

# ISRAEL

## & Christians Today

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
NEW ZEALAND

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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View of the Dome of the Rock and the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. | Photo: Flash90

## Israel's Independence

Last month, Israel observed the 74th anniversary of its independence, gained when the State of Israel was born on 14 May 1948.

This celebration is always preceded by Remembrance Day – the day Israel remembers those who have fallen in its many conflicts over the last century.

Together, both events show that the independence of the

Jewish people comes at a high price.

At the moment, however, Israel is undergoing another massive wave of terror and violence.

She is also being attacked internationally. The media and many in the international political community condemn Israel for crimes – even when there is no proof. Israel is accused of being an apartheid State that uses excessive

force and kills journalists without reason.

Now, more than ever, Zionism is under attack. The very existence of the Jewish State is being threatened as never before.

The Bible tells us, however, that God alone is holy and sovereign. He is bringing His people home, never to be uprooted.

**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. They will live in the land I gave to My servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David, My servant, will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put My sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy when My sanctuary is among them forever. *Ezekiel 37:24-28***

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Sisters Make Aliyah



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

## Colophon

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### Mission

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

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# Israel is Fighting for the Freedom of Jews and Arabs

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

On 4 May, Israel celebrated *Yom Hazikaron*, Remembrance Day. The nation honoured its fallen before transitioning from mourning to joy as nightfall ushered in the country's 74th Independence Day.

A siren sounded at 11 am, bringing the country to a standstill for two minutes of silence in memory of the over 24,000 service members and 4,000 terror victims killed over the last century and a half. At cemeteries across the country, bereaved families, friends and others gathered to remember those lost with speeches, poems, candles, wreaths and tears.

defend the citizens of the country on the roads and intersections of Judea and Samaria and along the borders," he said, using the biblical name for the West Bank. He added that the IDF "goes beyond the country's borders to strike in the air, at sea and on land, throughout the Middle East" in the cause of defending Israel.

Few people outside Israel realise how much the Jewish people have sacrificed for their right to live as a nation and how vulnerable Israel is.

The dilemma is highlighted by the tragic killing of Palestinian Arab journalist Shireen Abu Akleh during an Israeli military operation in Jenin.

refugees) became a hotbed of hatred and violence.

When Israel (miraculously) took control of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria in June 1967 (in a defensive war), it would have been suicide to have simply handed back control of these territories to those still swearing to eliminate them the Jewish people. Instead, Israel took the strategic decision to 'occupy' the territories: hold control of them under a military administration but not claim sovereignty over them (excepting 'East Jerusalem' over which it did apply Israeli sovereignty).

Since 1967, cities like Jenin have become a breeding ground for Islamist terrorists

**Few people outside Israel realise how much the Jewish people have sacrificed for their right to live as a nation and how vulnerable Israel is. The dilemma is highlighted by the tragic killing this week of Palestinian Arab journalist Shireen Abu Akleh...**

President Isaac Herzog stressed the unity of the people of Israel – Jewish and non-Jewish: "Our sons and daughters, who fell in defence of our state, fought together and fell together. They did not ask, nor did anyone ask them, who was right-wing and who was left-wing. Who was religious. Who was secular. Who was Jewish and who was not Jewish," he said. "They fell as Israelis, defending Israel. In cemeteries, arguments fall silent. Between the headstones, not a sound. A silence that demands that we fulfil, together, their single dying wish: the resurrection of Israel. The building of Israel. United, consolidated, and responsible for each other. For we are all sisters and brothers."

IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kohavi emphasised that Israel is still fighting for its freedom. He said the Israel Defense Forces were currently dealing with threats on several fronts and hailed the generations of soldiers who have served in the military. "The thwarting of terror continues every day, from north to south, and IDF units

Even if Abu Akleh was killed by an Israeli bullet – which has not been proven - what was the Israeli army (IDF) doing in Jenin?

Jenin is a mainly Arab city in the northern part of the mountain range of Samaria. It has become a breeding ground for Islamist terrorists who sneak into Israel to carry out terror attacks killing Jews and non-Jews.

When the Jewish State of Israel was proclaimed in May 1948, the Arabs could also have declared their own state. But they chose to continue the policy adopted from 1920 of using violence (i.e. killing Jews) to destroy the Jewish national home.

In 1948/9, the Arabs attacked Israel, and Jordan took control of the old part of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria (which in 1950 became known as the 'West Bank' of Jordan). Since 1967, Palestinians have been used as a political pawn, left in refugee camps set up under a new organisation called the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). They have been given false hope of 'return' to their former homes. Palestinian 'refugee camps' (a misnomer because the Palestinians were not truly

who sneak into Israel to carry out terror attacks killing Jews and non-Jews in Israel.

In the 1990s, Israel and the PLO agreed to enable the Arab Palestinians to have autonomy and self-government. Jenin was one of the cities where Israel withdrew, and full control was handed over to the PA.

This policy has been a dismal failure. The PA, it turns out, is just the mouthpiece of the PLO, which remains deeply committed to its original goals: the liberation of 'Palestine' and the destruction of Israel.

What is Israel supposed to do - just 'withdraw' and hand over the whole of Judea and Samaria to the Palestinian Authority, as it did in Jenin?

That would be suicide. As everyone knows, whoever controls the mountains of Judea and Samaria can easily destroy the cities and towns in the plains and valleys.

For sure, Shireen Abu Akleh's death is tragic. But the fact that the IDF has to root out terrorists in cities like Jenin reveals there is a much deeper problem.

Israel treats the Palestinians as badly as the Nazis once treated the Jews. Pray for a change in people's thinking and for more and better education about Biblical prophecies, the Holocaust, and the history of Israel.

## Christians for Israel

- "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 *Thessalonians* 5:16-18a). Continue to pray for the work of Koen and Ira Carlier and the Christians for Israel team in Ukraine. Pray that we can help many more Jewish refugees on their way to Israel and pray for protection of the team. Give thanks that God has often given solutions in difficult circumstances.
- Pray for your own church today, and thank God that, though sometimes with difficulty, people will indeed receive a vision for Israel. Check what you might be able to do or what difference you could make to your church in this respect.

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

## Prayer Points

By C4I Prayer Team

### Israel

- In recent weeks there have been several terrorist attacks in Israel. Pray that these attacks will stop.
- Pray that Israel will be able to receive all the Ukrainian refugees that enter the country. Pray that it will be successful in creating sufficient housing.
- "He draws up the drops of water, which distil as rain to the streams" (*Job* 36:27). The water level of the Sea of Galilee is very high at the moment, partly due to the large amount of rainfall this spring. Give thanks for the high levels in this body of water where the levels are often low.

### Israel & the Nations

- "Arise, Lord, do not let mortals triumph; let the nations be judged in your presence" (*Psalms* 9:19). Pray for the protection of Israel against hatred from other nations.
- In the United Kingdom, a survey was conducted among British adults about antisemitism. It showed that 24 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement that

# Wave of Terror Continues

## Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

The situation in Israel remains very tense, and it does not look like it will change any time soon. Officials within the Israeli intelligence apparatus have predicted that the current wave of terror will continue throughout the year.

This prediction seems to be based on a recent opinion survey by the *Palestinian Policy and Survey Research* (PSR) institute. That survey showed that the popularity of Fatah is again higher than that of Hamas among Palestinian residents of areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. The most shocking finding of the survey was that as many as 73 per cent of Palestinian Arabs believe that the Koran contains a prophecy predicting the end of the State of Israel. These Palestinian Muslims believe it will happen in 2022.

This is probably why Palestinian Arabs have recently started a new wave of terror attacks and why Israeli Arab Muslims have joined their brothers in the PA and Hamas controlled areas. These Israeli Arabs, as well as the Bedouin in the Negev desert, are becoming increasingly militant and regularly openly display their large amounts of weapons.

The epicentre of the wave of terror against



Rescue forces evacuate the assailant of an attack that appears to be of a terrorist nature near Temple Mount, in Jerusalem's Old City. 11 May 2022. | Photo: Flash90

Israel now seems to have shifted from Gaza to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

### Preparations for Attack Against Iran

The Israeli military is preparing for a possible airstrike against Iran's nuclear facilities. Such an action seems to be getting closer by the day now that talks in Vienna on a new or revised nuclear agreement with six world powers, including the United States, have stalled. Defence Minister Benny Gantz warned of the consequences of the failure of the

Vienna talks and said Iran was not far from producing a nuclear weapon. Shortly afterwards, it was leaked that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) and the IDF had begun a large-scale exercise simulating an attack on Iran and Israel's defences in preparation for a possible multi-front war. The participation of the American tanker planes in the exercise must be seen as a signal to Iran now that the nuclear talks have once again stalled. It does not mean, however, that the US Air Force will participate directly in an attack on Iran.

# Israel and the Ukraine War

## Dan Schnur

It's not often that you see a headline that begins with the words 'Putin apologises.' But both American and Israeli media have reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin offered an apology to Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett for the anti-Semitic slurs one of his top advisers made recently regarding Hitler and Jews.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had sought to justify Moscow's stated goal of 'de-Nazifying' Ukraine—which a Jewish president leads—by claiming Adolf Hitler had "Jewish blood" and that "the most ardent anti-Semites are usually Jews." There was strong international backlash against Lavrov's insults, but the Russian Foreign Ministry originally reinforced his comments before Bennett and Putin spoke directly.

At the time this was written, the Kremlin had neither confirmed nor denied Putin's apology, suggesting an effort on Putin's part to avoid looking weak to his own people while avoiding a diplomatic blowup with Israel. But Putin hates backing down—to anyone, at any time. So the question is: Why would he feel it necessary to mend fences with Bennett?

From the beginning of the war, Israel's leaders have been forced to navigate an extremely difficult path to avoid antagonising Russia. While Israel's own democratic principles (and strong relationship with the United States) naturally align the Jewish homeland with Ukraine, Bennett has avoided provoking

Putin for both domestic political reasons and international security considerations.

Israel's military must coordinate its actions in Syria closely with its Russian counterpart to avoid any unintentional conflict. Combined with the sizable population of Russian émigrés in Israel—and their considerable political clout—Bennett's best available option has been to position himself as an intermediary between Putin and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

But as Russian atrocities became more apparent, Israel's support for Ukraine became more assertive. Bennett's government has directed immense amounts of humanitarian aid, including medical equipment, clothing, food and other supplies, to displaced Ukrainians. Diplomatically, Israel has moved off the sidelines as well, voting for recent United Nations condemnations of Russia after staying away from earlier resolutions. More recently, Israel's military has taken its first steps toward engagement, sending helmets, flak jackets and other types of body armour for use by civilian and medical personnel.

Putin knows that Israel is also facing growing pressure to begin sending weaponry, too, and given his own military's underwhelming performance to date, it's understandable why he would not want to see Israeli armaments deployed against his troops in Ukraine. Even more important are the added benefits of Israel's considerable cyberwar expertise, as well as

its sophisticated military intelligence capabilities. The large number of Israel's Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking active-duty and reserve forces would also greatly aid training efforts.

Putin has watched and listened to the fierce response of Israel's political leaders to Lavrov's blunder, most notably Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's statement that Lavrov's comments had "crossed a line." Within a day, Putin and Bennett were on the phone, ostensibly to discuss the evacuation of civilians from the Avostal steel plant in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol and for Putin to congratulate Israel for its Independence Day. But the timing of the call, and the rather tepid pushback from the Kremlin against Bennett's announcement of a Putin apology, suggest that the Russian president knew exactly how important it was to defuse the situation.

It should not be forgotten that Ukraine is far from the top of Israel's list of international concerns. But Bennett recognises that the best way to maintain his influence in the Iranian nuclear negotiations—and to discourage too many American concessions—is to maintain as strong a relationship with the United States as possible. Stepping up Israel's support of Ukraine is an effective and timely way to achieve that goal.

Dan Schnur teaches political communications at UC Berkeley, USC and Pepperdine. He hosts the weekly webinar 'Politics in the Time of Coronavirus' for the Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall.

## Short News

### Synagogue Restoration



Egypt has started the restoration of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Cairo, the oldest synagogue in not only Egypt, but also in the entire Middle East. The work is being done thoroughly. Not only is the interior given a thorough overhaul, but the roof is also insulated as well and fitted with a water-repellent layer. In 2018 the Egyptian government reserved more than 68 million euros for the restoration of Jewish heritage in the country. In 1948 between 80 and 100 thousand Jews are estimated to have lived in Egypt. In the following years, most Jews were expelled from the country. | Photo: Shutterstock

### Hospital for ADI

Recently Israel's prime minister Naftali Bennett opened ADI's new hospital in the Negev Desert. The hospital is part of an innovative rehabilitation village, where 170 children and (young) adults with multiple disabilities get every opportunity to develop. The hospital has 108 beds. Christians for Israel has been involved with ADI (formerly ALEH) for years. During the opening, PM Bennett expressed his appreciation for ADI. "Everyone is seen as a human being here. A person who deserves respect and care."

### Schindler's Secretary Passes Away



In early May, 107-year-old Mimi Reinhard passed away in Israel. Reinhard was the secretary in the office of Oscar Schindler, the German businessman who rescued 1,200 Jews from the hands of the Nazis. Mimi was born in Vienna, moved to Krakow and ended up in the concentration camp Plaszow, where she was needed to do administrative work. There she was instructed to type the list with the names of the Jews who were going to be transferred to Schindler's ammunition and metal factory. She added her own name to the list. Only when she was 92 years old, Reinhard moved from the United States to Israel. | Photo: Flash90

# Israel is Experiencing Turbulent Times Again

## ■ Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

Israel is once again experiencing turbulent times with a wave of new attacks by Palestinian terrorists, rapidly changing relations with states in the Middle East, and changes in Syria that could affect the covert war between Israel and Iran.

The wave of new terrorist attacks that began on 21 March 2022, with an attack on civilians in the city of Beer Sheva, reached its lowest point on 5 May when two Palestinian terrorists armed with axes and knives from the Jenin area murdered three Jewish men in the central town of Elad, Israel.

### Jenin

It is no coincidence that several of the terrorists, who recently committed seven attacks in seven weeks, came from the city of Jenin in northern Samaria.

Always a stronghold of extremists, Jenin was dubbed the capital of suicide terrorism during the Second Intifada because many terrorists who blew themselves up in buses, hotels, and restaurants came from that city and its suburbs.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Palestinian Authority security forces have always been wary of operating in Jenin, especially within the city's refugee camp.

That cautious approach by the IDF, however, has changed since April after a terrorist from the Jenin area murdered three young Israelis on Tel Aviv's busy Dizengoff Street.

Since then, the IDF has regularly raided Jenin and the refugee camp there while arresting dozens of suspects.

### Hamas and the Temple Mount

Another factor in the current wave of terror attacks is the incitement by Hamas in Gaza.

Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar recently delivered an inflammatory speech that was broadcasted by Quds TV in Gaza. During that speech, Sinwar called on Palestinian Arabs in Judea and Samaria to arm themselves, if necessary, with axes and butcher knives and then hunt for Jews who should then be murdered. Apparently, the two Elad terrorists were influenced by Sinwar's incitement as they carried out their horrific attack with axes and knives.

Hamas has long incited the Palestinian masses over the alleged Israeli desecration of the Al-Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount. Sinwar, in his fiery speech, threatened a religious war that would change "the face of the world and scorch the earth in the Middle East".

He also threatened that Hamas would attack synagogues around the world.

Tensions around the Temple Mount peaked during Passover and the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan when hundreds of young Muslims attacked Israeli police daily from within the Al-Aqsa mosque. Police were eventually forced to enter the mosque in an attempt to bring the situation under control.

To keep things from getting completely out of hand, Jews were then banned from ascending the Temple Mount during the last ten days of Ramadan.

### Tensions with Jordan

Relations with Jordan further deteriorated due to the tensions surrounding the Al-Aqsa mosque. The government in Amman blamed Israel for the riot and even summoned Israel's ambassador to dress him down.

Jordan also demanded an increase in the number of guards of the so-called WAKF, the Islamic custodian of the Muslim holy sites on the Temple Mount.

Israel responded to this demand with ambivalence.



Family and friends attend the funeral of Boaz Gol. Gol was killed on 5 May in a terror attack in Elad. | Photo: Flash90

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett rejected the request, but Omer Bar-Lev, his internal security minister, was in favour of expanding the WAKF in exchange for removing Hamas elements from within the organisation.

Prime Minister Bennett, however, stuck to his rejection of the Jordanian demand, saying that only the Israeli government makes decisions about the Temple Mount.

### Israel-Russia Relationship Under Pressure

Then there is the situation in Syria, where the Russian army is reducing its presence because of the war with Ukraine.

More on that later.

