in moving forward.

Hadn't God parted the Red Sea and delivered Israel from the bonds of slavery? He had rained manna from heaven and poured water from a rock! Hadn't He led them by fire and by cloud?

God knows the end from the beginning. And God knows our hearts - intimately. We read in *Jeremiah 17:9-10* - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

As a Christian, I for one am grateful that through Jesus God has shown Himself to be a forgiving Father who knows and understands my heart - all my follies, failures and fears - and still loves me! It seems that the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran, however, simply could not overcome the fear barrier.

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

Philanthropists in Israel

In this new series, we bring you philanthropists who seek to promote the welfare of Israelites in Israel.

Sheldon Adelson



In January 2021, the Jewish world lost one of its most prolific funders with the passing of Sheldon Adelson (87 years old). His \$35 billion personal fortune ranked him #38 on the Forbes list.

Together with his wife Miriam, the Adelson Family Charitable Trust donates \$200 million annually to Jewish and Israeli causes.

Adelson credited this ethos to his father, who “kept a charity box for the poor in our house.” Charitable giving, he said, “is my humanitarian legacy. We’re prepared to pay billions.”

Sheldon Adelson was born in 1933 in Boston to a low-income Jewish family. His father, of Ukrainian and Lithuanian ancestry, drove a taxi. His mother, an immigrant from England, ran a knitting shop.

Adelson took to entrepreneurship early in life and, at age 12, borrowed \$200 from his uncle for a license to sell newspapers. At age 16, he borrowed \$10,000 from his uncle to start a candy-vending-machine business.

Through his first marriage, Adelson adopted three children. His son Mitchell died of a drug overdose, leading Adelson to crusade against legalising marijuana, considering it a ‘gateway drug’ to the cocaine and heroin that claimed his son’s life.

In 1991, Adelson met his second wife, Miriam, on a blind date. A child of Polish refugees, she grew up in Israel and achieved success as chief internist in the emergency room of Tel Aviv’s Rokach Hospital. She shared her husband’s opposition to drugs and founded a substance abuse clinic.

Adelson’s gift of \$70 million to Birthright – in honour of Israel’s 70th anniversary – solidified his leading position in Jewish philanthropy. “Before Israel was founded, my father always said he wished there was a place where Jewish people could live. He always wanted to go, but by the time I could send him, he was too old and too sick. I don’t want any kid to say they were too old or sick to visit Israel.”

Over the centuries, great philanthropists like Rothschild and Montefiore have dedicated themselves to meeting the critical needs of the Jewish people. In our generation, Sheldon Adelson carried that tradition proudly. May his memory be blessed.

The First and Second Aliyah

■ National Library of Israel

The beginning of the return to Zion, the first mass immigration wave to the Land of Israel after 2,000 years of exile, was called the ‘*First Aliyah*.’

In the last quarter of the 19th century, about 30,000 young people left their homes in Europe and Yemen and made their way to the Land of Israel where they laid the foundation for the new Hebrew settlement. This wave of immigration was part of a larger migration of Jews, who more commonly ended up in the major cities of Central and Western Europe and even other continents, including North and South America, Australia and South Africa.

The year 1882 is usually considered the start of the *First Aliyah*. Around the same time, a Jewish national movement that would eventually develop into the Zionist movement, began to form. The year 1904 is generally held as the end of the *First Aliyah* and the beginning of the second wave of immigration, known as the *Second Aliyah*.

The New Yishuv

During those 22 years, the members of the *First Aliyah* established new Hebrew settlements and agricultural communes that became the basis of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, known as the new *Yishuv*. These 32 colonies and agricultural farms encompass the story of the heroic pioneers who came to make the desert bloom. The establishment of the settlements laid the foundations for the development of the Hebrew agricultural economy, which is considered one of the *First Aliyah*’s great achievements. The establishment of agricultural projects such as the winery in Rishon Lezion and the purchase of land by philanthropists and organizations, the most prominent among them Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, are also regarded as major accomplishments.

Enormous difficulties and personal sacrifice accompanied the establishment and development of the farming colonies, which were the jewel in the crown of the new *Yishuv*. Among the first colonies established were Rishon Lezion, Zichron Yaacov, Rosh Pina and Petah Tikva. Later, Rehovot, Menahemia, Metula, Nes Ziona, Gedera, Hadera, Atlit and other colonies followed.

The New Jew

The idea of the ‘New Jew’—the aspiration for a new type of Jewish figure who was strong, sturdy, muscular, a farmer and a warrior—developed at the same time as the *First Aliyah*. The revitalised image was a sharp retort to the contemporary perception of the Jew, who was considered weak, cerebral and foreign in nature.

The reasons for the *First Aliyah* clearly explain its members’ passionate embrace of the new ideal: upheaval among Russian Jewry in the wake of the 1881–1882 pogroms, which strengthened the



1. First Aliyah: Children gathering grapes in Rehovot. 2. Working the fields in Rehovot. 3. Digging drainage in Hadera. 4. Second Aliyah, pioneers in Migdal. | Photos: The National Library of Israel and Wikimedia.

recognition of the need for a Jewish state; the rise of the Jewish Enlightenment and the acknowledgment that the solution for the Jewish people did not lie in the Diaspora; the development of a Jewish national movement embraced by many Jews who aspired to immigrate and build a productive life in the Land of Israel with the goal of establishing a Jewish state.

The image of the New Jew integrated organically into the spirit of the times. Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau, among the leaders of Zionism, encouraged the new ideal and instilled the understanding that establishing a state necessitated both a high level of physical ability as well as physical and mental resilience.

The Second Aliyah

The ‘*Second Aliyah*’ was the second mass wave of Jewish immigrants to arrive in the Land of Israel as part of Shivat Zion (the Return to Zion), which began in 1904 and lasted until the outbreak of WWI in 1914. During this decade, about 35,000 immigrants arrived, the vast majority coming from Eastern Europe, with a minority arriving from Yemen. Like the *First Aliyah*, the *Second Aliyah* took place on the backdrop of a global migration movement from Eastern to Western Europe, as well as to the Americas and Australia. Many of these immigrants were Jews, though only a minority chose to make their way to the Land of Israel. The scope of the *Second Aliyah* intensified with manifestations of antisemitism and pogroms that swept Eastern Europe.

The immigrant population was composed of four main groups: immigrants who joined the ‘*Old Yishuv*’ (traditional Jewish communities based mainly in the cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias and Safed); immigrants who settled in the new farming colonies and in new neighborhoods being built in various towns or cities; immigrants from Yemen, about half of whom went to

work in the farming settlements; and young people from Eastern Europe who hoped to create a new Zionist national society in the country.

