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CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
NEW ZEALAND

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

www.c4israel.org.nz | info@c4israel.org.nz



The Abieh family with their six children and their uncle (right) in front of their rented house in Gondar.

From Ethiopia to Israel—A Dream Fulfilled

In early November, we were privileged to accompany twelve Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Christians for Israel has contributed much financially to the *Aliyah* of Jews from that country. The return of the Jews from Ethiopia is one of the most wonderful stories in Israel's history. It brings to mind the text from *Psalm 126:1*: "When the Lord caused the captives of Zion to return, we were like dreamers."

For more than 2,500 years, the 'Beta Israel' (House of Israel), as the Jews of Ethiopia call themselves, lived secluded among the Ethiopians, with no contact with other Jews in the Diaspora. All these centuries, they have longed to return to their ancient homeland in God's time. From the 1980s, that return began to take off. The first rescue operations were hectic and happened in secret. Jews were suffering from persecution for engaging in Jewish activities and were fleeing civil war and famine. And so began covert missions to airlift Ethiopian Jews to new lives in the Jewish state.

In total, about 95,000 have returned, but almost every

Ethiopian family in Israel still has family members in Ethiopia. Some 10,000 Ethiopian Jews are waiting to be allowed to return to Israel.

Hoping for Good News

The families in Ethiopia have moved out of their villages towards the city. Those from rural areas have relocated to Gondar, and others have moved to Addis Ababa. They live in small, rented houses. Every day they hope for the good news that they will be allowed to leave for Israel, especially Jerusalem. They are no longer building their future in Ethiopia. At the Jewish community centres in Gondar and Addis Ababa, run by the Jewish Agency, adults are helped with pre-Aliyah prep courses, children attend after-school Hebrew and history classes, and mothers and infants receive nutrition and medical care. Once in Israel, they are provided with their first home in one of the Absorption Centres dedicated specifically to the needs of Ethiopian immigrants, as well as Hebrew and vocational training for adults, academic enrichment

and after-school activities for the children, and social and recreational activities for all.

Yearning

Jewish families in Ethiopia often wait years before they can leave for Israel. For the family Abieh, portrayed above, the same is true. Father Teshome (38) works as a day labourer to bear the high rent costs of their shabby living quarters and to provide food and necessities for his wife and six daughters, of which the youngest is four months old. Mother Ageriy (30) has two sisters in Israel, who also send money to help the family. Before flying to Ethiopia, we visited them in their apartment in Beersheba. The oldest sister, Salina, dreams of the family reunion every night. The family has been waiting for ten years.

The father of one of the families flying back to Israel with us meets his sister at the airport, whom he has not seen for 26 years. The miracle of return touches the heart every time. (Read further stories on page 6)

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Mission

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

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The Challenges of Restoring Israel

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The Lord promised throughout scripture that He would bring back the children of Jacob – all the descendants of the twelve tribes of Jacob – from the four corners of the earth and settle them in the land. For example, in Ezekiel 28:

“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety... Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.”

The purpose of their return is also clear: by their physical and spiritual restoration, the name of the Lord will be sanctified amongst the nations. Why? Because He is preparing the nations for the coming of Messiah, who will be seated in Jerusalem on the throne of His father David and reign over the descendants of Jacob (*Luke 1:32-33*), and all nations will learn the ways of the Lord (*Isaiah 2*). See, for example, *Ezekiel 37*:

“I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them, and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms... I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees... Then the nations will know that I, the Lord make Israel holy when my sanctuary is among them forever.”

Can there be any doubt that the return of the Jewish people to the land over the last 150 years is the fulfilment of those promises? Since the 1850s, Jews have returned to the land of their forefathers from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. Today, half the known Jewish population of the world lives in Israel. Gradually, the ‘lost’ ten tribes are being found. The return is continuing every day, and we are privileged to play a small role, as you can read in this edition of *Israel & Christians Today*.



Arrival of new immigrants from North America at Ben Gurion airport. | Photo: Flash90

So much for the return of the Jewish people. What about the modern State of Israel? Is it a reflection of the Lord's will? Should we support the State of Israel?

Yes, we should. But we should also not expect too much from it.

Like all other states in the world, the State of Israel is a human institution. It is not perfect, and – like all other states in the world – it cannot be perfect. Moreover – unlike many states in the world – it is a democracy. It has a representative Parliament and separation of powers (legislature, executive and judiciary). There is always going to be tension, and even conflict, as the various components of the state advance their respective interests. That is normal in a democracy. Just look at the problems facing the USA, Canada and Australia, for example. Israel is not alone or exceptional.

The results of the elections in Israel early November have provoked a strong debate in Israeli society (and the Jewish world generally) about what it means to be a ‘Jewish’ state.

To be sure, there is a tension – but not a conflict – between the ‘Jewish’ and ‘democratic’ characters of the State of Israel. Over the last century, the Zionist movement has had to contend with this

tension: how to return to the land and become a Jewish ‘nation’ while respecting the non-Jewish population. While there have always been extremists, the vast majority of Jews simply want to live in peace and harmony with the non-Jews in the land. However, this is a huge challenge given that the very existence of the Jewish nation is opposed bitterly by her enemies – including the political leadership of the non-Jews in the land – especially the Palestinians, who take the position that the Jewish state of Israel has no legitimacy whatsoever.

The people of Israel – Jews and non-Jews – have expressed their will in these last elections. We can be confident that, while there is a clear call to enforce strong internal and external security measures, the new government will also be sensitive to the need to respect and integrate the Arab communities in the land. That is a two-way street. The Arabs in Israel and the disrupted territories also are responsible for their own situation.

Our primary task as Gentiles outside the land is to pray for the people of Israel in the coming period, and especially for its leaders – that those who form the new government will be led by the Spirit of unity, discernment and love.

Prayer Points

By C4I Prayer Team

Israel

- From December 18 to 26, the Jewish people celebrate *Hanukkah*. This year, Christmas coincides with *Hanukkah*. Both feasts celebrate the coming of light in dark times. Give thanks for the light God brings in a dark world. Give thanks that Jesus came as the Light. Pray for a blessed *Hanukkah* celebration for the Jewish people.
- Israel has recently had to eliminate numerous terrorists in Judea and Samaria due to the many attacks on the Jewish people. Pray that this will be a warning to others not to join a terror group. Pray for the protection of Jews in Judea and Samaria from terror.
- “‘I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have banished you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.’” (*Jeremiah 29:14*) This verse emphasises ‘all the nations’ and ‘all the places’. Pray for this Bible verse to be fulfilled.

Israel & the Nations

- New British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is in favour of moving the British embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In addition, he condemns the BDS movement and wants to fight it. Pray that he will do many good and meaningful things for the Jewish people.
- Pray that Christians will look beyond the (extremely prejudiced) regular news media for news about Israel. Pray that Christians will take the trouble to find dependable news sources and share this information with others.

Christians for Israel

- Due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, this was an eventful year for Koen Carlier and his C4I team. Give thanks for all the thousands of Jews they were able to help leave for Israel. Pray that they will receive strength to help many Jews in the coming year.

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

Will Saudi Arabia Join the Abraham Accords?

■ Dr Eric Mandel

I recently returned from meetings in Saudi Arabia with diplomats, foreign ministry, counter-terrorism officials, and various think tanks. One of my goals was to see how close the Kingdom is to joining the UAE, Morocco, Sudan and Bahrain in normalising relations with Israel.

The Abraham Accords are just two years old, but they have revolutionised the relationship between the Jewish state and the moderate Sunni Arab nations, so it is not unreasonable to think that what has until now been a Palestinian veto on any diplomatic progress between Israel and Saudi Arabia might be at an end.

The Abraham Accords employed an outside-in strategy, making peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours as a bridge that would allow the Palestinians to feel comfortable with making the necessary concessions for peace.

Unfortunately, with a corrupt Palestinian Authority, which has never come to terms with a Jewish state anywhere in the Levant, it is up to the Sunni states to say: Enough is enough; we need to make peace with Israel in our own interests.

It was always presumed that the UAE and Bahrain would never have joined the Accords without behind-the-scenes Saudi encouragement. However, as I learned last year when I spoke with officials at the Saudi embassy in Washington DC, the Saudis still believe they have a special obligation to protect their Palestinian Arab brethren, no matter how difficult they are to deal with. On the other hand, the Saudis know that the Palestinians are not fond of them, and the feeling is mutual.



Riyadh city towers in Saudi Arabia. | Photo: Shutterstock

Arabia is a 'critical partner' in expanding the Accords, the Biden administration has invested minimal political capital in making it happen.

The Saudis know that the administration would consider it a political win if Riyadh joined the Accords, and they are in no hurry to do Biden a favour. This is especially the case after Biden publicly reprimanded Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) for lowering oil production while Americans are paying high gas prices, despite the president's demand that he refrain from doing so.

If Biden wants the Saudis to help with future oil production, the quid pro quo will be American help against the

If new marching orders from a new king were to arrive, however, more than a few Saudis would be happy to develop relations with Israel. This was reaffirmed to me by someone close to the next generation of princes. I believe that when King Salman passes away and MBS consolidates power, the Palestinian issue will be sidelined to some extent.

I recommended to my interlocutors that, if they are not yet ready to join the Abraham Accords, they should find other public ways to build a bridge between Israel and Saudi Arabia. I said being pro-Israel is the secret sauce in Congress, as it remains, for most, a bipartisan issue. Off the record, moreover, I heard from some that the anti-Saudi comments made by Muslim members of the left-wing congressional "Squad" have not been appreciated. The American pro-Israel community is not a fan of the Squad either.

So, will Saudi Arabia join the Abraham Accords?

While King Salman is alive and President Biden prioritises a return to the Iran nuclear agreement, it is very unlikely. However, the Saudis and the Israelis have a lot to offer each other and need a united front against their common adversary Iran. One day, MBS will be king, and the possibility of closer relations will become a reality. But with Iran threatening Saudi Arabia and Kurdistan to deflect attention from its persecution of its own citizens, it would be preferable for improved ties with Israel, and for that matter the US, to come sooner rather than later.

Dr Eric R. Mandel is the director of the Middle East Political Information Network (MEPIN) and regularly briefs members of Congress and their foreign policy aides. He is the senior security editor for The Jerusalem Report and a regular contributor to The Hill and The Jerusalem Post.

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"...Without solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we're not going to have real, sustainable security in the region."

So, I asked why they allowed the Palestinian Arabs to work against Saudi security and economic interests. A few officials reminded me that the Saudis were incredulous that Arafat did not take the Israeli-American peace offer at Camp David and Taba in 2000 and 2001 and seemed unaware of an even more generous offer Abbas refused from then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2008.

According to *Bloomberg*, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said last year that the Kingdom has "no current intention to join the [Abraham] Accords. ... The best way to build on that spirit is to find a path to solving the issue of the Palestinians and finding a path to a Palestinian state. ... Without solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we're not going to have real, sustainable security in the region."

The precarious state of US-Saudi relations today will likely be a drag on any possibility of diplomatic progress between the Kingdom and Israel. Despite Secretary of State Antony Blinken saying Saudi

Iranians. If the US stops its outreach to Iran and imposes more 'consequences' on the ayatollahs, MBS will almost certainly start pumping more oil.

When asked by the Saudis how they could get back into the good graces of the US despite the current difficulties, I said I would give them the advice I gave to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry a few years ago when President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's human rights record was hurting Egypt's relationship with America: There is still bipartisan consensus in support of the U.S.-Israel relationship, and any warming of relations with Israel would be welcomed in Congress and by the administration.

All the Saudis I met, officially or not, on the record or off, made a point of saying that they are ready for diplomatic relations with Israel only if the Palestinian issue is resolved. It sounded to me like they were still following the old Saudi playbook: A resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would have to come before normalisation.

Short News

Jewish Sports Museum

It is the first Jewish Sports Museum in the world that was opened this Autumn. The museum is in the town of Kfar Maccabiah in Israel and recently opened its doors to the public. One thousand authentic and rare items are on display, covering the period from the 19th century until the present day. For lovers of sports and history definitely worth a visit.

Israel's Top 50 Christian Allies



This year the Israel Allies Foundation published a list again of the top fifty Christian leaders who contributed to the Jewish State. The organisation publishes the list on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles because Christians feel connected with this feast. Director Reinstein: "Recognition of this invaluable work of our Christian supporters is an important way of expressing our thanks to them. Each of them is an example of the far-reaching influence of diplomacy for Israel on the basis of their faith. They are Christians – not countries – on whom we can count and who will always stand next to Israel." On the list are two well-known names from Christians for Israel: Frank van Oordt (Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands | left in the photo) ranked 37, and Andrew Tucker (Editor-in-Chief of Israel & Christians Today | right in the photo) ranked 45. | Photo: C4I

Economy is Booming



The Israeli economy is booming. With a population of nine million people, the growth is enormous, with low inflation (4.3 per cent) and a low unemployment rate (3.5 per cent). In addition, the currency, the shekel, has become stronger in the past years. It is expected that the growth of the GDP this year will hit 5.2 per cent. The technology sector in it is of vital importance to the Israeli economy. It is the largest sector in the country, from car parts to medical supplies and solutions for climate change. Israeli inventions and developments are vitally important for the industry outside of Israel. | Photo: Flash90

Why Israel Must Not Provide the Iron Dome to Ukraine



An Iron Dome anti-missile battery is stationed near the southern Israeli city of Sderot, on 6 August 2022. | Photo: Flash90

■ Jacob Nagal

Iran and Russia have been moving closer against the backdrop of an ongoing war in Ukraine, which has dragged on and expanded. For Israel, these ever-closer ties are a source of constant headaches.

Ukraine has not relented in its efforts to have Israel provide it with the Iron Dome missile defence system, other types of air defense technology, and a whole host of cutting-edge weapon systems. Official requests have been relayed from Ukraine's prime minister, foreign minister and defence minister, as well as from its ambassador in Israel. Israeli officials have rebuffed these efforts, prompting Ukraine to lash out at Israel. Their strong rebuke has received support from various elements both within and outside Israel, who have failed to see the big picture.

It is almost certain that any system provided to Ukraine will ultimately fall into the hands of the Russians and, subsequently, of the Iranians, even if the Ukrainian forces limit their deployment to the Kyiv area...

Iran has been providing Russia with weapon systems—mainly kamikaze drones—and there is talk that it might also send sophisticated ballistic missiles. But that is only part of the problem: Iran has also been guiding Russia on how to circumvent Western sanctions and how to game the international banking system.

The United States is duty-bound to help Ukraine and defeat the brutal invasion of Russian President Vladimir Putin; Israel must do its utmost to lend a hand. But Jerusalem must not send Iron Dome or other weapon systems to Ukraine and should not be expected to do so.

The Iron Dome's combat record is stellar, making it easy to understand why Kyiv has its eyes on it. The Iron Dome is capable of getting the job done in Ukraine (I won't go into the technical or operational aspects, some of which are classified). Those who have tried to explain Israel's refusal by claiming the system would not be up to the task in Ukraine are both wrong and misleading. Having said that, there are four reasons why Israel cannot afford to send the Iron Dome and other systems to Ukraine.

The main and most important reason is obvious: It is almost certain that any system provided to Ukraine will ultimately fall into the hands of the Russians and, subsequently, of the Iranians, even if the Ukrainian forces

limit their deployment to the Kyiv area (as they have claimed they would in some cases). This would result in a potentially greater destructive potential for Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad when they target Israel in future wars. One cannot expect Israel to compromise its core (and secret) self-defence capabilities.

The second reason we should not provide such systems is that Israel still doesn't have enough interceptors for its own operational needs (especially when it comes to countering the threat on the northern border). It is going to take a long time to truly bolster our production capacity, perhaps years. It is also important to keep in mind that in order to have the systems do their job effectively, Ukraine would need many more interceptors than Israel can provide because of its massive geographical spread.

Third, even if Israel agreed to send weapon systems, it would still take time—presumably months, if not years—before they could be phased into service in Ukraine, as Ukrainian troops would need proper training.

These three reasons are as valid for the United States as they are for Israel. The U.S.-made systems Washington has been sending, despite not being top- or even second-tier, will likely fall (some have already) into the hands of Iran, which is likely to also get from the Russians any operational lessons drawn from their use in combat, including their limitations and modus operandi. As such, one can understand why the United States has been adamant in its refusal to provide Kyiv with advanced air defence systems such as the THAAD or Patriot. It's also worth noting that the United States doesn't even have enough air defence systems to cover its own deployed forces.

There is a fourth reason why Israel should not heed Ukraine's request: the impact on Israel-Russia relations and the dwindling presence of Russia in Syria, as well as the threat of Iran replacing it. While it is less important, this reason should not be overlooked. The war may have led Russia to take troops out of Syria and deploy them in Ukraine, but this seemingly positive development has become a source of concern because Iran seeks to fill this

vacuum with the backing of Russia and Syria. Having Israel send systems to Ukraine could create a potential threat, from Russia, Syria or Iran, to Israel's freedom of manoeuvre. Some have even speculated that Russian President Vladimir Putin would retaliate by changing his policy toward Russia's Jews, but this does not appear to be a real concern.

However, while Israel should avoid sending Iron Dome and other weapon systems to Ukraine, it could definitely provide Kyiv with good intelligence on Iran's actions, its drones and its ballistic missiles (should they be provided to Russia). As Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said, Israel can also send sensors and an integrative early warning system that would dramatically help Ukraine deal with drones, rockets and missiles. Israel must also continue and even increase its humanitarian aid to Ukraine and its citizens.

Those who have been critical of Israel for not sending the Iron Dome or other sophisticated systems to Ukraine should take a look in the mirror and ask why they have not held the United States to the same standard. They can demand that the United States send Ukraine advanced air defence systems such as the Patriot or the Predator drones. I hold the view that the United States, like Israel, has done the right thing by withholding such systems for the above-mentioned reasons.

Washington has opted instead to send less sophisticated systems, which might also fall into the Iranian hands. These systems are of greater availability, and there is a shorter period necessary to phase them into service.

A final note regarding global hypocrisy over Iran's nuclear programme.

Even as Russia and Iran move ever closer, the Iranian regime has continued supporting terrorist activities all over the world. It has not been forthcoming in answering the questions posed by the International Atomic Energy Agency and has been brazenly breaching the nuclear deal and various other pacts it has signed. It is simply beyond the pale that the United States and the European Union have persisted in the absurd effort to find a "creative" way to revive the JCPOA. It is time we understand the nature of the murderous regime in Tehran and confront it head-on.

IDF Brig. Gen. (res.) Jacob Nagel, formerly the national security adviser to the Israeli prime minister, is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a visiting professor at the Faculty of Aeronautics and Space at the Technion.

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Netanyahu's Stunning Election Victory Explained

■ **Yochanan Visser**
Correspondent in Israel

Election polls in Israel can be wildly off the mark, history teaches us, and this was certainly true for the election that took place on 1 November.

With almost all surveys, including the three exit polls published immediately after polling stations closed at 10pm on 1 November, predicting that the deadlock in Israeli politics would continue, the rightist bloc led by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu secured a surprising and resounding victory.