This war caused deterioration in relations between Israel and Russia after both Bennett and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yair Lapid, strongly criticised the Russians.

**Tensions around the Temple Mount peaked during Passover and the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan when hundreds of young Muslims attacked Israeli police daily from within the Al-Aqsa mosque.**

Israel, in turn, was accused by a Kremlin spokesman of sending mercenaries to fight alongside the Ukrainian army, and the Jewish state was also accused of collaborating with the "Nazi regime in Kyiv".

Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, then added fuel to the fire and made anti-Semitic remarks about President Volodymyr Zelensky's Jewishness.

Lavrov also claimed that Jews are the biggest anti-Semites.

These comments provoked great anger in Israel and sharp condemnations from Lapid and Bennett.

Ultimately, Israeli fears that the crisis with Russia would limit freedom of action against Iran's entrenchment in Syria didn't materialise.

During Independence Day on 5 May, President Vladimir Putin telephoned Bennett and apologised for Lavrov's comments.

Putin also sent a congratulatory message on the 74th Independence Day to Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

With that, the crisis seemed to have come to an end.

### Syria

Israel can thus continue its campaign against Iran in Syria and has recently launched repeated airstrikes against Iran- and Hezbollah-related targets in the war-torn country.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad now seems less confident due to the declining Russian presence and Putin's attitude towards Israel.

Assad is now seeking closer relations with Iran and, in early May, travelled to Tehran, where he met with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Iran's extremist President Ibrahim Raisi.

Media in Iran later claimed that close relations between Damascus and Tehran had prevented "the Zionist regime's dominance in the region".

### Positive Developments

Meanwhile, Israel is helping displaced persons in Syria with a new technology that converts air into water.

The Israeli company Watergen has been producing, for the past two years, a device that converts moisture in the

air into condensation and then into mineral-rich water.

The device runs on solar energy and was purchased by the Multi-faith Alliance for Syrian Refugees.

This Democratic-oriented organisation bought dozens of water harvesting devices from Watergen and distributed them in refugee camps run by the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) which is dominated by Kurds.

Another positive development is that the Abraham Accords between Israel, two Gulf States, and Morocco remained intact during the crisis on the Temple Mount.

The Arab countries didn't choose Israel's side during the conflict, however.

In addition, Turkey has made overtures to Israel after a long period of very poor relations.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to restore relations with Israel amid the economic crisis in Turkey and Erdogan's diminished popularity among the Turkish population.

Israel is reluctant to watch Erdogan's moves and apparently first wants to see actions against the presence of Hamas operatives in Turkey.

# Condemnation of Israel Halts Search for Truth



Hundreds gather for the funeral procession of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh in Jerusalem's Old City. | Photo: Flash90

## ■ Fiamma Nirenstein

The tragic death of *Al Jazeera* journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was killed in a fire in the Palestinian town of Jenin, has prompted worldwide demonisation of Israel that does not help the search for the truth of how Akleh died. We have seen worldwide condemnation—or rather criminalisation—of Israelis and Israeli leaders by nearly all media outlets, who have uncritically accepted the narrative of Israeli guilt and criminality proffered by the Palestinians. Yet regarding the Palestinian Authority's refusal to conduct a joint investigation into the incident, to the point of refusing to produce the very bullet that killed Akleh, there has been worldwide silence.

## No one asked how the events actually unfolded, choosing instead to criminalise and demonise the Israel Police.

This reflexive and all too common criminalisation of Israel creates a false and defamatory narrative of Jewish violence and cruelty. This is nothing less than the promotion by international public opinion of the Palestinians' campaign to resurrect their 'cause' after a period of near-oblivion. To further this campaign, the PA will *never* consent to an objective examination of the evidence relating to Akleh's death—likely for fear of what it might find.

Indeed, the Palestinians have already got what they wanted: clashes and violence in the streets of Jerusalem, which have been flooded with Palestinian flags. The Israeli reaction to the clashes during Akleh's funeral in Jerusalem, moreover, proves the intellectual Douglas Murray's thesis in his latest book that the West is its own worst enemy. Israel's Public Security Minister Omer Barlev has set up a committee to investigate the conduct of Israel's own police at the funeral, even though the Palestinians clearly intended to exploit the event in order to spark a

demonstration or riot, which the police attempted to prevent even while defamatory slogans were shouted and stones thrown at them.

Media coverage of this shocking behaviour was carefully censored. The brother of Akleh, for example, told those attempting to steal Akleh's casket, "For God's sake, let us put her in the car and finish the day." It is not surprising that the global press refused to report this, choosing instead to portray the police response as either unprovoked or inspired by depraved cruelty. The *BBC*, *CNN* and all other media outlets with reporters at the scene painted the Israel Police in precisely the same defamatory light. This capitulation to Palestinian violence and propaganda was not limited to the media. US

President Joe Biden's Spokeswoman Jen Psaki called the images of Akleh's funeral "very disturbing," while the European Union said it was "deeply shocked."

No one asked how the events actually unfolded, choosing instead to criminalise and demonise the Israel Police. Nor was there any interest in the day-to-day difficulties and hazards faced by the police, who are charged with the immensely difficult task of preventing terror attacks and violent clashes in a country that is permanently at war. Yet even their leaders have abandoned them. The police said they were merely trying to ensure an orderly funeral. Barlev, however, appeared—along with Israel's enemies—to suspect otherwise, even though this is his own police force.

The obvious assumption in such a case, and in such a context, is that the police did not find themselves facing a funeral but a Palestinian demonstration that threatened to become a riot. They had to confront a

mob of people chanting slogans of hatred and revenge. The mob threw stones at them—and stones can kill. The police were in an explosive tactical and political situation in which, during Ramadan and after, Israel has been plagued by multiple terror attacks and violence on the Temple Mount. They reacted in a manner that, whatever an investigation may conclude, was understandable.

That an Israeli minister has forsaken his own police at a moment of violent and disproportionate international condemnation represents something dark and unusual. Certainly, Israel is a democratic state that is accountable for its behaviour. It is logical for it to publicly provide a response to such a wave of condemnation. And this took place. Nonetheless, such an investigation takes resources away from the Israel Police at a difficult moment, after three weeks in which 19 Israeli civilians were murdered in terror attacks. They were killed in the name of the same flag that covered the streets of Jerusalem at Akleh's funeral. It is not even necessary to ask what would happen if an Israeli citizen carried an Israeli flag through Ramallah—they would not last long.

It is perfectly legitimate for the US, EU and indeed Israel to call for a thorough investigation into the death of Akleh and the violence at her funeral. But such an investigation cannot be objective if the *a priori* delegitimisation and demonisation of the Israel Police and Israeli security forces in general continues. If it does, then any investigation will simply be another attempt to further the Palestinian leadership's strategy of uprooting Israeli sovereignty and legitimacy in the international community.

*Journalist Fiamma Nirenstein was a member of the Italian Parliament (2008-13), where she served as vice president of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Chamber of Deputies. She served in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and established and chaired the Committee for the Inquiry Into Anti-Semitism. A founding member of the international Friends of Israel Initiative, she has written 13 books, including 'Israel Is Us' (2009). Currently, she is a fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.*

## Short News

### Joseph's Tomb Restored



Recently Joseph's Tomb in Nablus (formerly Shechem) was destroyed by Palestinians. The damage was considerable: there was a fire, a tombstone was smashed, windows were broken, and even the water supply system was damaged. For many Jews, Joseph's Tomb is a sacred place. Meanwhile, Israel started the repairs, a job that needed the protection of the Israeli army against the rioters.

| Photo: E. Ben Kimon via Twitter

### Guided Tours

Recently the Israeli Ministry of Tourism recently free 'Guided tours' through Israel for Ukrainian refugees. They are accompanied by Russian speaking guides. In this way the Ministry wants to contribute to the integration of the refugees by introducing them to their new homeland. Amongst others places, the refugees visit several nature reserves.

### Cable Car



In the Israeli port of Haifa, a cable car was recently put into operation. It connects the train station with Haifa's two most important universities. The ride takes nineteen minutes, and every fifteen seconds, a cabin leaves, accommodating ten people. The cable car will be the most important means of transportation for the students and teachers of the universities and will provide a solution for the daily traffic jams and shortage of parking places.

| Photo: Flash90

### Plan for a Jewish Quarter

Rabbi Abadie in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has drafted a plan to develop a Jewish quarter in the country. The Jewish population is growing, and with that, the demand for specific Jewish amenities. "We will see more houses of prayer, schools – from daycare centres to higher education – a place for a *mikveh* (ritual bath), companies selling *kosher* food and a community centre", the Rabbi explains to the Jerusalem Post. "That is why we need a Jewish quarter, and I am discussing this with some developers." According to the Rabbi, about two thousand Jews live in the UAE, of whom 500 actively practice Judaism.

## “We are Hanging in There”

■ **Koen Carlier**  
Christians for Israel Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has now been going on for over three months. But anyone who assumes that the situation is returning to normal, that there are fewer requests for help, or that the worst is over, is wrong. On average, we help between 150 and 200 fleeing Jews per week, bring them to safety and help them on their way to Israel.

Koen Carlier, team leader in Ukraine, explains: “We pick people up by bus in eastern Ukraine and bring them to the Vinnista region. We provide them with a clean bed; they can shower, and volunteers prepare hot and nutritious meals. It gives people who come out of the war zone such a feeling of humanity. After weeks they feel a bit human again for the first time. We don't know exactly how people managed to get out of the occupied areas in the east. But they come, travelling from one place to the other most of the time. And in the Kiev area, people can finally flee from cities that are no longer there. We offer them time to catch their breath and help them with the journey to Israel.”

**How do you as a team keep up helping refugees non-stop, 24/7?**

“Practically speaking: preparation has helped us tremendously. There are supplies, there was a plan, and shelters were arranged. That takes away worries. Our team in Ukraine continues to help. We cooperate exceptionally well. And above all: we pray together. We see that through the war, God is bringing His people to the Promised Land. We are experiencing a bit of what we read in the psalms and prophets. We see something in *Isaiah 43:19*. That’s an encouragement.”

**What can people do for you?**

“Keep praying. Keep praying and proclaim in your surroundings that God is fulfilling His promises right through all the misery. And I want to thank you: you provide financial support for this emergency campaign. This is a rich blessing because it relieves us of a great deal of stress; it gives us the space to focus all our attention on our Jewish brothers and sisters in need.”



Koen with a group of refugees. | Photo: S. Soroka

*Why Alina Helps Refugees*

## “Showing God & His Grace”

How satisfying it is when we realise the good results after all the work we do! And God arranged everything in the best way possible! No matter how difficult things can be and how tired we all get - the most important thing is to finally see people's happy and grateful faces and to know that they received the best care possible with lots of love.

Our mission is not simply to bring people to a safer place, but to make them feel safe, loved, and cared for on their way. It is not an easy task, especially when there is a big group. Everyone has their own trauma and story, character and emotional issues, different ages and status, and habits. Some people look decent; others still wear dirty and dusty clothes... However, nothing should be an obstacle for us to show God and His grace. I am convinced that —without exception— everybody we help will never forget how they were taken care of. You cannot even imagine how many grateful words they expressed to everybody who was involved in the rescue process!

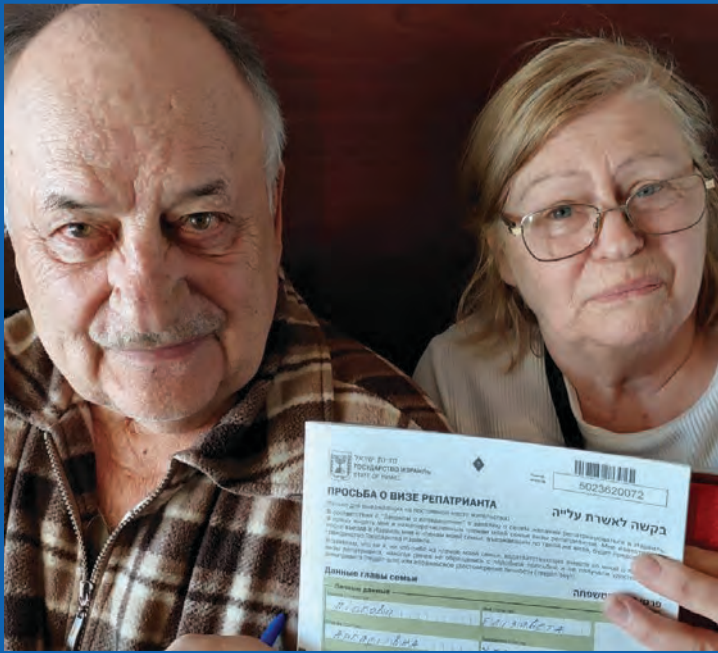
There is one thing that I do not like about my work at Christians for Israel - it is the moment when I have to say 'goodbye' to people who became so dear to me by the end of the journey to the Kishinev shelter [the capital of Moldova]. I give each of them a big hug, knowing I won't see them again, and my heart cries with sadness and grief for what these people ran from. At the same time, I feel joy about what they are going to experience soon!



Alina from the Christians for Israel Ukraine team.

## Safe at Home

This couple was recently assisted by our team in Ukraine to prepare their journey to Israel. The paperwork came through, and now they are safely in Israel. They are relieved that they can be with their daughter in Beersheba. But they have mixed feelings: their son had to remain in Ukraine because of his age.



| Photo: Christians for Israel

### Providing support in Ukraine



20 workers and many volunteers help Jewish refugees to safety



In our shelter refugees stay overnight before we take them across the border



One bus and seven mini-busses to transport refugees



40,000 Aliyah requests received from Ukrainian Jews



10,000 Jews fled from Ukraine to Israel so far



200,000 Ukrainian Jews have the right to return to Israel



5,000 Jewish people assisted by C4I on their way to Israel



Support of integration through 'First Home in the Homeland'



Oldest olim: Ludmilla (99 years)



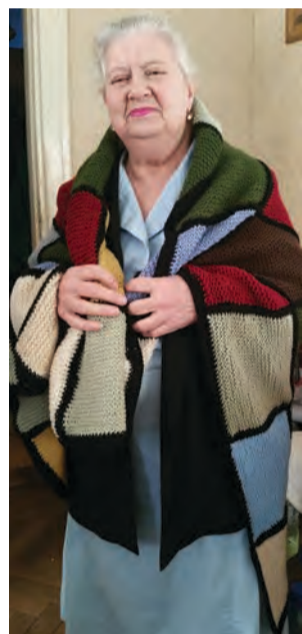
Youngest olim: Yan (3 weeks old)

## “Then I’m Not Feeling Alone Anymore”

### ■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors in Israel & Ukraine | Christians for Israel

“We are operational again,” says Vera, our contact person in the northern Ukrainian city of Chernigov. “But 70 per cent of our beautiful city has been destroyed.” The medieval churches of Chernigov – the former capital of an independent principality – are considered world heritage. Vera spent several weeks in March in the basement of her apartment block, trying to organise medication for her most needy patients via the Red Cross. When Chernigov’s main bridge to the Kiev district was destroyed, Vera sent a message saying, “We are preparing for the worst.” For a long time, the population was cut off from any supplies. In early April, the siege around the city miraculously ended. Vera is able to go shopping again for her senior community members from



the donations provided by Christians for Israel. “You know, it’s very difficult. Every air-raid alarm frightens me,” says Ludmila (pictured left), who lives in Chernivtsy. She turned blind many years ago and shares an apartment with her daughter. Since German Telekom started offering free calls to Ukraine, I have tried to call some of the elderly every day. “If my daughter would go with me, I would also leave,” Ludmila continues. Her granddaughter has already escaped to Germany with her 1-year-old daughter. “I miss you; I miss your visits... Do you remember

that you brought me a blanket once, knitted by a certain Frau Huber from Germany? Tell her how much it means to me now. I wrap myself in this blanket every day, and then I’m not feeling alone anymore.”

Together with my colleague Alina, I have been able to bring hundreds of hand-knitted blankets, shawls and socks to Holocaust survivors and needy elderly in Ukraine’s Jewish communities over the last few years. We gave out thousands of small cards, speaking words of comfort into people’s hearts: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you.” The cards, the shawls, and the heart-shaped waffles have deposited a seed of love in the hearts of the needy. The memories of our visits are releasing hope at a time when we have hardly any opportunity to reach these dear people physically and geographically.

“For the elderly, it is incredibly difficult to leave their old lives behind,” says one of the Jewish leaders on the Black Sea coast. “Many of them just only made it through the past years thanks to the loving care of their nurses and lots of medication. They don’t have the strength to pack and leave. They would rather die in their own bed than having to flee again. That’s why we try to continue supporting them through our staff who remained in the city. Thank you for helping us in this effort.”

