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CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
NEW ZEALAND

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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



President Donald J Trump, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Foreign Affairs for the United Arab Emirates Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan participate in the signing of the Abraham Accords Tuesday, 15 September 2020, on the South Lawn of the White House. | Photo: Official White House Photo by Shealah Craighead

Changing Alliances in the Middle East

On 15 September 2020, on the lawns of the White House, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed 'normalisation' agreements with the Foreign Ministers of the small Gulf States United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain.

The agreements have been brokered by President Donald Trump and his team at the White House led by the President's Senior Adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner.

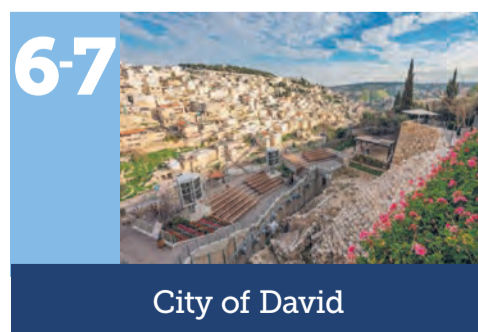
Israel's two existing peace treaties with Arab states (Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994) were based on the 'land for peace' paradigm. They have created a cold, formal peace between these nations, but no real cooperation at the people-to-people level.

The agreements with the UAE and Bahrain, on the contrary, are focused on security and economic and cultural development. Many commentators have hailed these agreements as a major break-through.

Normalisation between Israel and its neighbours is essential to create real peace.

Israeli intellectual Natan Sharansky described the UAE agreement as "the first real agreement about normalisation which doesn't include any concessions to any dictator. It simply says that it is in our interest to co-exist, to co-operate, and to help one another. I believe the

meaning of it is huge. It is much bigger than the size of Abu Dhabi and Israel." Sharansky believes this development is "changing the paradigm of the last 50-60 years that has been dominant in the West, especially in Europe: that 'we, the free world, have all these problems with the Moslim world, and specifically the Arab world, and have all these waves of terror because Israel is not willing to give the Palestinians what they want us to give.' None of this was true, nor was it able to strengthen peaceful elements in the Arab world. Normalisation between Israel and its neighbours is essential to create real peace."



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.

Editorial Team

Andrew Tucker

International Editor-in-Chief
atucker@c4israel.org

Cathy Coldicutt

Managing Editor
newspaper@c4israel.org

Marloes van Westing

International Communications Manager
international@c4israel.org

Ian Worby, Bryce Turner, Rita Quartel,
Marie-Louise Weissenböck and Marijke Terlouw

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C4I Offices

Christians for Israel International

Leon Meijer, *Chairman*
Rev Willem J.J. Glashouwer, *President*
Rev Cornelis Kant, *Executive Director*
P.O. Box 1100 | 3860 BC Nijkerk,
The Netherlands | Tel: +31 33 422 0405
info@c4israel.org | www.c4israel.org

The English Edition of *Israel & Christians Today* is published by the following English speaking branches:

Christians for Israel - Australia

Ian Worby, *National Leader*
PO Box 1508, Springwood
Queensland, Australia 4127
Tel: +61 (7) 3088 6900, info@c4israel.com.au
www.c4israel.com.au

Christians for Israel - New Zealand

Bryce Turner, *National Executive Director*
PO Box 12 006, Penrose,
Auckland, New Zealand 1642
Tel: +64 9 525 7564, info@c4israel.org.nz
www.c4israel.org.nz

Christians for Israel - South Korea


Tel: +61 410 430 677
email: wijung@gmail.com
www.c4israel.org/korea

Christians for Israel - USA

Fred J van Westing, *CEO*
PO Box 2589, Manteca, CA 95336, USA
Tel/Fax: +1 209 665 4280
usa-info@c4israel.org
www.c4israel.us

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Shifting Sands

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

Like ever-shifting sand dunes, the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East is changing rapidly. We're seeing two trends. Iran and Turkey are more aggressively pursuing their expansionist and Islamic extremist objectives. The recent alliance between China and Iran underlines those concerns. Iran's proxies like Hezbollah (in Lebanon) and Hamas (in Gaza), as well as its nuclear ambitions, present an existential threat. Israel appears to be the only state in the region willing to use force to oppose Iran.

An opposite development: over recent weeks Israel has started to formalise diplomatic relations and 'warm' cooperation with some Arab allies in the region. With the US playing the role of broker, the UAE and Bahrain have agreed to 'normalise' relations with Israel. Other nations, such as Oman and Morocco, may well follow.

To some extent, these agreements just confirm the strong relations between these countries already for several years. Some critics pass off the White House ceremonies as a PR stunt. These agreements are significant because they challenge the myth that Arab states cannot have strong relations with Israel unless and until the demands of the PLO are met. That is the logic of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. These smaller (Sunni) states no longer wish their positive relations with Israel to be dependent on the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Similarly, in relation to Jerusalem. The consensus view is that Israel's 'reunification' of the city in 1967 and its declaration in 1980 of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel are illegal, and therefore no embassies should be located in the city (not even 'West' Jerusalem). President Trump challenged the historical, legal and strategic assumptions underlying this position when he recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved the US embassy to Jerusalem



Ceremony at the White House 15 September 2020. | Photo: Official White House photo by Joyce N. Boghosian

in 2018. Several other states followed his example. A few weeks ago, Serbia and Kosovo signed documents in the Oval Office in which both agreed to move their embassies in Israel to Jerusalem.

The EU responded by warning Serbia and Kosovo (both aspiring EU members) that this could undermine their EU membership bids. The EU position has always been that Israel's reunification of Jerusalem is illegal. It is an irrational position which shows Europe's deep ideological resentment of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem.