The right-wing bloc led by Netanyahu ultimately won 64 seats, securing a comfortable majority in the Knesset, Israel's parliament.

The bloc of left-wing and right-wing parties led by outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid, supplemented by the Arab Ra'am party, fell to 50 seats out of 120 in the Knesset and will see Lapid become Israel's shortest-reigning prime minister.

The leader of Israel's second-largest party Yesh Atid, which won five seats to reach 24, was heavily criticised by other left-wing parties for the way he handled his campaign, which was mainly focused on the unrealistic attempt to make Yesh Atid the largest party in Israel.

Lapid's critics say the outgoing prime minister's campaign was responsible for the disappearance of the far-left Meretz party from the Knesset and for the fact that Labor, which for decades was Israel's largest political party, is now the smallest faction in the new Knesset, with only four seats.

Those four seats were just enough to pass the 3.25 per cent electoral threshold that Meretz failed to pass.

Before the election, however, Lapid tried to have Meretz and Labor enter into a temporary or permanent merger but to no avail, however, because Merav Michaeli, the leader of the Labor party, opposed it.

Michaeli assumed that if her party and Meretz were to participate separately in the elections, they would win 13 seats together.

At the time, the Labor leader defended her decision, pointing to the importance of Lapid's bloc winning enough seats to prevent Netanyahu from achieving his next premiership.

That turned out differently, as we now know, and Netanyahu will again be the prime minister of Israel and will be able to form a stable coalition for the first time in almost four years.

The Likud leader already held the record for longest-serving prime minister (15 years) and, with his stunning victory, has now given a new dimension to his party's name, which means consolidation.

Netanyahu's comeback is linked not only



Likud party chairman MK Benjamin Netanyahu seen after coalition talks at a hotel in Jerusalem on 6 November 2022. | Photo: Flash90

to Likud winning 32 seats, two more than in the March 2021 election, but also to the rise of the far right and the gains of the religious party Shas, which won 11 seats, two more than in March 2021.

The biggest surprise, however, was the newly formed Dati Leumi (National Religious) party, which won 14 seats, eight more than in the previous elections and became the surprise of this election.

The rise of the party of Betzalel Smotrich and controversial far-right activist Itamar Ben Gvir has two causes.

Statistics showed that almost most of the supporters of the right-wing party Bayit HaYehudi (Jewish House) had defected to Dati Leumi.

Bayit HaYehudi (formerly Yamina) is the party of ex-Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, who led the party to a debacle in this election and got more than 1.2 per cent of the vote.

In the previous election in 2021, Bennett and Shaked's party won seven seats, but it now appeared that their supporters had not forgiven the two leaders for joining a coalition of left-wing and Arab parties led by Yair Lapid.

Bennett thus violated his election promise, which he made during the 2021 election campaign, that he would never sit in a government with Lapid.

Another reason for the astonishing growth of Dati Leumi is the sense of personal insecurity that many Israelis have resulting from the current wave of terror in Israel, especially in Judea and Samaria, where attacks have been carried out on a daily basis in recent months.

Itamar Ben Gvir strongly appealed to this sense of insecurity during the campaign and promised to claim the Internal Security portfolio when his party would be part of the next coalition in Israel.

In that position, Ben Gvir wants to take

all kinds of measures that are supposed to bring an end to the current wave of terror.

He is, for example, in favour of introducing the death penalty against Palestinian terrorists and wants to deport Arab Knesset members who openly support terrorism or express their admiration for terrorists, as has happened recently.

Also, in cities with a mixed Arab-Jewish population, where violent riots broke out last year during the war with Hamas in Gaza, the support for Dati Leumi grew significantly.

The support for the party in the city of Lod, for example, grew from 3.9 per cent to 15.5 per cent of voters.

The same was roughly true for the cities of Akko, Ramle, and Jerusalem, where 14.2 per cent of voters now voted for Dati Leumi.

In other cities that did not witness the Arab violence in May 2021, an upward trend for the party of Ben Gvir and Smotrich was also registered.

One of those cities was Eilat, where the party won 11.1 per cent of the vote compared to 3.4 per cent in March 2021.

Another factor contributing to the victory of the Netanyahu-led right-wing bloc was the high voter turnout.

This high turnout of about 72 per cent benefited right-wing parties and was the result of Netanyahu's campaign, which targeted right-wing voters who stayed at home last year.

It is now expected that Netanyahu will soon be able to cobble together a coalition composed entirely of right-wing parties for the first time.

The prime minister wants to end the rule of the current caretaker coalition as soon as possible.

Short News

Robot Cleans Solar Panel



Solar panels must be cleaned from time to time to produce the maximum possible amount of energy, but the use of water is not always eco-friendly. That is why the Israeli company Airtouch Solar came up with a solution: clean without water – and with the aid of a robot. The product is available in Israel and India. | Photo: Shutterstock

BDS Has to Back Down

Spain adopted a law that states that a subsidy or public funds are prohibited for organisations and bodies that promote antisemitism. This law defines antisemitism as is defined in the working definition of antisemitism of the IHRA, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. This law against antisemitism effectively excludes BDS groups from public funding in Spain.

High-Quality Textbooks Morocco

Morocco is the first Arab country to include relevant Jewish history education in its compulsory curriculum. The Anti-Defamation League ascertains that they do this in a good way. The textbooks promote the appreciation of Jews and show the students what Jews contribute to the country. In various Middle Eastern countries and Northern Africa, negative perceptions of Jews occur and even antisemitism.

Alternative for Bees



Bees are indispensable, on a worldwide basis, for pollinating crops. Unfortunately, the bees are doing poorly. And yes, a first step towards a solution is in sight. In Israel, the company of Arugga presented a commercial robot imitating a bumblebee. The robot is called Polly. Polly produces vibrations releasing the pollen from the flowers and ensures fertilisation. During tests in hothouses in Israel, Australia and the United States, the results are promising. Tomatoes fertilised with Polly yield five per cent more harvest than with the traditional bumblebee. | Photo: Shutterstock.

From Ethiopia to Israel—A Dream Fulfilled

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Christians for Israel Austria

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A small team of Christians for Israel had the privilege to visit Jewish families in Ethiopia and learn more about Jewish life and *Aliyah* in early November this year. Preceding this, we had the opportunity to visit their family members in Israel, who had already made *Aliyah* years before—many of them with the help of Christians for Israel—and were eagerly awaiting the reunification of their families. Their stories deeply impacted us.

Moket and Babich

Ashkelon, Israel: In Ashkelon, we visit Moket, who welcomes us to her home with traditional Ethiopian snacks: fresh popcorn and fruit. On her arm, she has her little son, Beni'el. Moket made *Aliyah* to Israel five years ago, together with her husband and their daughter, who was five at the time. Her brother also lives in Ashkelon, and together they save money to send to brother Babich in Gondar. The family needs their help to survive.



Photo left: Averu offering us Ethiopian food. Photo right: Babich reads the card which Moket wrote.

On cards which we brought with us, the word 'Shalom' written colourfully on the front, they write a few sentences to their brother. Other than that, they are in touch by phone.

Ethiopia, Gondar: After a night flight of 2,100 kilometres southwards, our team arrives in the old imperial city of Gondar the next morning. Surrounded by mountains, the former capital of Ethiopia lies at an altitude of more than 2,000 metres in the north of the country. It is not far from the Tigray region, where civil war is still raging these days. Together with our guide and translator, Tariku, we set off to visit Moket's brother Babich and his family. We are accompanied by three Ethiopian soldiers for the entire duration of our trip. As the former capital of Ethiopia, Gondar has much to offer, with numerous castles, churches, monasteries, and well-preserved buildings. But the closer we get to the rented house of Babich, the poorer the area becomes. We leave the busy main road and walk up a narrow dirt road. At the top, there is a collection of simple mud houses with corrugated iron roofs. A few steps lead into the interior. In front of one of the houses, Babich (35) is waiting for us with two of his daughters peeping through the door. His



The road to Babich's rented house.

wife, Torango (30) and the three daughters, Kalkidan (8), Kidist (6), and Simcha (8 months), are curious to meet us. The family welcomes us with smiles on their faces and invites us into their living space.

The room, no more than 20 square metres in size, is dark and cramped, with light only coming in through the open door. Eventually, everyone finds a place to sit. Half a year ago, the family moved from the countryside to the city. They wanted to be closer to the Jewish community and are hoping for an exit permit to Israel soon. Like Babich, there are about 10,000 Jews who are waiting in Gondar and Addis Abeba, some of them for more than 20 years. The family cannot afford a real apartment or a larger room. Babich works as a day labourer, doing odd jobs. With the help of the Jewish Agency and his siblings in Israel, the family survives. Our tour guide Tariku explains to us that the Jews in Gondar are charged horrendous rents for the shabby rooms: "There is a lot of envy of the Jews in the neighbourhood because they are allowed to go to Israel and receive support from there. Knowing the need of the Jews to live close to the Jewish Community Centre, the landlords charge very high prices."

Tears run down Babich's cheeks when we hand over the cards written by his siblings. His eight-year-old daughter reads aloud over his shoulder. His wife and children visit the Jewish Agency's community centre in Gondar every day. There is the Synagogue, where men and women pray every morning. Torango gets medical care for her youngest children there and two meals a day. The cost of living is extreme, especially if you are focused on the Promised Land for your future. Babich is full of hope that the waiting will soon come to an end and that the family can leave for Israel in two or three months.

Preparing for Life in Israel

The visit to Babich and the other families makes us aware of how important the work of the Jewish Agency is: These Jewish families live in great poverty, many live very traditionally, they cook over open fires, and electrical appliances are not common to them. It will be a long journey until they have integrated themselves into the modern high-tech nation of Israel. The Jewish Agency tries to prepare the Jews in Gondar for life in Israel as much as possible. To this end, it supports the city's Jewish Community Centre. Here, in addition to attending state schools, children receive further education in the afternoons. Both children and adults get classes in Hebrew and Judaism, as well as the history of Israel and the Jewish people. Some attend computer classes. When our team visited the Synagogue in the Community Centre one morning, we were stunned to see women, children, and men in great numbers. The Jews of Gondar come here not only on *Shabbat* but every morning to pray. The Torah scrolls are read in Hebrew and in the local language, Amharic. After the service in the Synagogue, we are introduced to the nutrition programme. Two hundred mothers and



Moket and her brother with Frank, Marie-Louise and Dana of C4I.



The nutrition programme in Gondar.



The Synagogue in Gondar.

pregnant women, as well as 1027 children under the age of five, receive a meal at the Centre five days a week. They can take some food home to provide another meal consisting of bread, an egg, potatoes, and bananas. Children under five and citizens over the age of 50 also receive free medical treatment.

The other family we visit shares a similar fate. Averu (48) and Asasi, who have prepared a wonderful Ethiopian coffee ceremony (*Buna*) and traditional food for us when we visit them in Bat Yam, made *Aliyah* with their husbands and children 15 years ago. They are waiting for their sister Mantaboch and her family in Gondar to make *Aliyah*. For those who already have family members in Israel (blood descendants), the process of *Aliyah* is mostly smoother. Mantaboch and her family eagerly await their *Aliyah* at the end of this year.

Family Reunion in Israel

Two families and a young woman have their dream come true when they join us on our flight back to Israel. At the airport in Tel Aviv, they are welcomed by employees of the Jewish Agency. Supplying them with money, SIM cards for their mobile phones and other necessary documents, they help them enter their ancient homeland. For as long as necessary, they will receive a first home in an Absorption Centre in Ashkelon. There they will stay until they are integrated and ready to rent their own apartment. In the entrance hall, their relatives are waiting with flowers and gifts. As they appear, they are showered with confetti, sweets, and kisses. Tears of joy and relief are mixed with excited chatter and laughs. Finally, they are home!

With your help we could reunite these Ethiopian Jews with their families in the land of Israel! We continue working towards bringing more Ethiopian olim home to Promised Land. You can donate by filling out the coupon on the back of this newspaper.



Reuniting families - arrival in Israel.

Being a Light in Dark Times

Koen Carlier

Aliyah Fieldworker | Christians for Israel Ukraine

By now, winter has set in in Ukraine. Attacks with missiles and kamikaze drones continue unabated. Infrastructure across the country is being affected. Especially in the south and east of Ukraine, great damage is caused to schools, apartment buildings and industrial sites.

We prepare as best we can for the coming months to ensure we can continue evacuating Jewish refugees. Meanwhile, we are also in contact with someone with four large buses who is willing to help us with evacuation. Such a trip takes two to three days on average.

Wise Decision

Among the people, we brought to the Moldovan capital of Kishenov was Natalya with her 17-year-old twins: son Pavel and daughter Anna. The three came from Konotop, a small village not so far from the border of Belarus and Russia. Her husband, who is now obligated to serve in the Ukrainian army, had told Natalya, "You should leave here as soon as possible, leave for Israel and do not ask too many questions." Natalya did ask us several times when her husband would also be able to leave. Our answer: when the mobilisation law is no longer in effect, or the war ends. We encouraged Natalya and her children and told them it was a wise decision to leave and that the children are 'the future of Israel'.

We try to encourage everyone who leaves. People often need so much positive conversation after all the hardship and reassurance that their choice to go to Israel is the right one.

Light

We hope to be a light to our Jewish brothers and sisters even in these 'dark' times, and at the same time to not be bothered by snow and ice. As long as it is needed our help continues.

"I will signal for them and gather them in. Surely I will redeem them; they will be as numerous as before. Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return." Zechariah 10:8-9

The costs of helping a Jewish person leave for Israel is \$300. You can donate by filling out the coupon on the back of this newspaper.



Natalya and her two children, in the middle of the photo, along with several other refugees, on their way to Israel. | Photo: C4I



Rockets destroyed the homes of many Ukrainians, including the Jewish refugees we are helping. Many lives were also lost. | Photo: C4I

“Please Tell Us About Israel”



Meeting with the students in Guantanamo.



The group of pastors and students in front of the Seminary in Santiago.



The Seminary in Santiago.

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

How are Jews doing in Israel? And what is their relationship with the Christian church? These and other questions were fired at me by dozens of Christian students and pastors in Cuba. Cuba is a communist dictatorship, and the state propaganda about Israel is one-sided and exclusively negative. Yet I noticed a huge interest in Israel.

I contacted the dean of a Seminary in Santiago de Cuba through a missionary organisation last year, where pastors are educated. Because of the corona pandemic, we kept in contact via Whatsapp, but this year he invited me to come to Cuba and teach several days on Israel's biblical and theological significance in our Christian faith. “We are keen to learn more about Israel here, and our pastors and students will be eager to attend,” he assured me. And it really turned out to be like that.

In the university town of Guantanamo, over 30 students from various disciplines turned up for a Bible study and meeting on their free Saturday. That God's promises for Israel are repeated and confirmed in the New Testament

was an eye-opener for them. “Is it true that Israel is trying to exterminate the Palestinians?” one of them asked. “We couldn't believe this either,” was their response when I made it clear that this was just nonsense propaganda. They listened breathlessly when I told them about Israel's current events and its situation.

In Santiago de Cuba, I was invited to conduct a Bible study with over 40 pastors and students on Israel's continuing role in God's salvation plan with the world: “Now we see and feel a deep faith connection with Israel and the Jewish people”. We talked about the continuity between the Old and New Testaments as opposed to an often assumed ‘break’ between old and new. And we studied how God's covenants and promises for Israel are repeated and confirmed in the New Testament. This was also an eye-opener for these pastors: “Israel has suddenly become much closer,” they said. There appears to be a great need among pastors and students in Cuba for biblical and historical information about Israel. They asked me for more books and articles about Israel. So there is still a lot of work to be done for Christians for Israel in Cuba.

Taking books about Israel to Cuba was too great a risk. It could get me and the Seminary into problems with the

authorities. So we had the book ‘Why Israel’ translated into Spanish, and the text was put on 100 USB sticks. This raises no questions at the customs, and giving away USB sticks for free is just allowed. So in that way, we could still give the ‘book’ to every student and pastor on USB.

In Cuba, there is a serious shortage of medicines and painkillers like Tylenol and Ibuprofen. A doctor told me she often has to prescribe a certain medicine to a patient, knowing that this medicine is not available in Cuba. So my suitcase was filled with a lot of these medications before my departure to Cuba. Some students told me that many students feel discouraged and would like to leave the country because there is no future there.

Churches have reasonable freedom in Cuba and are allowed to hold services on Sundays. Their sermons and teachings are just not allowed to criticise the government. So a sermon emphasising Israel's Biblical and historical legitimacy might conflict with state policy.

We agreed to start a partnership with the Seminary and pastors will translate and distribute more Bible study materials on Israel.

| Photos: Christians for Israel International

“This is a New Revelation to Me”

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

The title reflects the reaction of a pastor during one of our conferences in India in November. It was not long ago that a pastor from Bangalore, the largest city in South India, recently proposed to our Regional Director Asia, Dr Wilson Ng, to organise three conferences for pastors with teaching about Israel in three different cities in India. During our preparations this pastor told us: “Your message about Israel is important for India and the pastors here are eager to learn about Israel”. And so it happened that Rev Willem Glashouwer (President C4I International), Rev Dr Conrado Lumahan (C4I Philippines) and I ended up teaching at conferences in Bangalore, Pondicherry and Chennai.

This is all the more special, because India is number ten of *Open Doors* ‘World Watch List’ of 50 countries where Christians face the most persecution for their faith. Recently three churches in Bangalore were burnt down by angry Hindus. So pastors were only invited privately to attend these conferences and without making any publicity. During the conferences, a car and driver were permanently ready next to the church to remove us in case of riots. About 2.5 per cent of the Indian population is Christian and they are often facing hard times. Nevertheless they told us they are not afraid and fully inspired to continue church planting and preaching the gospel in their country.

In Bangalore 140 pastors from various denominations



The conference in Bangalore. | Photo: Christians for Israel



Our local host in India with Rev Cornelis Kant, Rev Willem Glashouwer and Dr Wilson Ng. | Photo: Christians for Israel

attended our conference. It was impressive to see how some were on the edge of their seats listening to our teachings. Rev Willem Glashouwer spoke about God's everlasting covenants and promises for Israel and the Jewish people. Rev Conrado Lumahan concentrated on Biblical reasons for Christians and churches to stand with Israel during his teaching. I had the opportunity to share with the participants how Israel disappeared from our Christian theology during the first centuries and about the role of Jesus as Messiah in the present-day return of the Jewish people to their homeland Israel.

Many pastors told us this was a new revelation for them.

One of them had tears in his eyes and explained to us that he felt the need to repent, because he never preached about Israel in his Church. Even the pastor who was the host of the conference told us most of our teachings were new to him: “In all these years that I have been a pastor, I was never aware of the Biblical significance of Israel as you taught us these days”. All pastors will receive the book ‘Why Israel’ that was translated in their local *Tamil* or *Telugu* language. We were again deeply impressed by the impact of this Biblical message and convinced of the important mission of Christians for Israel.



CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand
and
South Pacific Edition
December 2022

Successful NZ Tour to the Holy Land

■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director | Christians for Israel NZ

It is an incredible privilege to write this piece sitting at my laptop, looking over green fields on a *moshav* in the Jordan Valley, Israel.