Another Jewish community actively engaged in helping the needy is located in Poltava between Kiev and Kharkov. “It took a long time, but now I was able to place another bulk order with our contract pharmacy (pictured below) for the elderly who need medical support in our community,” says Rabbi Yosef. In addition to its own needy, the Jewish community has taken in countless refugees from severely destroyed cities such as Kharkov. “Thanks to your help, we have been able to provide each



family – community members and refugees alike – with a nice Passover package (pictured above right).”

“Our seniors are very strong. I almost get the impression they take this situation better than we do,” says Tanya from Belaya Tserkov, who had to abandon her home near the airbase during the air raids at the beginning of the war. “Last night, the sirens went off again and lasted for an hour. I couldn’t sleep after that. Our city is more or less ok at the moment. But we are getting more and more refugees from the east - from Lugansk, from Mariupol. What they report is simply horrible.”

Tanya and her team go out of their way to provide for the many elderly in their large area of responsibility, which also includes many outlying villages. “We realise that they need us. They depend on the aid we bring. But it’s still scary to go outside. Whenever we plan a larger tour, we try to get a police escort.” All the community’s needy continue to be cared for. Their helpers are so committed to them that they are willing to risk their lives for it.

“At the same time, the *Aliyah* continues,” says Tanya. “We are sending everyone who is halfway mobile and ready to go to Israel to you. And those who took this big step are very happy. Thank you for everything you do for us!”

“Dear sponsors – your donations continue to reach the elderly, and they are needed more than ever – materially and emotionally! So far, we have been able to continue our support programmes in all our Jewish partner communities, although under more difficult conditions. The message this conveys – that someone is thinking of them and caring for them – is invaluable for the needy at this challenging time. THANK YOU!”

## Everything is Gone



There they are, this man and woman from Mariupol. They lost everything they had. Their faces show the misery they endured. Whatever was left of their lives was packed in our plastic bags that we use for food parcel distribution.

They are devastated. Helpless. Weary. They want to leave, and get out of the war. And we help, first of all with basic necessities these people had been deprived of for weeks: a bed, a meal, a shower. We surround them with love and attention and make arrangements so they will be able to leave for Israel for a new and hopeful future.

**Will you continue to remember all these people, our Jewish brothers and sisters, in your prayers? That they find the help, they need? And that we can help each person that comes our way to make the journey to Israel?**

| Photo: Christians for Israel

## Emergency Campaign Ukraine Continues

### How can I help?



The war in Ukraine is ongoing. Our work to support the Jewish communities in Ukraine continues. Please continue to pray for our staff and the Jewish communities in Ukraine.

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

Transport for a Jewish refugee



**\$ 110 NZD**

Transport for a small family



**\$ 635 NZD**

One bus



**\$ 6315 NZD**

# Christians for Israel Visits Tanzania



The team who prepared the conference in Tanzania. | Photos: C4I



During the conference in Tanzania.



The women preparing the food for the conference.

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

*"Your teaching about Israel felt like healing."*

That comment was made by one of the participants in the team which prepared our Christians for Israel conference in Tanzania. She was describing the impact of our teachings on her. In April, our team in Tanzania organised a two-day conference about Israel in the city of Mwanza in the Tanzanian Lake Zone.

Pastor Mark Manumbu, team member, pastor and teacher at the Pentecostal Seminary in Mwanza, allowed us to use his church for this conference. Over 120 pastors, teachers and church members attended the conference. A teacher and representative of Mwanza's university also attended. She was excited about our biblical and historical teachings and invited us to meet her students during our next stay in Tanzania.

Jos van Westing, our speaker for African countries, taught about the history of Israel, the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jewish people over the centuries, the establishment of the State of Israel and the anti-Israel sentiment in the present-day world. Projected pictures

supported his teachings. I taught about the everlasting significance of Israel in our Christian faith, in accordance with the Old and New Testament, the relationship between Christians and Jews from a Biblical perspective, and the role of Jesus as Messiah in the promised return of the Jewish people to their homeland Israel. We are always impressed by how deeply the message about Israel touches people. The impact goes much deeper than only adding knowledge. Biblical teaching about Israel and God's incredible plan for Israel often comes across as a revelation. The woman mentioned earlier expressed her feelings by using the term 'healing'. Becoming aware of the significance of Israel and the Jewish people in God's redemptive plan is so inspiring and refreshing for one's personal faith.

Also, four pastors from Kenya attended the conference. One from the Nairobi area and three others from the western part of Kenya. They had contacted us recently to talk about cooperation in the future. So I first invited them to attend our conference in Tanzania in order to get to know our message. They were touched by the teachings and showed great eagerness to spread the message in Kenya as well. We had good conversations

with them and gave them some guidelines regarding proper preparations for a conference. The next Sunday, the conference was finished by a church service in two different churches in Mwanza.

Last year Pastor David Mbago, our team leader of Christians for Israel in Tanzania, translated the *Why Israel* Abridged Edition into Swahili. After a check by a translation agency, we printed it and gave it to all the attendants. Now they can reread the Bible verses at home. During our stay in Tanzania, we also visited a pastor in the neighbouring city Shinyanga who wants to organise a pastor's conference in his city.

Pastor David Mbago invested in the establishment of teams of 'friends of Israel' in various cities in Tanzania over the last few years. Their focus is mainly on prayer for Israel and the global work of Christians for Israel. These teams meet for a week of prayer several times a year. David also teaches about Israel during these weeks of prayer. In 2019 Pastor David organised a speaking tour, where we visited ten churches and schools and were able to reach well over 1000 people with our biblical message. Since the Covid pandemic, the emphasis is more on prayer. Our team in Tanzania needs our support and prayer.

# C4I Office Opened in Kampala, Uganda

## ■ Jos van Westing

Speaker | Christians for Israel International

How exciting it was to be able to travel to Africa again after a two-year lockdown and visit Tanzania and Uganda. Uganda really has my heart. It was like coming home and having a family reunion!

I had the opportunity to teach the Israel message for five days, approximately 5-6 hours a day, at V.O.S.O. Gilgal Church. Christians for Israel Uganda (C4I Uganda) restarted through this church under the inspiring leadership of pastors and teachers, Sarah, Asher and Victor. C4I Uganda has grown tremendously in knowledge, inspiration and important contacts. Its origins began when a local church in Kampala, with a sincere love for Israel began by praying and financially supporting *Aliyah*. Today it is a mature movement with national broadcasting through the most viewed Christian Television Station in Uganda, Lighthouse Television Studios. On both Fridays and Saturdays, there is a programme of 1½ hours in which they share the Biblical view of God's purpose for Israel, the Church and the nations. Unexpectedly I was invited to preach for 15 minutes during an outdoor gathering of a few hundred selected guests, including pastors and church leaders, which was broadcasted live by Lighthouse to 142,000 followers all over Uganda.

Due to their growth and contacts, the Christians for Israel team in Uganda is ready to reach out to churches, Christian fraternities and engage with government

officials to organise national conferences and seminars concerning prayer and action for Israel. One of the objectives is to counterattack antisemitism strategies in current events in Israel. The team does not only want to spread the Israel message in their own country but also in neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zambia.

During my visit, I had the honour to officially open a small C4I Uganda office in a newly built shopping and office centre, which will be daily manned during office hours to inform the public about the *Why Israel?* message.

Another valuable contact of our team is Dr Julius Oyet, the Founder and Presiding Bishop of Life Line Ministries, an international ministry with headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. He is called to the apostolic and evangelistic ministry of church planting and has planted over 100 local churches in two decades. He is described as a prolific Christian leader, highly recognised by Christian leaders around the world. Bishop Oyet invited me to speak in the Life Line Church on Sunday, as he did two years ago, and we discussed plans to develop a *Why Israel?* course in the non-denominational Elijah Institute, which he founded on the Life Line Ministries campus. Students will have to register and pay a small amount and receive a certificate. Bishop Oyet also stressed that he wants to partner with us concerning *Aliyah*.

We pray that the *Why Israel?* message will be spread more and more in Uganda and beyond!



Pastor Sarah with Jos van Westing. | Photo: C4I



The Christians for Israel Uganda team.





# WHO Condemns Israel... Again!

## ■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director | Christians for Israel NZ

Once again reinforcing its own increasing irrelevance, the United Nations' World Health Organisation has just interrupted its assembly to hold a special meeting – to condemn Israel.

With 28 items on the WHO's current agenda, including the current Covid-19 pandemic and a host of other global health challenges, all were pushed to the side to allow for speeches by representatives of some 24 countries, all singling out Israel for supposed health rights violations.

Hillel Neuer, executive director of the Geneva-based UN Watch, stated, "Out of 28 items on the current world health assembly's agenda, only one focused on a specific country—Israel."

"There has been no agenda item or resolution adopted on any other country, conflict, civil war or political impasse. Nothing on Syria, where hospitals and other medical infrastructure are deliberately bombed by Syrian and Russian forces; nothing on Afghanistan where the Taliban takeover has led to a collapse in basic health systems; and nothing on Ethiopia where more than five million people in Tigray are in dire need of humanitarian support, including healthcare, due to the conflict there," said Neuer.

The Iranian speaker accused Israel of "exceptionalism, racism and superiority", saying Israel "can expand only by provoking and promoting wars and conflicts". Speaker

after speaker delivered emotional attacks – albeit devoid of any actual facts or evidence – with repeated and familiar lines of 'brutal occupation', 'atrocities' and of course 'occupied territories'.

Looking a little deeper, the resolution was submitted by none other than Syria, that bastion of human rights. Syria, of course, was elected by consensus last year to the WHO Executive Board. The text was co-sponsored by a number of equally upstanding countries including Cuba, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Venezuela and Yemen, and the 'country' PLO.

Accusations that Israel is somehow harming Palestinian health rights are highly questionable at best. To anyone who has visited Israel, especially Israeli hospitals, and seen the world-leading healthcare being offered to Palestinian Arabs and (usually fleeing) Syrians, this is simply absurd. But again, the question of UN relevance has to be raised. When such an incredible amount of time, money and other resource can be wasted on political attacks and unashamed hatred of Israel – resource that is being taken from actual global health crisis – surely there are enough rational citizens of the world to call a stop to the farce? It appears not.

The vote was passed 77 to 14, with 36 abstentions and 56 absent. Part of the resolution calls for a new report to be submitted to the assembly next year – thereby guaranteeing yet another day of Israel-bashing. Further, accepting the report as submitted included adopting

another WHO report claiming that injuries and fatalities in the Gaza Strip during 2021 were Israel's fault as well. Evidently, but in keeping with the overall vitriol, facts and evidence are not important, given that Israel withdrew from the strip in 2005. Further, the report claims that the majority of these casualties occurred during Israel's military action of May 2021. The report does not even mention Islamic Jihad or Hamas, nor of their instigating the conflict by firing over 4000 rockets into civilian areas of Israel.

So where then was the common sense? That remarkably uncommon attribute these days was indeed displayed by a number of countries including our Tasman neighbours.

New Zealand, however, continued its horrendous track record of anti-Israel voting by supporting the resolution.

I wonder how many New Zealanders actually support this position.

I wonder how many New Zealanders are even aware of it.

We are very excited to be able to return to Israel soon, with another group of New Zealanders on a Study Tour. There is nothing like actually going to Israel and seeing the truth for yourself!

Thank you for joining us, and for taking the time to read this edition of Israel and Christians Today. Our team strive to bring you news and information, to bring balance and honesty in a world that is clearly not interested in facts. Thank you for joining us as we speak up for the truth.

*Tour confirmed*  
**Journey to Israel 2022**  
 Join us on our 16-day tour to the Holy Land

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Bryce Graham

**4 - 19 November 2022**

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- Get baptised in the River Jordan;
- Float in the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth;
- Ascend the fortress mountain of Masada in the Judean Desert;
- Explore the Old City of Jerusalem and walk in the footsteps of Jesus;
- Walk through the amazing tunnels under the Western Wall;
- Celebrate Communion at the Garden Tomb.

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 Email: [steven@olivetreetravel.com.au](mailto:steven@olivetreetravel.com.au)  
 Or download from our website:  
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**Don't miss out on this trip of a lifetime!**

**Spaces are filling up fast**



# Commemorating 40 Years in the Sinai

## Joanna Moss

If being in the Sinai desert for 40 years merited whole chapters in the Bible, our service in the MFO deserves an article at least. Yet many Israel supporters have no idea about the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), let alone our lengthy involvement alongside neighbouring countries Australia and Fiji. On the 30th anniversary NZ Major Patrick Butterworth spoke to Victoria University on the mission using the signature MFO quote as “the world’s most successful peacekeeping force - that no-one has ever heard of.” Unless you’ve been there, you’re unlikely to know much about this exclusive club. Little has changed since then. But 40 years is a long time.

As believers we need to know about it because it’s a key component of our relationship with Israel. Interestingly, our defense force personnel are operating in the same areas where their WWI and WWII forebears saw active service. ANZAC commemorations are an integral part of the NZDF mission. Significantly, the current Force Commander is a Kiwi – Major General Evan Williams.

### MFO Nuts & Bolts

Let’s start with some basic facts to set the scene and get a flavour for this operation...

**HISTORY:** Israel and Egypt had fought three wars 1967-1979. They entered into a Peace treaty, but the treaty needed policing. The question was who was going to do this? Enter Treaty of Rome 26 March 1979 coming out of the 1978 Camp David Accords. In Annex I, lay provisions for a force to do this. At this stage it was envisaged a UN Force would be engaged. However, there were objections and of course issues over who was going to pay for them. Then President Carter set out what the US would do including providing an alternative multinational force if the UN said No. The alternative multinational force was confirmed in 1981 and called the Multinational Force and Observers. Initial funding was equal parts i.e. one-third Israel, USA and Egypt ensuring an active interest from the treaty partners. Today six other nations provide top-ups.

**TYPE OF MISSION:** It’s not United Nations, but it is multinational. The Secretariat is based in Rome, but has two Director Generals with staff (liaison branches) in Cairo and Tel Aviv. As an independent force, they needed to have a mission emblem and could not wear the distinctive light blue UN beret. Thus the terracotta MFO beret with its brown emblem was born. Serving personnel attach the emblems to their existing uniforms.

**WHAT’S PEACEKEEPING?:** Peacekeeping is based on three principles of consent, impartiality and of not using force except in self-defence. Peacekeeping is specific and different from training and reconstruction missions.

**MFO MISSION:** Monitor the truce between Israel and Egypt by observing, reporting and verifying any breaches. Over time it has gone on to include renegotiating terms when required and fixing problems arising from breaches!



Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Williams during the handover of command, New Zealand contingent, MFO, February 2022. | Photo: NZDF

**POLICING AREA:** The Sinai is an inverted triangular piece of land, basically 60,000 sq. km of desert bordered by the Mediterranean on the north side with mountains and sea to the south. So arid, it receives less than 100mm rain per annum. Putting it into perspective it’s three times the size of Israel and much bigger than Switzerland. The area is divided into four zones: A, B, C and D. Zone D lies in Israel and zones C and D are adjacent to international borders. The operations specify the armapoints (markers) and personnel and sometimes weaponry allowed in each zone.

**STRUCTURE:** Interestingly, MFO operations have military and civilian components. There are two base camps, El Gorah in the north also known as North Camp and South Camp near the Gulf of Aqaba and the Egyptian city of Sharm el Sheik. Each contingent has their own base within the compounds creating a safe area for operation. North Camp was built from an old Israeli Air Force base and lies 20 kms south of the Mediterranean Sea near the town of El Arish and 15 kms west of the Gaza-Israel border. The Force Commander is based at North Camp, whereas the Americans control South Camp. In addition to the bases are Observation Posts and Check Points dotted across the peninsula. These are manned and therefore need to be serviced with water, fuel and supplies. **Safe driving between bases and points is thus a crucial feature of the operations.**

**CLIMATE:** It gets up to 50C in summer and is freezing cold in winter especially at night. There are sand storms, fog and hot winds like the dreaded Khamsin. Keeping up fluids is essential.

**HAZARDS:** Sinai is littered with the debris from the various battles including unexploded shells. Other hazards include potholes, dangerous drivers, wandering camels and Bedouins who interrupt services as well as the natural encroachment of sand on roads and in equipment.

**STAFF:** There are 2,000 multinational and civilian personnel. Currently 1154 peacekeepers are serving from 13 countries. The Americans comprise the largest contingent followed by Colombia and Fiji then Italy. NZ and Australian numbers are comparable about 3% of the total. Over time the countries involved have changed for example Hungary and Netherlands are not currently sending peacekeepers and UK and French involvement is now

minimal. Various contingents play specific roles like the Italians who patrol the Mediterranean, the Americans who provide aviation services along with the Czechs then the Fijians, Americans and Colombians man the remote posts. Countries are assigned specific roles and rank is very important. Being offered a position is an honour and many service personnel actively seek a post both for the operational aspects and working within a multinational force plus traveling overseas and seeing the sights. For poorer countries the pay and prestige are major draw cards.