Pioneers Who Left Their Mark

Most of the immigrants of the *Second Aliyah* joined the *Old Yishuv* or settled in the new neighborhoods being built at the time. The population increase in the cities led to impressive urban development, with the most prominent being the establishment of Tel Aviv, which began as a neighbourhood of Jaffa. Jerusalem and Haifa also received a boost with the development of new neighbourhoods and important public institutions.

While the number of young ideological pioneers was relatively low, they left a deep imprint on Zionist history and produced a generation of leaders for the Hebrew settlement and eventually the State of Israel. They established the first communal agricultural settlements, which began as cooperative farms and developed into kibbutzim and moshavim.

An idea that took shape in those years called for the employment of immigrants in agriculture, in the belief that “Hebrew labor” was essential to national revival. In practice, however, there was friction between the immigrant workers and their employers, and many farmers continued to use Arab workers. Another ideology advocated Jewish defense of the settlements, which led to the establishment of the Bar Giora group that later became the Hashomer organisation.

The difficult economic situation in the country and the poor living conditions dashed the hopes of many, leading to widespread frustration among the immigrants. It is estimated that at least half left the country within a few years. At the end of the period, the Jewish community numbered about 80,000 people.

Christians for Israel NZ 2022 CALENDAR

As we are more than halfway through 2022, we still have a few 2022 calendars left. If you would like a **FREE** calendar, contact us today. To order your **FREE** calendar, either email: info@cgisrael.org.nz, phone 09 525 7564 or complete the coupon on the back page and post it to: Christians for Israel NZ, PO Box 12006, Penrose, Auckland 1642

FREE



“Every Day is a Reason to be Grateful”

■ Sara van Oordt

Christians for Israel Netherlands

On 1 June, Moshe Lion, the Mayor of Jerusalem, visited the Netherlands for 24 hours. He opened the exhibition ‘Destination Jerusalem’ at Christians for Israel’s headquarters in Nijkerk and made a tour of the beautiful fishing village of Urk, where he met hundreds of friends from Israel. In between activities, he made time for an exclusive interview for our newspaper.

This morning you opened the exhibition ‘Destination: Jerusalem’ at our headquarters in Nijkerk. Can you tell us what you enjoyed most about it?

“It was a wonderful experience to be able to see and open the Jerusalem exhibition. I thought it looked like the original; it reminded me of my city, Jerusalem. You have done a tremendous job in building this exhibition. There is no doubt that I recommend everyone to go and see this exhibition.”

What do you consider the most beautiful place in Jerusalem?

“The Mahane Yehuda market. That’s really the heart of the city, almost 24 hours a day. I also really like Mishkenot Sha’ananim and the Western Wall.”

What is it like to be Mayor of the most controversial city in the world?

“That is a big and important question. It is a big responsibility. In Jerusalem, Jews, Muslims and Christians live together. Ultimately, we want to live together. As Mayor, I am responsible for ensuring that every resident of the city feels at home in our city and understands that we as a municipality are there for them.”

Do you think all residents experience it this way, or is there still work to be done?

“I admit that not everyone feels the way I would like them to feel. But we are improving the situation in the city. I feel responsible for all residents. We are building a lot of new classrooms: in the Orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods but also in the eastern part of the city. Unfortunately, there is a big gap between the east and the west of Jerusalem when it comes to education levels. Four years ago, we started to improve this.”

Do you believe education is the key to improving the situation?

“Education is one of the important keys to closing the



The Mayor of Jerusalem opened the exhibition ‘Destination Jerusalem’ by attaching a *mezuzah* at the entrance of the exhibition. On the left, HE Modi Ephraim, Israeli Ambassador to the Netherlands. | Photo: Jacco Klamer

gap. We have made a start. It is a long process, but we are up to the challenge.”

You are religious. Both Jews and Christians pray for the coming of Messiah. Suppose He comes tomorrow. Have you prepared your speech already?

“I am not sure if He will come tomorrow, but you have to pray for it. I think that when He comes, it will be a big miracle. We will welcome Him whenever He comes.”

As a religious Jew, does it have a special meaning for you that you are the Mayor of Jerusalem and not of, say, Tel Aviv?

Moshe Lion laughs: “Yes, it is part of my job that I get to welcome Messiah!”

The Mayor’s advisor, Eliran Baruch, joins the conversation: “In the Jewish prayer book, the *Siddur*, it says that we must build Jerusalem, and this is what we are doing”. Shai Doron, director of the Jerusalem Foundation, jokingly adds: “The Mayor of Tel Aviv can lie on the beach every day. He does not have to prepare for the coming of Messiah.”

When you retire, how would you like people to remember Moshe Lion, the Mayor of Jerusalem?

“That I built up Jerusalem. That I was able to forge links between the different population groups of Jerusalem.

Because we all have to live together in this city.”

As Mayor of Jerusalem, what was your most difficult moment, and what was your most joyful moment?

Moshe Lion pauses to think. “If I say that there are no difficult moments, it is not true. Every day is difficult in my position as Mayor. Because you never know what is going to happen and what problems will come your way. I would say the most difficult moment for me was the disaster in Meron (where 45 people died on 30 April last year). Twenty families from Jerusalem had lost their lives. That was incredibly sad. And if you ask me about my highlight: every day is a highlight. My ultimate dream was to be the Mayor of Jerusalem. So every day is a reason to be grateful.”

What is a Mezuzah?

The Hebrew word *mezuzah* means ‘doorpost’. According to tradition, the *mezuzah* is affixed to the doorpost at the entrance to a Jewish home as well as at the entrance to each of the interior rooms except for bathrooms. The *mezuzah* itself consists of a small scroll of parchment (*k’laf*) on which are written two biblical passages. The first is *Deuteronomy 6:4–9*, the second passage is *Deuteronomy 11:13–21*.

Shofar

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

Everyone knows the *shofar*, the ram’s horn. It is blown in small or large sizes during the services on Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), on Yom Kippur (Great Day of Atonement), and in the morning services in the month of Elul (preceding Rosh Hashanah). The original Biblical name of Rosh Hashanah is even a reference to it: the ‘day of blowing [of trumpets]’ (*Leviticus 23:24*).

In Biblical times the *shofar* also announced the Sabbath, the new moon, the feasts and the year of jubilee.

Most translations add the word ‘trumpets’ as a clarification. However, this translation actually creates a wrong association. It makes you think of a wind instrument made of copper or another metal. But the *shofar* is a horn of an animal. By the way,

silver trumpets were used, too, in the Temple service.

The *shofar* is mentioned even before *Leviticus 23*, namely at the revelation on Sinai (*Exodus 19: 16 and 19*). The appearance of God at Sinai is announced by an ever-louder sounding of the *shofar*.

The *shofar* was used in the Bible and in later times as an alarm instrument. The piercing sound called to battle or sounded when there was an emergency. The *Talmud* (Jewish oral tradition), for example, speaks of blowing on the *shofar* during prolonged drought as a call to fast and pray.