Following the rather traumatic Covid-derailed tour of 2020, it has been a huge relief—and an enormous blessing—to have just completed our first post-Covid Study tour. A wonderful group of 40+ New Zealanders have just survived an exhausting itinerary, experiencing a vast array of historical, archaeological, biblical, cultural and modern geo-political sites and interactions. Coming from the opposite side of the world is always a big undertaking, but once again, we were blessed with a fantastic group of people and an incredible tour.

One of the key objectives in taking people to the Holy Land is to enable them to see for themselves both modern Israel and also the thousands of years of archaeological evidence of Jewish occupation. It is difficult to think of any other piece of ground anywhere on earth where so many empires and civilisations have fought to control it. Traces of literally dozens of foreign rulers and their armies can be found all through Israel, but always present is the fact of Jews living in the land. At times, due to the tyranny of various rulers, there were not very many living in the land, but it is undeniable that Jews have lived continuously in Israel for thousands of years.

Meeting *olim*, in particular, those from former Soviet countries, was a very special opportunity.

Given the desperate attempts by so many to rewrite history, effectively trying to deny any historic Jewish connection with the land, seeing so much evidence first-hand is powerful.

Another key objective is to see just what modern Israel looks like. Again, in spite of the propaganda being pushed at us from so many directions, witnessing life in Israel, even experiencing a little of it, is extremely empowering. Meeting and engaging with the diverse range of characters and cultures living within Israel's borders is a



Panorama of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee where the River Jordan originates. Agricultural lands including date palms, bananas covered fields, and kibbutz, with the occupied Golan Heights. | Photo: Shutterstock

real education. Seeing so many people getting on with life, even in the face of considerable challenges, is nothing short of inspiring. For a country so often facing terror attacks and the blatantly biased scrutiny of so many other nations, and having just completed yet another round of government elections itself, Israelis were just peacefully going about their lives. Being able to fly into Tel Aviv on an Arab airline via Dubai was impossible only a few years ago, so there are certainly some positive signs in the Middle East in spite of everything.

One of the great joys of this recent journey was the chance to spend just a few days after the tour visiting some of the projects Christians for Israel NZ supporters contribute to in Israel. My wife and I were fortunate to be able to join together with a group from Christians for Israel Holland and visit the 'First home in the Homeland' project. This was a true blessing to us all! Meeting *olim*, in particular those from former Soviet countries, was a very special opportunity. As the various new Israelis shared their stories, it was deeply moving. In many cases—especially those who have made *Aliyah* from

Ukraine—*olim* have left very difficult circumstances. The challenges of learning a new language—Hebrew—along with a whole new way of life were often completely shadowed by memories of the extreme hardships these people had faced in their previous countries. To see the beaming faces of young children loving every minute of their new lives is unforgettable.

For those of us who see the return of God's people to Israel as the fulfilment of prophecy, the stories of these previous *olim* have even greater significance. If there is ever any doubt that God is working in Israel right now, please feel free to join us on the next Study Tour!

There are many good causes to support around the world and many opportunities to bring hope. Thank you for your support of our work at Christians for Israel.

Have a great *Hanukkah* and a wonderful Christmas!

Christmas HOLIDAYS
Our office will be closed from Tuesday 20 Dec 2022 to Monday 16 Jan 2023

AVAILABLE NOW - 2023 CALENDAR

To celebrate Israel's 75th Diamond Jubilee in 2023, Christians for Israel NZ have produced a commemorative calendar.

2023 Israel Calendar—Celebrating 75 years of Heritage

- Shows Biblical/Jewish festivals
- Shows Israeli holidays
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or order online at
www.c4israel.org.nz

and pay by internet banking (put your name and CALENDAR as the reference).

Order by 16 December to have it posted before the office closes.



All About the Numbers

Joanna Moss

This election was supposed to be the most important ever. Yet they seem to say that about each one. However, this time was different, as you will see... It was billed as being about those who regard Israel as a democracy versus those who primarily see it as a Jewish state. The latter won, so now it remains to be seen how this dynamic will play out. It needs to be remembered that on paper, Israel is a right-wing country with a large centre (73 seats), and it's only the Pro and Anti-Bibi narrative that splits the centre parties.

Let's dive into the numbers and look for lessons and comparisons with the NZ experience. It's especially helpful as they are comparable parliamentary democracies with similar systems resulting in coalition governments and even the same number of members called MKs in Israel, meaning Members of the Knesset and MPs for us. We know well that 61 is the critical number required to form a government.

Party Vote is the Name of the Game

Under Israel's system, you only get one vote, and that's for a party. Like us, each party publishes a party list in advance. Some parties, like Likud, hold primaries, whilst others, like Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid, are formed at the behest of the leader. Thus being the head of a party is very important, and the further up the list, the greater your chance of getting in. Thus having good relations with the party leader is critical!

Turnout is King

There are many variables, but in a tight election, turnout is key and not just overall turnout, but turnout of particular voters. So it's up to each leader to get their voters out. Likud has a well-oiled machine for their party faithful. Concern was voiced that with election fatigue and a fairly brutal campaign, many voters were turned right off the process; thus, turnout would be very low. Advanced voting enhances turnout because it makes it easier and more convenient to vote.

On the contrary, the 2022 voter turnout was high (71%), making it even harder for smaller parties to succeed. Turnout was high amongst the religious Jews, some of whom traditionally don't vote or even believe in the state! They do what their rabbis tell them, and this year, the rabbis left key instructions—vote and vote for the religious parties!

Arab Vote

One of the unknowns in Israeli elections is the Arab vote. Arabs make up around 20% of the population but only 17% of eligible voters because they have a significantly younger demographic. Traditionally many Arab Israelis don't vote either because they don't believe in the state, the voting process or harbour dissatisfaction with their Arab candidates. However, if they vote, they hold key power. 53.2% of Arab/Druze voted compared with 44.6% last time. Interestingly, Shas representatives reported they got votes from the Arab villages.

Parties Standing

The adage two Jews, three opinions is never more aptly seen than in the number of parties voters get to choose from. This time there were 39 parties. However, most of them are so fringe they fail to get many votes and are considered inconsequential.

Threshold Crisis

As we saw when Winston Peters (NZ First) narrowly missed out, making the threshold is vital. It's an IN versus OUT situation with consequences and a huge blow when you fail, not least regarding ongoing loss of political profile. The threshold is 3.25% in Israel (4 MKs) and still 5% (6 MPs) in NZ. Had Israel NZ's threshold, there would have been far fewer parties in the Knesset, and a further decimated Left. Helpfully in Israel, if parties think they are close and don't want to take a risk, they can join with another similar party to safeguard their precious votes. By contrast, Yamina's successor and former Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked failed to do so and is out of power. Some parties didn't realise how close they were to failure.

Wasted Vote: Lapid's Undoing

Wasted vote represents votes for parties that don't make the threshold or Invalid votes, the latter comprising less than 1% in 2022. In some elections, wasted vote is tiny, and in others, it is significant. Overall, the wasted vote was high this time (7+ seats) because two well-known parties were close, but could not reach the threshold. Strategically Likud's head, Benjamin Netanyahu, recognised earlier on that the Right needed every vote to count and encouraged two parties to join—Smotrich and Ben Gvir to form Religious Zionist. Note that both gain because combined, they leapfrogged other parties to become the third largest party in the Knesset. By contrast, the Left bickered amongst themselves and lost this opportunity. Yair Lapid was unable to secure his coalition, leaving him with a much smaller opposition.

Wasted votes also alter the threshold numbers of votes required to secure each seat. Over the course of the counting, that number yo-yos, and it's not until the end, when all votes are tallied, that the final numbers of MKs are determined. Sometimes it comes down to a matter of a few votes.

Biggest Issue: Demographics

One of the main, forgotten issues in election analysis is the voting population that increased by 200,000 since the last election. That is both natural increase and immigration. Israel's population has been steadily increasing, yet the number of MKs is static. This means that each party must grow their vote and also try to grow their proportionate vote. Such was the downfall of Meretz and Balad.

People forget that as of 2022, more than 50% of Israelis are traditional, religious or Haredi (ultraorthodox). Such people tend to vote conservatively and often for their brand of Judaism – Ashkenazi for United Torah Judaism (UTJ) and Mizrahi/Sephardic for Shas, and religious Zionists for their parties. The groups having the most children are ultraorthodox and then orthodox, and it only takes 18 years for them to grow into voters. So that if you mobilise this demographic, it turns into a lot of votes, as this election demonstrated especially for the Shas party and Religious Zionists.

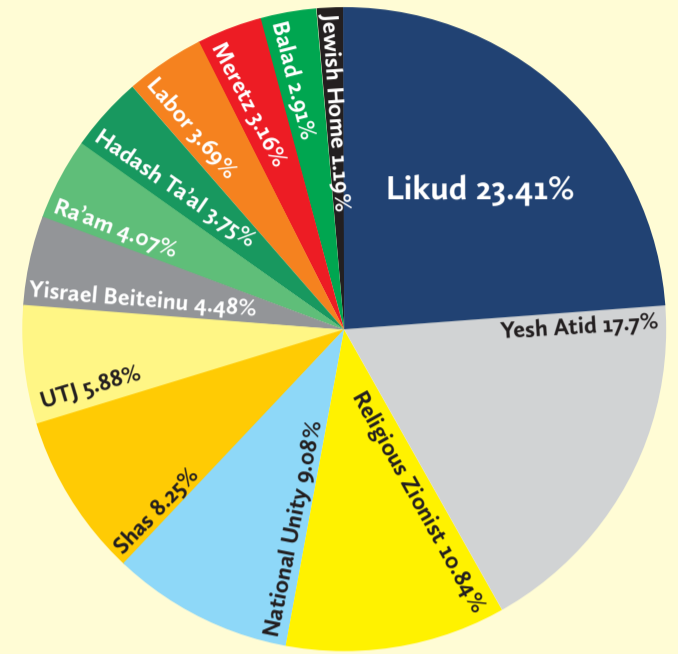
Shas was also able to mobilise the disaffected voter by focusing on domestic issues like housing. Unlike the last election, where they had similar numbers of MKs with UTJ, Shas now has a sizeable increase which cements the role of the Mizrahi Jews over the European- ancestry Ashkenazi Jews.

Time will tell, but this election may well be a watershed election like 1977 in that it tipped the balance in favour of the religious Jews, and this trend will only continue whilst the demographics support it. The Far Right is now mainstream. New immigrants tend to vote conservatively.

The Left's in Bad Shape

A fractured Left meant a losing Left, contrasting the skilful campaign of the Right, who positioned themselves for maximum impact and zero wasted votes, with a disgruntled and divided Left. Yair Lapid was again no match for shrewd Bibi Netanyahu. But perhaps the most interesting campaign came from the Religious Zionist camp, who claimed that Bibi needed to be checked. The traditional Left is in terminal decline. Whether it recovers remains to be seen. Demographics are against it,

Breakdown of Party Vote: 2022 Elections



Party	Leader	% Vote	Seats	Inc/Dec	Final 3 TV Polls (Tol)
Likud	Bibi Netanyahu	23.41	32	+2	30-31
Yesh Atid	Yair Lapid	17.7	24	+7	24-27
Religious Zionist	Bezalel Smotrich	10.84	14	+8	14-15
National Unity	Benny Gantz	9.08	12	-2	10-11
Shas	Aryeh Deri	8.25	11	+2	8
United Torah (UTJ)	Yitzhak Goldknopf	5.88	7	0	7
*** NZ Threshold ***					
Yisrael Beiteinu	Avigdor Lieberman	4.48	6	-1	5-6
Ra'am	Mansour Abbas	4.07	5	+1	4
Hadash Ta'al	Ayman Odeh	3.75	5	0	4
Labor	Merav Michaeli	3.69	4	-3	5-6
*** Israel Threshold ***					
Meretz	Nitzan Horowitz	3.16	0	-6	4-5
Balad	Jamal Zahalka	2.91	0	-1	0
Jewish Home	Ayelet Shaked	1.19	0	-7	0

Note: Under the NZ System, wasted vote is proportionally re-distributed, making winning parties even stronger. The number of parties in the Knesset is significantly higher than with NZ threshold (+4) and the wasted vote would be intolerably high 23.5+%. Tol= Times of Israel.

especially with the Arabs walking away.

Less Representative Knesset

Due to the major wins of religious parties, fewer women will be in the Knesset and also fewer Arabs. However, under Israeli law, parties can appoint people as ministers from outside the Knesset for their expertise. The Polls were wrong again!

Correction to Article in October Issue: 'Germany Makes amends in Munich'

Sometimes we can do all the research and end up repeating a mistake. Such was the case with 'Germany Makes amends in Munich' article (October 2022).

Through an Israeli connection the article was shown to Professor Shaul Ladany, a member of the 1972 Israeli Olympic team. He kindly brought it to our attention that the details surrounding his actions on that fateful day were incorrect. Ladany did not jump out of a second-story window. He exited his apartment building and climbed along the rear terraces to Apartment 5, where Chef de Mission Shmuel Lalkin was housed to raise the alarm.

We regret the error. A book review of Professor Ladany's autobiography will be published in an upcoming edition.



Partition—the Idea of Two States

■ Andrew Tucker

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

In 1920 the League of Nations approved the Mandate for Palestine. The idea was to enable the Jewish people to re-establish their homeland 'in Palestine'. The territory of Palestine was one area, comprising what is today Israel, the West Bank and Jordan.

The idea of dividing Palestine into two states—one Jewish, the other Arab—is not new. Time and again over the last century, as conflict and violence between Jews and Arabs has erupted, the international community has proposed division of the land into two independent states.

The first manifestation of this principle was the creation of Transjordan in 1921: a Jew-free state for the Arab Palestinians.

Division of the remaining Mandate territory (west of the Jordan River) was discussed intensively already in the period of the Mandate for Palestine, as the British sought to reconcile competing Jewish and Arab Palestinian interests. Partition was the model proposed and adopted by the UN General Assembly in the UN Partition Plan in 1947, which was reluctantly accepted by the Jewish leadership, but rejected by the Arabs.

After its creation in 1948, the young State of Israel faced three wars of aggression launched by various alliances of its Arab neighbors, each intended to destroy the new Jewish State (the 1948/9 War of Independence, the 1967 Six Day War, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War).

In the mid-1970s, the idea of two states was again revived by the international community.

In the meantime, Israel proceeded to negotiate and ultimately reach peace treaties with two of the Arab aggressor states: Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994). The others, including Israel's two other immediate neighbors (Lebanon and Syria), do not even recognize Israel's existence, and remain in a state of hostile belligerency.

In 1991 the US-Soviet sponsored Madrid conference called for Israeli-Arab peace based on the territory-for-peace principle. Within the next few years, Israel and the PLO entered into a series of agreements intended to lead to Palestinian autonomy and a permanent agreed resolution of the conflict. These 'Oslo' agreements established the Palestinian Authority and other institutions. The West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C, and Israel withdrew in part. Key issues such as 'borders' and 'security' were left for further negotiation.

Since 1980, the European Union has been pushing hard for a 'two-state' solution to this conflict. According to the EU, the creation of a Palestinian state within the '1967 lines' is the only way to solve this conflict, and thus to bring peace to the Middle East.

While in the 1980s-1990s there was wide support for the idea of establishing an independent Palestinian state



| Photo: Shutterstock

adjacent to Israel, public opinion has shifted significantly over the decades. The failure of the Camp David negotiations in 2000 followed by the Second Intifada was a watershed.

Today there is very little support—either in Israel or within Palestinian society—for a two-state solution. Recognizing that a full-fledged Palestinian state is unrealistic and perhaps even undesirable, commentators and actors across the political spectrum, both in Israel and Palestinian society, are discussing alternative solutions to the conflict. These include the creation of one 'unitary' state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, to replace the current State of Israel and administered territories. Such a state could be either binational, 'Jewish', 'Palestinian', or nationless. Other alternatives that are discussed include a federation, a confederation, and a Jewish state containing a territory on which Palestinians would have limited autonomy.

The current Two-State Policy advanced by the European Union and others is based on three main assumptions:

- That the PLO would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian State within the 1967 lines as a final resolution of the conflict;
- That the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, are entitled under international law to the establishment of an independent state, and Israel is obliged to enable the creation of such a state; and
- That the legal and political culture of Arab Palestinian society in particular, and the region in general, supports the establishment of a peaceful state in Palestine based on the rule of law.

In our view each of these assumptions is currently questionable:

First, the core issue of the conflict is not Palestinian statehood, but the right of the Jewish people to nationhood and statehood in the land. The Israel-Palestinian conflict today is essentially the same as the conflict that began when the foundations for a Jewish State were laid in the Mandate for Palestine, implementing the Balfour Declaration. The core issue in dispute is: does the Jewish State of Israel have a right to exist as a Jewish State? The PLO has always denied the right of the Jewish people to exist, and there is no sign that this will change.

Second, international law does not mandate the establishment of a full-fledged Palestinian state within the '1967 lines'. The Palestinians have a right to self-determination, but this is not an automatic right to statehood. Moreover, the 1949 Armistice Lines have never been accepted as borders of the State of Israel. The only way for Palestinian self-determination to be fulfilled is through negotiation with the State of Israel.

Third, an examination of the dynamics, powers and legal and political culture in the Middle East, as well as the Palestinian society, suggests that there are significant cultural and structural impediments to the creation and stable development of Western-style states in the region. These impediments are insufficiently acknowledged or addressed by the EU's policies and programs supporting Palestinian statehood. The result is that, while some Palestinian institutions of government have been established, these are little more than an empty shell.

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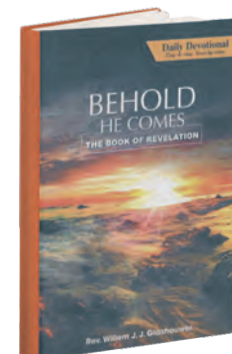
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New Report Challenges the 'Two-State' Paradigm

■ Prof. Wolfgang Bock & Andrew Tucker

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

A new report published by *The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.)* challenges the legal, historical and political assumptions underlying the two-state policy.

The report, authored by Wolfgang Bock and Andrew Tucker, is entitled *Two States for Two Peoples? The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, International Law and EU Policy*. It was launched at an event in the European Parliament in Brussels on 7 December 2022.

For four decades, the European Union has advocated the establishment of a Palestinian state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip as the only possible solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

This policy has failed the test of history.

Despite a half-century of strenuous EU efforts, expending tens of billions of euros, the reality is that there is no independent, democratic, sovereign and viable Palestinian state. Instead, major Palestinian organisations continue to promote the destruction of Israel and reward the killing of Jews. Democratic institutions of Government are lacking; the Palestinian society is radicalised and violent. The Oslo process has been terminated. The security risks mean that Israeli withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the West Bank is totally unrealistic.

This Report suggests a new way forward, consistent with legal, historical and political realities.

Reasons for Failure

The report argues that the EU two-state policy has failed because it is based on three false assumptions: a) conceptually, that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is territorial and not existential; b) legally, that the West Bank belongs to Palestinians for their State; and c) practically, that the establishment of a peaceful, democratic fully-fledged Palestinian state beside Israel is feasible. This discussion paper critiques these assumptions and makes recommendations for a new approach.