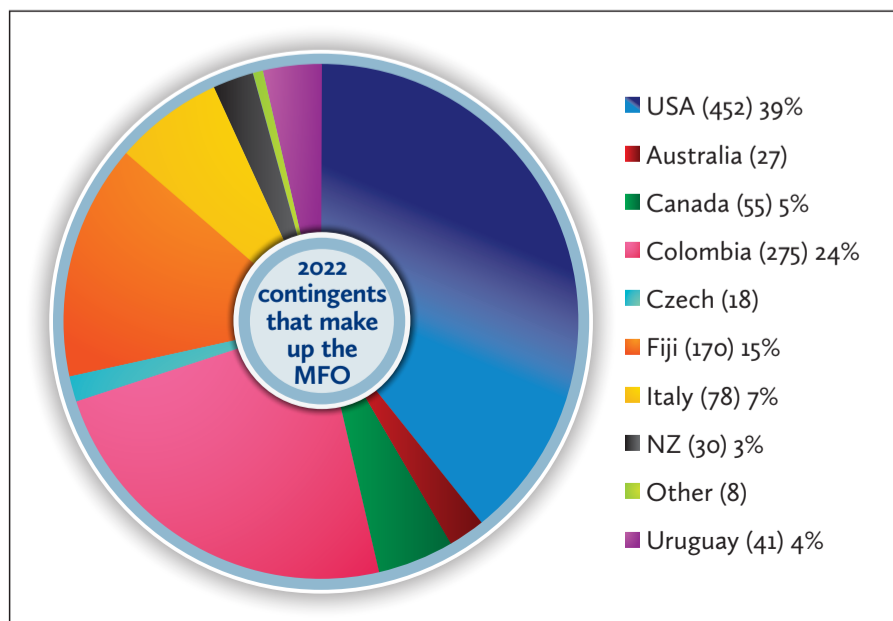
**UNIQUENESS:** Some of the UN operations have drawn a lot of criticism for their treatment of the locals. This has not been a feature of the MFO. Rather it has been seen and studied for its uniqueness and professionalism in uniting disparate cultures and languages whilst maintaining a high standard. Firm friendships extend across contingents and beyond postings.

**RECREATION:** Each contingent provides different recreational facilities including bars and halls to socialize and sports facilities based on their national sports. Competition between groups is fierce and an integral part of boosting morale in what can be seen as a boring posting outside of work. Staff can apply for travel permits to go sightseeing and these are eagerly sought. All national days are celebrated and so each contingent learns about the others. Pranks are not unknown.

**DEATH:** This mission is not without risk. In 2012 some participants died from border clashes and Islamic militants. The French mission has suffered deaths from accidents. Driving can be perilous. When Saddam Hussein was launching Scud missiles from Iraq, a missile fell near North Camp. Rockets from Gaza are a real hazard. The risk level goes up and down and when raised, borders can close and the camps can be isolated so that personnel cannot leave.

**ISSUES:** The Arab Spring reminded the world that instability was a feature of the region. For the MFO the situation got more difficult when the Muslim Brotherhood overthrew the Mubarak regime in Egypt with their links to Hamas in Gaza. There has been resentment from both parties over the limitations imposed in the Sinai being essentially controlled under MFO jurisdiction. Safety around borders is a key concern.

**ABRAHAM ACCORDS:** The Abraham Accords have big implications for the MFO because the proposed land swaps include swapping land adjacent to the Sinai border south of the Gaza strip. This would place the proposed new state to the east of North Camp. It would also mean a big change to the current border access into Israel.





## New Zealand's Role in MFO

New Zealand was involved right from inception comprising part of the 'coalition of the willing' at a time when Robert Muldoon was Prime Minister. The first day of operation was ANZAC Day 1982, cementing the link between our involvement and ANZAC. In the first instalment were 36 Kiwis – 29 from the Air Force and seven from the Army acting as peacekeepers, including Ron Mark. It was a vastly different force from New Zealand in the early years. The MFO force Rotary Wing Aviation unit was born and used five Huey helicopters (two Kiwi and eight Australian) to patrol the area for the first four years. The base was spartan, and conditions were tough—this marked the beginning of incrementally building the base for the future. Today the facilities contain a range of services including a cinema, gym and swimming pool and water and supplies are not a problem generally. About 1,500 Kiwi personnel have served, touching many more spouses, family and friends.

### The NZ government has four criteria to determine whether or not to contribute to a particular peace support operation:

- the strategic implications of the operation, including its effect on security, the humanitarian situation and New Zealand's relationships with other countries;
- the mission's nature – proposed mission and mandate's legality under international law;
- repercussions for New Zealand agencies involved in the proposed operation;
- whether New Zealand can assist the fragile or post-conflict state in other ways.

### Service

New Zealand makes a unique contribution to the MFO by participating in a wide range of roles from operations, liaison, personnel, engineering, driving and training. In so doing they are touching lives on a daily basis. But it is driver training and as drivers Kiwis are most known for. That's impressive given it's driving on the other side of the road in tough conditions. In the early years, New Zealand stepped up and offered to provide driver training as a response to the many crashes.

Drawing from all three branches of the services makes the MFO a unique exercise in bonding within the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Six monthly posts



| Photo: NZDF

provide service personnel with important training in desert conditions and operations plus experience serving under a multinational force. Currently, NZ Battalion (NZBATT) provides staff for the Force Training Team and transport section, Force Commander's Aide-de-camp, planning function staff, three engineering division staff and a passport clerk inter alia. MFO drivers drive 356,000 km per year (275 Auckland-Wellington round trips or 23 per month. Amazingly, that's about once per day when you take the weekends out starting at 4.30 am).

### ANZAC Link

Serving with the MFO connects modern-day peacekeepers with their ANZAC forebears as they are serving on the same ground and even sightseeing the same sights and battlegrounds like the Pyramids and Sphinx plus Cairo and Jerusalem. Additionally, they are taking part and attending annual services in Egypt, Gallipoli and Be'er Sheva in Israel, and commemorative ones in Greece and Jerusalem and elsewhere. This is a highlight for many personnel.

### New Zealand Force Commanders

Throughout the mission, contingents take turns in supplying heads for the MFO. The current head is a Kiwi Major General Evan Williams, following in the footsteps of Warren Whiting and Donald McIver.

### Impressions

For the 30th anniversary, *Sinai Journal*, a personal pictorial record of Kiwis serving each year, was published, providing a great deal of personal information essential for an understanding. When asked whether they would go back, many said, "You bet". Some noted they came out more rounded as a person and more knowledgeable about different cultures and working styles. Others talked about the thrill of attending ANZAC services or seeing religious sites, especially Christian ones. Generally, the Kiwis get on well with everyone and have a reputation for being friendly, having high standards and problem-solving.

Squadron Leader Ross Cook (1995/96), "It was an unforgettable opportunity both professionally and personally, providing perspective to the challenges the region faces and understanding why resolving these challenges is so difficult."

### Prayer

Please pray for the safety of our personnel in the MFO and their colleagues, especially on the roads. Pray that the mission will work cohesively and continue to provide a deterrent and harmony amongst treaty partners. That the words of our National Anthem – "Make her praises heard afar" will resonate and that the uniqueness of Israel and the religious nature of the region be better understood.

## 40 Years of Fijians in the Sinai

Fiji was one of the original forces making up the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO). Alongside Colombia and the United States, Fiji provides an infantry unit, making it a core component of the Force. Of course, that's in addition to the many Fiji peacekeepers serving under the UN. Their MFO numbers have varied in size as the Force has contracted. It went from 500 at inception down to 378 in 1990, 339 in 1995, 203 in 20016 and 170 from 2017 onwards. But per capita, it is a significant contribution based on the population of Fiji (900,000) FIJICON, as they are known, had their home base at North Camp in the Northern Sinai but were redeployed to South Camp in 2016 under US control due to security concerns where they perform security duties. Two Fijian soldiers were injured when a device exploded. The Fijians provide security services to the Civilian Observer Unit when conducting missions in Zones A-C. Fiji troops also conduct observations in Zone C, meaning they man remote posts in the desert in addition to other specific roles such as involving naval staff, giving them wide connections across the Force.

Wide smiles, professionalism and keenness to serve make the Fijians a valuable asset to the MFO. Soldiers serve a minimum term of 12 months, and the whole contingent rotates at one time. Many of the soldiers have served multiple terms, and some switch between the UN and MFO, giving them added experience. Every six months of service to MFO warrants a medal and is denoted by a number worn on uniforms. One Kiwi member noticed a Fijian with an 11 badge when he thought he had served a long time with a 4! Fierce competitors in the inter-contingent sports and skills competitions has made the Fijians champions from time to time.

For Fijians with a deep love of the Bible, the opportunity to serve in Israel or in the MFO is a dream come true. It gives them a taste of living the Bible literally and visiting Jerusalem, Nazareth and other biblical sites when leave allows. Peacekeeping is an important link in the political bilateral relationship, and support for peacekeeping missions and Israel amongst Fijians is strong.

Few soldiers of the MFO come away without lasting

memories of the Fijians singing wafting over Sinai, and the Fiji Military Band is an integral part of parades and other activities. Such is their fame, they were even selected to appear at the Edinburgh Military tattoo in 1998, but then they had already tasted the cold in Sinai.



| Photo: Republic of Fiji Military Forces



# Israel and Iran

## ■ Andrew Tucker

Director | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) | [www.thinc.info](http://www.thinc.info)

Since 1979, the US has imposed various sanctions against Iran in response to the Iranian nuclear programme and Iranian support for Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Shi'ite militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. Further international sanctions were imposed in 2006 after Iran refused to halt its nuclear enrichment programme.

In 2015, the US and several European countries entered into an agreement with Iran called JCPOA, under which Iran had to limit the volume of uranium it enriches and the quality and number of centrifuges it operates at any one time in exchange for sanctions relief. In 2018 President Trump pulled out of the agreement, citing Iranian breach of the agreement.

Iran has been working on nuclear capability for decades and is close to achieving a nuclear bomb. This week, Defence Minister Benny Gantz stated that Iran "stands just a few weeks away from accumulating fissile material that will be sufficient for a first bomb," as it now "holds 60 kilograms of [fissile] material enriched to 60%, produces metallic uranium at the enrichment level of 20% and prevents the IAEA from accessing its facilities." Over recent months there have been indirect negotiations between Iran and the Biden administration. It is reported that a draft agreement for returning to the 2015 nuclear deal is almost done. The last remaining stumbling block is Iran's demand that the Biden administration remove the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the US Foreign Terrorist Organisations blacklist.

It seems Biden will be unwilling to do so. It is unclear whether Iran will give in and accept a deal, requiring it to limit its enrichment programme in return for lifting sanctions. Haaretz correspondent Yossi Melman is optimistic that a deal can be reached with the Iranians because "[t]he Iranians are desperate for a deal to lift the sanctions on them. \$100bn is at stake, and they need it for their economy. The IRGC is also an economic empire in Iran, so they also see the utility in getting the sanctions lifted."

Enrique Mora, the European Union's coordinator for Iran nuclear deal negotiations, recently visited Iran to help salvage the deal. True to form, the Europeans believe that an agreement with Iran – and not military action – is the only way to avert war.

Israel and its (Sunni) Arab allies in the region strongly disagree. At a meeting in late March, Israeli PM Bennett told Secretary of State Blinken that Iran can only be deterred from moving toward enriching uranium to the



| Photo: Shutterstock

military level of 90% if it knows that the US and European countries would ramp up sanctions to the level placed on Russia. Bennett also told Blinken that the nuclear deal will only be 'a Band-Aid' solution for just a few years, and at the same time, it will give Iran billions of dollars it would be able to use for its regional malignant activities and to arm its proxies.

Deal or no deal, Israel is vigilant in monitoring the situation in Iran and intervenes where necessary. Last December, Israel reportedly struck the Natanz nuclear plant in Iran. Israel regularly strikes Iranian-sponsored facilities in Syria.

## Iran has recently warned that it sees Israeli cooperation with Bahrain as endangering its own security interests, and it will not hesitate to attack in response.

For Israel, Iran's activities in the region present a real existential threat. Iranian militia and proxies surround Israel – Hezbollah in the north, Hamas/PIJ in the West, pro-Iranian militias in Syria, and the Houthis in the south. Their objectives are aggressive. Iran remains committed to the expansion of its revolutionary ideology, which includes the destruction of the Zionist entity [Israel] and the liberation of Al-Quds [Jerusalem].

Iran is not only opposed to the existence of Israel; it sees the influence of Israel and the USA in the region as a threat to itself and the entire Islamic ummah. Iran has recently warned that it sees Israeli cooperation with Bahrain as endangering its own security interests, and it will not hesitate to attack in response. Iran also claims

that the Israeli presence in Kurdistan endangers its national security and hence launched missiles at a 'Mossad base' in Erbil on 13 February 2022.

Israel takes these threats seriously. According to Defence Minister Gantz, "the State of Israel will continue to act against any enemy that threatens it and prevent the transfer of advanced capabilities from Iran that endanger the citizens of Israel and harm the stability of the entire region."

Israeli Defence Forces are prepared, if necessary, to strike Iranian nuclear facilities that are buried deep

underground. The Israeli Air Force will have to deal with increasingly sophisticated Iranian air defences in order to conduct such a strike and also have to prepare for an expected retaliation against Israel by Iran and its allies throughout the region.

The situation is explosive. The whole geopolitical context of this conflict has changed with the war in Ukraine, and the growing rift between Russia, China, and other countries on the one hand, and the West, on the other, which itself is internally divided.

Within the next few weeks, we will know whether Iran will choose a diplomatic resolution or open the door to a possible military escalation.

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## Bula Vinaka from Fiji

### Raphael Jordan

National Leader | Christians for Israel Fiji

Shalom and Bula Vinaka from the Fiji Islands. I hope this article will encourage and uplift any downcast soul needing hope, love and comfort during these Covid times.

In April and May we continued with our Fortnightly Prayer Meeting (FPM), hearing encouraging testimonies, plus praise and worship. After a lapse of nearly a year in holding our FPMs, we are now holding them as usual (face to face) personally at the Wesley Church, in the centre of Suva's CBD. Also, it's encouraging to see members looking forward to sharing their testimonies, etc., during these meetings.

The April highlight was the invitation from your C4I Fiji team, consisting of Lepani and Salote Makubuna, Karalaini Tubuna, Tomasi Biunaiwai, Raphael and Ana, to celebrate Passover with a Jewish family and other close friends at Denarau Island in Nadi.

Tamar Atcheson and her husband Peter took us through the Passover Cedar, followed by dinner. For non-Jews, it is encouraging to see that for more than 2000 years, Jews have kept their faith, language, land, and appointed feasts. We were also witnesses of how God's chosen people have been continuously obedient to the call (*Leviticus 23*), irrespective of which part of the world they reside, to remember the meaning of Passover.

It is amazing to note that Jews remember their liberation

from slavery in Egypt (*Exodus 14*) after being held captive by Pharaoh for 430 years. The shed blood of the lamb painted on their doorposts and lintels protected them and led to their liberation. On the other hand, Christians remember Christ Yeshua's victory over death as our Passover lamb (*1 Corinthians 5:7*). The blood He shed for us on Mount Calvary and His resurrection (from the dead) freed us from the bondage of sin.

It was a wonderful experience for Karalaini and others who were attending for the first time to experience a Passover Cedar - such a blessing.

The night concluded with another surprise. As your National Leader, I gave a brief speech of appreciation and by saying *Todah Rabah* to the Atcheson family for hosting us in celebrating Passover with them and forming new friendships at their home (temporary) in Denarau.

I invited Tamar to receive a gift on behalf of her family. Tears of victory were shed to see a huge Israeli flag unfolded before all in attendance and handed over to Tamar and her family.

As I write this article, C4I Fiji also bid farewell to the Atcheson family, who left our shores for New Zealand on 5 May 2022. We are also thankful to them for recognising and supporting the work of C4I Fiji and also taking part in our FPM. The Atchesons are always eager to meet us whenever we're in Nadi's CBD, and we wish them well.



C4I Fiji's gift to the Atcheson's during Passover. | Photo: C4I Fiji



Haggadah book in Hebrew and English for Passover. | Photo: C4I Fiji

## Israel at ANZAC Ceremony

It is fitting that Israel was represented at the national ANZAC ceremony held at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park in Wellington because of our contribution to their existence in WW I&II. Often forgotten, we have our service personnel buried in their soil, forever linking the nations. Israel was represented by Roy Rosenberg, Deputy Chief of Mission, who laid a distinctive blue and white wreath

beside the tomb of the unknown soldier.