In the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah, the sound of the *shofar* has three functions: it proclaims God’s kingship, calls people to repentance and calls for God’s mercy. It is a combination of three sounds: one elongated tone, three wailing tones, and nine staccato tones.

The *shofar* is made from the horn of a kosher animal. Most often, the horn of a ram is used.

This recalls the ram at the binding of Isaac (*Genesis 22*). This story is also read on Rosh Hashanah. The Yemenite Jews traditionally use the long, curled horn of a certain African antelope, although the scholars of the *Talmud* generally preferred the horn of a goat. A cow’s horn does not qualify, as it evokes the association with the golden calf.



Recommended Reading

Behold, He Comes - the Book of Revelation

By Rev. Willem J.J. Glashouwer
Akitiara, 2020

This 572-page daily devotional contains short reflections on the Book of Revelation. Starting at the first verse of the first chapter of this last (and perhaps most difficult) book of the Bible – the revelation of Jesus Christ to His church - the author takes the reader day-by-day, step-by-step through the book. Every day, more of God's treasures are shared. In this way, Jesus' revelation of the purposes of God, which were gradually opened up to the Apostle John so that he could share it with the church, is revealed day-by-day to the reader in the 21st century.

Each daily reflection is written in a very accessible style, with many Bible references to other books of the Bible. In this way, the reader gains a much more comprehensive and coherent perspective on the prophetic character of the Bible as a whole.

By being immersed in God's word, the reader is made more deeply aware of God's sovereignty and the magnitude of His loving purposes of redemption for this broken world and fallen humanity through his only Son, Jesus Christ, who alone is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

Each daily portion gives a one-page explanation of the day's verse, putting it into the context of the Bible as a whole. In addition, the author provides a few remarks that provoke the reader to further reflect on the significance of the portion. As such, the book encourages the reader to draw closer to God, trust Him, and draw comfort from the knowledge that God is in control of history.

Jesus Christ will soon appear in great power and majesty. He calls us to a living, loving relationship with Him, our graceful Lord and Saviour.

The author, Rev Willem J.J. Glashouwer, is President of Christians for Israel International. He is an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and has written many Bible study books, including *Why Israel? Why Jerusalem? and Why End Times?*



If you would like to purchase this book, either complete the coupon on the back page of this newspaper, or purchase it through our website: www.c4israel.org.nz/product-page/behold-he-comes-by-rev-willem-j-j-glashouwer

Theirs are the Covenants



Panoramic view from Mt Sinai, Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock

Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

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

Paul says in *Romans 9:3-4*:

“For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.”

In the Bible, a covenant confers a special status on a person or guarantees peace, success, salvation, atonement, or reconciliation. In contrast to some translations of this passage, Paul explicitly speaks in the plural of ‘covenants’ that belong to Israel.

Let's look at the following covenants mentioned in the Hebrew Bible:

a) God's Covenant with Abraham includes the following promises: Firstly, “you will be the father of a multitude of nations” (*Genesis 17:4*); and secondly, “to your seed I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates” (*Genesis 15:18*; compare *Genesis 17:5-8*; *Exodus 6:4-5*).

In Abraham's time, God made this covenant exclusively with the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (renamed Israel by God himself) and not with Abraham's first-born son Ishmael. From the very beginning, this covenant has belonged to the ‘Israelites’ and cannot be transferred to anyone else (*Genesis 17:18-21*).

b) God's Covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, in contrast to the covenant with Abraham, is conditional: “Now, if you will indeed listen to my voice and preserve my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession before all [other] nations” (*Exodus 19:5*). Israel's covenantal obligations are best summarised in the ‘Ten Commandments’ (*Exodus 20:1-17*; *Deuteronomy 5:5-22*).

Moses says, “not with our fathers did the Lord cut this covenant, but with us. We are

the ones who stand here today all [together] alive” (*Deuteronomy 5:3*). The covenant of Mt Sinai had to be renewed over and over again in the course of Israel's history: in the plains of Moab, before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan (*Deuteronomy 28:69*; *29:8 14, 20*); through Joshua in Shekhem (*Joshua 24:25*); through king Asa from Judah (*2 Chronicles 15:12-15*); at the coronation of Joash from Judah through the high priest Jehoiada (*2 Chronicles 23:16*); likewise through the kings Hezekiah (*2 Chronicles 29:10*), Josiah (*2 Kings 23:2 3, 21*; *2 Chronicles 34:30-33*) and Zedekiah (*Jeremiah 34:8, 10, 13, 15, 18*); and finally, through the scribe Ezra after the return from the Babylonian captivity (*Ezra 10:3*).

A further difference between these two covenants is that the covenant of Mt Sinai is never called an ‘eternal covenant’. Whenever Israel broke this covenant through her disobedience, God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*Exodus 2:24*; *Leviticus 26:42,44-45*; *2 Kings 13:23*; *Psalms 106:44-45*; *Luke 1:72*), which is called an ‘eternal covenant’ more than once (*Exodus 2:24*; *Leviticus 26:42,44-45*; *2 Kings 13:23*; *Psalms 106:44-45*; *Luke 1:72*; compare further *Deuteronomy 4:31*).

c) The Sabbath Covenant could be seen as part of the covenant of Sinai. However, it is explicitly described as a ‘brit olam’ (‘eternal covenant’) in its own right. Furthermore, the connection of the Shabbat to God's order of creation distinguishes it from the covenant of Mt Sinai. Finally, the Shabbat covenant has a special future significance for ‘eunuchs’ and ‘foreigners’ that is not found in the covenant of Mt Sinai (*Exodus 31:12-17*; *Leviticus 24:8*; *Isaiah 56:4-7*).

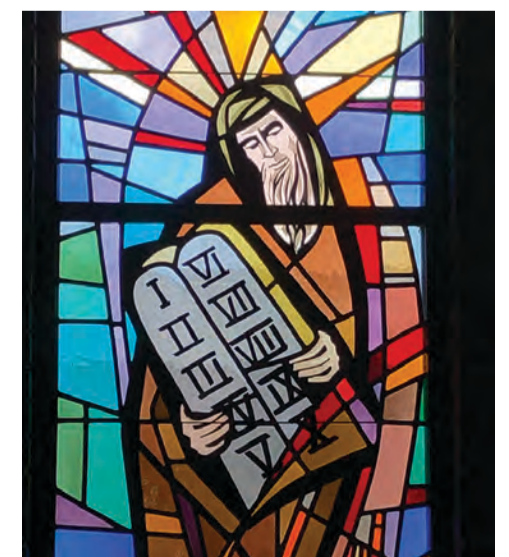
d) God's Covenant with Pinehas is: “my covenant of peace” and “the covenant of an everlasting priesthood” for Pinehas and his descendants. The priest Pinehas was distinguished by God “because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel” (*See Numbers 25:10-13*; this covenant is further mentioned in *Nehemiah 13:29*; *Jeremiah 33:20-22* and *Malachi 2:4-9*).