The Palestinian leadership continues to condemn the normalisation of Israeli-Arab relations as a 'stab in the back' and a betrayal of Islamic beliefs. No-one seems to be listening – except Iran and Turkey. Palestinian leaders are missing the opportunity to improve the well-being of their people.

Israel is paying a price. Netanyahu's highly-publicised proposals earlier this year to 'annex' Israeli settlements and the Jordan Valley have been shelved. Israel has made clear it will not do so without US support. The Administration has indicated no consent will be given for four years – giving the Palestinians time to accept the Trump Peace Plan, which envisages the establishment of a (very limited) Palestinian state within part of the 'occupied' territories provided the

Palestinians agree to certain conditions. If they do not come to the table (and assuming Trump is re-elected), this would potentially enable Israel in 2024 to implement sovereignty plans. Of course, if Biden wins the election, the Trump initiative will no longer be on the table.

The 'normalisation' agreements are to be welcomed as a foretaste of the peace that will come when the Messiah has returned and 'the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem' (see, e.g. *Isaiah 2*). But until then, they are no guarantee for peace. Allies today can become enemies tomorrow. Israel must be on the continual alert to defend itself against those who are bent on its destruction.

And there is another challenge facing Israel. In June 1967, Israel took control of the West Bank – the heartland of the Jewish national home. With the exception of Jerusalem, it chose to treat Judea and Samaria as 'occupied' territories, refraining from asserting sovereignty. This challenge cannot be put off forever. The Bible tells us that the Lord God is planting His people back in Jerusalem and the mountains of Judea and Samaria, never to be uprooted again. Their calling is to govern the land of which they have been given control. This includes equal treatment of the 'strangers' in the land (provided, of course, they accept the Jewish people).

Prayer Points

By Pieter Bénard

Israel

- From 3 to 10 October the Jewish people celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, followed by Simchat Torah (rejoicing of the Torah). This is the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles. Because of Covid-19, the celebrations will be different from usual. Pray that it will still be a blessed and joyful feast under the protection of God.
- There is hostility against the Jewish people, lies and agitation, danger of war and terrorist attacks, false accusations and falsification of history. But the miracle remains: Israel lives! Give thanks according to *Lamentations 3,22.23*: "Yes, the mercies of the Lord are not finished, yes, His mercy does not cease; it is new every morning: great is your faithfulness".

Israel & the Nations

- Several special steps towards peace have been taken recently. For example, a peace agreement has been reached between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and between Israel and Bahrain. There are plans in both Serbia and Kosovo (a country with a Muslim

majority) to move their embassies to Jerusalem. Give thanks for these special steps towards peace.

- "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings." (*Psalms 17:8*) Israel is the apple of God's eye. Pray for the protection of Israel while many enemies still want to wipe Israel off the map.

Christians for Israel

- "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." *Ephesians 2:10*. In this time of Covid-19 Christians for Israel cannot organise Israel conferences and meetings like usual. Pray for the work to continue online. Pray for new opportunities to spread our message digitally.
- Pray that Christians with a vision for Israel may inspire their pastors and fellow Christians so that they too will understand that Israel is a sign of hope and that the return of the Jewish people is a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy.

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

Short News

Sea of Galilee Water Level 27-Year High



At the beginning of September, the freshwater lake was at 209.5m below sea level, the highest that has been measured in September since 1993. As late as 2018, the Water Authority warned that the Sea of Galilee was drying up due to low rainfall and was approaching a 'black line' below which water quality was problematic. This year, however, there has been so much rainfall from January to March that the water level rose by 2.63 metres.

| Photo: Israel Haysom

Supermarket Charges UN



The owner of a well-known Israeli supermarket and telecommunications company, Rami Levy, started legal proceedings against the UN Human Rights Council for defamation. The council has blacklisted both his companies because they also conduct business in what the council calls 'occupied territories'. According to the UN Human Rights Council, this blacklisted company and one hundred and ten others harm the Palestinians because they conduct business on the Golan Heights, Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem. Levy's position is that his 'companies highly promote the rights of the Palestinians and their financial well-being'. Levy demands compensation of almost seventy thousand euros. | Photo: Flash90

Church Found



The remnants of a thirteen hundred-year-old church have been found near Mount Tabor, in the north of Israel. Presumably, this was the location of a monastery that was built just outside the old city of Kfar Kama. Some mosaic floors were uncovered, but more rooms can be excavated, the researchers say.



From left: US special envoy for Iran Brian Hook, Avraham Berkowitz, Assistant to the President and Special Representative for International Negotiations, US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, US President Donald Trump, White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. | Photo: AP

'Full Normalisation' Between Israel and the UAE

■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

On 13 August 2020 US President Donald J. Trump and his staff in Washington announced that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had agreed on "full normalisation of relations" between their respective countries.

"Israel will suspend declaring sovereignty over" parts of the West Bank, the statement from Washington promised. Liberal observers consequently saw Israel's sovereignty over parts of the West Bank off the table, construction activity in the settlements suspended and the two-state solution as the only remaining goal. Settlers felt betrayed by Netanyahu.

The Israeli government seems to have found a way to avoid accepting legal responsibility for much of Judea and Samaria – even though this is exactly what all relevant politicians and parties promised before the last parliamentary elections, it had been widely announced on the international stage and is of course hotly disputed in the western world.

The fact remains that the State of Israel has had the decisive say in the disputed areas between Israel and Jordan for more than 70 years. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly been left with nothing but the 'threat' to throw the burden of responsibility for the Palestinian territories, which have been autonomous for almost two decades, at the feet of the Israelis.