This year four other Middle Eastern countries, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, participated alongside traditional allies and foes, plus others like Peru and Mexico with no war connection. Foreign missions recognise the significant role ANZAC plays in our national culture.



## Ambassador's First Year in NZ



The following article is a transcript from the Embassy of Israel in New Zealand by His Excellency Ran Yaakoby, outlining his first year in office. His Excellency serves as Ambassador of Israel to New Zealand and Non-Resident Ambassador to the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga.

"Shalom, kia ora, talofa and kia orana,

A year has passed since my family and I arrived in beautiful New Zealand. I want to share with you some of the highlights of what I, together with the support of my team at the Embassy, have achieved. Throughout the year I have had the pleasure of meeting with many wonderful people all who share the same love and support for Israel. For instance, all around the country I have met with many Christian Friendship groups, connected and rubbed noses with local *Maori Iwi*, and of course, met members of the Jewish communities. Your friendship and support means a lot to us.

One of the highlights was the connection with *Ngapuhi* in Whangarei where, I, after having been officially welcomed in their *Marae*, was able to plant an olive tree in honour of Earth Day but also as a symbol to solidify the friendship between Israel and *Ngapuhi*.

Another memorable event was the gathering at Pastor Nigel Woodley's congregation in Flaxmere. The

unprecedented support from Nigel and his congregation has been heart-warming.

I have also had the honour of presenting my credentials to Tonga and Cook Islands. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic these ceremonies were held online. However, I am still hopeful that I will soon be travelling to the beautiful island of Samoa and present my credentials to the new Prime Minister in person and meet with the wonderful people there.

New Zealand and Israel are both small democracies with advanced economies and we share similar values and aspiration for peace. I am pleased to have been able to strengthen our mutual ties with the various government ministries. For instance, my meetings with Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta resulted in New Zealand further committing to combat antisemitism and acting to promote Holocaust Remembrance. Or the connection we built with the New Zealand and Israel Ministries of Health on the Covid-19 vaccination rollout. There are still many avenues through which we can learn from each other and find ways to cooperate.

Israel's expertise in the field of Science & Technology has been a good example for this. Last year, in conjunction with the Trans-Tasman Business Circle we hosted a successful webinar on Cyber Security.

In February of this year, we hosted a three-day online summit on Agritech outlining areas where we cooperate and showcasing leading Israeli and New Zealand Agricultural technologies. Similar events we have

scheduled for later this year are WATECH and Planettech. I hope to see you there.

2021 has been a year of deepening peace in the Middle East. As I arrived in New Zealand, the Abrahamic Accords, the peace agreements with the UAE, Morocco, Bahrein and Sudan were in their first stage of implementation. A year on and we see multi-billion-dollar investments in Israel's technology by those new partners in peace, and an Israeli booth at the Expo in Dubai. This augurs well for a prosperous future of peace and cooperation together.

We are still hopeful that our neighbours, the Palestinians, will join us at the negotiation table and we can together strive for a lasting peace.

As we record this message (12 April), we are closely following the catastrophic events in Tonga. The State of Israel has offered its assistance to the Kingdom in the form of offering funds and water technologies, products and food. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people in Tonga as well as the Tongan population living here in New Zealand.

2022 is going to be another exciting year for us. Although we are a small team, we have big ambitions. To keep updated on our developments, may I encourage you to follow us on our social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. Otherwise, I do hope to see you again at one of the events we are participating in around the country.

*Toda*, thank you, and *kia ora*."

If you would like to see the Ambassador's video, here is the link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/IsraelinNewZealand/videos/770496031918507>



# Israel is Open - Now What?



Volunteering at a vineyard in Judea. | Photo: The Heartland Experience and Shutterstock

## ■ Luke Hilton

The Israel Guys

The war between Russia and Ukraine that has captured the world's attention seems to have suppressed the good news from Israel; **that their borders are finally open to tourists with no restrictions!** The only thing required to enter the country is that you must take a PCR test before leaving your home, and another one upon arrival.

After two years of being closed to foreigners, Israel, a country heavily reliant on international tourists, is once again ready to receive visitors. This is not only good news for the millions of Christians who have been longing to come to the Holy Land for the last two years, but also good news for Israel's Ministry of Tourism and the many tour guides and tour agencies who have seen their livelihoods and businesses disrupted for so long.

I've already heard of several individuals who immediately hopped on a flight to Israel as soon as the borders opened.

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

Their only goal was to get to Israel, rent a car, and explore the country. Regardless of whether you're coming with an official tour, or simply on your own, or with family or friends, the time has arrived – come to Israel!

As an organisation dedicated to bringing Christian volunteers to Israel's biblical heartland to serve farmers all throughout Judea and Samaria, we are overjoyed to have the opportunity to introduce you to this incredible land. You can check out all of the new trips that we have planned for this year here, including one that starts 2 May. *The Heartland Experience* ([www.serveisrael.com/volunteer/heartland-experience](http://www.serveisrael.com/volunteer/heartland-experience)) is designed to introduce you to the land and people of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Two parts tour and one part volunteer program, you'll go to places most tour buses don't, and have opportunities to get your hands dirty in the prophetic soil of this place.

I like to call Judea and Samaria Israel's best-kept secret. Fifteen years ago, no one came to this beautiful place. Now, Christians and tour agencies are beginning to discover Israel's mountain region and are insisting on visiting Israel's heartland. However, Israel needs more people to visit the biblical heartland. If millions of people begin to visit a place that is falsely known as the 'West Bank,' Israel and the international community will realize that this could never be a Palestinian-terrorist state. It must remain an integral part of the Jewish nation of Israel.

Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria are home to more than 700,000 Israeli Jews. More than 80% of the Bible was either written or occurred in these places. Most of the biblical covenants to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob happened in these mountains.

Prophecies spoken more than 2,000 years ago are coming to life right before our very eyes (see *Ezekiel 36*, *Jeremiah 31*, *Amos 9*, *Joel 2*, and *Isaiah 61*).

Here's just a taste of the incredible places that you can visit in Judea and Samaria:

### Hebron:

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah are all buried here in what is known as *'The Tomb of the Patriarchs.'* An ancient road dating back 4,000 years can be found here. A vibrant and growing Jewish community lives here. And to boot, former US Vice-President Mike Pence just visited Hebron in a show of support for Israel's biblical heartland!

### Bethel:

This is where Jacob had his dream of the angels ascending and descending on a ladder to heaven. God spoke to Jacob here, reaffirming His covenant to Abraham and Isaac, and promising that He would one day return Jacob to this land.

### Shiloh:

This is where Joshua led the children of Israel and sent them forth to conquer the land of Israel. The Tabernacle was set up and stood here for 369 years. God's glory resided here until the Tabernacle was moved to Jerusalem and eventually the Temple was built.

### Elon Moreh:

This is where Abraham stood in *Genesis 12* when God promised the land of Israel to him and his descendants forever. Here you can walk in Abraham's footsteps and watch the sunrise over the Tirzah Valley, where the children of Israel entered the land under Joshua's leadership.

### Mt Gerizim (Mt of Blessing) & Mt Ebal (Mt of Cursing)

This is where six tribes stood on one mountain and six stood on the other mountain. Here the children of Israel accepted the covenant that God proclaimed to them. The sages say that this is where the children of Israel were 'married' to the land. The altar that Joshua built still

stands on Mt Ebal, and you can go visit!

Yeshua (Jesus) also ministered to the Samaritan woman at the well on Mt Gerizim (today the Mt of Blessing).

### Vineyards & Wineries:

Judea and Samaria are fast becoming internationally famous for their wine production. In the early 1990s, farmers heeded the prophecy of Jeremiah when he said that one day vineyards would again be planted on the mountains of Samaria (*Jeremiah 31:5*). The agricultural experts of the day tested the soil and said that it would never work. Bold Jewish farmers planted vineyards anyway, and thirty years later, millions of bottles of wine are being produced in Israel's biblical heartland. Wines from this region are winning gold medals in international competitions. The beautiful vineyards, olive groves, almond trees, and much more are fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy that Israel's mountains would once again shoot forth her branches (*Ezekiel 36*).

Not convinced yet? Check out our volunteer programmes and *The Heartland Experience* at [www.ServeIsrael.com](http://www.ServeIsrael.com). We'd love to have you join us on Israel's mountains this year for a trip like none you've ever experienced in Israel. You will not only get your hands dirty in Israel's soil, but you'll experience off-the-beaten-path places, meet Israel's most amazing pioneers, and fulfill biblical prophecy, happening right now, before our very eyes.

Israel's gates are open. Are you coming?

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

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
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NEW ZEALAND

# The Lesson of the Two Pentecosts

## ■ Pastor Enoch Lavender

Living Way Christian Network | Melbourne, Australia

Many Christians trace the beginning of the Church to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. However, few understand the significance of the Feast of Pentecost, nor are they aware of the Jewish legends concerning an earlier Pentecost occurring almost 1500 years earlier.

### Pentecost in the New Testament

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come...” Acts 2:1

This is the very first mention of the ‘day of Pentecost’ in the New Testament, and it appears in the dramatic context of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the early believers. Given that the Feast of Pentecost had by this stage been around for close to 1500 years, the writer of Acts makes no effort to explain its context or significance. For the benefit of us modern readers, let us take a moment to review the origins of this feast.

### The Divine Appointments

When God revealed Himself to Moses at Mt Sinai, He gave him a calendar of seven annual feasts for the Jewish people. These divinely ordained feasts are much more than mere cultural celebrations. The Hebrew word for feast (*moed*) can best be translated as an ‘appointed time or season’, and a careful study of each of these ‘appointments’ reveals how they prophetically and sequentially foreshadow Jesus’ first and second Comings. As they were performed year after year, it was as if they were prophetic dress rehearsals preparing God’s people for their future fulfilment. No wonder God calls them “my feasts” (*Leviticus 23:1-2*).

Among these seven feasts, the Feast of Pentecost stands out as being the only feast that has no specific date given for it. Instead, the Israelites are commanded to literally count their way to this day from the Feast of First Fruits (*Leviticus 23:15-16*). They are to count seven Sabbaths, and then on the day after the last Sabbath, celebrate Pentecost. This rather unique aspect of the feast led to it being given the name Pentecost (meaning ‘50’) in Greek, and Shavuot (meaning ‘weeks’) in Hebrew.

### The Timeline of Acts

Having watched Jesus ascend into heaven, the disciples were commanded to wait in Jerusalem ‘for the promise of the Holy Spirit’. The annual 50-day countdown to Pentecost was to take on new meaning that year as the disciples - as well as the entire nation - counted the days until that great outpouring.

As the days drew closer, we can imagine the disciples peering out the windows of the upper room where they gathered. Outside they could see and hear Jews from all over the world gathering in the city of Jerusalem for the upcoming feast (*as commanded in Deuteronomy 16:16, also see Acts 2:5*). The stage was truly being set for what was about to take place.

But before we go any further, we need to first examine the Jewish understanding and traditions surrounding the first Pentecost.

### The First Pentecost

According to Jewish tradition, the very first Pentecost was when Israel received the Law of God at Mt Sinai (*Exodus 19-20*).

On that day, the Bible records how God Himself came down in fire, thunder and lightning on top of the mountain. At the base of Mt Sinai stood the increasingly terrified congregation of Israel. Before their very eyes, the entire mountain literally began to shake as smoke and fire covered its peaks. Then a loud trumpet began to sound, and it kept blowing louder and louder. Next, Moses lifted His voice to speak, and from the mountain, the Israelites heard God Himself answer in an audible voice. What an awesome sight that would have been!

Most English Bible versions translate *Exodus 20:18* as the people seeing ‘the thunder and the lightning’. But the rabbis point out that in Hebrew, it literally says ‘they saw



Happy young Israeli women throwing wheat into the air on Shavuot, also called Pentecost. | Photo: Shutterstock

the voices and the torches’. How does one see a voice? Furthermore, the book of Deuteronomy repeatedly refers to God’s voice speaking to them at Mt Sinai from ‘out of the fire’ (*Deuteronomy 4:15, 4:33, 5:24*).

Basing itself on this unusual description of God’s voice being seen in the fire, one ancient Jewish legend asserts that God’s voice actually split into multiple sparks of fire which travelled around the camp, coming to each Jew individually. Furthermore, it is believed that as God spoke the commandments, they went forth in all the world’s languages at once. (*Shabbat 88b, Shemot Rabbah 5:9*).

The Jewish traditions concerning this awe-inspiring encounter would have been familiar to Jesus’ disciples as well as their fellow first-century Jews. In an amazing parallel to that first Pentecost, the book of Acts records the events of this second great Pentecost. A sound came from heaven, and the Holy Spirit personally came upon the disciples like individual flames of fire, resulting in the disciples supernaturally praising God in many foreign languages. No wonder the Jewish onlookers present were left completely stunned by what they were witnessing.

### Rebellion vs Revival

We have seen the amazing parallels between the original Pentecost and the second Pentecost and how they both brought powerful supernatural manifestations of God. Yet, the greatest difference between the two events is found in their immediate aftermath. At Mt Sinai, God’s people very quickly seemed to forget all that they had just seen and experienced and turned to worship a man-made idol. In the ensuing judgment, 3,000 men of Israel fell. This stands in sharp contrast to the book of Acts, where Pentecost resulted in 3,000 men repenting and being baptised (*Acts 2:41*).

What went wrong at Mt Sinai that went right in the Upper Room of Acts?

The key could well be found in the days leading up to the Feast of Pentecost. Just 50 days prior to the original Pentecost, the Israelite nation had been set free from slavery in Egypt. They had praised God jubilantly as they witnessed the final destruction of Pharaoh’s armies at the Red Sea. Yet, only a few days later, their attitude of praise turned sour as bitter complaints rose about their lack of water and food. Rather than being a journey of praise and thanksgiving, the Israelite’s 50-day trek to Mt Sinai became a tirade of persistent complaints against God and Moses.

By contrast, the disciples in the book of Acts used this same 50-day time period well by gathering daily in one accord to seek God. Perhaps the poor spiritual preparation of the ancient Israelites was why they fell at Mt Sinai, whereas the disciples, by contrast, were found ready for their encounter with God’s Spirit.

### Are you waiting well?

Many Bible scholars believe the next event on God’s timetable is nothing less than the return of His Son. This is pre-figured in the next feast to be fulfilled on the calendar - the Feast of Trumpets.

As we look at the world around us, we can increasingly see signs telling us that His return is very near. Are we heading the message of these signs? Are we using our time well - like the disciples - getting ready for the next major event on God’s prophetic calendar? Or are we spending our time - like the ancient Israelites - consumed with the matters of life, complaining and murmuring?

Throughout his teaching ministry parables, Jesus repeated, again and again, the importance of being found ready at His coming - will we listen and learn the lesson of the two Pentecosts?



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## “I’ll See You in Israel”

### ■ Rita Quartel

Christians for Israel International

A warm welcome awaits in Israel for the many Jews currently fleeing Ukraine. Tatyana Gershman (40), from war-torn Zaparozhe, is one of them. Through the project First Home in the Homeland, which is supported by Christians for Israel, she will soon settle in Kibbutz Ein HaShofet in northern Israel to start her integration process.

Valeria Zakharova works at First Home in the Homeland and was very surprised when she recently received a call from Tatyana. “Hello Valeria, I am currently waiting for my flight. I’ll see you in Israel.” Valeria: “We had been in contact with Tatyana for a long time about her coming to Israel and our integration programme, but the circumstances had put everything on hold. I called her on 21 March to find out how she was doing. At that time, she was still in Ukraine, had no idea what to do and asked us for help. We were her only link to Israel. I gave her the phone number of Nataliya, who is part of the Christians for Israel team in Ukraine, and told Tatyana that she might be able to help her. And so, less than ten days later, she called me to tell me that she would be getting on a plane to Israel at that very moment. On 31 March, Tatyana landed in Israel.”

### Attention

Her mind is still much in Ukraine, the country she had to leave so unexpectedly. “I fled the war with the help of the

Christians for Israel team. I met Koen and Nataliya at the shelter in western Ukraine. They took very good care of me, and I was really touched by their kindness, personal attention and commitment. By bus, we went to the border with Moldova and then on to Kishenov, the capital of Moldova. During the bus ride, Koen talked to all the refugees and tried to cheer us up.”