Palestinian rights to self-determination must be respected, but they may not conflict with international law or be allowed to undermine Israeli sovereignty or regional stability. A successful settlement of this conflict can only be achieved within the framework of a consistent application of international law. Peace will never be achieved through agendas aimed at annihilation and destruction. The necessary conditions are: the mutual rejection of extremism and mutual acceptance on both sides, the fair and equal application of international law to all actors in the region, and strengthening institutions of Government based on the rule of law.

End Palestinian Rejectionism

First, the EU must acknowledge the reality that all relevant Palestinian political organisations – including the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority that represent and govern the Palestinian people – aim not to establish an independent and viable state side-by-side with Israel but to destroy the Jewish state. This reflects their ties with extremist actors in the region, such as Iran. Unless the actual goals of these organisations change, they will not accept any solution allowing the existence of the State of Israel. Neither will Israel accept any solution that compromises its secure existence as a Jewish state free from hostile acts or threats of force by foreign states and non-state actors. Addressing this root cause of the conflict should be the highest priority.



Muslim and Jewish man walking together in the Old City of Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

If the Palestinians accept the Jewish people as a nation and the right of the Jewish State of Israel to exist as a state free from hostile acts or threats of force, peace has a chance. Developments in the region show that this is possible, but the obstacles to be overcome are significant.

Interpret and Apply International Law Equally in the Region

Second, the EU's assertion that the Palestinians have a right to statehood in East Jerusalem and the West Bank is based on a unique and incorrect reading of international law that the EU does not apply to any other comparable conflict or occupation. The rule of law requires the EU to interpret and apply international law concepts of statehood, territorial sovereignty, self-determination and occupation fairly, objectively and consistently to all actors in the region, including Israel and the Palestinians.

The Palestinians have a right to self-determination (including autonomy) but not an *à priori* right to a full-fledged state. The EU must also acknowledge Israel's legitimate territorial rights in these territories and treat the Palestinians no differently than all other people groups.

Establish the Conditions of Statehood

Third, the EU's interventions on the ground ignore the power structures in the region and political culture within the Palestinian society. Instead of promoting peaceful relations and cooperation, EU support of Palestinian institutions is entrenching corrupt autocracies and promoting extremism and radicalisation within the Palestinian society.

Internal structures must be developed that promote equal freedom and security for all citizens founded on the rule of law. The Palestinian political culture must be reformed. This is a long-term project. Such an approach is consistent with EU values; the EU cannot support the creation of an entity dominated by the same extremism and oppression of human rights the EU opposes everywhere else.

Therefore, European financial aid should be conditional on the performance of benchmarked requirements in three main areas: a) cultivation of fundamental values that protect the rule of law and the civil, religious, and political rights of everybody; b) encouragement of personal liberty and equality, including acceptance of Jews as equal members of society; and c) normalisation of relations with Israel along the lines of other agreements with Israel such as the Abraham Accords.

About the authors: Prof. Wolfgang Bock studied Law and Political Science at the Universities of Geneva, Giessen and Frankfurt/Main. After his secondment in 2011/2012 to the Hessian State Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Wiesbaden (special fields: Islamist extremism and Islamist terrorism), he worked from 2012 till his retirement in September 2017 as a Counsellor for Constitutional and International Law at the Federal Academy for Security Policy, an institution of the German Government educating people from ministries, security administrations and from economy on all questions of Security Policy, covering the Near and Middle East and Islamic cultures. He writes and teaches on Constitutional Law and Security Law, on Islam, Islamic Cultures and Islamism, and on Policies and Legal Cultures in the MENA region.

Andrew Tucker is a graduate of the Universities of Melbourne (BA, LLB) and Oxford (BCL). He has over 20 years of experience as an attorney in Australia, the UK and the Netherlands, advising governments and corporations mainly in the energy, transport and telecoms sectors. Previous positions include in-house counsel to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). He has been a Research Fellow at the TMC Asser Institute for European Law, International Law and International Commercial Arbitration, in The Hague, Netherlands, and a Senior Fellow in the Faculty of Law, University of Melbourne. In 2017 he co-founded The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) – a non-profit think tank educating and advising politicians, policy-makers and others on the fair and non-discriminatory application of international law in relation to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East generally.



This report will be available in the future as a hard copy report and an e-book.



Abraham Accords Foster a New Regional Architecture

■ His Excellency Ran Yaakoby

Ambassador to New Zealand, Tonga and the Cook Islands | Ambassador-Designate to Samoa

In these challenging times, it is natural to seek out beacons of hope and optimism. Today we can focus on a beacon that is lighting the path to a better future in the Middle East. Two years ago Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed the US-brokered peace and normalisation agreements known as the Abraham Accords.

The 15 September 2020 ceremony on the White House lawn was a historic event, one with the potential to transform the Middle East. On its anniversary, we celebrate the Accords themselves along with the remarkable achievements accomplished in just two years.

For years, Israel worked behind-the-scenes to build clandestine diplomatic and economic relations with other moderate states in the region. It took wisdom to ultimately recognise that Israel is an integral and permanent part of the Middle East with much to contribute to its stability and prosperity. It took vision to prioritise the future and see what connects the peoples of the region. It took courage to accept that peace is not the shameful compromise that hostile elements claim it to be, but rather a victory for everything that is good in humanity.

Prime Minister Yair Lapid drove home the importance of this paradigm shift during his remarks alongside President Biden in Jerusalem when he said that the Middle East has a new “alliance of moderate countries that believe in peace, that believe that our children deserve the opportunity to live a better life”.

The Accords are strengthening bonds between nations and peoples. Warm relations filtered down from national leaders to every aspect of society, and are now thriving between our peoples and nations. Since the first direct flight between Tel Aviv and Dubai in November 2020, over 500,000 Israeli tourists and businesspeople have visited the UAE and Bahrain, connecting peoples and cultures like never before. Israel also presented a national pavilion at the 2020 Dubai Expo, whose theme of Journey for Tomorrow could not have better represented the symbol of our hopes for the new relations.

A shining example of the new moderate alliance that the Abraham Accords have fostered in the Middle East was the establishment of the Negev Forum. The first-of-its-kind Negev Summit was held at Sde Boker in March 2022, when then Foreign Minister Yair Lapid hosted the US Secretary of State and the foreign ministers of the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Egypt which led to the establishment of the regional architecture, the ‘Negev Forum’.

The ‘Negev Forum’ is based on six multilateral working groups in the fields of clean energy, education and coexistence, food and water security, health, regional security and tourism. Its purpose is to promote large-

scale projects between the member states in order to deal with common challenges while strengthening the ties between the ‘Negev states’ and foster the fruits of peace in the region.

The Accords also created exciting opportunities for regional and multinational cooperation in the fields of energy, sustainability, tourism, security, and much more. Thirty-four agreements have already been signed between Israel and the UAE on topics ranging from cooperation in the fields of health and the environment to collaboration in agriculture, water, tourism, and more. Israel has also signed twenty-two agreements with Bahrain thus far, including in the fields of economy, tourism and communications.

Israel aspires to continue the regional development that started with the Abraham Accords and to expand the circle of peace and normalisation. Indeed, Israel believes that it can bring about a change in the conflict and establish peaceful coexistence with its most immediate neighbors, the Palestinians, in the spirit of the Accords. After all, peace begets peace. Moreover, the normalisation process serves to effectively consolidate moderate forces in the region in the face of shared threats, providing a counterbalance to Iranian aggression.



HE Ran Yaakoby, Ambassador of Israel, Prime Minister of NZ Jacinda Ardern, and HE Rashed Matar Sultan Alsiri Alqemzi, Ambassador of the UAE.
| Photo: Embassy of Israel in New Zealand

As Ambassador of Israel to New Zealand, I have seen firsthand that the impact of the Abraham Accords has reached even as far as New Zealand with the New Zealand Middle East Business Council adding Israel to its countries of focus, joining the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan along with other countries in the region. Additionally, in a recent conversation with Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern, His Excellency Rashed Matar Sultan Alsiri Alqemzi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, and I were pleased to hear the Prime Minister express her support of the Abraham Accords.

The Abraham Accords represent a decision to build a future together that will benefit all our peoples. They have lit the path to a new hopeful reality in the Middle East, one that will improve the welfare of its population and bring peace, security, and prosperity to all.

Ambassador Confirmed

NZ Ambassador to Israel Zoe Coulson-Sinclair was invited to present her credentials to Israeli Head of State Isaac Herzog on 31 October as part of the confirmation of six ambassadors; most of whom like her are non-resident. Our ambassador is based in Ankara, Turkey and, like other NZ ambassadors in the region, is ambassador to four countries, whereas Australia has an embassy based in Tel Aviv. Unlike Australia, few New Zealanders live in Israel, but more Israelis are making NZ home.

It was an auspicious date being the date of the Battle of Beersheba where primarily British, Australian and NZ forces broke the WWI stalemate and claimed Beersheba, then a Turkish railway town. It was the turning point in the campaign. So instead of joining the 105th commemorations, Ambassador Coulson-Sinclair had a private meeting with the President. These meetings are opportunities to discuss the broad relationship.

Interestingly, the Hertzog family has a personal connection to NZ as President Herzog's famous father Chaim visited

NZ in the 1980s. During this meeting the matter arose over whether the current President might visit NZ in the future. Time will tell. But it's worth remembering that NZ's former head of state, Dame Patsy Reddy visited Israel during the WWI centenary commemorations. It is not known whether the Christian connections to Israel were discussed.

Once accredited, Ambassador Coulson-Sinclair had a round of calls in the Israeli Foreign Ministry and with a number of diplomatic colleagues including with the new Hon NZ Consul Issac Bentwich, based in Tel Aviv. She combined the visit with participating in a NZ delegation organised by the Trans Tasman Business Circle to FoodTechIL22 and AgriVest giving her a first-hand appreciation of what Israel has to offer. As a bonus, she was able to witness an Israeli election campaign too.



First Step in State Support

This 29 November marked 75 years since NZ made its first multilateral step in support of the modern state of Israel concept – Res 181. Notably, it's our first 75th commemoration. People often think erroneously that this UN vote represents a vote for the state to be established. But that's not what it was. Statehood is declared by those who claim it e.g. by Ben Gurion, not the UN. Then other states recognize it for legitimacy. Britain had been given the Mandate for Palestine among other mandates and wanted to relinquish it and pass it back to the UN. This 29 November vote was a vote for what to do next. Thus, it was a stepping stone to statehood.

But why it's important for us as supporters was that it showed NZ supported the idea of an Israeli state and demonstrated an independent foreign policy by rejecting Britain's demand to abstain in the vote. Australia did likewise. Such is the significance, there are 29 November 1947 monuments all over Israel including in Rishon le Zion proudly displaying the NZ flag.

We voted YES for Israel and they remembered.





Happy Hanukkah from Fiji

■ Raphael Jordan

Christians for Israel Fiji

Bula and Shalom again from the white sandy beaches and swaying palm trees of the Fiji Islands. I hope this article finds you all in the best of health as we approach the festive season before we draw the curtains to a close for 2022.

Firstly, Christians for Israel Fiji congratulates Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party for winning more seats for the Knesset in the Jewish State of Israel's Election in early November 2022.

On the same note, my beloved country, Fiji, also looks forward to conducting their own National Elections on 14 December 2022. It is also obvious that the final results will determine how Fiji steers her ship well in stormy waters in such a time as this, where antisemitism, BDS and anti-Israel resolutions are increasingly passed at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

C4I Fiji operations have not wavered from its fortnightly prayer meetings. We have realised the power of praying together as believers for the Jewish State of Israel and its eternal and undivided capital, Jerusalem (*Psalms 122:6*).

Our C4I Fiji merchandise has reached countries such as Israel, Alaska, USA, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue and the Solomon Islands.

On 12 November, a Prayer Breakfast was hosted by former C4I Fiji Secretary, Ms Ana Rokomokoti, who received her calling from the Lord to join politics in 2020. Ana is a provisional candidate for the SODELPA Party. The party comprises the main opposition members of Parliament from the past two elections in 2014 and 2018.

The Prayer Breakfast was held at the new Wesley Church Hall, with approximately 40 people in attendance.

The theme of the programme was *'The Jewish State of Israel'*.

A Biblical theme that captivated the audience's attention was the Old and New Covenants was a Jewish affair. Led by the Holy Spirit, the programme was a mixture of praise and worship; C4I Fiji anthem – My Love for Israel Increases Each Day; Testimony by Ms Ana Rokomokoti on 'Why Israel?'; Motivational speeches by the SODELPA party leader, Mr Viliame Gavoka and Mrs Leba Qarase (spouse of the late Prime Minister of Fiji (2000 – 2006), who has maternal Jewish roots).

The audience was invited to pray together (first time for some attendees) for the following: for the Jewish State of Israel; its political leaders; Israel's security; Aliyah; the Jewish people; aspiring Fijian political leaders, and the Fijian elections. All these generated positive energy at the meeting because the Jewish State of Israel LIVES (*Am Yisrael Chai*). Knowing that the Jewish State of Israel exists because God's protection over them is 24/7. (*Psalms 121: 4*).

Furthermore, the programme culminated with Holy Communion, breakfast, and fellowship. A free-will offering was given to assist Ms Ana Rokomokoti in advocating the importance of supporting the Jewish State of Israel and the blessings that come with it (*Genesis 12:3*).

C4I Fiji, as facilitators of the event, had decorated the venue with Israel and Fijian flags in the hope that Fiji would support Israel at the UNGA and the UNHRC. These flags were then given to the attendees at the end of the gathering as gifts.

We saw wisdom in our giving, as 40-plus homes will have a piece of Israel in a special place in their hearts and homes and good memories to reminisce about in years to come.

Positive feedback continues to flow in from those who attended the Prayer Breakfast; we thank God for His provisions, especially when we had no capital to host the event. As believers who share in YESHUA's inheritance, we say if it's God's will, then it is His bill.



Women from different denominations coming out in numbers to celebrate the Jewish State of Israel. | Photo: Christians for Israel Fiji



Mr Roko Avenito Kolikata, Mr Viliame Gavoka, Mrs Leba Qarase and Ms Ana Rokomokoti. | Photo: Christians for Israel Fiji

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Wellington Man Fulfils Biblical Prophecy on Hanukkah

■ **Dr Simon Smelt**
Retired Economist & Author

Plot 49D in Wellington's Karori's cemetery contains the grave of a man who fulfilled Biblical prophecy. Louis Salek was from a Jewish family well-established in Wellington – Salek Street in Kilbirnie is named after them. Studying in Melbourne, Louis joined the Australian Army in March 1915 at age 23. Private 3154, Louis Salek, served in the Medical Corp in the Dardanelles and then Egypt during World War I.

It was a Zionist dream to see a blue and white Jewish flag (the colours of the *tallit*) fly over Jerusalem. This perhaps inspired Salek who ordered a Zionist flag from the Jewish haberdasher Moreno Cicurel in Cairo. It was similar to what became the national flag of Israel.

In October 1917 Salek was assigned to the 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital at Ismailia on the Suez Canal but the following month was himself admitted to hospital with 'debilitating hysteria'. He was described as suffering from night frights and nightmares. Discharged on 6 December he re-joined his unit on 8 December.

Jerusalem surrendered to allied forces on 9 December, the first major city to fall. On 11 December, the allied commander General Allenby entered the Old City of

Jerusalem on foot through the Jaffa Gate. Standing on a platform in front of King David's Tower, he read out his formal acceptance of the surrender, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule.

Louis Salek was there – whether under his own steam or under orders is unknown. Not under orders, he went up King David's Tower and unfurled the Zionist flag from its top. Allenby quickly had it taken down. Brief, but probably the first time a Jewish symbol had been flown over the Old City since the Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Roman troops in AD 135.

Salek's action occurred on the 25th of Kislev in the Jewish calendar, the first day of Hanukkah. It was prophetic in two ways. First, of the State of Israel being declared in 1948 and its flag finally raised over the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967. But, more than that, Salek fulfilled prophecy from the Tenach (the Old Testament).

Isaiah 5:26 reads: "And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly." The Hebrew word lamed here translated as 'to' can also mean 'by means of'. Hence, the verse can be read as: "And He will lift up an ensign by means of the nations from far..."

Louis Salek was a citizen of the furthest nation – New

Zealand—and served in the army of the second furthest (and at the time newest) nation – Australia. In the hands of Private Salek, an ensign was lifted up by means of the distant nations who had indeed come swiftly to Jerusalem. His flag is now in the King David Tower Museum, donated by the Salek family.



Louis Salek took many photos of the allied campaign and his display was noted by the Dominion newspaper. In later life, he served with his father as a JP. He died in Wellington in 1973, aged 82.

Dr Simon Smelt is a retired economist. Author of 'God's Lost Call to the Ends of the Earth,' he is a Jewish believer with family living in Israel.

Material in this article mainly based on: Kelvin Crombie' (1998) Anzacs, Empires, and Israel's Restoration

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<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8076089> (Nat Aust Archive B2455)

Silver Fern is Go

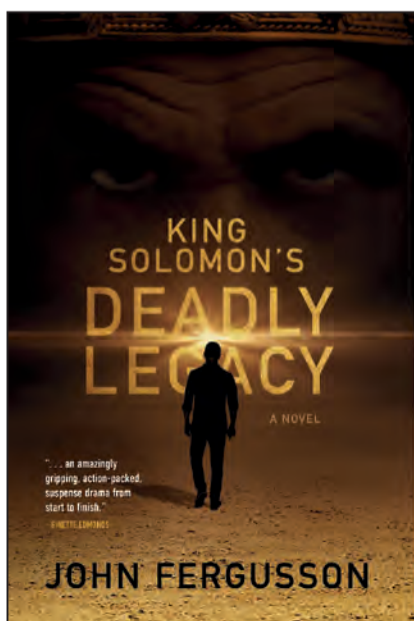
Some time ago a group of Israel supporters proposed to erect a stainless steel Silver Fern in Israel to celebrate the modern friendship between the nations. The design is based on the fern at Warren Dawson's Sarona Park development off the Kaimais Highway on the plateau overlooking Tauranga harbour. This project is being done entirely without government support and is being led by a team steered by Warren Dawson in Tauranga and a lawyer in Ness Ziona called Yossi Eshed.

The site is now confirmed and it will be at Moshav Gan Sorek which is located south of Tel Aviv/ Jaffa between Rishon le Zion and Ness Ziona the two towns liberated by the Kiwi ANZACs on 14 November 1917. Importantly, it is also overlooking the Ayun Kara battlefield where the Kiwis fought. Conveniently, there is an existing monument there to tell the story and remember the Kiwis that gave their lives in that battle, erected by the Israelis. The aim is to bring something from NZ to add to that site and what better a symbol than the Silver Fern. The stainless steel structure has been chosen for its distinctiveness, durability and lack of maintenance.