e) God's Covenant with David is a ‘brit

olam’, an eternal covenant of an extraordinary quality, like the covenant with Pinehas. God's covenant with David is as firm and unchanging as the order of His created universe (*2 Samuel 23:5*; *Psalms 89:28-38*; *132:11-13* and then especially also *Jeremiah 33:20-22, 25-26*). The prophet Nathan promises to this king of Israel and “man after God's own heart,” a son who “shall build a house for my name. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (*2 Samuel 7:13*; compare *Psalms 89:4-5*).

f) The New Covenant is called a ‘brit olam’ more often than any other covenant of the Bible (*Isaiah 61:8*; *Jeremiah 32:40*; *50:5*; *Ezekiel 16:59-62*; *37:26*). Of a totally different nature, it explicitly replaces the covenant of Mt Sinai. The covenant mediated by Moses had been broken so often that the Lord prophesies a new covenant which he intends to make “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”. This covenant includes not only complete forgiveness of all sins but also the placing of God's instruction into their minds. The Torah will be written on their hearts. “No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord’, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (*Jeremiah 31:33-34*).

All these covenants define a special, exclusive and binding relationship between God and Israel.



Stained glass image of Moses and the Ten Commandments. | Photo: Shutterstock

Winning the War on Truth - Part 1

■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before”. *Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:24-25*

Since we are in the last days (*Hebrews 9:26; 1 John 2:18*), prophetic awareness is a key to surviving and thriving. Study the pastoral epistles of *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, and you will not only get great leadership tips but also principles of last-day living. While there are several key signs we can focus upon, there is one sign that has immediate and practical ramifications. It has to do with the war on truth.

This war is real, and it is fierce. Israel, its place in the Bible, today's world, and end-time prophecy also hang in the balance.

Why the War on Truth?

Warring against truth is nothing new... it has been happening since the days of Eden. Yet, prophetically, what we are seeing today is a frontal assault in overdrive! It is not just that people are lying more than ever. Or that they do so with a very straight face and without a pang of conscience. It is that there is a strong spirit of deception and delusion that must be proactively resisted. Let's consider how the last days' war against truth came into being:

1. Relativism: This is facilitated by postmodernism, which is the successor and critic of rational scientific modernism. It believes in 'radical relativism,' namely, you have 'your truth,' I have 'my truth,' and no one's truth is more true than anyone else's. The proliferation of postmodern relativism is a recipe for philosophical, semantical, and spiritual anarchy.

2. Low View of Truth: Postmodernism is only one of the reasons why many people, including some churchgoers, have a low view of truth. One popular group of churches in the West make themselves deliberately attractive to postmodern people, but it comes at the cost of truth. Go to their website, and you will struggle to find a 'Statement of Faith' or doctrine. Remember: no truth means no law, liberty, and/or justice.

3. Delusion: This is what makes the last days particularly dangerous. A spirit of deception and strong delusion will be so potent that the elect have to make a conscious effort to remain 'in the truth.' The devil knows his time is short and works overtime to deceive. Fortunately, our weapons are more powerful weapons than his.

'Post-Truth Vocabulary'

The arsenal against truth is growing. Here is a sample vocabulary lesson on what constitutes the modern version of lies and mendacity:



| Photo: Shutterstock

Spin: Takes the unsavoury issues of life (e.g. abortion), sugar coats and spins them like cotton candy. When signing a grizzly executive order expanding medical research on aborted fetuses, a former US President gave this spin: 'America deserves the best health care system in the world.' Spin creates euphemisms, takes sour lemons and makes 'lemonade.' Masters of spin-spin doctors - help public officials craft byte-size phrases to get their point across quickly and persuasively, even if it is not true.

Post Truth: Instead of conveying objective, verifiable facts, post-truth seeks to shape public opinion by appealing to the narrative, personal beliefs, feelings and emotions.

Double-speak: Speaking one way but deliberating meaning something else. Double-speak seeks to obscure, disguise, distort, and divert real meaning by fostering great ambiguity. Political rhetoric can fall under the heading of double-speak.

Smoke and mirrors: An attempt to make you believe something to be true when it is not. Like a tax-and-spend parliament telling the population that the big-spending bill will not add a penny to the national debt or 'the war to end all wars.'

Gaslighting: This is particularly insidious. It is a form of manipulation, often incessant, to cause a person to doubt their sanity, memory, perception and judgement. The gaslighting person tries to convince the other party that they really did not see what they clearly saw or hear what they clearly heard.

Misinformation: Misleading or incorrect information is treated as fact. Less menacing than disinformation but still problematic because it is not truth. We must get our facts right!

Disinformation: A subset of propaganda, false information deliberately and quickly spread with the express purpose to deceive. This is a problematic and evil thing.

Irrational, unproven, preposterous ideas and policies, void of empirical evidence, are enacted by governments, media and academics. Intimate sexual issues are taught from kindergarteners to university by those who have no Biblical worldview. This practice is backed up by government, big business, and popular culture.

War on Truth - The Bible Says

Let's face it; we have never seen such a concerted attack on truth - absolute truth - God's truth as we do now. This includes the Bible and what it teaches about Israel. Yet it should not be a surprise to students of the Scriptures. As we have learned, one of the most fundamental signs of the last days is that deception will be manufactured and disseminated on an industrial scale.

When Jesus' inner circle asked Him the direct question of what will be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age, His very first words were, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (*Matthew 24:4*). This is not just a polite suggestion; it is a divine command. Deception does not merely distract and divert people from the right path - it can hijack and destroy. That's why it should be recognised, repudiated and avoided.

Under this banner of deception, Christ goes on to say that **many** shall come in His name, proclaiming themselves to be the Messiah and shall deceive **many**.

If ever there was a good reason to "follow the cloud (of God's glory), not the crowd," this is it. *To be continued.*

■ Paola (25)

Isreality Netherlands

Jews worldwide recite this phrase during Passover and on the Great Day of Atonement when resolutions are made for the new year. This statement reveals something of the centuries-long desire of Jews to make *aliyah*: to emigrate to Israel, to the Promised Land. But why is Jerusalem so important?

Dwelling Place

Jerusalem is the most important, holiest place in the world for Jews. This is not surprising because if you read the Bible, you will see that God chose Jerusalem as His dwelling place: *For the Lord has chosen Zion, He has desired it for His dwelling, saying, "This is My resting place forever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it."* (*Psalms 132:13-14*)

There have been battles over Jerusalem for centuries.