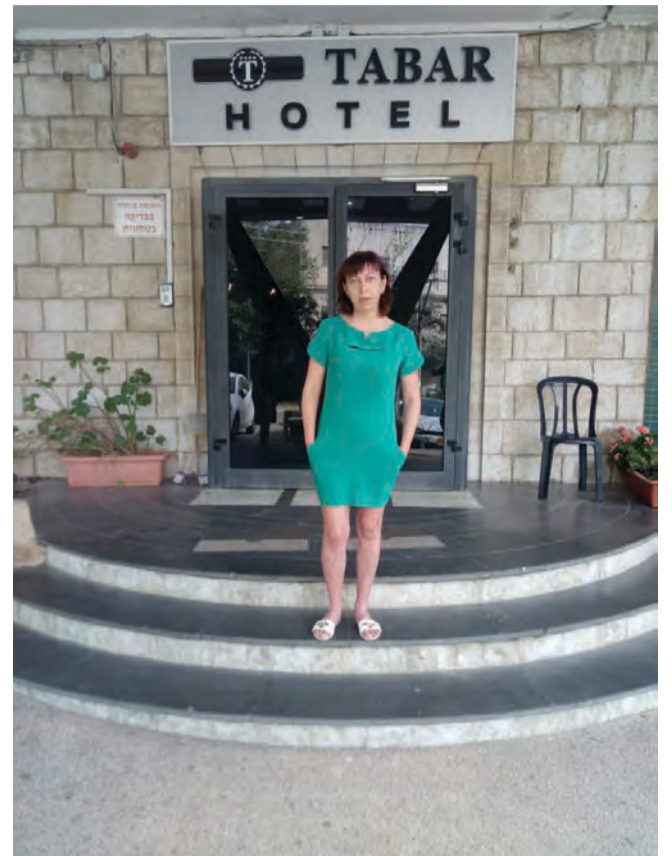
### Grateful

The decision to flee was made quickly, although it was not easy to leave everything behind. Tatyana: “Because of the constant threat, I hardly had time to think about it properly. I felt depressed, but at the same time, it was an opportunity to go to Israel. I am so incredibly grateful to the team at Christians for Israel, and I wish them all the best in the beautiful work they are doing.”

### Hebrew

Tatyana is living temporarily in a hotel while she waits for all the necessary Israeli documents to be arranged. She will then move to Kibbutz Ein HaShofet and be able to start her integration process, in which learning the Hebrew language is an important priority.

Currently, there are already thirty kibbutzim that assist in welcoming Jewish refugees from Ukraine through the programme First Home in the Homeland. In the meantime, they have already taken in the first 34 families. It is expected that the number will increase rapidly.



Tatyana in front of the hotel where she is staying at the moment. | Photo: Jewish Agency for Israel

## “As Long as We Have the Bridge”

### ■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors in Israel & Ukraine | Christians for Israel

**Nikolayev Jewish community members risk their lives to provide for the elderly.**

In retrospect, when considering life-changing events in history, you sometimes ask yourself where you were and what you did when it all started. I spent the third weekend in February calling Jewish families in Ukraine who were on their way to the airport with Christians for Israel (C4I) to make *Aliyah*. Little did I know that Valentina (77), hailing from Nikolayev, would be one of the last repatriates making their way to Israel in peacetime on that day, 20 February.

“Mom has visited several times, but each time she wanted to go back to her little house in Nikolayev where she grew up,” said Valentina’s daughter Ora, who immigrated to Israel 15 years ago as a single mom and now came back to pick up her mother. Her older son is serving in the Israeli army. Their family is part of the Karaim group – the so-called Crimean Jews who were considered of Turk descent under the Russian czar and not persecuted as Jews under German occupation during World War II but are eligible to repatriate to Israel.

“My whole life, I heard from my grandparents that we are not Jewish,” said daughter Ora. “But all my grandpas and uncles are called Avraam, Isaac and Moisey. At some point, I went to the Israeli embassy, and the consul told me, “Of course, you can make *Aliyah!*””

Now that the ailments of age are increasingly bothering her, Valentina has decided to join her daughter in Israel’s Negev region. “I am looking forward to having Mom with us,” said Ora. “She hasn’t even seen her youngest granddaughter, who is two.” Valentina left just in time.

As Russian forces are beginning to close in on the Ukrainian city of Nikolayev following their invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, the Jewish community’s social workers risked their lives to bring much-needed supplies to needy elderly. C4I has been running its personalised sponsorship programme there for over a year.



Many Jewish elderly in Nikolayev are supported by the generous donations of our readers. | Photos: Christians for Israel

Many life-changing visits were made by C4I’s local team, leaving Holocaust survivors and needy elderly with the overwhelming realisation that they matter to someone at the other end of the earth.

Once the Soviet Union’s most significant shipbuilding yard, Nikolayev is located in Ukraine’s south on the Black Sea, only an hour’s drive from the city of Kherson, which has been occupied and completely cut off by Russian forces. Two hours of driving in the opposite direction, to the west, connect Nikolayev with the port city of Odessa, which is still largely functional.

“There are explosions, sirens going off all the time, but then all is eerily quiet again,” said Mikhail from the Jewish welfare fund. “Most food stores are still open. But medication is a problem. We have medical supplies to last a bit longer, but we have to fight for medication now. Local transport has stopped working, so we had to work out a system by which our staff can walk to the needy in their immediate neighbourhood. We used your donations

to help people stack up some supplies at home.” Some humanitarian trucks from abroad are beginning to reach the city, but the city is big, and the demand is huge.

“It’s been quiet recently. But this morning, just two hours ago, a bomb went off in the city centre close to the synagogue, right where I live,” said Yelena, who runs several aid programmes. “It’s hard to get cash anymore as the ATMs don’t work. If you want to buy something at the bazaar, you can only pay in cash.”

Inna was visited earlier this year by one of C4I’s staff members Alina. “Inna is severely in need. She has a debt for electricity about three times her pension and lives without lights. Her fridge is off, and when it gets dark, she lights candles.”

“As long as we still have the bridge with Odessa and it doesn’t get bombed, we can still get supplies,” said Yelena. Even the social workers struggle at times to find hope to continue helping those in need.



# Anglican Church Repents for its Role in Expulsion of Jews

## ■ Dr James Earle Patrick

On Sunday 8 May 2022, bishops of the Anglican and Catholic churches gathered in Oxford's Christ Church Cathedral to 'acknowledge with shame and penitence' the antisemitism of the Synod of Oxford, 800 years ago.

Held in 1222, that Synod instigated a particularly disturbing time in Christian-Jewish relations in England, with repercussions across Europe. In promulgating the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) the Synod added a range of further anti-Jewish measures for the English church. The resulting legal canons forbade social interactions between Jews and Christians, prohibited new synagogues, denied Jews access to churches, and required that they wear an identifying badge (which later developed into the Nazis' yellow star). These prejudicial laws were followed by further anti-Jewish statutes, culminating in the mass expulsion of the Jewish community in 1290.

### How was the English church moved to this act of repentance?

In 2019, the Anglican Church published its official document on Christian-Jewish relations, *God's Unfailing Word*. At the end of its first chapter about the history of Christian antisemitism, it encourages Christian communities to take suitable opportunities to express repentance for this.

I had come across the 1222 Synod when publishing two booklets in 2017 about British Christian history and the Jewish people, and realised its 800th was approaching. A Jewish historian friend encouraged me to write a paper summarising what scholars have written about the Synod, and submit this to the Anglican Church to see if it truly meant what it had said about repentance.

I spent several months researching and writing the paper, finishing the footnotes after the first lockdown in 2020. Due to my role in leading Christians for Israel (UK), I had become a member of the *Love Never Fails* coalition of British pro-Jewish Christian ministries. They wanted to send a thank-you letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the 2019 document. I suggested adding a proposal about repenting for the 1222 Synod. This was agreed, and we sent it on 27 January 2021.

Then Jacob Vince (Director, Christian Friends of Israel UK) told us that because he is a lay member of the Anglican General Synod, he has a right to ask formal questions. Together we wrote two questions, which he submitted for General Synod in July. In replying, Bishop



Service of Repentance (Bishop Michael Ipgrave, Rabbi Jonathan Romain, Bishop Steven Croft). | Photo: Tom Pilston / Diocese of Oxford

Michael Ipgrave (chair of the Council of Christians and Jews) finally confirmed that our proposal had been received, and that they would be "exploring the idea of such a service" of repentance. This vague answer was buried at the end of a long list of questions, and only published online. Even so, during the weekend, an eagle-eyed reporter with the Telegraph newspaper found this small paragraph and published a major article on the Sunday about the Anglican Church repenting to the Jews. This was picked up by many other papers in the next few days. We were delighted.

We then heard nothing for about six months; maybe they were hoping people would forget? Eventually Bishop Christopher Cocksworth (chair of the group who wrote the 2019 document) replied to me on 3 January, having been on sabbatical. He confirmed that plans were underway for a service in Oxford, organised by the Archdeacon of Oxford. After more emails, and much prayer by intercessors, it was decided that the service would be held in the cathedral, that it would be open to the public, and that it would be livestreamed also.

I circulated the information about ticket bookings around all the LNF ministries and many other pro-Jewish groups. On the day, the Bishop of Lichfield commented to friends that he was astonished to see the cathedral so full. Over 300 had travelled from every part of the UK, even some from Ireland and Switzerland!

The service featured moving contributions from the local Jewish community, and the Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave reaffirmed a commitment to continue building these longstanding friendships:

*"Remembering needs to lead to repenting... remembering with clarity what happened and its impact; repenting with sincerity for our turning away from the path of justice and mercy; and rebuilding in trustful partnership with one another. The last six decades have indeed begun to see a transformation in the ways in which our communities view one another, but there is still a long way to go... Trust can only be won through building friendship, through learning about one another, through treating one another with respect, through facing difficulties and disagreements openly, honestly and courteously."*

After the service, over 100 Christians gathered informally for prayer, while the official 'civic reception' was hosting the Chief Rabbi and about 60 other dignitaries. Finally, some 25 of us met in the gardens of Christ Church to pour salt from a new pottery jar into an underground stream there, which re-joins the River Thames to flow down to London. We proclaimed, like the prophet Elisha in *2 Kings 2:19-22*, "This is what the Lord says: I have healed these waters, they shall no longer cause death or animosity or barrenness."

God accomplished every step of the process, in His mercy for our land.

## Modern Israel & the Bible - New Online Course



In this world of Google, Instagram and Twitter, it is challenging for young adults to understand the Israel-Palestine conflict. Is Israel a colonial enterprise, an apartheid state? Whose side should we be on?

The online course *Modern Israel and the Bible* combines a solid, Biblical worldview with insights into modern politics, law and history. Eight interactive sessions help students understand key events and trends in the world today – including the return of the Jews to the land over the last two centuries.

Led by German/Israeli journalist and theologian Johannes Gerloff and Australian/Dutch lawyer Andrew Tucker, a pilot programme was run recently in cooperation with Kingdom Faith Church in the UK, attended by students in England, Netherlands, Denmark, Italy and New Zealand.

Here is an overview:

**Session 1:** How do we read the Bible? - compares Islamic, Jewish and Christian hermeneutical principles.

**Session 2:** God creates differences – a close look at Biblical texts shows that God creates order out of chaos by differentiating. This includes the difference between Israel and the Gentile nations.

**Session 3:** The people and the land - When God chose Abram, He made a covenant connecting Abram and his descendants with "a land that I will show you". This connection is relevant for all the other nations of the world.

**Session 4:** The heavenly and earthly Jerusalem - The Bible testifies to the resurrection of our bodies and the Heavenly Jerusalem coming down onto this earth.

**Session 5:** Zionism - This module gives an overview of the return of the Jewish people to 'Palestine' and 'Israel' over the last 100 years.

**Session 6:** Israel and the nations – examines the phenomenon that, since the 1970s, Israel has been the subject of condemnation and ostracization within the UN.

**Session 7:** Israel and the Arab world - This module explores the conflict between Israel, the Arabs and the Palestinians.

**Session 8:** Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria - looks specifically at Jerusalem's history and current status and the 'mountains of Israel', also known as the 'West Bank'.

*Modern Israel and the Bible is an initiative of thinc. – The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation [www.thinc.info](http://www.thinc.info)*

*The online course is under construction. We will inform you when it is available. Watch this space!*

## Recommended Reading

### The Prince and the Prophet

This book tells the beautiful story of the friendship between Anglican priest William Hechler (1845-1931) and the founder of the modern Zionism movement, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904).

God used these two remarkable men - a Bible-believing Gentile and a secular Jew - to bring about the restoration of the Jewish people to the land as He had promised and foretold in the Old Testament.

Hechler was a German/British Anglican who believed fervently in the prophecies about the restoration of the Jewish people. Herzl was a Jewish Hungarian/Austrian lawyer and journalist who attended the trial of Alfred Dreyfus in Paris in the late 1890s and realised the dangers of anti-Semitism facing the Jewish people in Europe. He founded the modern Zionism movement, which led to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

Having earlier been tutor to the children of Frederick I, Grand Duke of Baden, Hechler later became Chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna. Following the pogroms in western Russia in 1881-1882, Hechler travelled to what is today Ukraine, where he met Leon Pinsker, author of *Autoemancipation*, a foundational work of early Zionism. Pinsker argued that the Jews needed their own homeland, but he didn't specify where. Hechler earnestly pleaded with him that the only fitting place for a restored Israel was Palestine, based on Biblical prophecy.

Hechler visited Herzl in Vienna just weeks after Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* was published in 1896. He introduced Herzl to the Grand Duke, who agreed to open the door for him, the Kaiser Willem II. This bid finally came to fruition in Istanbul in October 1898. Ten days later, in Palestine, Herzl stood hat in hand to greet the Kaiser, who was mounted on horseback. The two men and their advisors met yet a third time in Jerusalem five days later (2 Nov. 1898) for proper talks, albeit ones that mysteriously failed.

In 1897, Hechler wrote:

*"As a Christian, I believe in the Jewish National Movement called 'Zionism' because, according to the Bible, yes, according to the ancient Hebrew prophets themselves, a Jewish State must once again arise in Palestine. And, as it seems to me, judging by the signs of the times, the Jews will again soon occupy their own beloved home in their ancient God given Fatherland. May they soon respond to the call."*

Fifty years later, the Jewish State of Israel was born.

Claude Duvernoy, *The Prince and The Prophet* (1966)  
Published by Glorious Church Fellowship, 2003  
ISBN 10: 9659057229 ISBN 13: 9789659057221

See also: Dr James Patrick, *A History of Christian Zionism in Britain*

Available from CFI: <https://www.cfi.org.uk/a-history-of-christian-zionism>

# The 'Israelites' Have God's Divine Glory



Panoramic view of the Solomon's temple remains and Al-Aqsa Mosque minaret in Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

## ■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

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

In *Romans 9*, the Apostle Paul refers to his own countrymen as 'Israelites'. He says: "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen."

In the last article we looked at the adoption of the Israelites as 'sons' of the Father.

What does it mean that the people of Israel have 'the divine glory'?

'Doxa' in the New Testament designates the 'external appearance', 'splendor' or 'aura' of an object or a person. The Hebrew synonym 'kavod' is related to 'kaved' (heavy) and indicates the 'weight' of a personality. *Genesis 13:2*, for example, tells us that Abram was 'heavy' (kaved), or 'weighty' - King James translates 'very rich'. 'Doxa' also means 'excellence', 'renown', 'honour' or 'glory'.

Paul, however, speaking of *this* (unique, distinct) glory, was thinking of the glory of the Lord. Israel encountered this visible, illuminating appearance of the presence of the invisible God on Mount Sinai as a consuming fire (*Exodus 24:16-17*). While the cloud rested on the tent of meeting, it filled the tabernacle in the desert (*Exodus 40:34-35*). There, in the Holy of Holies, dwelt the presence of the Lord. Therefore, the High Priest Aaron could not "come at any time into the Most Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat, which is on the ark, so that he may not die" (*Leviticus 16:2; compare 1*

*Kings 8:10-11*). At the dedication of the temple, "when Solomon had finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. The glory of the Lord filled the house. The priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (*2 Chronicles 7:1-2*).

The 'glory of the Lord' is the primary theme of the book of Ezekiel. In the beginning, the prophet observes the glory of the Lord leaving the temple in an easterly direction, over the Mount of Olives (*Ezekiel 10; 11:22-24*). It leaves together with the Jewish people into the Babylonian captivity. Only after the prophet foresaw the restoration of the people, the land, and the temple, did he see the return of the glory of the Lord to the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem (*Ezekiel 43:1-5*).

This 'glory of the Lord shone around' the shepherds living out in the fields of Bethlehem when the angel brought them 'good news of overwhelming joy' (*Luke 2:9*). John, the visionary, saw 'the Holy City, the new Jerusalem' as 'the tabernacle of God with men', in which 'he dwells with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God' (*Revelation 21:2-3*). The outstanding characteristic of this city is that it shines with the glory of God (*Revelation 21:10-11*). This city has no need for the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light (*Revelation 21:23*).