Israel's security cabinet, its foreign and defence ministers, learned of Netanyahu's phone call with the powerful sheikh through the announcement from Washington, possibly only from the media.

Nevertheless, the announcement of a 'normalisation' of relations between Israel and the UAE was not a real surprise. For years there have been relations between the two countries, partly overt, partly

covert. The first feelers were put out in the 1960s. In 2017, the UAE Air Force participated in an exercise in Greece in which the Israeli Air Force was also involved. In the areas of agriculture, irrigation and cyber technology, billions have flowed back and forth between the two countries. It is an open secret that Netanyahu visited the Emirates and that 'interest offices' exist on both sides. Today, hundreds of Jews – some estimates reach up to 1,500 – live in the Emirates. There are now three Jewish congregations, two of which are Orthodox.

The United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is an association of seven emirates in the Arabian Peninsula, on the Persian Gulf: Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain. Only twelve per cent of the people who live there are actually 'Emiratis'. They represent only one per cent of the working population. The UAE is notorious for its uncompromising adherence to Sharia law, harsh collective punishments and use of the death penalty. Foreign workers enjoy little protection.

A Common Enemy

A decisive factor in the rapprochement between the Jewish state and the UAE is the threat from Iran, including its nuclear and hegemonic ambitions. Tehran makes no secret of its aspiration to wipe out the State of Israel. At the same time, the Shiite mullahs and their allies are waging a bloody war against the Sunni Arabs in the Gulf, mainly in Yemen. The nuclear agreement between the West and Iran in 2015 was not only a thorn in the side of Jerusalem but was also decidedly rejected by the Gulf Arabs. In 2016 Israel's UN ambassador Danny Danon made a trip to Dubai, which was mainly about Iran. Israel's missile defence techniques and cyber technology are of great interest to the Arab Gulf States. In recent years, Israel has repeatedly demonstrated that it is the only country in the Middle East that has the will and ability to face the threat from Iran.

The F-35 Dilemma

Immediately after the announcement, fears were expressed in Israel that the US could now deliver F-35 stealth jets to Abu Dhabi. Defense Minister Benny Gantz immediately stressed that Israel would never give up its qualitative military advantage for peace. Netanyahu emphasised that the normalisation agreement does not include Israel's consent to any arms deals.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tried to calm the situation on 24 August when he assured the Israeli Prime Minister that "the US will find a way to balance helping its military ally the United Arab Emirates without weakening Israel's qualitative military edge" in the region. One day earlier, Trump's special advisor Jared Kushner had said on CNN that "this new peace agreement should increase the probability of [the UAE] getting [F-35s]".

Reactions

Israeli Jews and worldwide Jewry spontaneously expressed enthusiasm. Netanyahu praised the announcement of the peace treaty as the "beginning of a historical era". Israel's political right responded: "It is time for Netanyahu to go. We need to build an alternative leadership." Settlers accuse Netanyahu of concluding a peace treaty with a country with which Israel was never at war.

One day after the announcement, UAE Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash emphasised that this was by no means just a symbolic gesture and that his country wishes far-reaching bilateral relations "as soon as possible". He called on the Palestinians to immediately start peace negotiations with the Israelis.

The Palestinian leadership under Mahmud Abbas spontaneously railed against a 'betrayal of Jerusalem, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Palestinian cause' and recalled his ambassador from the UAE. On the 'Haram Al Sharif', the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Palestinian worshipers trampled pictures of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed.

Continued on page 4

Hezbollah Continues Anti-Israel Campaign

■ **Yochanan Visser**

Christians for Israel Correspondent | Israel

On 4 August 2020, a huge blast destroyed almost half of Lebanon's capital Beirut, leaving more than 300,000 people without a home. The death toll has now exceeded 200 people. Nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in a hangar near the sea in Beirut's port exploded. Within the next hour, Hezbollah and Israel came very close to a new war. Operatives of the Iranian-backed terror organisation thought that the Israeli military had something to do with the giant explosion. Two Hezbollah members told Sputnik News in Russia that "Hezbollah troops were immediately redeployed from the mountains to the coast in southern Lebanon, with rocket system operators ordered to their missile sites and told to be ready to fire".

The truth, however, is that Hezbollah itself spread the narrative that the giant explosion was an accident caused by extremely high temperatures in the hangar which had no air-conditioning, nor a ventilation system.

Hezbollah has a track record of using and storing ammonium nitrate. Last year, it was caught storing the material in London and southern Germany, after Israel's intelligence agency, the Mossad, tipped off the authorities in both countries.

Experts have pointed out that the blast in the port of Beirut could have been the result of work Hezbollah had conducted to produce missile fuel or explosives for the terror organisation to use in its attacks on Israel.

A retired American weapons expert of the US Navy, who wished to remain anonymous, told me that the second explosion, which created a purple-red smoke cloud, was the result of exploding nitrogen triiodide - an inorganic compound used for the production of missiles and explosives.

At the beginning of September, the Lebanese army found a new cache of the chemical agent near the port of Beirut. More than 4 tons of ammonium nitrate were found in containers near the port, but the Lebanese army said it had no idea who stored the material there.

Anyone who may have thought that the anger of the Lebanese people over Hezbollah's activities in Lebanon - where the Shiite organisation dominates every aspect of life including the political system - would have a moderating effect on the Iranian proxy, got it dead wrong.

Despite a huge economic crisis that has left almost half of the Lebanese people without enough income to buy basic foods and that already existed before the giant explosions in Beirut's port, Hezbollah continues its belligerent activities aimed at Israel.