Next Year in Jerusalem!

The city has been in the hands of the Romans, Crusaders, Muslims, the British, and others. Even today, there are struggles over this special city. For example, many countries do not recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital. In addition, Palestinian leaders want their own state, with its capital, as you probably guessed, Jerusalem. Every decision surrounding Jerusalem seems controversial and is hotly debated around the world. Does this fit with what the Bible tells us? *"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. (...) On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations."* (*Zechariah 12:2a,3a*)

Yearning

Jews have lived scattered around the world for centuries. All that time, there was a longing for Jerusalem. This yearning is also beautifully described

in *Psalms 137*: *If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.* (*Psalms 137:5-6*)

Return

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jews again have had the opportunity to live in their land and city. God gives numerous promises of this return in the Bible. We see this promise fulfilled before our eyes! Amazing that God has been faithful to His people throughout the centuries. Jerusalem is and remains God's dwelling place, and He is bringing His people home. In spite of all the struggles around Israel and Jerusalem, we can be certain that Almighty God is a protective wall.

Will you join us in prayer for the peace of Jerusalem?



Rosh Hashanah

■ Rev Henk Poot

Christians for Israel Netherlands

Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of the year in the seventh month, the month of Tishri. It is called this way because the Sabbath and Jubilee years are counted from this day. The Bible calls it the Feast of Trumpets or rather of blowing the *shofar* (*Leviticus 23:23*). Rosh Hashanah is the first of ten days ending with the Day of Atonement. These days are also called the Days of Awe.

Rosh Hashanah recalls the very first days of the world, ending with the day of the creation of man. The time of creation must correspond to the autumn, the time of Rosh Hashanah, for when the trees were created on the third day, they bore ripe fruit (*Genesis 2:8-9*). In Israel, it is the time of the late harvest.

On Rosh Hashanah and on the Day of Atonement, the shofar is blown a hundred times as a call for repentance and self-examination. That is how the year begins!

According to tradition, the *Shofarot* (blasts on the *shofar*) call to mind as many as ten things:

1. You are a creature of God
2. Your destination, your vocation, is life with God.
3. You have received God's word, His instruction. The gift of the Torah at Sinai was also accompanied by the sound of the shofar (*Exodus 19:19*).
4. The destruction of the temple because of sin.
5. The danger that surrounds Israel in this broken and disconnected world. In this sense, the blowing of the shofar on New Year's Day is also an alarm (*Joel 2:15*).
6. The day of judgment. This is only a rehearsal of the day of the final judgment.
7. The sacrifice of Isaac and the complete dedication of the fathers to God. Their merits.
8. God remembers His covenant with Israel.
9. God's love is greater than His wrath.
10. And finally, the redemption of Israel and the gathering of all God's people is remembered (*Isaiah 27:12-13*).

Prayers

On New Year's Eve, special prayers are said, consisting of verses from the Bible:

- a. The *Malchuyot* ('Kingships'), proclaiming God's Kingship;
- b. The *Zichronot* (remembrances), calling to mind the faithfulness of God;
- c. and the *Shofarot*, verses that speak of blowing the trumpet.



Orthodox Jew blows a long Yemenite shofar for Rosh Hashanah. | Photo: Shutterstock

Sermon on the Mount

I am convinced that it was during this period that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount with the answer to the question of how to pray and teach about fasting, about prayer in the inner chamber, about almsgiving and about forgiving each other as a prerequisite of receiving forgiveness from God. These are the themes of the Days of Awe still considered in Judaism.

I believe that the Gospels and the Apostolic letters are full of references to the Ten Days of Awe!

To give just one example: Maimonides, the great medieval Jewish lawgiver and philosopher, writes concerning Rosh Hashanah:

"Awake, ye who are in a daze and ye who are in a deep sleep: who in the unreality of this age have forgotten the truth and run after the trifles, look within yourselves."

Then Paul in *Romans 13:8*, "Owe no one anything but to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." *Romans 13:11*, "And do this, understanding the present time, the hour has already come for you to wake from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here!"

The New Testament proclaims that the Lord Jesus is the one to whom God has given the judgement. *John 5:28*:

"Do not be amazed at this, for time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice, and will come out—those who have done what is good, will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned." And Christ will gather the nations and judge them on how they have treated his own brothers and sisters (*Matthew 25*).

And now? I am alive, I am a creature of God, I am walking around, and the time is near, the summer, the heat is over. How do we prepare ourselves? What did Jesus say? By fasting, prayer, mercy and love.

Prayer: Our Father, your Kingdom come, but also pray for peace for Jerusalem.

Mercy: We also hear God say (*Isaiah 40:1*): "Comfort, comfort my people. Tell her that her suffering is over." A cup of water, a garment to wrap oneself in against the cold, as a symbol of the love for God's people after all the hardships after all the guilt also of the church.

Summer is over, a new season is about to begin, we say, and in the synagogue, we hear the *shofar* sounding, not once, not twice, as many as a hundred times, and we are searching for our destination.

How radiant the church will be when Christ will come and find His church at the side of the children of His people.

Rosh Hashanah - 5783

The name *Rosh Hashanah* translates into 'head of the year' or 'first of the year'. It signifies the beginning of the Jewish high holidays. It is also called the Jewish New Year.

Special Greeting

People wish each other a *Shana tovah umetukah*, meaning a good and sweet year.



Shofar

The *shofar* is a curved ram's horn. It's a 3000 year-old musical instrument that is blown like a trumpet. The blasts of the *shofar* revitalise the soul and intelligence of all who hear it during the holiday.



Food

During *Rosh Hashanah*, people eat sweet foods, including:

- a round of *challah* bread - symbolising fullness and completion;
- apples dipped in honey - symbolising their prayer for a sweet new year.



The Numbers

- 2 days and nights.
 - 1st of the month of *Tishrei*.
 - 10 days of repentance begin on *Rosh Hashanah* and end on *Yom Kippur*.
 - 23rd chapter of *Leviticus* (verse 23-25): *Rosh Hashanah*, or the Feast of Trumpets is mentioned.
 - 100 blast are blown on the *shofar* on both days of *Rosh Hashanah* in most communities.
 - 613 seeds of a pomegranate symbolise *mitzvot* or commandments of the Torah.
- It is customary to eat the first pomegranates of the new harvest on *Rosh Hashanah*.



A Remarkable Journey

Tal Hartuv

Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

35-year-old Hussein Aboubakr Mansour has already led a whirlwind of a life. Born to a Muslim banking family in Cairo, Hussain has depicted his journey in his breathtaking memoir, *Minority of One: The Unchaining of an Arab Mind*. In it, he depicts how and why he taught himself English and Hebrew, was thrown into the hell of an Egyptian prison, underwent torture, was granted political asylum in the United States, and ended up as a Zionist and advocate for Israel.