Recently Israel Primo an Israeli sculptor has been appointed to commence the work to create the fern based on NZ drawings and funds will be transferred to do this. A planned opening date has been set at 30 April 2023. This date has been picked to be just after ANZAC day, which in 2023 coincides with Yom HaZikaron, which is the day to remember fallen soldiers that leads into Yom HaAtzama'ut, Israel Independence day. In 2023 Israel will celebrate her Diamond Jubilee – 75 years so that it is a significant year. A tour to cover these celebrations is also planned. Additionally, individual travellers will make their way to the event to celebrate alongside Kiwis living in Israel and those with close ties.

Now the final sum is being sort to complete the project. This will include the cost of the base to mount it, signage in two languages, landscaping and other administrative, legal and regulatory costs.

Miniatures, memorabilia of hats and shirts, donations and information can be obtained from the NZ Israel Friendship Association as silverfern2021@gmail.com.



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Lessons for Life

Facing Change, not with Fear but with Faith (part 3)

■ Keith Buxton

Former National Director of Bridges for Peace Australia

This is the final part of a 3-part series on 'lessons for life', concluding our exploration of the Torah portion 'Sh'lach' or 'Sh'lach Lecha'. This well-known passage in *Numbers 13-15* recounts the mission of the twelve spies sent by Moses to explore and report back on the land of Canaan as a future home for the Israelite people.

We have in this series been recognising the reality that there are seasons in life when God clearly calls us to make a specific change in our personal circumstances—maybe to move to a new location, even perhaps to head in an altogether new direction in life. It is at such times that God's Word so often proves to be especially helpful.

Changes in life inevitably confront us with challenges. One specific challenge that we looked at in the previous article (part 2 in this series) is the need to confront and overcome the fear that so often accompanies the prospect of change.

We saw how ten of the spies brought back what was, in effect, a negative report on the land of Canaan, a report that resulted in fear gripping the hearts of the Israelites in the wilderness. They declared that the Canaanite people were fierce and intimidating and described the land of milk and honey as "a land that devours its inhabitants."

Joshua and Caleb, however, saw things differently; they saw things from a different perspective—they factored God into the equation! They chose to believe in and focus on the promises of a good and strong God who they were confident would enable the Israelites to overcome the very real obstacles before them. They were true men of faith.



| Photo: Lightstock

There is urgency in his voice and passion in his desire! Caleb knew that now, right now, was the time to claim victory. And so it may be for you, perhaps even today! Don't put off moving forward into your God-given destiny!

The fact that Caleb was ready to go showed the genuineness of his faith. Faith and action go hand in hand. As we are reminded in *James 2:14-17*—"What does it profit, my brethren if someone says he has faith but does

part is to have faith and obey.

Writes author Eileen Guder: "A ship wrecked off the New England coast many years ago. A young member of the coast guard rescue crew said, 'We can't go out. We'll never get back.' The grizzled old captain replied, 'We have to go out. We don't have to come back.'" It's so true—we really don't know the future. But we know the One who holds the future in His hands!

The command by the Lord at the end of our passage for the Israelites "to make tassels on the corners [fringes] of their garments" is a powerful reminder that the One who holds the future in His hands calls us to be like the two spies Caleb and Joshua, who refused to hold back from obeying the Lord.

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.

"And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God."

The tassels, or *tzitzit*, are an outward reminder of what God in His Word requires of me—"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (*Micah 6:8*).

Rabbi Jonathan Cohen tells the story of a person thrown from a boat into the sea. "The captain stretches out a rope and tells him to take firm hold of it, for his life depends on it. The rope is like the *tzitzit*, and the captain is like God. The *tzitzit* provide a lifeline." Fringe benefits, if you like!

It just may be that, for some of you reading this, obedience to God's Word and stepping out into the exciting and even scary future that God has prepared for you will be the very thing that will cause all fears to flee.

I don't know what changes or challenges or difficulties you may be going through right now or will face in the future, but ultimately you must make the choice. It's really an 'either-or' thing or, put another way; it's an 'I can't' or 'God is with me' situation.

Continued on page 10

The problem with our fears is not fear itself, but what they reveal about our concept of God and our willingness to trust Him implicitly.

Ultimately, the issue for us when confronted with significant changes in life isn't ultimately whether we are competent or strong enough.

The question is really this: Will we take God at His word, and will we trust Him with our problems? The problem with our fears is not fear itself but what they reveal about our concept of God and our willingness to trust Him implicitly.

Canaan always comes with Canaanites in it. Obstacles come with the territory. But let's remember that no matter how big the problems are, God is bigger. Do you believe that? Are you a faith or fear person?

I love how Dr E. Stanley Jones puts it—"I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt and anxiety.

"In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath—these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely—these are my native air. A John Hopkins University doctor says, 'We do not know why it is that worriers die sooner than the non-worriers, but that is a fact.'

"But I, who am simple of mind, think I know. We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cells and soul, for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality."

Caleb lived in reality! The reality that if God's people in simple faith obeyed God's word, He would enable them to be overcomers—right there and then. And so we read: Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

not have works? Can faith save him?

"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." That is real Jewish thinking.

Following the complaining cries of the Israelites, Joshua and Caleb, still very positive, declared: "If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."

"They are our bread"—maybe today we would say, "Hey, this is a piece of cake!" Both Caleb and Joshua were just as confident of victory as the other ten spies were certain of defeat.

They chose to put their faith in an all-powerful God. In *Numbers 14:24*, God specifically celebrates two things about Caleb—"he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully." What an affirmation from the living God!

In *Psalms 119:2*, the psalmist says, "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!" Caleb knew that a life of blessing was a life of total obedience to God.

And so Caleb, together with Joshua, acted in obedience to the Word of God, knowing that God would be with him whatever the outcome. And God's promise to be with us in every situation remains true for every believer. Our

Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine: *The Balfour Declaration (part 1)*

■ Hugh Kitson

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

24 July 2022 marked the centenary of the ratification of the British Mandate over the territory then known as Palestine. While most people in the Jewish communities around the world know something about the British Mandate—especially in Israel—not many Christians know about it, and only a tiny percentage of people in the general public have any knowledge of it at all. So, what is the Mandate for Palestine and why is it so important? We will be examining this question in a series of six articles, beginning with this one.

What Led to the Mandate?

The Mandate for Palestine was one of a number of Mandates that were formed after WW1 to enable people living in what would be perceived today as 'third world' countries to prepare themselves for self-determination and independence. These were countries or territories in various parts of the world, mainly in Africa and Latin America, but also in the territory that had been under the control of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. Included in those Mandates was the Mandate for Palestine, which we will examine in detail in forthcoming articles. But first, we need to backtrack a bit and examine what led to the Mandate for Palestine.

There were two major milestones preceding this particular Mandate. The first one was the vision encapsulated in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The second one was the Resolution that came out of the San Remo Conference of 1920, which itself was an adjunct of the Paris Peace conference of 1919.

From Vision to International Law

Chaim Weizmann (then leader of the Zionist movement and who would later become the first President of the State of Israel), addressing the annual Zionist conference in July 1920, described the San Remo Resolution as "the most momentous political event in the whole history of our movement and it is perhaps no exaggeration to say in the whole history of our people since the exile."

Across the Atlantic, the Zionist Organisation of America declared: "that the decision of the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers (in other words, the San Remo Resolution) crowned the British declaration (which was, of course, the Balfour Declaration) by enacting it as part of the Law of Nations of the world."

The San Remo Resolution of April 1920, in many respects, is even more significant to the Jewish people than the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. The Balfour Declaration, in legal terms, was nothing more than a statement of Government policy. The San Remo Resolution and the Mandate for Palestine that resulted from it, both of which encapsulated the Balfour Declaration, raised it to the legal status of an international treaty.

The San Remo Resolution, and the Mandates that resulted from it, were not isolated events. There was a back-story—especially as far as the Mandate for Palestine is concerned—that continues to have both prophetic and spiritual ramifications to this day, both now and into the future.

Biblical Title Deed to the Land

Most Christians, who share God's love for Israel and the Jewish people, know that the title deed to the land, originally known as the land of Canaan, as being the sole inheritance of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob forever. It is referred to many times in the Hebrew Bible.

The best example is found in *Genesis 15*, where the Lord entered into an unconditional covenant with Abraham, especially regarding the land that became known as Israel. Behind the scene at San Remo in 1920 the Lord did a remarkable thing. He enshrined that ancient 'title deed' into international law in the modern era. The ratification

of the Mandate for Palestine in July 1922, and its subsequent implementation in 1923, was the blueprint for its realisation.

Theodor Herzl's Vision

The Balfour Declaration was the vital stepping-stone to that happening. However, what became known as the Balfour Declaration was not an isolated event either. We need to rewind back even further to the 1890s, when there was a rise in anti-Semitism in Europe.

This was epitomised by the Dreyfus Affair in France, when a Jewish army officer, Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely accused of treason because he was Jewish. Among those reporting on the trial was a Jewish Vienna-based journalist, named Theodor Herzl.

Herzl came to realise that only persecution lay ahead for the Jewish people in Europe, and in 1896 he published a booklet entitled *Der Judenstaat*—The Jewish State. The following year, 1897, Herzl organised the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, where he predicted there would be a Jewish State within 50 years. In 1900 the Zionist Congress was held in London, where Herzl said: "Zionism demands a publicly recognised and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people. This platform, which we drew up three years ago, is unchangeable."

The Christian Vision

Alongside Theodor Herzl in his quest to establish a Jewish state in the ancestral home of the Jewish people was a Christian Anglican minister who was Chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna. His name was William Hechler, and in many respects he was as 'Zionist' as Herzl himself.

Hechler was by no means the first 'Christian Zionist'. In Britain the expectation of the restoration of the Jewish people to their ancient Promised Land had started with the Puritans in the 17th Century, followed by the evangelical revivalists of the 18th and 19th Centuries. Almost every Christian leader one could name from that era—among them the Wesley brothers, William Wilberforce, Charles Simeon, Robert Murray McCheyne, Lord Shaftesbury, Bishop J C Ryle and C H Spurgeon—held this belief. Christians in those days were looking to and longing for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with a passion that is rarely seen in the Church today.

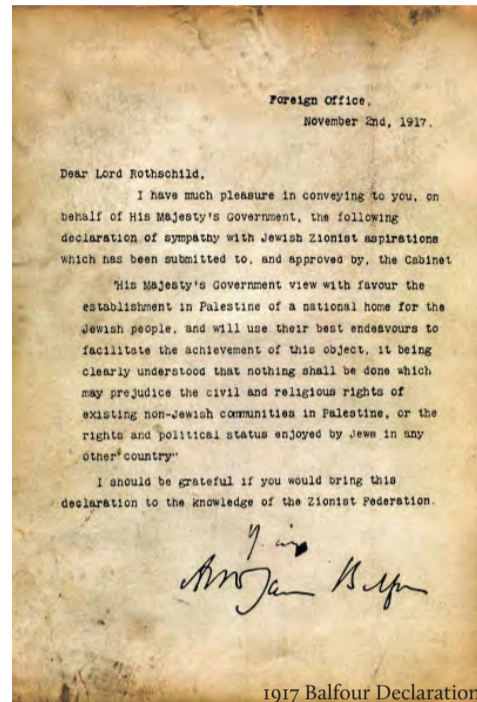
They also understood from the Bible that before the Lord could return, the Jewish people had to return to the land of Israel, and they began to pray for that restoration in anticipation of the Lord's return. I believe that the Balfour Declaration was God's answer to those prayers, which were entirely in line with His purposes.

The Balfour Declaration

These days, most non-Christians (and, sadly, many who call themselves Christians too) would describe such belief as fanaticism, even criminal. They would blame the Balfour Declaration on nothing more than British imperialism. To be sure, British geo-political interests did play a part in the issuing of the Balfour Declaration. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob used that too!

Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine—The Balfour Declaration: Part 1

At the time, the members of the War Cabinet sat down in Whitehall on 31 October 1917 to determine the final wording of the statement of policy that became known as the Balfour Declaration, the British Government was in no position to implement it. All of Palestine—as the area



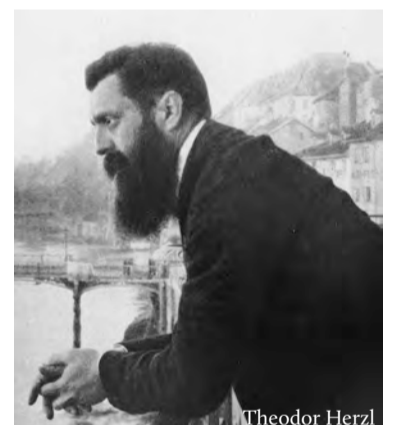
1917 Balfour Declaration



Arthur Balfour

was then known—and beyond was firmly in the control of the Ottoman Turkish empire, which was fiercely opposed to the idea of Jewish self-determination, let alone the restoration of their national home.

Unknown to the War Cabinet, at the very time they were meeting in Whitehall, the Allied forces had captured Beersheba. This first crucial victory on the Eastern front opened the way for the conquest of Jerusalem and eventually the collapse of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Was the timing of this decisive victory on the battlefield mere coincidence, or was it the sovereign hand of God? Two days after the War Cabinet meeting, a letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour was conveyed to Lord Rothschild. Simultaneously, news of the victory at Beersheba reached London. The date was 2 November 1917.



Theodor Herzl

A Positive Response and a Pledge

A number of church leaders responded favourably to the Balfour Declaration, including three Roman Catholic bishops and fourteen Anglican bishops. The then-Bishop of Lincoln wrote: "What lover of Holy Scripture and what friend of freedom can help rejoicing at the prospect of the Hebrew people returning to their own land again? God speed them!"

Jan Christian Smuts was one of the ten men at that momentous War Cabinet meeting on 31 October 1917. He was also one of the authors of the Covenant of the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. He said of the Balfour Declaration: "Christians who had received the leadership of the Prince of Peace from the Jewish nation were now in a position to make some small return for those priceless blessings, and to restore Israel to the ancient glorious homeland."

He went on to say that it was "A debt of honour which must be discharged in full at all costs and in all circumstances."

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

This article is the first in a six-part series exploring the significance of the British Mandate for Palestine for today. Part 2, 'The Paris Peace Conference of 1919,' will follow in the February Israel & Christians Today.



Hanukkah—The Spirit of End Time Bravery

■ Pastor Enoch Lavender

Living Way Christian Network | Melbourne, Australia

“Those who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits...” *Daniel 11:32*

While this verse has been a source of encouragement to countless Christians down through the ages, few have considered its original prophetic context.

This beautiful promise comes immediately after Daniel's description of an anti-Christ-like figure from the 'kingdom of the north' who puts an end to sacrifices in the Temple and erects the 'abomination of desolation'. In AD 175BC, 400 years after Daniel wrote his prophecies, Antiochus Epiphanes became ruler over the dominant and powerful Seleucid Empire based in Syria to the north of Israel.

At this time, Hellenism was a powerful force in society, seducing many Israelites to the Greek materialistic, pleasure-seeking and idol-worshipping culture. The power-hungry Jason—a Hellenised and corrupt Levitical priest—entered into a treaty with Antiochus. In exchange for becoming Israel's new High Priest, Jason erected an idol in Jerusalem and built a gymnasium in town—a place to openly promote obscene sexual activity. Jason's actions split Israel—outraging those who remained faithful to the *Torah*, while many Hellenised Jews rallied to Jason's side.

Three years down the track, Antiochus—who called himself 'Epiphanes' or the 'godman made flesh'—suffered a humiliating loss in battle. Returning from this stinging



| Photo: Lightstock

stories. One such story is that of the elderly scribe Eleazer. Eleazer's captors desired to treat him kindly due to his advanced age and implored him only to pretend to go along with their demands. Eleazer, however, refused to compromise and went willingly to a torturous death, setting an example that was to be followed by many – faithful Jews in the following days.

Hearing of the impending onslaught, Judah and his men first spent a day fasting and repentance, where Judah reminded his men of the great heroes of the Bible. The next day the Maccabees launched a daring surprise attack; against all odds delivering another crushing blow to their enemies. After three years of battles and stunning military wins, the brave Maccabees finally retook Jerusalem, cleansed the Temple and re-dedicated it to the God of Israel.

As the Jewish people today commemorate this great victory with the feast of *Hanukkah*, they say to each other that 'a great miracle happened here'. Truly this was an astounding miracle and one which crucially set the stage for the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem some 150 years later.

An End Time Lesson

We understand from Bible prophecy that in the End Times, we will again see the rise of a new 'Antiochus' type leader who brokers some kind of 7-year treaty. He will ultimately break this treaty and demand worship from the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, marking the beginning of a period of great persecution for true believers.

To us as believers, the story of *Hanukkah* carries a powerful message of standing firm in the face of persecution. As it is becoming increasingly unpopular to stand for Biblical values, may we, too, count the cost and be faithful to our Lord no matter what lies ahead. Like the Maccabees, we might be vastly outnumbered, but truly those who know their God these days 'shall be strong and carry out great exploits...'

Like the Maccabees, we might be vastly outnumbered, but truly those who know their God these days 'shall be strong and carry out great exploits...'

defeat, he heard of trouble brewing in Israel and launched an enraged attack on the city of Jerusalem. When the dust had settled, 80,000 Jews had been butchered. Antiochus proceeded to defile the Holy of Holies in the Temple—sacrificing a pig on the altar of God and pouring swine broth over the holy parchments. As foretold in *Daniel 11:31*, Antiochus then put an end to the daily sacrifices in the Temple and erected an idol of Zeus in the Holy Place—bearing his own image on its face. The Jews at the time called it the 'abomination of desolation'—drawing on the imagery of *Daniel 11:31*. Truly, it became an 'abomination of desolation', for as soon as the idol was erected, intense persecution broke out across the entire land of Israel. Meticulous house-to-house searches were performed, and those found keeping God's laws were mercilessly tortured and killed.

Daniel 11:33 predicted that many of the faithful would fall by the sword, and the book of Maccabees tells many such

Antiochus' plan to Hellenise Israel seemed to be slowly but surely working. Much was at stake, for if Antiochus' diabolical plan were to succeed, then there would have been no nation of Israel, no books of the Law, no temple and no one keeping or knowing God's commandments by the time Jesus was to be born 150 years later. But in these dark days of suffering, as Daniel had predicted, a small but brave minority who knew their God began to 'carry out great exploits'.

Under the command of the daring Judah Maccabee, the rebels gradually gained strength. Although they were hopelessly outnumbered and facing undoubtedly the greatest super-power of their day, Judah was undaunted through his firm faith in God. Antiochus sent wave after wave of soldiers to crush the rebellion—yet time and again, Judah emerged victorious. Finally, Antiochus sent 47,000 men to squash Judah's rag-tag army of around 3,000 men once and for all.

Continued from page 8

Lessons for Life—Facing Change, not with Fear but with Faith: Part 3

Don't go there! As a Christian, you are a son or daughter of the King of Kings! I love the worship song 'No Longer Slaves', featuring Jonathan and Melissa Helsler, which really speaks to my heart about the importance of facing any fears or doubts that I may have by affirming my faith in who I am as God's forever child.

"I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God"—so go the words of the chorus of this song. Never forget that as Christian believers, we are defined by who we are as His children. And hold on to the unchanging truth that He is a forgiving and gracious God, as Moses well recognised when he interceded to God for the people as they complained bitterly at the thought of entering into the land of Canaan: "And now, I pray, let the power of my

Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, "The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression" *Numbers 14:18*.