Financial and Humanitarian Crisis

Lebanon is facing a financial and humanitarian crisis of massive proportions. The World Bank estimates that more than 50 per cent of Lebanon's population is now living



A view of damaged buildings after massive explosion in Beirut on 4 August 2020. | Photo: Flash 90

below the poverty line while the Lebanese currency Lira has lost 80 per cent of its value against the US dollar since the end of 2019. Negotiations with International Monetary Fund about a giant new loan failed after Lebanon defaulted on its debts to foreign investors last March.

In addition, Lebanon also faces a food crisis, exacerbated after the government raised the price of bread for the first time in a decade. People in the Cedar country have recently been rushing to supermarkets to buy food essentials, leading Al-Makhazen Coop, the largest food retailer in Lebanon, to close its branches in Beirut.

Then there is the energy crisis in Lebanon where citizens only get electricity for three hours per day and use candles to illuminate their homes at night.

To make things worse, Lebanon is hosting over more than a million Syrian refugees who aren't able to return to their country of origin due to the continuous hostilities in Syria and due to the fact that their houses have been destroyed during the 10-year-long civil war in Syria.

Hezbollah, which has taken over Lebanon in every respect, offers no solutions to the current economic and financial crisis in the country and is only focused on its conflict with Israel.

Although the terror organisation has been targeted with sanctions by the US Administration of President Donald J. Trump, this hasn't stopped Hezbollah from advancing its plan for the destruction of Israel.

Iran

Iran is financing almost all of Hezbollah's activities, and the terror group also has income that comes from international criminal activities such as drug trafficking.

Besides these criminal activities, Hezbollah also fills its coffers by stealing money belonging to the Lebanese

people and controls most of Lebanon's economy.

The terror organisation is active in other countries such as Syria, where it helps Iran building the so-called Golan Liberation Brigade, which consists of Shiite fighters from countries as far away as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Hezbollah operatives are also helping the Ansar Allah (the Houthi militia) in Yemen which is constantly terrorising Saudi Arabia and tries to bring down the official Yemenite regime.

Israel, however, remains Hezbollah's main target, as we saw over the past months with several incidents between Hezbollah and the Israeli military (IDF and IAF).

After the Israel air force launched an attack on a shared Iranian, Syrian, and Hezbollah base near Damascus and killed Hezbollah operative Ali Kamel Mohsen Jawad on 20 July, Hezbollah retaliated by infiltrating Israel in the area of Har Dov eastward of the town Metullah in the upper Galilee.

The infiltration attempt was prevented by the IDF who subsequently refrained from killing the Hezbollah terrorists to avoid a new war between Israel and the Lebanese terror group. But the ensuing tank fire on the location of the group of Hezbollah terrorists was enough to make them retreat to Lebanese territory.

Several days later Hezbollah again tried to harm IDF soldiers when it fired shots at an IDF position near Kibbutz Manara. In this case, too, the Israeli army retaliated by using attack helicopters and warplanes which - for the first time since the Second Lebanon War of 2006 - bombed Hezbollah's positions inside Lebanon.

The IDF remains on high alert and is prepared for the possibility that Hezbollah could launch new attacks on Israel before or during the Jewish High Holidays.

Continued from page 3

'Full Normalisation' Between Israel and the UAE

There were demonstrations in Gaza, the West Bank and Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Some factions spoke of a stab in the back by a supposed Arab ally.

Economic Advantages

All three countries involved in this 'normalisation agreement' - the USA, Israel and the UAE - hope to 'mutually benefit', especially with regard to investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications, technology, energy, health, culture and the environment. From an Israeli perspective, an autocratic regime with deep pockets that is able to make

quick, unbureaucratic decisions on huge sums of money is of great economic interest. For some Israeli businessmen who have been in the Emirates for years, however, normalisation could also prove negative. Now business deals that could previously be done behind closed doors and 'under the table' will be brought to light.

Is 'Normalisation' 'Immoral'?

So far the Jewish state of Israel has signed peace treaties with two Arab states: In March 1979 with Egypt and in October 1994 with Jordan. Both are, like the UAE, totalitarian regimes that sometimes brutally oppress their populations.

In both cases, one can hardly speak of 'normalisation'. It should also be noted that Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat

and Jordan's King Abdallah I both paid with their lives for their pragmatic approach towards the Jewish state. One can only guess what the peoples oppressed by these Arab regimes really think. 'Normalisation of relations with the Jewish state of Israel' has an immoral connotation in the Arab world. Years ago, an Arab once explained to me in private: "It is easier for me to say that my daughter is a prostitute than to admit that I live a normalisation of relations with Israel."

Will Other Arab States Follow the Example of the UAE?

Both Americans and Israelis have enthusiastically expressed their hope "that more Arab and Islamic states will normalise their relations with Israel in the

near future". Now that Bahrain has also signed a normalisation agreement, Oman, Sudan, Morocco and perhaps even Saudi Arabia could be considering future normalisation. After all, the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has already publicly conceded that Israelis have "a right to their own land".

The Palestinians are making every effort to prevent other Arab or Islamic states from following the UAE and Bahrain examples. When the US Embassy was moved to Jerusalem in May 2018, the Palestinians had still managed to convene an emergency meeting of the Arab League. Not this time.