Watching television one day with his family, Hussein saw the two planes crash into the Twin Towers in New York. His family believed this was God's punishment for the 'infidels.' Hussein was also taught that Egypt was the best country in the world and anything not the product of Islam was inferior. He knew 'Israel was behind' the attack on the Twin Towers.

To understand the evil plans of the Jewish enemy, he had to teach himself English and computer skills to learn Hebrew. The more he learned English, the more he learned about Israel. And the more he learned about Israel, the more he began questioning what he had been taught. For the first time, he saw that Jews did not focus on killing Arabs the way Arabs focus on killing Jews. Before long, he discovered an amazing resource just down the street - the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo - the fruit of the 1978 Camp David Accords.

The Israeli security guard was the first Jew he had ever met. He began to learn



Hussein Aboubakr Mansour visiting the Israeli ambassador in the United Arab Emirates. | Photo: Twitter/Hussein Aboubakr Mansour

Hebrew with him. Appetite unquenchable, the 19-year-old went on to devour Hebrew books and novels. He also broke the Islamic cultural taboo by visiting a place inhabited by Jews and Israelis, which soon came to the attention of an Egyptian state security officer.

His family begged him to stop his studies of Hebrew, Israel and Judaism. But he couldn't. He was compelled to understand. As a Muslim, he was becoming aware that Muslims were terribly persecuting the Egyptian Christians. Honest and fearless to the core, he decided to write a blog about antisemitism and the treatment of Christians and Muslim women.

The reprisals were brutal. Without trial, he was thrown into a military prison for two months, stripped naked, hit with belts and called a Jew lover.

Just before the Arab Spring of January 2011, he was released. Things looked better now that the President had been

overthrown. But hope did not last. When the Muslim Brotherhood took over, attacks on Christians worsened. Hussein was arrested again for writing about peace with Israelis.

But by diplomatic negotiations, he was later granted asylum in America.

Despite all he has been through, he remains an energised and passionate educator and advocate for Israel. With outstanding courage and eloquence, Hussein sums up his mission in his memoir: "I was born an Arab; I know how violent, hateful, intolerant and aggressive Arabs are. So I support the right of the free people of Israel to have their own independent country. I support the civilised man against the savage; I support honesty over dishonesty, I support life over death, I support freedom against slavery, I support intelligence over stupidity, and I support rationalism over terrorism. Thus, my dear reader, I support Israel."

Short News

New National Park



Plans are being made for an enormous national park between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. The aim is to attract tourists to the area, especially same-day visitors. The plans are aimed at Christians, Jews and Muslims. The area contains sites of interest to all three religions: the baptism site on the Jordan, the Mar Saba monastery (photo), the Nabi Musa mosque and various remains from the time of the Hasmoneans. The plan includes space for a mobile restaurant, a hotel on the northern side of the Dead Sea and a combined information and booking centre. | Photo: Flashgo

Lebanese Journalist Speaks Out

Journalist Nadim Koteich said in a TV interview that Lebanon should join the Abraham Accords and make peace with Israel. Since the Abraham Accords, more and more Arabs from countries surrounding Israel are speaking out in support of relations and peace with Israel. The fact that the journalist dared to express his opinion suggests that the desire for peace is perhaps more widespread among the Lebanese people than previously thought.

Antisemitic Imagery at German Art Festival



Antisemitic images at a leading art festival in Germany are being removed or covered up after German Jewish organisations and the Israeli embassy in Berlin came together to denounce a biased curation. The images appeared at *Documenta 15*, a leading arts festival that takes place every five years in the German city of Kassel. "Elements being portrayed in certain exhibits are reminiscent of propaganda used by chief propagandist of the Nazi Party Joseph Goebbels and his goons during darker times in German history," said Shira Ben Tzion, spokesperson for the Israeli embassy in Berlin, in a tweet. "All red lines have not only been crossed; they have been shattered." Prior to the event, the absence of Jewish artists and artists from Israel at the modern art exhibition had been criticised.

One Week in Shiloh

Per Nielsen

Christians for Israel Denmark

The alarm clock sounds at 3.30am. At 4am, the restaurant is open, where 70 archaeologists and volunteers - more or less awake - sit down and lay the groundwork for another busy day at the excavations in Shiloh.

When the clock hits 4.59am, everyone is sitting on the bus that drives for forty-five minutes out of Jerusalem - past Ramallah - into the mountains of Samaria. Shiloh waits, and while the herd moves out of the bus in silence and walks up the mountain on foot, the sun is rising. Every morning!

In small fields of 5 x 5 meters, we dig into millennia layers of rocks and soil. We dig into the Bronze Age. We dig into the time before Joshua!

What made my wife Kirsten and I volunteer for a week of hard work on a mountaintop in Samaria? We have no particular interest in archaeology or excavation work, we do not dream of becoming Indiana Jones or finding the Ark of the Covenant, but our interest was aroused when we heard that in 2022 it



| Photos: Per and Kirsten Nielsen

would be a hundred years since the first modern archaeological expedition began... by a Dane in 1922. As Danes, we really wanted to mark this! And then the stories of the Bible are incredibly exciting to live in. Here in Shiloh, "the stones will cry" while you work hard!

We worked under the leadership of ABR, Associates of Biblical Research, who have been digging in Shiloh for several years and will continue the work in 2023. The Shiloh Excavation is one of ABR's most important research projects.

The Tabernacle stood at Shiloh for more than 300 years, where the people of Israel gathered to worship year after year.

All findings will be published via academic journals, not random Facebook pages. So we have to arm ourselves with patience and wait for the official channels to tell us what the findings in 2022 have revealed about Shiloh.

You can find more information at: <https://biblearchaeology.org/shiloh-excavations>

There is NOTHING to Tell

A gripping story about a grandfather's legacy.

"There is NOTHING to tell," Anemone Rürger's grandpa had always maintained when asked about his rare last name, Mairants. Anemone's book *Grandpa's Legacy* lifts the well-camouflaged curtain and follows Grandpa's trace – back through one generation of communist East Germany, through the tormenting years *Opa* spent on the Eastern Front, and further back to a surprising address – Poland. One of millions of German grandpas. One of millions of stories. One of millions of redemptions that are possible.

A Rough Time

Anemone grew up in Eastern Germany behind the Iron Curtain, yet with a great love for Israel, nourished by family and church. She also had a close relationship with her grandparents.

Anemone: "Hardly ever did they talk about the past. All we knew was that Grandpa had been a soldier, and judging by his tears, it had been a rough time. Whenever my parents dared inquire into the origin of his last name, he would brush their questions off, saying there was nothing to tell."

Search for the Truth

When Anemone was 15, the Communist system in East Germany came down and she was free to travel. After graduating from high school, she went to Israel as a volunteer in a seniors' home for Holocaust survivors.