When fear causes you to balk at embracing changes that God is calling you to make, never underestimate or undervalue the depth and extent of His forgiving mercy, which as Christians, we see demonstrated supremely in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Are you facing changes in your life, even significant and perhaps scary changes, that you have come to recognise come from the heart of God, who only ever wants to bless you? Then declare, "I'm no longer a slave to fear; I am a child of God"—and resolve like Joshua and Caleb to move forward in confidence and faith as the forever child of God that you are!

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.

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Torn Between Soviet Flat & Flight Ticket *Hope for needy Jewish seniors in Ukraine*

■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator | Holocaust Survivors in Israel and Ukraine | Christians for Israel

While tens of thousands of Jewish people have left Ukraine since the outbreak of the war and found a new home in Israel, most seniors have stayed where they were. The ailments of age have kept many from leaving their apartments. The fact that there are Christians supporting them in prayer and practical help gives them new hope.

It's two o'clock in the morning. I am awakened by the shrill sound of a siren. Is this live? Or is my hotel neighbour getting an air raid warning from a more Eastern city in Ukraine he may have registered for?

I am back in Ukraine for the first time in a year. Were it not for the tank traps along the side of the road, no one would suspect a war in this golden October land. God gave me a time window, a small team and a driver to visit some of the needy in our sponsorship programme—those who have stayed behind, which is true for most of them. The elderly, who all received an apartment from the state through their work during Soviet times and lived their entire lives there, find it incredibly difficult now in their advanced age to leave their familiar four walls behind.

The seniors of the Jewish community in Uman sit around the checkered plastic tablecloth like in the olden days. Their meeting place is a ground-floor flat in an apartment block from the 1970s or so. Most of the elderly are Holocaust survivors. Several have died since our last visit; others have been added to the group. The table is set with homemade honey pie and 'Sharlottka'—a delicious apple cake. How grateful they are to know they are supported by their Christian friends during these difficult times. The walls are decorated with photos of



Galina in Uman and our staff member Anemone in a conversation. | Photos: Christians for Israel

our many visits, which used to happen regularly with international groups – all before corona.

Then we venture out to visit the less mobile community members. We climb the stairs with a large bag of fresh food items in hand and sound Galina's doorbell. She leads us to the living room and immediately breaks out in tears.

"Look at this—this is what my son-in-law sent from the battlefield! This is what he received from some volunteers, and he sends it off to ensure I'm taken care of!"

A large bag of freeze-dried meals sits in front of the wall unit, a pair of felt boots standing next to it. Volodya is deployed somewhere in Eastern Ukraine. He was in hospital with a concussion resulting from heavy combat but soon had to return to the front lines.

So many tears. It is a time to weep with those who weep, embrace Ukraine's Galina's and comfort them with the words of *Psalm 91*: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High ... will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress.'"

Galina knows there are people in faraway countries who pray for her and share what they have.

This comforts her. She asks us to say a special thank you to the woman who knitted the beautiful socks for her.

"I leave this world the same way I entered it – in wartime," says Lilia, who ended up in a ghetto with her grandmother as a 4-year-old. Her Ukrainian mother was able to buy her out and hide her; the grandmother was shot.

Then Lilia corrects herself. "No. I still want to live to see the end of the war!"

Before we say goodbye, Lilia takes her crutches and makes her way downstairs, step by step. "I made so many food preserves for the winter – raspberries, blackcurrant, pickled cucumbers. I want you to take some with you!"

It's already getting dark. A few hours ago, Koen, the director of Christians for Israel's work in Ukraine, left for Zaporozhe with his team and hundreds of food parcels – in the eye of the storm. Just a few hours earlier, the city had been heavily bombed. Now many in the Jewish community are waiting for our team's arrival – some wait for material help, others for a seat in the bus that will take them to safety. By the end of the week, 81 members of the Jewish community will have been evacuated from burning Zaporozhe by our bus. New requests keep coming in.

Aliyah and comfort, returning to Zion and packing food parcels, listening and hugging are some of the ways God uses us to help restore His Jewish people.

Would you join in?

Please see the coupon on the back page for details on how you can bring comfort to the Jewish people of Ukraine! Any donation is welcome.



Lilia (left) still wants to see the end of the war. Galina (right) enjoys a pair of hand-knitted socks from Germany.



The Jewish community of Uman continues to meet in a small Soviet-time flat.



Our bus is constantly taking members of the Jewish communities from the East Ukrainian cities to safety.

Philanthropists in Israel

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

David Gottesman



David Gottesman, who carried on a family tradition of Jewish philanthropy while also becoming one of the most successful investors in the United States, died at 96 in September this year.

Gottesman's involvement in finance and Jewish causes began with his birth, to Benjamin and Esther Gottesman, in 1926. Benjamin Gottesman was a banker and a trustee of Yeshiva University, home to the rabbinical school that his own father, Mendel, a paper manufacturer, had helped found. Mendel Gottesman had started a family foundation devoted to supporting Yeshiva University and its library, which ultimately was named for him.

After a stint in the US Army at the end of World War II, Gottesman, who was known as Sandy, went to college and then Harvard Business School before heading to Wall Street. There, he got connected with Warren Buffet, then an up-and-coming investor and the two struck up a fast friendship.

Gottesman was an early investor in Berkshire Hathaway, the company that for a time made Buffett the richest man in the world. The return on his investment was massive: This year, more than half a century after making the investment, Forbes estimated his net worth at \$3 billion, placing him at No 358 on its list of 400 wealthiest Americans.

Through a family foundation he launched with his wife Ruth in 1965, Gottesman continued the Jewish giving that had long characterised his family. In addition to his father's giving, his mother Esther was largely responsible for securing the Dead Sea Scrolls for Israel and building the distinctive inverted-dome structure that houses them near the Israel Museum.

In 2019, the Gottesman Fund disbursed more than \$26 million to dozens of groups and institutions, including New York City civic and arts groups; Planned Parenthood and other groups focused on reproductive rights; and organisations funding civic improvements in Israel.

Gottesman's giving in particular changed the landscape of Jerusalem, namely the new building being constructed for the National Library of Israel, across the street from the Knesset.

His family has supported Israel since the pre-state era, and in recent years funded Milton's Way Bike Path in Jerusalem—also known as Park HaMesila, the train track path—and Israel's first aquarium at the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo.

Bernard (Dov) Spolsky 1932-2022

Bernard (Dov) Spolsky, 1932-2022

Although he spent much of his life in Israel, Professor Bernard (Dov) Spolsky, who died recently in Jerusalem at age 90, remained proud of growing up as part of the Wellington Jewish community.

Indeed, his experiences as a young man in New Zealand launched Bernard on his remarkable journey towards becoming an internationally-recognised socio-linguist, and an expert in the revival of endangered languages including *te reo Māori* and Hebrew.

His early years were quite typical of life for a Jew growing up in Wellington in the 1930s and 1940s.

His parents, Abe and Ellen (née Green) had come to New Zealand when they were young, part of families that moved first from eastern Europe to the United Kingdom and then on to New Zealand.

The Spolsky family were far from wealthy but instilled in young Bernard an abiding belief in the importance of education and connection to the Jewish people. Life revolved around the then new-Jewish community centre.

Bernard spent his Friday nights and Saturday mornings in synagogue, while *Shabbat* afternoons were for playing sports. Sundays were dominated by Hebrew school and by *Habonim*, the left-wing Zionist youth group. His parents were also heavily involved in community activities, and for adults in those pre-television days, the Jewish social club was like a second home.

WW2 left its mark on Jewish life in Wellington in large and small ways. Bernard always remembered that war-time shortages meant that his *bar mitzvah* in 1945 was a rather quieter affair than usual. He did not receive the traditional *bar mitzvah* gift – a fountain pen – while the adults bemoaned that no whiskey was available for the celebratory *Kiddush*.

But what really shaped Bernard's future was the establishment of the State of Israel. He, like a number of his comrades in *Habonim*, soon began hatching plans for *Aliyah*. His parents were less enthusiastic about him leaving. They were passionate Zionists but worried that the community would not survive if its most committed young people settled in Israel. Even in 1948, people were predicting the imminent demise of Jewish communal life in Wellington!

Eventually, Bernard's dreams of Israel won

out. After completing a degree at what was then known as Victoria University College and a stint teaching, Bernard sailed in the 1950s to Europe and then on to Israel. He spent time with New Zealanders who had settled on Kibbutz Yizre'el before serving in the Israeli army. But romance and a desire to further his studies cut short his 'first *Aliyah*'.

In Jerusalem, he had fleetingly met a young woman visiting from New York. The usually calm, quiet Spolsky was immediately smitten and travelled to North America hoping to win her hand. He faced resistance from her parents, who were skeptical of his prospects and bewildered by his New Zealand accent. But the end result was a wonderfully happy marriage of sixty years to Ellen Spolsky, who was herself to become a prominent academic.

Like his marriage, Bernard Spolsky's rise to academic success was an international affair. As a young man, he had briefly taught at Gisborne High School. By the 1950s, *te reo Māori* was in rapid decline and officials were pushing Māori to give up on the language if they were to 'succeed'. However, Spolsky came to a very different conclusion.

He noticed that the Māori students he taught who spoke *te reo* at home tended to do better in English—and in their studies in general—than those Māori students who had less connection to *te reo*. This sparked Spolsky's belief that bilingualism and multi-lingualism were of tremendous value: culturally, cognitively and educationally.

After completing his PhD at Montreal University, Spolsky became a pioneer in the new field of socio-linguistics—the study of the various factors ranging from government policy to what languages were spoken in schools, workplaces and especially homes – which determined whether a language flourished or declined.

He worked first with Navajo in New Mexico (where he and his wife helped establish a synagogue and Jewish school) before the family returned to Israel in 1980. There he began comparing the revival of Hebrew to situations facing other countries and cultures.

Among his many books was a study of how dozens of languages – from Hebrew, Yiddish and Arabic to Armenian and Ge-ez – continued to be spoken by residents in



Bernard Spolsky with Katerina Mataira at a 2008 Te Ataarangi hui.

Jerusalem's tiny, cramped Old City. The Spolskys themselves lived in the Old City and many New Zealanders enjoyed the family's hospitality and generosity.

Bernard frequently visited New Zealand where he was much sought-out by Māori language activists keen for his insights into how *te reo* could be strengthened. He was an early observer and supporter of the *kōhanga reo* and *kura kaupapa* movements while emphasising the need for a sustained, multi-layered programme that would allow Māori to again become a language of everyday use.

Retirement from Bar Ilan University (near Tel Aviv) in 2000 did not slow him down. Reviews described his book *Rethinking Language Policy* as 'unparalleled, a world tour of language policy by a scholar whose work has defined the field'.

He also wrote a monumental study of Jewish languages over the centuries, a subject close to his heart. Even into his late eighties, he still wrote, lectured and travelled widely. Always understated in manner, he was quietly bemused to be greeted on a recent trip to India by large billboards bearing his photo and welcoming 'Professor Spolsky—world champion linguist'.

Blessed with a happy family life, he died at home surrounded by his wife, children, grandchildren and by a much-adored great grandson. He is also remembered with love by his sister Ruth Thomas, who lives in Wellington and by her family, and by the many who benefited from his scholarship, generosity and unflinching decency. May his memory be for a blessing.

This article has been republished with permission from Ruth Thomas, Bernard's sister. The article was written by Paul Thomas, Ruth's son who lives in Israel.

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We will advertise our 2023 tour when details are confirmed.

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Believing Without Israel - Part 2

How Israel Disappeared from our Christian Faith

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

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

The Early Church

The new Christian communities around the Mediterranean grew rapidly in the first decades after Jesus had sent out His Apostles into the world. These new Christians underwent a radical change in their lives as a result of their conversion and reception of the Holy Spirit. They often could not understand why most Jews did not believe in Jesus as Messiah. Surely, they already had the Old Testament for centuries and were familiar with the prophetic expectations of the coming of the Messiah? Paul explained to them in Romans 11 that through the fall of Israel salvation had come to the Gentiles. And he spoke of the mystery of a 'partial hardening' over Israel, a covering as a result of which they could not recognise Jesus until the fullness of the Gentiles would come in. Only then would all Israel be saved (*Romans 11*).

The inability of the majority of the Jews of that time to believe in Jesus was an essential part of God's plan of salvation for all people – Jews and Gentiles: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day" (*Romans 11:8*). And Paul continued his explanation of this mystery:

"Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious" (*Romans 11:11*). But that 'mystery' eluded the Early Church. Paul also emphasised that the Jewish people, nevertheless, remained "beloved for the sake of the fathers" as far as election was concerned (*Romans 11:28*). In other words, his message was that the inability of most of the Jews to see and acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah, does not mean that they have ceased to be God's people.

Tension

So there is a tension between the fact that most Jews have difficulty seeing Jesus as the Messiah, on the one hand, and the eternal faithfulness of God to His Jewish people, on the other. And Paul tries to explain this tension as part of God's plan of salvation for the world, for our sake, the Gentiles. But those first Christians from the Gentiles often did not realise this 'mystery' and increasingly saw the Jews as stubborn and disobedient, and therefore as unbelievers. People also didn't have a printed Bible yet with commentaries like we have today. Paul's letters were rewritten and read during



Reconstructed first-century synagogue in Nazareth village based on sites excavated in the Holy Land. | Photo: Flickr

congregation meetings. Those Christians, however, were not able to study the Bible like we can do today.

So gradually a lack of comprehension grew in the early church about the mystery regarding the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the majority of Jews at that time. Gradually, this resulted in various forms of replacement theology – ie. theologies in which the covenants and promises for Israel declared in the Old Testament were declared to have been transferred to the Christian church.

Keeping the Law

Also, inside the early Christian church, there was a tension between Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah and the Gentile believers. Many Jewish believers saw the existence of the new Christian congregations as an internal Jewish issue. Jesus - the son of the Jewish woman Mary and the Son of the God of Israel – was born under the law and He had to fulfill the law in order to be worthy to take away the sins of His people and of the world on the cross. That's why many Jewish believers in Jesus thought that the new Gentile believers needed to be circumcised and live according to the law. That's why Paul so explicitly claimed in his letters that the Gentiles don't need to be circumcised, because they don't need to become Jews to get salvation. At the Council of Jerusalem James explained "how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles" (*Acts 15:14*), and that these Gentile

converts only needed to follow certain basic laws.

So both inside and outside the Christian church there was a growing misunderstanding and lack of comprehension between Jews in general, Jewish believers in Jesus, and Gentile believers. This eventually led to major misunderstandings and conflict between Jews and believers in Jesus from the Gentiles – a tragedy as we will see in the next article.

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Tzitzit

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

Every pious Jewish man always wears them as a visible sign of faith: the *tzitzit*. Those are the tassels spoken of in *Numbers 15:38*: "Speak to the Israelites and tell them to make tassels at the corners of their clothes for themselves, all their generations." This is further specified in *Deuteronomy 22:12*, albeit with a different word in Hebrew: "At the four corners of the outer garment in which you cover yourselves, you must make tassels for yourselves." The *tallit*, today's prayer shawl, goes back to this rectangular upper garment.

What is the purpose of the *tzitzit*? Every time you look at it, you will think of God's commandments and do them (*Numbers 15:39*). This is how Israel is reminded to be holy before God. Two notable places in the Bible where we should think of the *tzitzit* are

Zechariah 8:23 and *Matthew 9:20*: the bleeding woman touches the *tzitzit* of Jesus.

The *tzitzit* consists of four threads, three short ones and one long one. The long one is called the *shammash*, the 'servant'. This was originally a blue-purple thread (*Numbers 15:38*). Over time, people had lost track of exactly which snail this colour was extracted from. Therefore, since the second century, four white threads have usually been used.

There are different ways of knotting the *tzitzit*, but the basics are the same. The four threads are inserted through an eye in the corner of the garment so that there is an equally long strand on both sides, two times four threads. Only the *shammash* is a lot longer on one side. Then a double knot is tied with the two strands. Then the long end of the *shammash* is wound around both strands several times, after which another double knot is tied. This is repeated three more times. The numerical value of five knots, eight threads, and the word *tzitzit* (600) is 613: the

total of all the commandments and prohibitions that Israel must remember (*Numbers 15:38*).

The Ashkenazi tradition is to put seven windings first, then eight, then 11 and finally 13. In the Sephardic tradition, the *shammash* is first wrapped around it ten, then five, then six and finally five more times. This is the numerical value of the letters Y-H-W-H, the ineffable Name of God. Yemenite Jews have a very distinctive way of knotting, borrowed from Maimonides.



Recommended Reading

Israel, the Nations and the Valley of Decision

By Harald Eckert

This highly accessible book is intended for praying Christians, intercessors, intercessory leaders, networks and movements. It is a call to pray for our nations - all over the world - a Global Prayer Call! The objective of this prayer call is to pray for our nations with regard to their relationship towards the Jewish people and Israel.

This book was launched in the spring of 2015 - 70 years after the end of the Holocaust and the end of WWII - when the events of the Holocaust and the attempts of Nazi Germany to annihilate the Jewish people were at the forefront of public attention.

This book contains a Bible study based on Jesus' parable of the judgment of the nations (*Matthew 25*). The author clarifies the relevance of the Old Testament in understanding the New.

In 16 carefully written chapters, the author argues that -

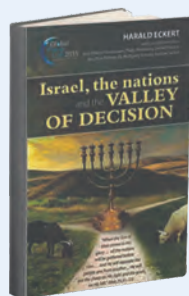
1. for God, nations have a role to play in the New Testament;
2. there is judgement not only over individuals but also over nations; and
3. this judgement is connected to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Today, antisemitism is on the rise. The nations of Europe and the West have not yet truly learned from the Holocaust. This book therefore remains highly relevant. Below is a quotation from the book:

"Just as we can assert with biblical certainty that every person is created in the image of God, and thus has an intrinsic individual dignity enabling him to understand that he is personally loved by God, so too can we ascertain that the same applies to the nations: God loves every nation! God has created an endless variety of individual forms of expression of the likeness of His image, and honours and loves each one of them. The same applies to the collective forms of expression of the likeness of His image. Each nation has its own collective personality, its own particular mentality, its collective temperament and its collective creativity. The biblical God is simultaneously the God of the microcosm and the macrocosm. The God of the Bible is the creator and God of each individual person and the creator and God of each individual nation."

This book is available from:

- www.c4israel.org/webshop
- www.globalprayercall.org/en/resources/book
- www.amazon.com/Israel-Nations-Valley-Decision-Harald/dp/9081969552



Harald Eckert (1960) is a Bible teacher, spiritual pioneer, author and networker. A former Chairman of Christians for Israel International, he is the founder of the Global Prayer Call.

Theirs are the Service of God, the Promises and the Fathers *Romans 9:4*

■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

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

"Theirs are the service of God, the Promises and the fathers" (*Romans 9:4*)

The Temple Worship (*Romans 9:4*)

To this day, Jewish worship in the synagogue refers back to the Levitical sacrificial service - not only in the designation of its liturgical parts but also in its content. The worship service of the Israelites is the only worship that clearly springs from divine instructions written in detail in the *Torah*.