Short News

Football: Emirates Invited to Israel



The rapprochement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates is also reflected in sport. The Israeli football cup winner Hapoel Beer Sheeva invited the winner of the Emirates, Shabab Al-Ahli Dubai, to a friendly match. These are historic times for Israel and the Emirates, the club from Israel wrote on Twitter. | Photo: Twitter

3000-Year-Old 'First Temple-Era Palace' Excavated in Israel

Magnificent and rare remains of a royal building from the time of the kings of Judah have been discovered during an excavation on the Jerusalem Promenade. Archaeologists report: "The column heads identified with the royal building from the time of the First Temple are the most beautiful ones found to date". The owner of the lavish Jerusalem mansion — which would have enjoyed a monumental view of the Old City and the Temple — remains a mystery. Still, archaeologists were able to date the finds back to the era of the Judean kings, due to the proto-Aeolic features of the soft limestone architecture. The finds include three complete medium-sized limestone 'capitals' and items from elegant window frames. The column head design will appear strikingly familiar to Israelis — it adorns the five-shekel coin of the modern State of Israel in tribute to the First Temple era.

Japan Helps Lithuania



A small but valuable museum in Lithuania was facing bankruptcy. The museum tells the story of the Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara, who helped fleeing thousands of Jews from the Holocaust. Usually, mostly Japanese visit the museum, however because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there were almost no visitors anymore. Without income, the museum was facing the risk of having to close its doors permanently. Inhabitants of the province of Gifu in Japan, from which Sugihara came, donated thousands of euros so that the museum can survive the crisis.



Photo: Shutterstock

All Israel?

■ Rev Willem Glashouwer President | Christians for Israel International

Romans 11:25-27 says, "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part **until** the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way, **all Israel** will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is My Covenant with them when I take away their sins." Compare with *Jeremiah 31:33-34* about the New Covenant.

Much has been written in theological contemplations about Paul's words, **all Israel**. What does Paul mean by this? Will every Jew who ever lived be saved? Or will the last generation of Jews alive at Christ's return be saved, by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*Zachariah 12:10-14*)?

Or does he mean for us to understand '**all Israel**' to mean that the believers from Israel (believers in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world) plus the believers from the **gentiles** (who believe the same) together form **all Israel**, and in fact are the **true Israel** that will be saved?

This perspective can be heard among Messianic Jews as well. I recently heard one of the leaders of a Jewish Christian congregation in Jerusalem say the following:

*The 'root' in Romans 11 is Christ. We Jews who believe in Jesus are the true branches of this noble olive tree that grows out of this root and you gentiles are grafted in, you have received a share in Christ and have joined **us** as the Jewish-Christian congregation and together with us form the true Israel. The 'natural' Israel is finished. God has broken it off, and we hope to save as many Jews as possible through*

*evangelisation to see them added to the true Israel. You, Christians from the Gentiles, and we, Christians from the Jews, form **all Israel** together.*

This puts the nation of Israel and the Jewish people at large in a precarious position. In this line of thinking, one can use this to distance oneself from the Jewish state of Israel, as the protestant churches in the Netherlands are busy doing. It allows you to maintain a much vaguer, more general solidarity with 'the Jewish people' and 'Judaism' and the 'Holy Land', without any solidarity with the current Jewish State of Israel or Israeli politics - whether left-wing or right-wing or middle of the road. With this theological concept the 'natural' Israel is

'natural' and 'biological' Israel was created by the Lord out of Abraham and Sarah, who, although she was beyond child-bearing years, received Isaac as a 'miracle-baby', created by God Himself. His firstborn son, *Hosea 11:1; Exodus 4:22-23*.

And yes, it is a separate state, because Israel will dwell alone and not be counted among the nations, according to *Numbers 23:8-9 KJV*: "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks, I see him, and from the hills, I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and *shall not be reckoned among the nations.*" The nations – and many in Christian theology – are revolting against God's election.

There are 'white', 'black' and 'yellow' Jews, along with many other variations, because anyone with a Jewish mother is considered to be a Jew and because gentiles (of any race) can convert to Judaism and become fully Jewish by faith and conviction.

finished as the specially chosen people of God and the State of Israel, and the Israelis become a state and a people like any other state and like all other nations in the world.

And so Israel must carry the yoke of the United Nations like every other nation and every other state or else they be labelled as a "racist nation with an 'apartheid state'". There is no understanding of the fact that Israel is a nation you are born into. So in a way, it is a 'race', although the members of the Jewish people display all of the racial features of the world. There are 'white', 'black' and 'yellow' Jews, along with many other variations, because anyone with a Jewish mother is considered to be a Jew and because gentiles (of any race) can convert to Judaism and become fully Jewish by faith and conviction. The

In Scripture, you come across three groups of Jews:

- Firstly a 'faithful' Israel that follows God's Commandments.
- Secondly, a 'worldly' Israel that goes along with the cultures and religions of the world around them. Sometimes even merging with them, assimilating and secularising. Consequently, they are warned repeatedly by the prophets and repeatedly encounter God's wrath.
- And thirdly a part of Israel that believes in Jesus the Messiah. Many of them today are looking for and seeking to experience ever more intensively their own Jewish roots. Yet they also find a growing unity with gentile Christians, including Christians from the Arab world.

The Pilgrimage Road Going up to Jerusalem

The 'City of David' is the location of the Biblical city of Jerusalem captured by King David over 3,000 years ago. Located to the south of the Temple Mount, here David built his first city, before the Temple was built by his son Solomon. And according to the Bible (1 Kings 2:10), David was buried in the City of David (not Mount Zion, where there is now a tomb of David).

The original City of David basically lay hidden for many centuries after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70AD, and began to be rediscovered in the 19th century. Today it is still being excavated. As excavations are completed, the area is opened to tourism to further deepen visitors' understanding of its past.