"We would share life with the survivors there, celebrate Shabbat together and try to bring some love to their lonely hearts," Anemone remembered. "I got especially close to Zvi from Lodz; he had been hidden by catholic nuns. When I returned, I shared my impressions with Grandpa, or *Opa*, as we called him. When he saw my favourite picture – Israeli soldiers by the Western Wall – he broke out in tears.

"He died age 80. Subsequently, my mother established closer relations with her relatives that Grandpa had largely excluded from his life. One of them was my mom's last aunt. One day Mom was on the phone with her talking about their mysterious last name. Suddenly the aunt said, 'Well, your grandfather comes from Poland, from a Jewish fabric maker's family in Lodz.'

"We were shocked. We had been connected to the Jewish people for as long as we could think, and now there was supposed to be a family link? Why had Grandpa hidden this significant fact from us?"

That's where the feverish search for the rest of the story began for Anemone and her sister Cornelia. Their starting point was a conversion certificate from 1845, showing a certain Aron Mairants 'of mosaic faith' becoming Henryk Adolf Mairants. The document had been obtained by Grandpa's sister, who had to prove her Arian descent back to 1800 to marry a higher-ranking officer in 1942. After weeks of night shifts on Google, the two sisters were on their way to Lodz, where they found ample documentation showing their great-grandparents' origins.

Heritage

Eventually, the family had ended up in Germany. Anemone: "We discovered that Mom's cousin 'Auntie Christel' was raised by her grandparents, so she was able to tell us most of what we know about them. My great-grandfather Oscar, third generation protestant then, grew up in the poverty of



Anemone pictured with her grandparents, 1975. | Photo: Anemone Rürger

the Jewish worker's neighbourhood of Baluty in Lodz. Having married into a German family, he was expelled from the country with his family as a 'German' when the First World War broke out. He ended up in the Lausitz region north of Dresden. Later on, during World War II, he didn't raise any suspicion appearing to be an express anti-Semite. The heritage of the family seemed lost forever."

How Far Back?

In Germany, the surname Mairants has virtually died out since Anemone's mom gave up her maiden name. The same goes for Poland and neighbouring countries.

Anemone: "Where we did find the name, in the end, was in the victims' database of Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum. We found nearly two hundred entries of Mairants murdered in the Holocaust. After the first shock, we wondered if anyone might have survived from this large family. Nerve-wracking hours later, the Israeli phone book pulled up a handful of entries."

Exciting phone calls followed. It turned out that the Mairants living in Israel today all originated in the vicinity of Polish Lodz. Their parents came to Israel either as Zionists before the war or as Holocaust survivors after the war. The question 'if' was replaced by 'how far back' the German and the Israeli Mairants had been one family in pre-war Poland.

Twelve Surviving Families

Since 2011 Anemone has been making trips to Israel to meet the Mairants' families living there. Many survivors had kept silent, but each family did recall some small pieces of information. Over the years, Anemone has been puzzling them together.

Anemone: "Some changed their last name. I found them by divine 'chance'. Initially, I had seven, later twelve families counted by survivors in Grandpa's generation. Those who came after the Shoah were mostly the only ones saved from their entire family."

To find out if there were joint roots, Anemone had to search the Polish state archives. "I spent hours, weeks, months – finding hundreds of birth, marriage and death certificates containing the names of the parents, which enabled me to piece them together in family trees. What I discovered was that all the Israeli families go back to two ancestors, ours being the third. Back then, two hundred years ago, all lived at an hour from each other."

Diving Through the Archives and Finding Destiny

"One question kept coming up throughout my research: What had happened to Grandpa that turned him silent? After I had finished compiling the survival stories of the Israeli Mairants, I knew it was time to tackle Grandpa's war experiences," Anemone said. "It turned out to be the most difficult part of the journey but also the most valuable. Based on the scarce information provided by the Germany army office, I descended into the archives

and dug my way through piles of military records, survivor reports, photo documentaries and Grandpa's personal photo album kept by my brother, who had been very close to him. For once, everything had to be put on the table – the guilt as well as the pain. It was a year of many tears for me and my sister – tears that *Opa* had never been able to cry, as my sister put it."

Little by little, an inheritance came to the light that had been completely buried under the debris of Grandpa's war trauma – the piece of the puzzle that the family unwittingly had always been looking for.

"At the end of this process, we were ready for an even deeper commitment to be tools of reconciliation and healing towards the Jewish people," Anemone said.

She has turned her discoveries into a gripping book about her grandfather's legacy. Just a week after the English version of the book came off the press this spring, Anemone and Cornelia gathered the Israeli Mairants descendants for what they described as the first family reunion in 170 years – "an unforgettable time of celebration and restoration where many second-generation survivors realised they do have relatives in Israel they never met before."

For more information or to get the book, visit www.grandpas-legacy.de.



Anemone Rürger coordinates C4I's sponsorship programme for Holocaust Survivors and needy Jewish elderly in Ukraine. Based in Germany, she serves as a liaison and spokeswoman on C4I's work in Ukraine.



Summertime in Bethlehem

It's possible again: enjoying the summer without corona restrictions. That is why Pastor Naim Khoury and his wife Elvira of the First Baptist Church in Bethlehem organise a Vacation Bible School for children and a family weekend.

One of the messages they want to convey is that we may trust God in spite of difficulties and challenges. The children will experience this through games, days out, spending time together, singing and reading the Bible. The family weekend takes Arab Christian families out of their routine and offers parents who cannot give their children a holiday a few days of relaxation. Naim and Elvira offer a complete package because the people can't pay for anything themselves: there is transport, food, craft materials, and the weekend accommodation arranged.

Naim and Elvira ask for your financial support (donations are welcome, see coupon 'Arab Christians'), but above all, for your prayers: that these activities can take place and that they can testify of the faithfulness of the God of Israel.



Mairants family reunion in Israel. | Photo: Anemone Rürger

Hope and a Future in Israel

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

During a visit to Israel at the beginning of July, I had the opportunity to meet and interview two families from Ukraine who, with the help of C4I, had made *Aliyah* two months earlier. Although they had to leave behind some family members and nearly all their possessions, living in Israel has given them new hope for a better future and a happy life. Here are their stories:



Valentin (24), Maya (23) and Mark (3) (pictured below) have been given a first home in Israel through the *First Home in the Homeland* programme, run by the Jewish Agency. They live in Kibbutz Beerli (pictured above), a beautifully maintained Kibbutz located in the south of Israel. The happiness beams from their faces as they show us their little house - equipped with all they need for living. "The neighbours gave us some electrical appliances such as a TV, a vacuum cleaner and other things. Everybody in Israel has been so good to us... When people hear that we come from Ukraine, everybody wants to help", exclaims Valentin.