The Hebrew root that runs through all these texts is the root 'shakhan'. It means 'to settle down', 'to rest' and 'to dwell'. From this root, the rabbinical teachers coined the term 'shekhinah' to describe the glorious presence of God. The word 'shekhinah' does not occur in the Old Testament.

The 'shekhinah' is a theme that runs through the whole of Paul's letter to the Church in Rome. In *Romans 1:23* the Apostle laments that men have "exchanged the 'shekhinah' of the incorruptible God for an image made like mortal man". That is why they all, without exception, fall short of the 'shekhinah'. In *Romans 5:1-2* he states: "Therefore being justified by faith, we... rejoice in hope of the [future!] 'shekhinah'". In *Romans 6:4* it is the 'shekhinah' of the Father, by which Messiah was raised from the dead. Through this 'shekhinah', we walk in newness of life. Now, it is precisely this glory of the living God, which we as Gentile Christians hope to attain by faith in the future.

According to Paul's own words, this 'shekhinah' is already part of the riches of Israel - God dwells among those who are Israelites!



Two orthodox Jewish men praying at the Western Wall. | Photo: Shutterstock

# Russian-Ukraine War: *Is this Gog and Magog? Part 2*

## ■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

The tragic war between Slavic brothers, the Russians and Ukrainians, is not just shifting global norms; it has caused the spotlight to focus on a fascinating end-time prophecy in *Ezekiel 38-39*, known as the Gog and Magog War. With a coalition of nations, Gog launches a spontaneous, unprovoked, knee-jerk invasion of Israel, who is unprepared for this war. The Jewish state would be destroyed if it were not for divine intervention. Instead, it is Gog and his allies who are destroyed. Israel takes seven months to bury the dead. The result of this harrowing event is a final ingathering of Jewish exiles, coupled with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

### Who is Gog?

The million dollar question is: we need to identify the key player. Magog, in all probability, means 'from the land of Gog.' So let's focus on Gog himself. Who is he? The normal nomination for this title is Russia. Why? Because it is a great power from the North (*38:15*). Russia's long thousand-year history, which reputedly began in Kiev before gravitating towards Moscow, has incorporated an empire larger than any except the Mongols and Muslims. Its imperialism and empire seem to fit the job description.

The old Soviet Union was a tailor-made villain like Gog — until it collapsed on Christmas Day 1991. Also, some Bible teachers say 'Mesech' equals Moscow and 'Tubal' Tobolsk. But is this really the case?

Is Russia really 'Gog,' as many Bible teachers say? This author is not completely convinced. One of the key verses *Ezekiel 38:15*, says Gog comes from *tzafone yereka* (Hebrew). This phrase is crucial because it identifies from what location Gog comes from. It is translated north 'side' twenty-one times. Modern translations say 'far north' or 'utmost parts of the north,' therefore implying Russia. The authorised King James Bible translates that Gog comes from the 'north parts.' If that is the case, it offers the possibility of other countries north of Israel fulfilling the role of Gog, like Syria or Turkey.

While Russia has been an imperialistic power in the past, and some would argue Putin is reviving that tradition, it has also been a Christian nation for a thousand years. Vladimir, Prince of Kievan Rus, led his nation into Eastern Orthodoxy in the year 988 AD. The seventy-four years of atheist communist rule (1917-1991) was an aberration in Russian history; the rest of the millennium



| Photo: Shutterstock

was influenced mostly by Orthodox Christianity. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was the great British missionary to China and founder of the China Inland Mission. Yet his most memorable prophecy was not about China at all but Russia. Sometime in the latter nineteenth century, Taylor received the following vision:

*I have seen a vision. I saw in this vision a great war that encompasses the world. I saw this war recess and then start again, actually being two wars. After this, I saw much unrest and revolts that will affect many nations. I saw in some places spiritual awakenings. In Russia, I saw there will come a general all-encompassing, national **spiritual awakening** so great that there could never be another like it. From Russia, I saw the awakening spread to many European countries. Then I saw an all-out awakening, followed by the coming of Christ.*

It is clear that Taylor, who died in 1905, saw the two world wars. That's the bad news. Yet the good news was he saw Russia as the epicentre and catalyst of a great spiritual awakening that would spread westward to Europe and herald the Lord's return.

Think about it: in Russia today, Christianity once shunned and persecuted by the godless Soviet regime, has returned to a prominent place. Not only is the Russian Orthodox Church having a renaissance, but the Baptists and Pentecostals are growing, too. Yes, there is

'anti-missionary' and 'anti-sect' legislation in recent years, and there is Orthodox opposition to other denominations. Yet there is no mistaking that Russia's atheist days have given way to a conspicuous multi-flavoured Christian presence in Russia.

While Russia is regularly associated with Gog of *Ezekiel 38*, some Russian Christians reject this interpretation. How could a Christian-influenced country try to destroy Israel in coalition with a few Muslim-majority nations (Libya, Iran, & Sudan)?

Another consideration: could Gog be Turkey, which is also north of Israel? The key is the places names written in Scripture, like *Gomer* and *Togarmah*, are possibly in Turkey, not Russia. Likewise, *Mesech* and *Tubal* may not be Moscow and Tobolsk after all.

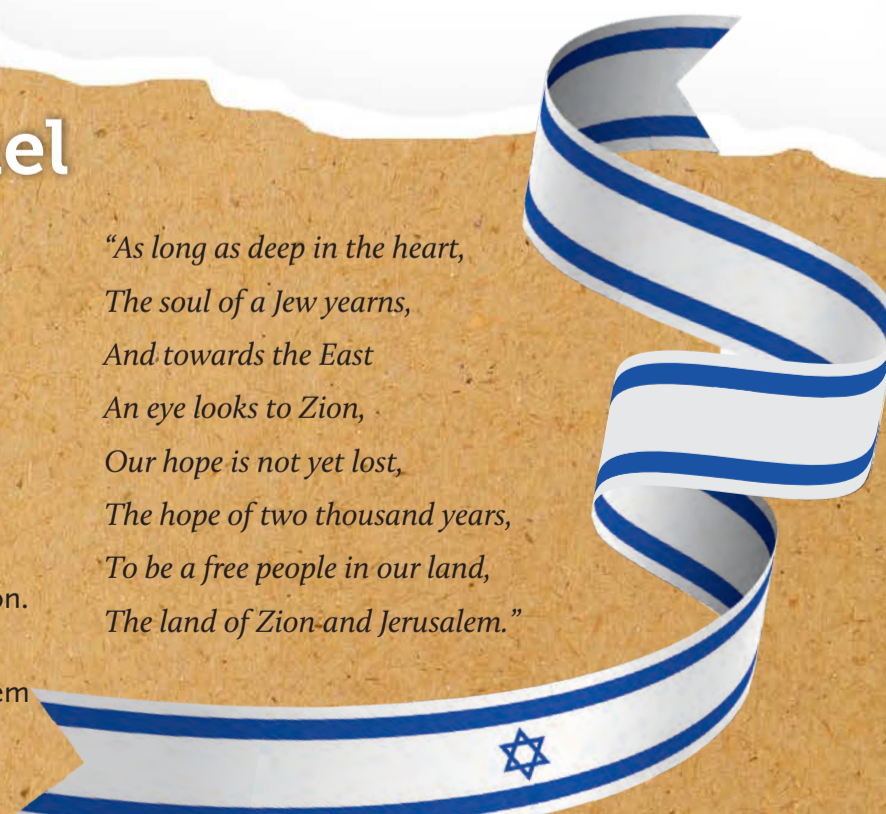
Finally, the fact is Russia, Iran, and Turkey are currently based in Syria, and Syria is next door to Israel. Could this military arrangement, under certain conditions, trigger the Gog attack? To answer that question, remember to take note of the specific details of the prophecy. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (*1 Corinthians 13:9*); we need to follow the Lord's simple injunction - watch, be sober, and pray (*Matthew 26:41; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:6*). Not only will we not be caught off guard - we will be part of the solution.

## Facts about the State of Israel

### Did You Know?

- The **FLAG** of the State of Israel is based on the design of the Jewish prayer shawl (tallit), with a blue Shield of David (Magen David).
- The **OFFICIAL EMBLEM** of the State of Israel is the Menorah (candelabrum), whose shape is said to be derived from the seven-branched moriah, a plant known since antiquity. The olive branches on either side represent Israel's yearning for peace.
- Israel has **NO CONSTITUTION**, however, the Declaration of Establishment (1948), the Basic Laws of the parliament (the Knesset), and the Israeli citizenship law fill many of the functions of a constitution.
- The text of **HATIKVAH**, the **ISRAELI NATIONAL ANTHEM**, was written by the Jewish poet Naphtali Herz Imber in 1878. The anthem speaks of the hope of the Jewish people to live as a free and sovereign people in the Land of Israel.

*"As long as deep in the heart,  
The soul of a Jew yearns,  
And towards the East  
An eye looks to Zion,  
Our hope is not yet lost,  
The hope of two thousand years,  
To be a free people in our land,  
The land of Zion and Jerusalem."*



# The Fulfilment of the Day of Pentecost and the Gift of the Holy Spirit

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

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

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit did not occur just somehow or somewhere. The Spirit came “like the blowing of a violent wind from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting”. This house was in Jerusalem. And it happened “when the day of Pentecost was fulfilled”, as it literally reads. This is one of the days for which Jews from all corners of the earth go up to Jerusalem.

It is Jerusalem where, according to Luke, salvation history takes place. Jesus went there to fulfil His departure (*Luke 9:31*), literally, His ‘exodus’. And there, the disciples received the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses “in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. Jerusalem is the heart and the centre.

### The Day of Pentecost

And there were the disciples, gathered together on the fiftieth day. Seven weeks are counted, starting from *Pesach* (Passover). On the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, a sheaf of the first harvested grain – in Israel, this is barley (*John 6:9*) – was brought to the priest as a thanksgiving offering. This sheaf is called *omer* in Hebrew. From then on, the days must be counted, “seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord” (*Lev. 23:15*). This is the day of the first fruits, the feast of weeks (*Numbers 28:26 and Deuteronomy 16:9-12*). The commandment in *Deuteronomy* adds a remarkable aspect: “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees.” In other words, Pentecost is still Passover, too.

In *Deuteronomy*, the last day of the feast of the unleavened bread is called in Hebrew a *Atzeret*, meaning either assembly or final day. And it seems as if this final day covers seven weeks. Thus, *Shavuot* becomes seven weeks of *Pesach*, and on Pentecost, seven weeks are fulfilled.

### Gift of the Torah

It is not entirely clear from the historical sources whether *Shavuot* was already celebrated as feast of the giving of the *Torah* in the time of the New Testament. However, a reference to this aspect of *Shavuot* may be found already in the *Book of Jubilees* (2nd BC). Interestingly, the Greek wording of *Acts 2:1* would also suggest that the disciples



Israelis seen at a celebration for the Jewish holiday of Shavuot in kibbutz Sarid, in Emek Yizrael. | Photo: Flash90

were together at the dawning of the new day. In other words, they had spent the night together – for what other reason would that be than praying and contemplating the teachings of Jesus?

It is still a Jewish custom today to study *Torah* together during the night of *Shavuot*. When I lived in Jerusalem, I experienced the joy and the excitement that radiated from the faces of the *Torah* students when they arrived at the Western Wall, at dawn, after this night of study, to say the morning prayers.

Even in Christian tradition, the connection between the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the *Torah* has been noticed. Nobody less than the church-father Augustine shows in a letter to *Januarius* that the revelation on Mount Sinai fell on the feast of weeks: “We learn, that after the Jews observed the first Passover with the slaying of the lamb as appointed, fifty days intervened between that day and the day on which upon Mount Sinai there was given to Moses the Law written with the finger of God; and this finger of God is in the Gospels most plainly declared to signify the Holy Spirit: for where one evangelist quotes our Lord’s words thus, “I with the finger of God cast out devils” (*Luke 11:20*), another quotes them thus, “I cast out devils by the Spirit of God”

(*Matthew 12:28*). In other words, there is a strong connection between the *Torah* and the Spirit. “We know, says Paul, that the Law is spiritual.”

### The House

Apparently, the apostles were gathered in a house (*Acts 2:2*). Which house would provide room for 120 people (*Acts 1:15*)? Could it be that they were together in a room inside the temple complex? In Hebrew, the temple is often referred to as the ‘house of the sanctuary’. Furthermore, “Every day, they continued to meet in the temple” (*Acts 2:46*). And where else would they have been noticed by so many people at the same time? Or where else could they have been able to baptise so many people at once? If anywhere, then it was the temple complex that provided enough ritual baths for this purpose.

### Torah and Spirit

On the third day, the Lord descended on Mount Sinai in fire. This was the fiftieth day after Passover. The gift of the Spirit is closely connected to the gift of the *Torah*. The disciples experienced the gift of the Spirit as the renewal of God’s covenant with Israel. They never disposed themselves of Jewish tradition or Jewish identity. Their preaching of the Gospel bears witness to and confirms God’s covenant with Israel.

## Kiddush Cup

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

On Friday evening at the beginning of the meal and on *Shabbat* morning, ‘*kiddush*’ is made: a blessing is pronounced over a cup of wine. This also happens on the evening and morning of feast days. *Kiddush* means sanctification, in accordance with the commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day, that you sanctify it” (*Exodus 20:8*). The day is therefore set apart from the other days. A cup of wine is poured - preferably so that it overflows a little. The person making the *kiddush* takes the cup in his hand and recites *Genesis 1:31b-2:3*, the text that speaks of the first *Shabbat* of creation. The words “It had been evening, and it had been morning” are said softly, the rest, from ‘the sixth day’ onwards, aloud. Then he pronounces the blessing over the wine: “Blessed art Thou, Lord, our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.” The wording of this blessing is very old. In the time of the Second Temple, it was

already established and in general use (*Matthew 26:29 and the parallel texts in the other Gospels*). The blessing over the wine is followed by thanksgiving to God, who sanctifies Israel with His commandments and has given the *Sabbath* a reminder of His creative work and a memorial of the exodus from Egypt. Finally, God is praised ‘who sanctifies the *Sabbath*’. They then drink the wine.

Incidentally, *kiddush* can also be made with bread. Then two loaves are taken, remembering the double portion of *manna* in the desert. But wine (or grape juice) is preferred.

To honour the *mitzvah* (the commandment) to sanctify the *Shabbat*, a beautiful cup is used, of course, usually made of silver. In fact, in Hebrew, it is called *kos shel beracha*, cup of blessing, because it is also used at other special occasions, such as the *havdalah* (closing of the

*Shabbat*), circumcision and engagement and marriage ceremonies. One often sees *kiddush* sets with one large and several small cups so that everyone can drink from their own cup, while the host makes the *kiddush* over the large cup.



Shabbat eve table with challah bread and Kiddush wine cup. | Photo: Shutterstock

## Operation Peace for Galilee



1982 Lebanon War. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

### ■ Bryce Turner Christians for Israel New Zealand

For many, memories of the early 1980s include nightly news articles on television bringing updates of war in Lebanon. Footage of injured troops and buildings hit by rockets still echo.

*Operation Peace for Galilee* – later known as the *First Lebanon War* – began in 1982, as Israeli leaders desperately sought an end to a massive escalation in bombings, rocket attacks, and violence wreaked upon the Israeli population by terrorist organisations including the PLO, PFLP, and the PDFLP. Civil war and instability in Lebanon became the perfect background for the PLO to set up and base its operations against Israel.

While the PLO fought to establish its dominance in Lebanon, members of the Warsaw Pact announced their support of the PLO – and opposition to Israel. As East Germany in particular began to strengthen its support for Arafat’s regime, many around the world felt tensions rise as something of an extension to the Cold War played out. With the financial and political support of the Warsaw Pact nations – and their military supplies – the PLO and its associated insurgents steadily increased their attacks on Israel. The might of the ‘East’ was soon to be tested as it again went up against the United States-backed Israel. Whilst not the first time prowess of East vs West military

technology had been contested, the looming conflict became perhaps the most visible display. Many commentators attribute the obvious military and technical superiority of the West during the war as a key factor in the subsequent demise of the Warsaw Pact.

Although the military operation began in June 1982, the roots of the inciting violence were clear much earlier. In March 1977, the Palestine National Council voted overwhelmingly to continue the armed struggle against Israel and rejected recognition of Israel, as well as Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967 as a basis for peace and negotiation. A week later Israel’s UN Ambassador Chaim Herzog addressed the UN Security Council, reminding that the PLO Charter still called for the expulsion of the bulk of the Jewish population and for the destruction of the State of Israel. Herzog reminded the Security Council delegates that “The negation of Israel’s right to exist is a principle accepted by all groupings within the PLO”, and of the PLO assertion that “the claim of a historical or spiritual tie between Jews and Palestine does not tally with historical realities” - ridiculous and unsupportable fiction that remains a favourite amongst enemies of Israel. It was the collapse of a UN-brokered ceasefire that saw *Operation Peace for Galilee* initiated.