One of the sites that has been recently rediscovered is the 'stepped street', as it's known from academic works, or the 'Jerusalem Pilgrim Road' as it has been dubbed by the City of David administration - the Late Roman period street connecting the Temple Mount from its southwestern corner, to Jerusalem's southern gates of the time via the Pool of Siloam.

The Road is still being excavated, and is closed to the public; it is expected to be open within the next year.

The Pool of Siloam became an important ritual bath, and source of water - King Hezekiah built the pool when he created an ingenious tunnel to divert water from the Gihon Spring, outside the city walls, to the Pool of Siloam (2 Chronicles 32).

Below: Moshe Gabay, director of Keshet Journeys, during filming of the Pilgrimage Road video. | Photo: Keshet Journeys



Above: A view of a stair structure on the street ascending from Siloam Pool in Jerusalem. Archaeologists speculate the finding, dated from the Second Temple time, may have been a podium for speeches. This could be the place where Peter preached the message at Pentecost. | Photo: Keshet Journeys

Right: A worker walks at the Pilgrimage Road at the City of David. | Photo: Flash90



Construction of the Road

National Geographic reports that historians previously thought it was the Roman-appointed King Herod the Great who approved most of the large construction projects that remade ancient Jerusalem into a major pilgrimage and tourist centre. But a recent analysis of more than 100 coins found beneath the stepped street point to the start and completion of the effort under Pontius Pilate, who ruled for about a decade starting in 26 or 27 AD. In other words, it was the Roman governor responsible for condemning Jesus of Nazareth to death by crucifixion, who ordered the construction of a street for pilgrims to follow to the Jewish Temple more than 2,000 years ago.

The latest coins discovered beneath the paving stones date to around 31 AD. The most common Jerusalem coins from the first century were minted after 40 AD, "So not having them beneath the street means the street was built before their appearance, in other words only in the time of Pilate," Donald Ariel, a coin expert with the Israel Antiquities Authority, told the magazine.

The Road took ten years for the Romans to build. When it was completed, it was about half a kilometer long and measured 10 meters wide. More than 10,000 tons of limestone were used in its construction.

The Pilgrimage Road was travelled by Jewish pilgrims obeying the Biblical commandment to travel to Jerusalem three times a year for a Temple sacrifice - at Passover, *Shavuot* (Pentecost), and *Succoth* (Feast of Tabernacles).

Zeev Orenstein, Director of International Affairs at the City of David Foundation: "For Jews in ancient days, their pilgrimage began at the Pool of Siloam, a giant *mikveh*, or ritual bath, the size of two Olympic swimming pools. Pilgrims would purify themselves here before going up to the Temple to offer their sacrifices."

Old coins found at various excavations



Special Significance of the Pilgrimage Road for the Church

According to Moshe Gabay, Director of Keshet Journeys, the Pilgrimage Road has special significance for Christians. "Gentiles also had access to the Temple, so they too would have cleansed themselves in the mikveh and climbed the Pilgrimage Road from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple. It is important to remember: the Temple was a place where both Jews and Gentiles could worship the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

"By Jesus' time, the City of David had become a poorer part of Jerusalem; richer people lived in what is now the Old City of Jerusalem. Because the Pool of Siloam was a public bath, it attracted many people. So it is no surprise this is the place where Jesus healed the blind man."



The excavations at the City of David are always ongoing. | Photo: Shutterstock

"As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." After saying this, he spits on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. (John 9:4-7)

Gabay: "The Pool of Siloam was also an important place during the Feast of Tabernacles. Here, the Jews took water up to the Temple, as the Feast of Tabernacles was the time when they started to pray for rain. They recited the words of *Isaiah 12:3* - 'With joy, you will draw water from the wells of salvation'. So it is very significant that when Jesus comes to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, He applies Isaiah's words about physical water to Himself as spiritual water":

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this, he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:37-39).

"The Pool of Siloam is also quite probably the place where 3000 people were baptised on the day of Pentecost - the day the church was born", Gabay explains. "It is likely that the disciples spent the days after Jesus' Ascension in the City of David. When Shavuot, the Day of Pentecost, came, the Jews were gathered near the Temple in huge numbers. They stayed up all night preparing themselves to go up to the Temple for the Feast. It is possible that when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in *Acts 2*, this would have been on the Pilgrimage Road. Many people would have been gathered in this area due to the ending of their Pentecost prayers, because the lower City of David is where the poor people lived. And Peter in his preaching specifically refers to David being buried there.

The Pool of Siloam, at the bottom of the road, is also the only place where 3000 people could have been baptised at once. Then they would have ascended to the Temple via the Pilgrimage Road, singing the Songs of Ascent. Isn't that beautiful? And now, after 2000 years, we will soon be able to walk these steps ourselves."



The tunnel system that was used by the inhabitants of the city in Biblical times to reach the Gihon Spring, and through which the water from the spring flowed to the Pool of Siloam later on, guarantees an adventurous outing in Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

The City of David

The excavations south of the Temple Mount on the Ophel, where the City of David once was, are fascinating. Among other things, they show how the inhabitants of the city got access to water by ingeniously moving the water from the lower Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam. King Hezekiah dug a tunnel through the mountain to secure the water, and tourists can still wade through there today. An encounter with Biblical times.

Countless archaeological treasures have been found in excavations in the City of David, including coins, statues, pots, bowls and an oil lamp as you can see right here.



Below: A cameo from the time of Jesus.