The *Pentateuch* allocates much space to describing how God wants to be worshipped. In contrast, later biblical writings, including the New Testament, offer no, or hardly any, alternative forms of worship. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles nor the early believers ever distanced themselves in principle from the worship service of the Israelites. Paul presupposed that his Jewish brothers and sisters, who believed in Jesus as Messiah and lived in Jerusalem or visited there as pilgrims, participated in the Temple worship, as he did himself (*see Acts 21:15-26*).

... and the Promises (*Romans 9:4*)

In the context of the Greek words *epangelia* (= promise, pledge) and *epangellomai* (= to promise, to pledge), the New Testament mentions the following *epangelma* (= promised goods, pledged riches) which God promises: the land, descendants, well-being, the Messiah, the Holy Spirit, the resurrection from the dead (*Acts 26:6-8*), eternal life, the 'rest' (*Hebrews 4:1*), the eternal heritage, and a 'new heaven' and a 'new earth' (*2 Peter 3:13*).

Christian readers of the Bible today often apply all these promises primarily and without question - either literally or in a figurative sense - to themselves. Only secondarily - and this is the best case! - they might ask themselves whether there are some promises that still apply prophetically to those descendants of Israel who still do not recognise Jesus as their Messiah.

Paul, laying the foundation of his theology on Israel, started from precisely the opposite side. First of all, he states that 'the promises' belong to 'the



| Photo: Pxhere

Israelites' - without explaining which promises or even excluding any of them! In contrast, he reminds the Christians in *Ephesus* that they only 'secondarily', through Jesus Christ, became participators of the riches of Israel: "Remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are being called uncircumcised" were "strangers to the covenants of promise" (*Ephesians 2:11-12*).

... whose are the Fathers (*Romans 9:5*)

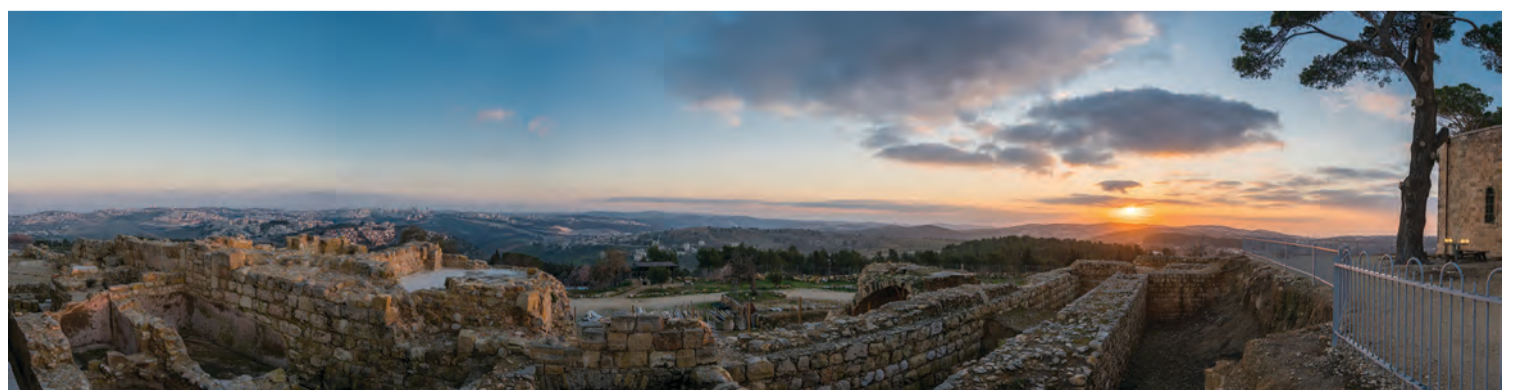
'The Fathers' referred to here are the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as Jacob's sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Josef and Benjamin, from whom the tribes of Israel received their names. Here, Paul creates a concrete historical connection, which is also referred to whenever the living God makes Himself known as 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', as 'God of the fathers' or as 'God of Israel'. The apocryphal book, which is called the 'Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach' provides in its 'Praise of the Fathers' (*chapters 44-49*) a wide outline, starting from Adam (*49:20*) up to the leaders of Israel in the time after the Babylonian exile (*49:13-15*).

This reference to human history is further underlined by the fact that the 'riches of Israel' here in *Romans 9:4-5* are framed by the expression 'according to the flesh'

(*kata sarka*) in *verses 3 and 5*. Those who are 'Israelites', 'their' God and the revelation that connects the two are all firmly rooted in history. The Holy Scriptures are not just "projections of human wishes and ideals into an imagined transcendence", through which, as the German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach once stated, "man created a God according to his own image".

Rather, the very existence of 'the Israelites' and the validity of those privileges which the Creator of the universe granted to them prove the Bible's self-revelation of the only living God. This fundamentally distinguishes the Judeo-Christian faith from all other religions, spiritual experiences, and theories of salvation. Before our very eyes, the history of those 'who are Israelites', constitutes true, substantial and tangible proof of God's existence and intervention in space and time.

"Yea, not just the fathers, even the Israelites themselves serve as 'marking of God's identity'," as Norbert Baumert suggested. Therefore, God commissioned Moses: "Thus you shall speak to the children of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, he has sent me to you. This is my name forever. This is how I shall be remembered from generation to generation'" (*Exodus 3:15*).



Mystical sunset over Jerusalem and the ruins of the Hellenistic city and the Crusader castle seen from the Tomb of prophet Samuel, Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

Winning the War on Truth *Part 3*



| Photo: Canva Pro



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

By now, we should be convinced that there is a definite and deliberate war on truth. Lying, deception, and delusion are all in overdrive. Left unattended, these things will mislead and destroy all those who heed its pernicious message.

Make no mistake: there is a direct link between persistent deception and lawlessness. You can't have one without the other. That's why both are proliferating in our present evil world.

Deception and delusion are very real and dangerous. A lot of fantasy, fairy tales, and falsehoods are being peddled in the public square; no matter how outlandish, these things are conveyed with straight faces. As always, we can turn to the Bible for insight and help

The apostle Paul gives us a detailed prophetic warning of this in *2 Thessalonians 2:9-12*:

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them, that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

The above passage is a reminder that the last days ‘battle of the ages’ is not just with visible forces but even more so with those that are invisible. Satan will be working overtime ‘with all power’ at his disposal to deceive through all kinds of signs and lying wonders. The whole idea is to distract and seduce people from the genuine Christ so that they follow a ‘fake Christ’ - the antichrist. Many will fall into this trap because they do not have the ‘love of the truth’ that they might be saved. Their enjoyment, indeed a pleasure, is in unrighteousness.

A Historic Precedent

This seemingly bizarre scenario in *2 Thessalonians 2* does have historic precedence. It's a tale of two kings: wicked Ahab of Israel and righteous Jehoshaphat of Judah. These two monarchs wanted to launch a joint military campaign against Ramoth-Gilead. They sought prophetic advice. All four hundred false prophets, presumably from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, told the two kings to go ahead and attack Ramoth-Gilead, “for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king” (*1 Kings 22:6*).

Though engaged in a foolish alliance with an unrighteous partner, Jehoshaphat was still a Godly man and wanted to hear from a prophet of the Lord. Ahab reluctantly called for Micaiah, son of Imlah, whom he personally detested but also knew was a genuine, true prophet of God. Micaiah, after a false start, gave the definitive word of the Lord: Israel would be soundly defeated (*1 Kings 22:17*), despite their superior numbers and weapons.

But there was more: Micaiah shared a vision of the Lord sitting on His throne, surrounded by the hosts of heaven. The Almighty asked who could persuade Ahab to fight at Ramoth-Gilead, where he would surely be killed. There were all kinds of spirits volunteering to convince the king. When a lying spirit appeared before God and said he would persuade Ahab, the Lord was convinced this would work and gave him permission.

Micaiah concluded in *1 Kings 22:23*: “Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.” This was an audaciously bold thing to share - one sole true prophet against hundreds of false. Micaiah would be sent, or returned, to prison for this prophetic word and vision.

Note that Ahab was told the truth - if you go to Ramoth Gilead, disaster and death are waiting for you. Yet because he loved lies and unrighteousness, he rejected prophetic counsel and was slain in battle.

Remember, Pharaoh chose to harden his heart; therefore, God gave him what he wanted and hardened it even more. If Ahab wanted to believe a lie about his military campaign, God allowed this to happen. Likewise, if people in the last days want to ‘love a lie’ and reject the ‘love of the truth,’ they will be susceptible to grand delusion.

Israel's Plight

When it comes to Israel and the Middle East, there are all kinds of lies that are viewed as dogma. The notorious and fraudulent Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which are defamatory and anti-Semitic, are still distributed as if they were true. Rumours that Israel plans to change the status of the Temple Mount/*al-Haram al-Sharif* have proven to be false. Unsubstantiated and untrue talk of Jewish ‘threats’ of danger to the *al-Aqsa* Mosque can cause riots and death. Israel is accused of ‘not wanting peace’ despite offering or accepting numerous peace proposals. The label of ‘apartheid state’ is particularly odious, considering the equal legal status of Arab Israelis. The ‘land of the Bible is the epicentre of the cosmic war of truth versus lies.

How Shall We Live

In order to survive and succeed in these challenging days of deception, it is paramount to cultivate the spiritual gift of discernment. Like a lighthouse warning of the rocky shores ahead, discernment will help you know what is true and what is false, thus preventing lethal gullibility. After all, people's lack of discernment can be destructive.

As a related item, falsehood is like poison, and the antidote is the truth: God's truth, which is the only truth that matters. There are three readily accessible sources of divine truth. They are 1. Jesus Christ is the truth (*John 14:6*); 2. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (*John 16:13*); and 3. The Scriptures are true (*John 17:17*). When you have all three sources operative in your life, you are safely and securely immunised from lies, falsehood, deception and delusion.

Truth is worth paying the price. After all, God's truth in Christ sets you free (*John 8:31-32*).

Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

The Hebraic Influence of The Lord's Prayer

One of the most familiar prayers in Christian Scriptures is entitled *The Lord's Prayer*. However, Jesus never used these words, nor does it contain the name, Lord. Jesus passed this prayer onto his followers when one of his disciples asked him how to pray (*Luke 11:1*). Therefore, *The Lord's Prayer* should be entitled *The Disciples' Prayer*.

Some say that *The Disciples' Prayer* is modelled after the *Kaddish*, a prayer that was and still is invoked after learning God's word with a quorum of ten people. It contains the phrases “Exalted and hallowed be his great name” and “May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime” that parallel “hallowed be your name” in *Matthew 6:9* and “your kingdom come” in *Matthew 6:10*. Others posit that *The Disciples' Prayer* is like certain petitions within the *Amidah*, the oldest synagogue congregational prayer created by the Men of the Great Assembly in the fourth pre-Christian century. The prayer contains petitions of:

“Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed...”

“Bless this year to us, *Adonai Eloheinu*, together with every kind of produce for our welfare; give dew and [seasonal] rain for a blessing upon the face of the earth...”

The above appeals are modelled by *Matthew 6:13* - “Forgive us our sins...” and *Matthew 6:11* - “Give us this day our necessary portion...”

The opening of *The Disciples' Prayer* with “Our Father” is influenced by *Isaiah 63:16* - “For You are our Father (*A'vi'nu*), for Abraham did not know us, neither did Israel recognize us; You, the Eternal, are our Father (*A'vi'nu*); our Redeemer of old is Your name” as well as *Isaiah 64:11* - “And now, the Eternal, You are our father (*A'vi'nu*); we are the clay, and You are our potter, and all of us are Your handiwork.” The metaphor of the Father-son relationship conveys the idea that even when Israel is not always faithful to God, this does not alter the degree of kinship with their Father.

I believe Father John Crossan's insight from his book, *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer*, sums up the Hebraic understanding of The Disciples' Prayer - “a prayer from the heart of Judaism on the lips of Christianity for the conscience of the world is one which prays for God's distributive justice.”

More than a prayer, *The Disciples' Prayer* commits the one praying it to make the vision a reality. Prayer and justice are two inseparable sides of the same coin.

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

The Joys of Hanukkah

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

On 18 December, Sunday evening, the Jewish *Hanukkah* festival begins. In the streets of Jerusalem, in Jewish homes, and in many cities around the world, *Hanukkah* lights are lit. One is lit on the first evening, two on the second evening, and so on, until eight lights are lit on the last evening. *Hanukkah* begins on 25 *Kislev* (a Jewish day begins in the evening) and lasts for eight days. *Kislev* is the winter month of the Jewish calendar.

The ritual is actually quite simple. You need a candlestick with eight candles or oil lamps, and a ninth - the 'servant' - to light the other lights. Two basic rules apply to the chanukia: the lights must be in a straight line and at the same height. Other than that, artists and designers can take all the liberty to make something beautiful out of it, and they do.

When the light is lit, a blessing is said, thanking God for the miracle of *Hanukkah*. Then the song *Ma'oz Tsur Yeshu'ati* ('Solid rock of my salvation') is sung. It is also a custom to eat *sufganiot*, a kind of doughnut fried in oil, and *latkes* (deep-fried potato biscuits) as a reference to the miracle of oil (see below). The children play with a special *Hanukkah* toll, the *dreidel*.

Historical Background

The word *Hanukkah* means 'dedication'. The *Hanukkah* festival celebrates the rededication of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, which took place in 167 BCE. Its history is described in the books of the Maccabees. The Greek king Antiochus IV, who had nicknamed himself *Epiphanes* - which means 'divine apparition' - was then seated in Damascus and also ruled the land of Israel. In an attempt to equalise all Jews in Greco-Hellenistic culture, he banned *Sabbaths*, circumcision and *Torah* study (the books of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament). He also placed an image of the Greek supreme god Zeus in the temple in Jerusalem and had pigs sacrificed to it. In *1 Maccabees 1:54*, this is called the 'abomination that brings destruction', a designation we also encounter in the Bible in the book of Daniel (*Daniel 9:27*).

A significant part of Jerusalem's upper-class society, including the leading priests, went along with this Hellenisation. Jerusalem got a theatre and a gymnasium, where sports were played naked according to Greek custom. The people of Israel were in danger of slipping into pagan culture and customs and forgetting the commandments of God.



| Photo: Shutterstock

But resistance arose in the countryside. The people did not allow their Jewish identity to be taken away but remained faithful to God's command. A family of priest-farmers from the town of Modi'in (northwest of Jerusalem) rebelled. And led by Judas the Maccabean, they eventually succeeded in recapturing Jerusalem and driving the Greek soldiers out of the city.

They found the temple in a desolate state. Immediately they began to cleanse the temple of the idolatry that had been practised there. The altar was restored and on the 25th of the Jewish month of *Kislev*, the same date on which Antiochus had desecrated the temple by offering pig sacrifices there, the temple was rededicated. The temple was decorated with wreaths and golden shields and festively lit with large candelabras so that it could be seen for miles around. The feast of dedication lasted eight days, exactly like the dedication feast of the first temple under King Solomon (*1 Kings 8*). That dedication by Solomon, incidentally, had taken place during the Feast of Tabernacles, which also lasted eight days.

Judas the Maccabean, together with his brothers and the whole assembly of the people, determined that from then on the feast of rededication should be celebrated every year for eight days with gladness and joy. And so it happened, Jesus, too celebrated it. At least He is said to

have been in the temple in Jerusalem during the feast of the dedication (*John 10:22*). It also mentions that it was winter, so there can be no doubt.

Oil

The *Talmud* (Jewish lore) relates that when the Maccabees entered the temple, they wanted to re-light the *ner tamid*, the lamp that always used to burn in the temple. However, there was no ritually pure oil available. Finally, after a long search, they found a jug of oil that was just enough for one day. But a great miracle happened there: for eight days, the menorah burned on that small amount of oil. And that was the time it took to prepare new oil. That is why the feast is also called the 'feast of lights'.

Dedication

Hanukkah is not just about lighting candles. Above all, it is about dedicating yourself and rededicating yourself to a life in accordance with the Word of God. The Hebrew word also has to do with 'formation', education. It is a Jewish idea that every person should make himself a temple, a sanctuary, by learning the values of God's Word. In this way, he or she will spread light in the world. Judaism sees it as a task for the Jewish people to be a light to the world.

Seven Fruits of Israel

"For the Lord, your God, is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with **wheat** and **barley**, **vines** and **fig trees**, **pomegranates**, **olive** oil and **honey**; a land where bread will not be scarce, and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land, He has given you."

Deuteronomy 8:7-10



Land

The word 'land' is mentioned seven times in the passage from Deuteronomy quoted above. Five of the seven fruits grow only in fertile environments, but the olive tree and the date palm also grow in regions that are much less fertile. Israel then adds extra flavour and quality to these fruits.

Months of the Year

The seven fruits also correspond to the months of the year. Time and place come together in the fruits. Wheat and barley grow in Nisan and Iyyar (spring). Grapes grow in Sivan and Tammuz (late spring, early summer), the fig in Av (summer). The



pomegranate blooms in Elul (late summer, early autumn). The olive tree and the date palm are autumn fruits and come off the tree in Tishrei, Heshvan and Kislev (autumn, winter).

Environment

The other five of Israel's seven fruits basically only grow in a fertile environment. They are also fruits which Israeli grows to a high quality, but Israel does not excel so clearly in them. It is particularly in olives and dates, which grow basically everywhere, that Israel's special sacred growing power is evident. Israel produces excellent olive oil and also delicious honey.

Israel-China Relations

■ Donna Ho

Film director & Tanakh Scholar

For years, I have taken entrepreneurs and professionals from mainland China to Israel from multiple industries, including film and the arts. People have asked me why connect China with Israel?

Let me share a time when I took some Chinese on their first trip to Israel. Thinking that Israel was a country of wars, barren deserts, and unknown cuisine, they packed instant noodles galore. One day, they came to me with a 'problem'. They had now visited coffee plantations, enjoyed gourmet lunches at wineries, and discovered traditional Israeli dishes that were similar to Chinese dishes (*Shakshuka* is like the unofficial Chinese national dish of eggs cooked with tomato). They had seen flowers blooming in the Negev, water flowing in the desert, and they had eaten apples at *kibbutz* orchards and were sweetly surprised by its taste. They were amazed by Israel's ancient history and impressed by Israelis whose innovations they had seen, heard and tasted. Their 'problem' was what to do with the uneaten noodles to make room for the wine, coffee, Dead Sea products, and dates. Before experiencing Israel for themselves, their concept of Israel was shaped by the media, which focused on the conflicts in Israel, just like the average person living outside of China. As followers of God, however, our calling is to be above average, to be the 'salt and light' of this world. Hence, we need to critically examine how our world views have been unduly influenced by media and whether we have missed what the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is and has been doing so that Israel fulfils her calling to be a light onto the world.

Some facts about modern Israel-China relations:

1920: Dr Sun Yat-Sen, the father of modern China, wrote to NEB Ezra (Jewish founder of the Shanghai Zionist Association): "All lovers of democracy cannot help but support whole-heartedly and welcome with enthusiasm the movement to restore your wonderful and historic nation, which has contributed so much to the civilisation of the world and which rightfully deserves an honourable place in the family of nations." The original letter is stored in the National Library of Israel.