Palestinian terrorists had entrenched

themselves in Southern Lebanon where they set about creating an informal state-within-a-state. Operating from bases established there, terrorist groups were deployed to bring death and misery in Israel and abroad. Tension along Israel’s northern border increased during 1981 as barrages of Katyusha rockets and artillery were fired at civilian targets in Israel’s northern Galilee region. On 3 June 1982, Israeli Ambassador Shlomo Argov was shot and critically wounded near his home in London. The next day Israeli jets bombed PLO ammunition depots and training bases in southern Lebanon. This was followed by a massive PLO bombardment against Israel’s northern settlements, causing extensive damage and loss of life.

On 6 June 1982, the IDF launched *Operation for Peace of Galilee*.

Effectively a war of two parts, the first was a conventional war lasting from 6 June to 23 August 1982, when Arafat’s PLO and its terrorists were expelled from Beirut. The second part, lasting the next three years, was a war against the terrorists.

Whilst the ineffectiveness of the weak Lebanese government and an inability to negotiate a solid peace led to a long, drawn-out conflict, there were some spectacular moments that boosted the moral of war-fatigued Israelis, grieving the loss of thousands of soldiers and civilians. Within hours, the IAF destroyed the Syrian SAM (surface-to-air missile) system, ultimately destroying over 90 Syrian fighter aircraft with no IAF losses. The brand-new Israeli-made mini-RPV (remotely piloted vehicle) played a massive role, in a conflict that confirmed Israeli air superiority in the area.

Although not achieving the lasting peace sought by Israel, Operation Peace for Galilee did result in a strip of patrolled land – a buffer or ‘trip wire’ – that allowed Israel at least some warning of impending attacks.

40 years after the war, echoes of terror attacks and the painful loss of sons and daughters serving in the IDF remain a constant reminder of those, literally on Israel’s doorstep, who seek the total annihilation of the Jewish nation.



Chief of Staff Eitan and Defense Minister Sharon on the roof of the IDF in Lebanon during Operation Peace of the Galilee. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

### Short News

#### Self-Driving Taxi



In a video from Mobileye®, the company announces that it is about to introduce self-driving taxis into Israel and Germany. In the video, you see taxis driving trouble-free through Jerusalem during the night. | Photo: Flash90

#### 3D-Printed Ear Corrects Defect

Plastic surgeons at Galilee Medical Center used a 3D-printed ear prosthesis for a child born with a developmental defect. The six-year-old boy had been born with microtia, a deformity that stops the development of a baby’s ear in the womb, usually during the first trimester of pregnancy. Staff from the plastic surgery department at Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya attached the synthetic prosthesis to the child’s head and covered it with skin.

#### Parkinson’s Pioneer Receives Israel Prize

Technion Professor Emeritus Moussa Youdim was among the first to identify the genes that are changed in the brains of people with Parkinson’s disease. He will receive the 2022 Israel Prize for Life Sciences ‘for his pioneering, groundbreaking, scientific achievements in neuropharmacology.’ Technion President, Professor Uri Sivan, said Youdim’s “brilliant work has brought about a dramatic change in the understanding of neurodegenerative diseases and literally transformed the quality of life of Parkinson’s patients the world over.” Youdim also developed the widely used Parkinson’s drugs selegiline and rasagiline.

#### Free Transport



To encourage the Israelis to more frequently use public transport, the Israeli government has announced a drastic tariffs reform (‘Transport justice’). Israel has some eighty different types of tariffs, whereby people in one town sometimes pay more than double the amount for the same kind of transportation as people in another town. The reform is not only going to level the tariffs but also lower them drastically. Those over 75 don’t even have to pay at all anymore.

| Photo: Shutterstock

# Gerda and Goethe

## ■ Kay Wilson

Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

**“Noble be man, merciful and good,” wrote the German poet Goethe. It was a sentence to be repeated well over a century later by Gerda Weissmann Klein, one of the most inspiring and outspoken Holocaust survivors who sadly passed away at the beginning of April 2022.**



Gerda Weissman, aged 11 in Poland. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Gerda's telling of her horrific story throughout the years began with a detailed recorded testimony for the Spielberg Foundation. It was just one of the over 55,000 survivor testimonies Spielberg documented for posterity. She soon wrote her gripping autobiography *All But My Life*, which in turn became an Oscar-winning film *One Survivor Remembers*.

Anyone who heard her testimony would indeed remember Gerda.

Like every survivor, Gerda's story is also unique, but it is extra special in that Kurt Klein, the American Jewish Soldier who liberated her at the end of the war, went on to become her husband.

By the time she was 21, Gerda had spent three years in concentration camps. Her parents, brother, and her extended family had by then all been murdered. Towards

the end of the war, after a 500-kilometre death march through temperatures well below zero, where even her best friend died in her arms, she was near to death and weighed a meagre 30 kilos.

Coming from an educated Polish family, Gerda spoke German, as did Kurt - her husband to be. It was as an American soldier, when he entered Czechoslovakia with the USA forces, that he came across the skeletal Gerda and asked her to show him the other 'ladies'. Leading him to a room of 150 sick and dying women, Gerda then pointed at them, quoting the German poet Goethe: 'Noble be man, merciful and good.' Kurt, who at that time did not know his parents had been murdered at Auschwitz, could hardly believe that in her dying state, she was able to recite a poem - and one of such nobility. In that very moment of her invoking the chilling call of Goethe to humanity, their future would be sealed.

It took a whole year before Gerda recovered and was able to finally leave Germany for France. By then, Kurt had fulfilled his army service and was also in Paris. The two kept in touch. But despite their affection for one another, Gerda feared that Kurt's interest in her was motivated by pity. She did not want to be a victim, and she certainly did not want to be a burden. Things were complicated even more because he thought her reluctance to accept his help was a romantic rejection. But despite it all, Kurt was love-stricken. After a lengthy exchange of conversations, they were finally married: but not before stopping at a bombed Paris synagogue. It was there among the rubble that they lit a candle for their murdered families just before their wedding ceremony.

After finally settling in the United States, the couple immersed themselves in volunteer work for Jewish relief. They were married for more than 50 years and brought three children into the world, as well as eight grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Ten years before she passed away, Gerda was awarded the American Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honour. In her speech that day, she spoke of meeting Kurt and how, not knowing how to react to his kindness, she decided to pray for him instead.

In her kindness and strength, Gerda was the epitome of what a human being can become, despite the horrors endured. When Goethe penned, "Noble be man, merciful and good," he could very well have been writing with foresight about Gerda Weissmann Klein.



Gerda and Kurt on top of the Eiffel Tower after their wedding (1946).  
| Photo: Journey Through The Holocaust.



Gerda Weissmann Klein received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award for the USA, from President Barack Obama, in 2011.  
| Photo: Official White House Photo

# Jewish Presence in Greece Dates Back to 4th Century BCE

## ■ Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

**“The Jewish community is an integral part of Greek identity, a fact that has been too often denied for centuries,” Greece's Chief Rabbi Gabriel Negrin said at the exhibition's inauguration ceremony. “This history should be passed on to future generations in order to combat ignorance and prejudice.”**

A new exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Greece confirms for the first time that the Jewish presence in the country dates back to the end of the fourth century BCE.

The temporary exhibit showcases ancient inscriptions uncovered by the museum that prove Jewish origins in Greece go back centuries, marking “one of the oldest recorded religious and cultural settlements in Europe,” according to the museum.

*Stone Paths – Stories Set in Stone: Jewish Inscriptions in Greece* opened in May 2022 and will remain open to the public through February 2023. It is being co-organised and co-hosted by the Epigraphic Museum in Athens. A total of 10 inscriptions are on display at the Jewish

Museum and about 30 more are on display at the Epigraphic Museum.

The Jewish Museum's president, Makis Matsas, said, “The exhibition has a very significant value because, on the one hand, it documents the existence and presence of Jews in Greece since the end of the fourth century BCE, therefore highlighting the Jewish element in Greece as one of the oldest Jewish communities in Europe, but at the same time highlighting the multicultural past of our homeland, Greece.”

One of the Greek inscriptions referring to Jews dates to between 300 and 250 BCE and references a freed slave from Judea, according to AFP. It was discovered at the Amphiareion of Oropos sanctuary near Athens.



Amphiareion of Oropos. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

“The Jewish community is an integral part of Greek identity, a fact that has been too often denied for centuries,” Greece's Chief Rabbi Gabriel Negrin told AFP at the exhibition's inauguration ceremony. “This history should be passed on to future generations in order to combat ignorance and prejudice.”

## A European Café Europa in Jerusalem

■ **Anna Rosa S.**  
Christians for Israel Austria

Established 55 years ago, the Jerusalem Foundation focuses on the social and local needs of the most vulnerable populations in the city, including the 10,000 Holocaust survivors still living in Jerusalem today. After two years of the coronavirus pandemic, they are becoming increasingly isolated, often finding it difficult to reconnect with the outside world and face psychological, physical and financial problems. This is where the Jerusalem Foundation's Café Europa programme comes in. It was launched over a decade ago to establish a safe and supportive setting for weekly social activities of this population group. The five branches in different neighbourhoods provide their own programme for about 650 men and women, in close cooperation with the municipality and various community centres.

This year, some of them were invited to participate in a special Café Europa event co-organised by the EU Delegation in Israel. At the Davidson Theater, located in the heart of Jerusalem, the two organisers worked together to mark this year's *Yom haShoa* (Holocaust Remembrance Day), which is deliberately observed in Israel a week before *Yom haZikaron* (Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers) and *Yom haAtzmaut* (Independence Day). In his address, EU Ambassador to Israel Dimitar Tzantchev 'bowed his head' to all Holocaust survivors who "went through hell on earth and managed to build a new life in Jerusalem." The European Union delegation to Israel paid tribute to the 6 million Jews brutally murdered by the Nazis and their local collaborators and renewed its solemn pledge: *'Never Again'*.

Some visitors to Café Europa shared their moving stories with European ambassadors, diplomats and journalists present on 25 April. Among them is Jose Levkovich, who was born in Poland in 1926 and whose life changed radically at the age of 13. Separated from his father in a forced labour camp, Jose survived seven concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau and Mauthausen. The rest of his family were murdered upon arrival at Belzec, making him the only surviving member of his extended family of more than 250: "So many miracles happened in order that I survived." After six years of war, on 5 May 1945, 18-year-old Jose was liberated by the American Army from Ebensee concentration camp in Austria. After the war, he rescued 600 hidden Jewish children in communist Poland. The question of justice also preoccupies him in his subsequent capturing of Nazi war criminals and bringing them to trial. Jose became a member of the police force and testified at their trials. He was responsible for the capture, and conviction at trial, of the 'Butcher of Plaszow,' Amon Goeth, who had nearly killed him. Jose later lived in Brazil, Argentina and Colombia, where he met his wife, Perla. They lived in Canada with their three children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren until Jose moved back to Israel later in life. Today, he devotes his time to educating young people about the *Shoa* in Israel and around the world. He loves God, Jewish learning, the Jewish people and humanity in general. This could be sensed through his appeal at the end of the event when he called for a comprehensive education of young Europeans regarding the *Shoa* so that *'Never Again'* does not remain just a languid shell.

Rena Quint also cares about the education of youth and has shared her story not only at this event but many times with people around the world: "We survivors want to talk. It is important that we do so while we still can." She has received numerous awards and is frequently interviewed by the media in Israel, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and South Africa. She grew

up in Brooklyn and never told her classmates that she had spent her early years in a Nazi ghetto, forced labour and concentration camps and had lost all members of her family. She survived as a child alone in Nazi-occupied Poland, thanks to a series of surrogate mothers, until they too died. "I never knew exactly who I was. Everyone was dead; no one could confirm to me that all my memories were really true. I had six different mothers. One time I was a boy, another time a girl. I was born in Poland, then in Germany." Later, she moved to Israel, started volunteering at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem and found her birth certificate and her parent's marriage certificate. She realised that all her memories were true. She has become the main English-speaking speaker at Yad Vashem today. Rena survived the *Shoa* with her faith in God and love intact. She and her husband, Emanuel Quint, a lawyer and Jewish scholar, have four children and dozens of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Rena is the prime example of the power of feeling like a survivor, not a victim.

Vienna-born Lily Schechter also attended the event as a regular visitor to Café Europa: "It's not always easy because I'm not very social, and I'm 89 years old." Although all visitors share the same background, their experiences are not the main focus of social or cultural activities. Many visitors, such as Lily Schechter, Jose Levkovich or Rena Quint, are therefore able to connect with people who have lived through similar things. Although it is not always easy to leave the house and be social in these times, Café Europa brings together many survivors who are no longer primarily victims but who continue to live their lives in dignity even in old age.

| Photos: Jerusalem Foundation



Jose Levkovich speaking at the *Yom haShoa* event.



Five survivors share their stories with the attendants of this special event.

### 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!

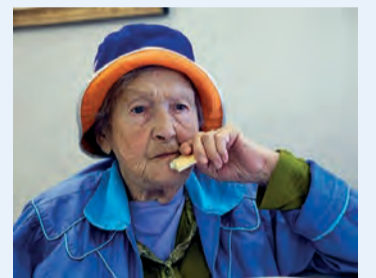
#### Aliyah

*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](http://www.c4israel.org.nz)

## After 20 Years, Sisters Make Aliyah

### The Jewish Agency for Israel

About 20 years ago, Workanesh (45) and Ataklit (40) parted from their parents, brothers and sisters. While their parents, brothers and sisters fulfilled their dreams of making *Aliyah* to Israel, the two sisters remained in Ethiopia with their husbands and small children.

Despite the sadness of parting and being without their mother for the first time in their lives, they were thrilled for their family and prayed too they would soon follow. But as the years passed, their day for *Aliyah* never came. The sisters struggled not to fall into sadness and despair. They held on to faith and one another, praying that they would be reunited with their parents and family in Israel. The sisters never parted; when one lost hope, the other would remain strong.

Without their mother by their side, they gave birth, raised their children and went through happy, as well as harsh and sad, times on their own. Their mother in Israel also

shed many tears for the grandchildren she had never met.

The sisters left their villages and went to Gondar to live with the Jewish community and to apply for *Aliyah*. Their life became that of a refugee in their own country. Their husbands struggled to get work, being told that because they were from the Jewish community they were regarded as outsiders who would only stay temporarily. Why should someone hire them? They work in daily jobs, often more than 12 hours a day, for about 15 US dollars for the entire day of work.

A few weeks ago, Ataklit finally received the message she had been waiting for nearly 20 years: she, her husband and their six children (23, 21, 19, 17, 15 and 13) are approved to make *Aliyah*! She was overjoyed but, at the same time, was deeply concerned. Can it be that her prayer has been answered but not that of her sister? Workanesh put on a happy face for her sister, but she cried herself to sleep at night. After two days that felt like an eternity, she too

received the message she longed for: she, her husband and their nine children (24, 22, 20, 18, 16, 14, 12, 10 and 5) are all approved for *Aliyah*!

Their family in Israel are waiting for them excitedly. Their mother, counting the days until she can embrace her daughters and grandchildren.

The children now have a new dream – after they make *Aliyah*, they wish to join the IDF, to defend their homeland and then go on to higher education. When asked how they have so much hope after such a long wait? They reply that now that this long-awaited dream and prayer have been fulfilled, they believe their future dreams and prayers are also just a matter of hard work, faith and time.

The family is expected to arrive in Israel on 1 June. Please help the Ethiopian Jews who are eligible to make *Aliyah* and reunite them with their families! To donate, complete the coupon below.



Workanesh and her family. | Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel



## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL NZ MINISTRY

My donation for ministry costs, print & post

### ALIYAH - EMERGENCY CAMPAIGN UKRAINE

- Help one Jewish refugee - \$160
- Transport for a small family - \$635
- One bus with refugees - \$6315
- General donation emergency campaign
- First Home in the Homeland

### ALIYAH - OTHER

- Aliyah - Ethiopia
- Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - \$1460

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- Hineni Soup Kitchen - \$10 per meal
- Holocaust Survivors
- Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)
- Arab Christians
- For Zion's Sake
- Israel Alzheimer's Centre: Bladder Scanner

**TOTAL DONATION \$.....**

### DONATION

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### ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

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|---|-------|---------|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 70 Questions about Israel by Chan Siew Fong                                      | ..... | \$25.00 |
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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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N.B. Donation statements are generated annually at the end of the financial year. Christians for Israel NZ does not currently qualify for charitable status.