With Special Thanks

To Moshe Gabay, Director of Keshet Journeys. Keshet Journeys offers quality educational tour programmes in Israel. Find out more at www.keshetjourneys.com

The Future of Pro-Israel Advocacy

■ Johannes de Jong

Director | Sallux - the think tank of the European Christian Political Movement

On 11 July 2020, the New York Times published the main points of a leaked version of a draft agreement between China and Iran. One may think that this is not really anything new. After all, there have been strong diplomatic and economic relations between communist China and the Iranian regime for a long time. However, this new deal sparked a debate even inside the Iranian regime as members of the Iranian Parliament expressed their fear that Iran would be sold out to China. The scope of the deal seems to justify that fear. It encompasses not just economic relations but also military cooperation and a strong Chinese presence in the Gulf. The agreement refers to joint military exercises, intelligence cooperation, joint research, and the development of weapons systems. One persistent story is that China will even build bases for their fighter jets on the Iranian islands in the Gulf. That would basically replicate the Chinese strategy for attempting to achieve dominance in the South China Sea (which actually stretches to far beyond China). The total amount of this deal is apparently worth \$400 billion in 25 years.

It is clear that this will be a serious problem for everyone else in the Middle East as well as the US and Europe. It will place China in a position to control access to a huge portion of the global oil and gas supplies as well as a very strategic position towards both the EU and the US. It would strengthen the Iranian regime significantly. All of this means the deal is a direct threat to Israel and the Arab world generally.

This brings me to the core issue. The main reason that this Chinese – Iranian deal is so worrisome is that this almost unifies at the geopolitical level two authoritarian and aggressive regimes. These regimes oppress all those who fall under their sphere of influence and allow no freedom to their subjects. These regimes and their vassals (such as the Assad regime in Syria and Hezbollah or the Iranian militias in Iraq) are spreading oppression and end



| Photo: Shutterstock

freedom wherever they go. This global trend can be seen in the fact that Russia, Iran, China and Turkey are operating more and more as one authoritarian block to keep these oppressive systems in power at the expense of the fundamental freedoms of billions of people. That is why recent attempts by the US to place sanctions on Iran are blocked in the UN Security Council, as Russia and China protect Iran. The increased aggression by Turkey in the region has to be seen in the same light. This is the reason the UAE recently sent jets to Greece and Cyprus to support them against Turkey.

The Middle East is, once again, the fault line between freedom and oppression. And Israel appears to be an indispensable partner to maintain freedom in that region and the world. The UAE – Israel agreement has to be understood in that light. The slow reforms in the Arab world as well. There where one can detect slow change in the Arab world towards freedom, we see the reverse in

Turkey, Iran and those areas that fall under Iranian or Turkish influence. One cannot imagine that freedom can keep a foothold in that part of the world without Israel. Actually, one representative of the Baloch people in Iran made exactly that point in the Jerusalem Post on 12 January 2019: “The reality of the world and the region dictates the need for more strategic cooperation and understanding between the oppressed nations of the Middle East and Israel.”

In my opinion, it is important that those who are active in advocacy for Israel see this broader picture and adapt accordingly. That would also build on the Israel/UAE/Bahrain agreements. If President Trump fails to win a second term, it is clear that pro-Israel advocacy will have to make an argument that reaches beyond the traditional constituency. Clarifying the position of Israel as an essential party in the global defence of freedom would communicate reality in a way that many more can relate with.

Israelis Face Second Covid Lockdown

■ The Guardian

President warns against ‘finger-pointing’ as country asks why virus containment efforts failed.

Israelis prepared to enter a second national coronavirus lockdown on Friday, 18 September, facing at least three weeks of tough restrictions that will upend a normally festive period filled with Jewish holidays.

The cabinet released a full list of rules, setting out a return to stringent measures Israelis had hoped were behind them when they endured a similar lockdown in spring.

As of Friday, 18 September, with a few exceptions, people were confined to a 500-metre radius around their homes, gatherings of more than 10 people inside were banned, and schools, nurseries, restaurants, malls, gyms, hairdressers and hotels were largely shuttered.

The prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, had said the move was essential after hospitals ‘raised the red flag’ following a steep surge in Covid-19 cases. However, anger has flared over whether he reopened the economy too hastily following the previous lockdown.

In an address to the nation recently, the country’s president, Reuven Rivlin, admitted the country’s leadership had not done enough. “You trusted us and we let you down,” he said.

“Tonight, I would like to say that I understand the feelings of confusion and uncertainty, the anxiety that many people are feeling,” he added, going on to apologise for breaking lockdown rules in April, when his daughter visited him.

“My loneliness is no more painful than the loneliness that many of you – who were so careful to follow the word and the spirit of the instructions – experience.”

On Thursday, 17 September, several hundred demonstrators in the coastal city of Tel Aviv protested against the lockdown amid the economic pressures. Resentment across the country has not just focused on government, but also on each other, with notable ire between secular and religious sections of society.

Parts of secular Israel feel that Netanyahu – whose government is propped up by Jewish ultra-Orthodox politicians – is allowing businesses to perish while going to extreme lengths to allow religious gatherings. They point to lockdown exemptions allowing rituals and even gatherings of dozens of people in some synagogues. Meanwhile, earlier proposals to lock down only ultra-Orthodox areas with high infections were scrapped following pressure from rabbis.

On the other hand, sections of religious Israel – notably the ultra-Orthodox communities who often live in poorer, cramped neighbourhoods – feel that they have

been unfairly blamed for the spread of the virus, by which they have been disproportionately affected.

“We will not prevail through finger-pointing and toxic accusations,” President Rivlin said in his speech. “Only together.”

Israel has reported almost 170,000 cases and more than 1,150 deaths, a relatively low mortality rate, although ministers have warned that it could quickly jump as new infections have recently risen above 5,000 per day.