1930s: David Ben-Gurion, then leader of the *Yishuv* in Palestine, proclaimed that China would be one of the world's great powers. He would declare the rebirth of Israel as a country and become the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

1948: The State of Israel was established.

1949: The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) was established.

1950: Israel was the first country in the Middle East to recognise the PRC as the legitimate government of all of China.

1992: Israel and China established diplomatic relations.

2020: The Chief Rabbi of Israel, Safed Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, called for prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, to pray for China and Covid-19 victims. Despite heavy rain, thousands of Jews went. Rabbi Eliyahu prayed in Hebrew and also in Mandarin.

2022: China is one of the few world powers to concurrently maintain warm relations with Israel, Arab countries and Muslim nations in the world.

Since I first took mainland Chinese to Israel, China-Israel relations have transformed rapidly. China is Israel's third-largest trading partner. The 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) spurred Israel to look eastward for economic and trade opportunities as Israel realised she could not rely on Europe and North America only. In 2019, over 160,000 Chinese tourists visited Israel (54,000 from Australia). In 2021, trade between the two nations was 22.8 billion USD, which is an increase of over 700 times since Israel started diplomatic relations with China in 1992.

China is Israel's largest East Asian trading partner and sources Israeli expertise in a wide range of industries, including green technology, manufacturing robotics,



| Photo: MFA Israel

water management, irrigation and desalination technology. In 2022, over 2000 Israeli firms operated in China, and China's *kosher* food industry, with more than 500 manufacturers, is worth over 10 billion USD.

With China's increasing interest in Jewish literature and education, scholars undertook Middle-eastern studies and went to Israel for further studies. Israel's universities established campuses in China, offering Hebrew, Tanakh and other courses. Chinese are interested in Israel's ancient, Biblical, and modern history. They are fascinated by the Israeli-Jewish mindset. They see Jews as a unique people who, like the Chinese, have a continuous written history dating back thousands of years. Both nations are rooted in ancient civilisations, and hence there are cultural similarities today, making them natural partners in the international community.

Jews have lived in China for centuries without experiencing antisemitism. Since Abraham's time, Jewish merchants travelled on the Silk Road through Central Asia, past India, and into China. During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), international trade was booming. The Song Emperor welcomed and bestowed seven Chinese surnames upon Jewish merchants so it would be easier for them to live in the empire's capital city of Kaifeng. One Chinese surname given was 'Gold' – this surname is still held by many Jewish families today.

The father of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was raised in the city of Harbin, a thriving Jewish community dating from the 19th century in Northern China. In 2007, Prime Minister Olmert visited China to bolster trade ties and also sought China's support against Iran's ongoing nuclear threats towards Israel.

In the lead up to WW2, thousands of European Jewry landed in Shanghai after fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe. The Jewish and the Chinese community had friendly relations and co-existed peacefully. The relationship became closer when, to please their Nazi allies, the occupying Japanese Army rounded up Jews and forced thousands to live in the Hongkou ghetto with the 100,000 Chinese already there. Some Jews died of illness and malnutrition. Many Chinese living in the same ghetto died from starvation and were slaughtered by the Japanese. In 2007, the Israeli consulate of Shanghai gave 660,000 yuan, donated by Israeli companies, to community projects in Hongkou in recognition of Shanghai's role as a safe harbour for Jews during the Holocaust.

China's embrace of Jews on her soil is one of affectionate sympathy. The Chinese admired their contributions to humanity and their ability to thrive. Sharing the same values on family, frugality, hard work, and education has also been an impetus towards their enduring friendship. When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited China

in 2017, he and his wife Sarah visited the Hongkou ghetto synagogue, now a museum supported by Shanghai city. Netanyahu thanked China, cited their experiences of similar historical events, and it is no wonder why both countries have warm relations. In November 2021, Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, phoned President Xi to discuss opportunities to enhance bilateral ties ahead of celebrations of 30 years of diplomatic relations.

In 1992, Israel-China relations was at a G to G level (Government to Government) and has since expanded into the following spheres - Economics to Economics and Scholars to Scholars. Despite significant relations developing over the last three decades, both nations still have a superficial understanding of each other. The immense voice of media and social media that magnify the selfish agendas of short-termed leaders, focusing on fault lines and amplifying extreme views, is a well-known phenomenon but easily overlooked. In such climates, it is easy for propaganda to permeate society, stereotyping a country and her people. Hence the next stage of relations needs to be people to people, to build on shared virtues and interests, to deepen the understanding that strengthens bilateral relations, to treasure the worth of a people despite the cacophony of voices against them, and to combat the rise of racism, fascism and antisemitism throughout the world. Chinese need enhanced insights about the Jewish people and Israel so as not to be swayed by geopolitics and not be polluted by antisemitism transmitted from other nations. Jews need to perceive China as a distinction from previous world powers. China has an Eastern (collective) mindset, the only country to pull millions of her people out of abject poverty in this century, unlike others where millions have gone below the poverty line; China does not have a history of antisemitism; and has a longstanding friendship with the Jewish people. Followers of God need to filter out the riotous noise of this world to discern the current moves of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Returning to the question, why connect China with Israel? My reply is, how can I not? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has been establishing friendly connections between Israel and China for centuries. Today, God has advanced His plan, and thousands upon thousands of mainland Chinese have visited Israel. Thousands are studying the Jewish mindset and the Tanakh. Israel's diplomatic relations and trade ties with China mitigates the economic hardships and oppression faced by Israel from the ongoing boycotts instigated by the BDS movement and their allies. China has been called by God to be a friend of Israel. It is imperative now for followers of God to accelerate genuine connections between these two peoples and to bring in more allies to support Israel through practical actions.

Jerusalem of Gold

■ Tal Hartuv

Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

In the amazing and very varied repertoire of Israeli songs, there are two which Israelis, both young and old, will stop in their tracks and sing along to wherever they are: *HaTikvah*, and *Jerusalem of Gold*.

Although there is somewhat of a competitive edge between the two songs, throughout the years, *Jerusalem of Gold* has become so cherished by Israelis that until today, some see it as a viable alternative to *HaTikvah*, the national anthem of the Jewish State.

The song was written by Naomi Shemer, arguably the most popular singer-songwriter in Israel at the time. Shemer drew upon ancient sources to bring the past to the present and the present to the past. Among other themes, the lyrics deal with exile and the Jewish longing for Jerusalem. This takes after a medieval Jewish poet, Yehuda Halvi, who is famously recorded as saying: "To all your songs, I am a lyre." The title *Jerusalem of Gold* refers to a piece of jewellery mentioned in a famous Talmudic parable about Rabbi Akiva, who was martyred by the Romans after the Bar Kochba Revolt. In addition, there are many Biblical references from the book of *Isaiah and Lamentations*; a book read out on the fast day of the 9th of Av.

On 15 May 1967, the night after Israel's nineteenth Independence Day, the inimitable mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, commissioned *Jerusalem of Gold* to be sung at the Israel Song Festival. At the time, the Old City was under Jordanian control and against all International agreements. Jews had been banned by the Jordanians from entering the city since the conclusion of the Independence War 19 years earlier, a war which saw Jewish people who had lived in the Old City lose their homes and become refugees. Some were even taken as Prisoners of War to Jordan. No Jews were allowed to return to the city, even for a visit.



Sunset over the Old City Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

Only three weeks after the song was sung at the festival by the-then unknown Shuli Natan, the Six-Day War broke out. It was a war that was to change the history of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide. Just three days into the conflict, Israeli Paratroopers took the Temple Mount. Standing where King Solomon had built his House of Worship, they burst into song with *Jerusalem of Gold*.

As God had told his people hundreds of years ago, Zion had at long last finally returned to the Nation of Israel. It was truly a miracle. Against all odds and after defeating the mighty Arab armies, the Jewish people were sovereign again in their land and in the holiest place on earth.

Shortly after the momentous and historic reunification of Jerusalem, Naomi Shemer realised that her song was now incomplete. Accordingly, she wrote a new ending. "We have returned to the cisterns, to the market and to the marketplace. A shofar calls out on the Temple Mount in the Old City."

Shofars indeed blew from Temple Mount on that day, which is what inspired Shemer to write about it. And while it may not be the official anthem of Israel, *Jerusalem of Gold* is indeed an anthem of triumph for the Jewish Nation that finally returned home.

Jews and Diamonds: *Mazel und Broche*

■ Joanna Moss

Christians for Israel New Zealand | Contributor

Jews have been associated with diamonds for centuries, and diamonds are even mentioned in the Bible as part of the priestly garments *inter alia*. But what is it about diamonds and Israel that they should play such a significant part in the global and Israeli economies?

Diamonds ideally fit the bill for Jews in a number of ways. First, they are traded commodities and therefore rely on trust and networks. Jews have for centuries had communities dotted all over the world and well-established connections between them. Community affiliation brought security to transactions. Devious trading behaviour could be punished by the community, and the threat of expulsion hung over the traders. Secondly, diamonds are small and can be cut and polished using small tools in a restricted space rather than requiring mass factories favouring family or niche businesses. Thirdly, diamond cutting is both an art form and a craft requiring skill, often passed down through generations. Fourthly, diamonds are high-value goods and portable. So that if any diamond processing or trading Jews needed to flee in a hurry, they could. Finally, diamonds are stores of value. This last point was played out expressly during the *Shoah* when Jews sewed diamonds into their clothing and traded them for food or security.

Diamond Industry History

When diamonds were discovered in South Africa in the late 19th century, it was Jewish firms that developed the mining and trade. Over time two firms dominated:

Oppenheimers and De Beers. But Jews were involved in all aspects of the business.

Pre-WWII, the Netherlands and Belgium were important diamond processing centres for cutting and polishing raw diamonds from South Africa primarily. However, as war loomed, some processing was moved to London and others to Israel. At one point, there were 4,000 polishers in Israel, mainly in Netanya. Jews on three continents largely controlled the process. After the war, the decimation of European cities combined with the lack of skilled craftsmen only encouraged the development of the Israeli industry, and by the 1970s, Israel had overtaken Antwerp as the world's largest wholesaler. In 1982 diamonds represented a whopping 24 per cent of exports. The industry grew rapidly until 2003 and today exports about USD\$5 Billion.

Bursa

European Jews started the diamond business in the 1930s Mandate period. When the industry flourished in Israel in the 1960s, it was decided to build a dedicated diamond district based around a four-tower structure. Today the impressive *Tel Aviv Diamond Exchange* is located in Ramat Gan next to Tel Aviv and known as the *Bursa*. It's still growing and renowned as a sophisticated, highly-organised and secure industry that's praised for its unique features. Today, employing over 15,000 people in 1,500 companies boasting a vast trading hall and dedicated museum!

A Diamond is Forever®

By the 1890s, the USA was the largest market for diamonds, but still small. Globally a demand for

diamonds needed to be created to match increasing supply on the premise that diamonds were both necessary and desirable psychologically. Enter ad agency *N W Ayer* who in 1938 created the *A Diamond is Forever®* campaign for De Beers, described by *Advertising Age* 50 years later as the greatest advertising slogan of the 20th century. Over many decades strategists built demand for diamond engagement rings linking diamonds with romance and commitment using celebrities, school projects, advertising and movies as they mass-marketed their products, subtly suggesting that the size and quality of diamonds were proportional to love. It worked.

Israeli Supremacy

Japan became an important market from the 1960s onwards as affluence increased, and then China and, more recently India, signify a Far East shift. But Israel is holding its own as it's particularly good at cutting and processing the gems. Industry processes have been largely developed by the Israelis themselves using Orthodox Jews as cutters. Israel specialises in advanced cutting and matching of stones. Advanced science is applied alongside skilled labour and craftsmanship with automated equipment, security, quality guarantees and scientific cost control to make Israel a world leader.

Mazel und Broche

Much diamond trading is still done in *Yiddish* by men in black coats and hats and by others wearing just a *yarmulke* to signify affiliation. The *Mazel und Broche* expression, often shortened to *'Mazl'*, seals contracts worth millions of dollars with a handshake, and for the uninitiated, it means good luck and a blessing: *May you be rich!* I'll stick with diamonds thanks!

Demand for Meals Increases at Hineni

Christians for Israel International

Hineni is located in the heart of Jerusalem and runs, among other things, a soup kitchen, which Director Benjamin Philip refers to as a humanitarian restaurant. After all, people do not just need a meal; they also need to be treated with respect and dignity. This is why the team at Hineni is attentive to all visitors and offers them a listening ear.

Jerusalem is the most densely populated city in Israel but also the poorest, with many citizens dependent on charity. Hineni means 'Here I am, I am ready to serve with love'. Hineni Jerusalem brings people together that want to serve God and are ready to serve with love. Among other things, Hineni runs a humanitarian restaurant, preparing 500 meals on a daily basis for the poor of Jerusalem from all walks of life. Holocaust survivors, lonely homeless people, new immigrants, and refugees. Hineni also has a programme for lone soldiers. They try to help where they can, wherever the need is. Recently Benjamin Philip visited the Christians for Israel headquarters in the Netherlands, and we had the opportunity to talk about the work of Hineni.



instance, there are now 400 refugees from Russia and Ukraine are now housed near our Hineni centre. They would like to receive a meal, and we try to help, but we also need to prepare the meals that we provide to about

Hineni responds to what is happening around them. They try to assist wherever the need is most urgent.

300 homebound people. Many of them are lonely and elderly, oftentimes Holocaust survivors. On top of that, about 200 meals are served daily in the restaurant of Hineni. So looking from a budget point of view we cannot provide more meals. In all this, we trust the Lord that He will continue inspiring people to help. We are never in despair.



What can we, as Christians, do to help Hineni?

First of all, pray for the sake of Jerusalem and for the well-being of the Jewish people. You can also come to Israel and join Hineni as a volunteer in our kitchen and restaurant. We have staff working in the kitchen, but amazing volunteers handle packing the food and distribution. The encounters with our volunteers positively impact the people coming to Hineni. And when you come to Jerusalem, you are more than welcome to join us for a Shabbat dinner. We can welcome the Shabbat together at the Western Wall, and you can experience the Jewishness of our faith and ask questions. Of course, your donation to Hineni, as a blessing to the decedents of Abraham, is more than welcome!

Hineni wants to provide a hot meal for Jerusalem's poor, elderly, and children. Your gift to Hineni goes directly to the purchase of food. Costs of a hot meal: \$10



Benjamin Philip (photo above) visited Christians for Israel's headquarters recently. Watch the interview here: <https://www.c4israel.org/video/interview-hineni/>

Scan and watch the interview 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



Why do people come to Hineni for food and help?

'First of all, they are referred to us by social workers of the municipality or other government officials. They come for food, but once they come to us, people start to realise they get much more. They get compassion, love, and a listening ear. At Hineni, people receive a sense of community and the Word of God. We remind people that God loves them and that if they would pray to Him, He can always bring salvation. We also organise special events during the Jewish holidays to give people a sense of Jewish traditions and love for God's word. I am just a simple Jew trying to remind the people that God loves them, and if they will read His word, He will answer them: Hineni, 'here I am.'

The cost of living is going up around the world. How does this affect Hineni?

'We serve high-quality meals with fresh vegetables, chicken and fish, but also the product prices increase here in Israel. The donations we receive from our faithful sponsors abroad are worth less since the value of the foreign currency dropped. At the same time, we see that the demand for meals has increased tremendously. For



Food Parcels for Ukrainian Jews



Photo: (left) Mikhail (58) and his mother Anna Kreiser (87).
Photo: (right) Ludmilla Balaban (67)

In Ukraine, thousands of Jewish elderly live in great poverty. Often lonely and in remote places.

As Christians for Israel, we have been distributing food parcels to Jews in Ukraine for years each winter. As you will understand, this year will be a little different compared to previous years...

In spite of all the uncertainty surrounding the situation in Ukraine, we cling to the certainty that God is continuing His plan with His people. Therefore, we continue to:

- provide food aid to the Jewish communities;
- evacuate Jews from eastern Ukraine;
- provide a shelter for Jewish refugees;
- and help Jews return to Israel.

We don't know how food supplies will be affected this winter. Therefore, we are stockpiling emergency supplies in order to meet the many requests for help. In total, we hope to distribute over 40,000 food parcels (over 400,000kg) this winter.

It is a comfort and encouragement to the Jewish people that we have the opportunity to do this. Will you help make this work possible, with your gifts and prayers?

Warm greetings on behalf of the entire Christians for Israel team in Ukraine,



Koen Carlier
Aliyah Fieldworker
Christians for Israel Ukraine

The food parcels brought by the Christians for Israel team in Ukraine are very much needed to get through the harsh winter and especially since food prices are going up. This winter in Ukraine, we hope to distribute 40,000 food parcels to poor Jewish families and Holocaust survivors. One food parcel costs \$26. Please donate one or more parcels!

Anna Kreiser (Holocaust survivor): "I lived a long life, experienced a lot of tragic moments, but my heart cries when I think of what is going on now... This war in the 21st century, as any other war, is just terrible. So much grief, but in the midst of darkness there are people like *Christians for Israel* who do not stop no matter what and continue to help and support Jews in Ukraine! Your food parcels are such a support and blessing to us! Thank you very much!"

Ludmilla Balaban (67): "Thank you very much for supporting us at this difficult time for everyone. It is good to know that we are not alone and there are people who think about us. These food parcels are very important and will help to live through winter months."

- One \$26 parcel contains:
- 1 kg spaghetti
 - 1 kg macaroni
 - 1 kg grits
 - 1 kg rice
 - 1 kg bulgur
 - 1 kg sugar
 - 2 kg flour
 - 1 tin of peas
 - 1 tin of corn
 - 1 litre cooking oil
 - 1 tin of chicken
 - 1 pack of coffee
 - 1 pack of tea

"Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy, honours God". Proverbs 14:31

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

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<input type="checkbox"/> Aliyah - Ethiopia	\$.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Christians for Israel NZ Israeli & Friends Cookbook <i>Special \$34.95</i>	\$20.00
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<input type="checkbox"/> Hineni Soup Kitchen - \$15 per meal	\$.....	<input type="checkbox"/> San Remo 100 - Pathway for Peace	\$12.95
<input type="checkbox"/> Holocaust Survivors	\$.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Israel: Covenants & Kingdom by Willem JJ Glashouwer	\$15.00
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<input type="checkbox"/> For Zion's Sake	\$.....			
<input type="checkbox"/> Israel Alzheimer's Centre: Bladder Scanner	\$.....			
TOTAL DONATION \$.....		<i>Please add \$5.50 for postage & packaging (or \$9.40 for rural postage)</i>		\$.....
		TOTAL \$.....		

Check out our website for a full list of essential resources

Thank you for supporting Christians for Israel. If you are donating via online banking for the first time, 'thank you!', please don't forget to put your name as the reference. If you receive the paper via a group or church and you are not on our database, please give us a call or email us so we can allocate a supporter number to you. It saves administration time if we have all the details and allocate your donation correctly. Please don't hesitate to contact us, as we are here to help through the 'no cheque' transition phase.

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