Valentin, Maya and Mark in their new home in kibbutz Beerli. | Photo: Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Escaping from Ukraine was quite traumatic. Until the war started, they lived in Shostka, a city in the north, about 25 km from the Russian border. Realising that the war would last longer than expected, they decided to flee to Kiev and were helped by a friend, a bus driver. The journey took them eight hours. In Kiev Valentin started looking for ways to reach a border and the possibility of getting to Israel. On a Jewish Agency website, he found information about C4I and contacted them. One of the drivers picked the small family up, which then spent one night in the little hotel rented by C4I. With a big C4I bus full of Jewish refugees, Victor, Maya, Mark, and their cat left for the Moldavian border the next morning. Maya and little Mark crossed the border on foot with Alina, one of C4I-Ukraine's fieldworkers, while Valentin stayed behind with all the luggage for an interrogation by the border police.

Although in a recruitable age group, Valentin had been issued a 'White Ticket' by the medical office in Shostka, exempting him from war service as he suffers from astigmatism. Maya and Mark waited together with Alina, who did all to calm them for 90 minutes until Valentin finally was allowed to join them on the bus to Kishinev, the capital of Moldova. There they waited for a week. The meeting with the consul, which took place on 24 April, will always remain a special memory for them. After looking carefully through their papers, he decided to

phone Valentin's grandmother in Kiev to ask some questions, which she answered in her best Yiddish. This opened the doors for them, and the young parents, their son and his cat arrived safely in Israel on 3 May.

They had to stay in a hotel in Arad for the first five days and then were moved to Kibbutz Beerli, where their new life began.



Vitalii and family on their way to Israel, 12 May 2022. | Photo: V. Tabak

The Tabak Family from Odessa

Vitalii, his wife Victoria, daughter Polina (11) and son David (5) (pictured above) came to Israel on 12 May. Before the war started, Vitalii worked as a salesman, trading toys from China. When the first rockets fell and the war was evident, he immediately fetched his family and drove to his sister's home near Braclav. They stayed there in expectation that they would be able to return home soon. Vitalii's father had been in the process of preparing to make *Aliyah* but died of cancer before he could leave the country. Now Vitalii decided to act quickly. He contacted C4I, was taken to the Moldovan border with his family in a bus driven by Koen Carlier, crossed the border with Alina, who had, amongst others, also accompanied the family of Valentin as described above, then immediately boarded the next bus prepared by C4I to Kishinev, saw the consul on the same day and boarded the plane to Israel. Within 24 hours of crossing the border, they were on their way to a new future. The family is still processing how amazingly blessed they were to have had such a smooth passage from their worn-torn country to their new home in Israel.



Vitalii and his son David, who will receive the necessary health care in Israel. | Photo: Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Usually, men between 18 and 65 years of age cannot leave Ukraine easily, as they have the duty to serve in the army. There are a few exceptions, though. If the family has three children or more, or if a child has a serious health condition, as in family Tabak's case, the father may leave with his family.

Their first apartment was at the seaside in Bat Yam. Now they have moved to Rishon Le Zion, close to Tel Aviv. When asked what their happiest moment was, Vitalii answered, beaming: "To cross the Moldovan border and know that now we are all safe." He continued: "The people in Israel are very friendly. You have an easy life here if you are open - people welcome spontaneity, and they all want to help. Our children are very happy and have made friends easily. Children of all ages play together - this is unique in this country. We love this place. Thank you to all from Christians for Israel for helping us come here!"

Overview of our projects

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

Aliyah

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



Hineni Soup Kitchen

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



Holocaust Survivors

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



Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

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



Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

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



Arab Christians

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



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

Coming Home to Israel from Ethiopia

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

As the rescue mission in Ukraine continues, another wave of immigration is taking place from Ethiopia. Families that have long been separated are being reunited. Israel has committed to bring home up to 3,000 Ethiopian Jews before the end of 2022 as part of its ongoing emergency airlift known as Operation Tzur Yisrael ('Rock of Israel').

Here are some interesting facts given by Danielle Mor, Vice President, Israel and Global Philanthropy and Director of Christian Friends of The Jewish Agency:

How many Ethiopian Jews have come to Israel in the past years?

Since the establishment of the State, 95,000 Ethiopians have emigrated to Israel with the help of the Israeli government and The Jewish Agency. In the mid-1980s, approximately 8,000 immigrants arrived through Operation Moses through Sudan. In 1991, 14,000 immigrants arrived as part of Operation Solomon. In the summer of 2013, The Jewish Agency completed its



Ethiopian Olim after arriving in Israel. | Photo: Marie-Louise Weissenböck

leadership of Operation Dove's Wings, which brought 7,000 immigrants from Ethiopia. To date, more than 2,000 new migrants have arrived during the ongoing Operation Tzur Israel. In November 2021, the Government of Israel renewed Operation Tzur Israel, enabling an additional 3,000 immigrants to unite with their first-degree relatives in Israel. The flights are planned to take place during the next few months.

Why does it take so long for some Ethiopian families to be reunited?

The reality is that persecution, communism, and the history of the Jews in Ethiopia created a base for life unique in the world. The Government of Israel has had to make difficult decisions in light of this reality.

Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews) appear to have been isolated from mainstream Jewish communities for at least a millennium. They suffered religious persecution, and a significant portion of the community were forced into Christianity during the 19th and 20th centuries; those converted to Christianity came to be known as the Falash Mura. This Christian name given to Ethiopian Jews is derogatory, 'Falash' meaning intruder, landless, wanderer. They were not allowed to own land or turn over land to the next generation. Many converted in the hope that they would be accepted by Christians, which did not happen. Some converted under pressure, others voluntarily. But they continue to identify with the Jewish people and faith, and they have close relatives already living in Israel. Therefore, in 2015 the Israeli government approved the resumption of the Ethiopian Aliyah to reunite these separated families. The condition is for applicants to complete a successful Jewish conversion process.

Can you tell us something about the yearning of Ethiopian Jews to come to Israel?



Ethiopian young woman especially dressed in blue and white for her Aliyah. | Photo: Marie-Louise Weissenböck

In Ethiopia, all Jews want to make Aliyah. Beit ha Israel (Beta Israel) is a community that has been praying for this all their lives and believe that it can happen at any moment. The worst threat a parent can give their child is, "if you are naughty, we will not take you to Jerusalem." It is not only about preparing to come to Israel, but to come to Zion, to Jerusalem.

In the fall of 2022 a plane with Ethiopian Olim, sponsored wholly by Christians for Israel will land at Ben Gurion Airport.

Together, we can help these Ethiopian Jews reach their dream of returning to Zion! Please help the Ethiopian Jews who are eligible to make Aliyah and reunite them with their families! To donate, complete the coupon below.

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