Officials fear that the High Holy Day period could see a dangerous spread of the virus as families and friends normally congregate indoors; ministers have urged the public to adhere to the rules.

Shoshana Chen, writing in the daily newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth*, expressed doubt that Israelis, who she said were filled with resentment at the government’s and each other’s alleged failings, would comply with a national effort.

“Anyone who strictly complies with those rules will be perceived, in their own eyes and by others, as being a sucker,” she wrote. “We will visit friends furtively and say that we’re going to the pharmacy... We’ll find a way to attend prayer services... We’ll shrug off the need to wear a mask. And the public’s voice will rise to the heavens, saying: ‘We showed you, you can’t tell us what to do.’”



Israel's Planned 'Annexation' Not Illegal

■ Andrew Tucker

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



Israel's planned 'annexation' of territory was widely condemned when it was announced earlier this year. The issue is off the table for the time being, as a result of the recent 'normalisation' agreements with the UAE and Bahrain. But it will come back at some time.

So, what is the legal status of the 'West Bank'? Does it belong to Israel?

Israel was established in 1948 when the Mandate for Palestine came to an end. The Mandate committed the international community to the re-establishment of the Jewish homeland in Palestine - reflecting the historic, religious and cultural ties between the Jewish people and the territory of Palestine. This included Jerusalem and the area now known as the 'West Bank'. The rights of the Jewish people to a national homeland in Palestine under the Mandate to 'immigrate' and to 'closely settle' the land were preserved by article 80 of the UN Charter.

The Mandate for Palestine was part of the wider post WWI settlement of the former Ottoman and German territories. The Arabs acquired sovereignty (and ultimately Statehood) in the overwhelming majority of the Middle East - at the expense of the national rights of minorities, such as the Jews and the Kurds, amongst many others.

The day Israel after was created, war was launched by Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq to destroy Israel. Jordan occupied Judea and Samaria. In the Six-Day war in 1967 Israel won back the West bank and much more territory. Israel unified Jerusalem, and tried to negotiate 'land for peace'. It imposed de facto occupation on the West Bank and Gaza - a political and military compromise. This has created a complex matrix of legal regimes (Jordanian, Ottoman, Israeli...) that has satisfied no-one and resulted in an appalling degradation of the dignity of the Arab Palestinian people. Major Jewish cities and towns have been built, and a 'dual' legal system has developed with different legal regimes for Israelis and non-Isrealis.

Unfortunately, the Israeli government over the last 50 years has not explained clearly on what basis it considers it has a valid claim to sovereignty over Judea and Samaria, preferring to use language like sovereignty being 'in abeyance'.

In this apparent legal vacuum, since 1973 many countries have developed a policy that all the territories outside the 1949 Armistice Lines (the 'Green Line') are 'Palestinian', and none can (without the Palestinians' consent) form part of the State of Israel. This 'two state' policy was introduced after the Yom Kippur War. It is a policy based on political expedience. It distorts international law and fails to take account of the facts.

International law forbids acquisition of territory by force. But an act to incorporate territory is illegal only if (a) the affected territory belongs to another State, and (b) the acquisition results from use of force against the territorial integrity of another state. Neither of these conditions applies to the 'West Bank':



Panoramic view to Israeli security fence near Jerusalem separating West Bank territory. | Photo: Shutterstock

The 'West Bank' is not 'Palestinian Territory'

The Palestinian people have a right to self-determination, but they do not have a legal right to Statehood or territorial sovereignty. There is no State of Palestine according to normal international law rules (even the ICC Prosecutor agrees with that).

It is Israel that has the strongest claim to sovereignty over the territory of the West Bank. According to the normal rules of international law, this follows from the Mandate for Palestine (1922) - a treaty ratified by all 51 League of Nations member states.

The day Israel after was created, war was launched by Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq to destroy Israel.

Since 1948, Israel has never relinquished its sovereign rights, and no international tribunal has ever made a determination about the sovereign status of these territories (not even the International Court of Justice). Neither should the United Nations or anyone else.

No Illegal Use of Force

Israel has also never used unjustified force in order to acquire territory from another State, nor to acquire territory claimed by the Palestinians. Israel's use of force in 1967 (when it acquired control of the West Bank) was defensive and entirely justified.

Israel's obligation to negotiate is not open-ended. Arab states have rejected land for peace offers since June 1967. The PLO has rejected several concrete offers of Statehood (e.g. 2000 and 2008), while manipulating the international institutions (UN and ICC) to obtain political recognition of its claimed sovereignty over the whole West Bank territory, inciting terror and hatred of Jews, and denying Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State - all in breach of Israel's territorial integrity and security and the Oslo Accords themselves. Israel's extension of its civil laws would be a justified response to the PLO's continuous and blatant non-implementation of the Oslo Accords.

Applying Israeli sovereignty to parts of the 'West Bank' may or may not be a good idea. But, like it or not, Israel is also a sovereign state. The normal rules of international law determine its territory. The international community simply doesn't get to decide the borders of states on the basis of what they think is morally right or politically sensible.

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ReThinking our Relationship 2020

■ **Joanna Moss**

NZ Friends of Israel | Wellington

September brought the UN back in session in New York although remotely. It conjures up images of General Assembly debates, the Security Council and anti-Israel resolutions. It is the 75th session of the UN General Assembly beginning with a special event on 21 September themed on the topic of: "the Future we want and the UN we need". It's hard to envisage a future when the UN focuses more on global problems and less on passing anti-Israel resolutions, but that's what is needed and we live in hope.

Springtime and election time are great times to reflect upon the nature of our relationship with Israel and look for ways to bolster the connection. Whilst we may think that the diplomatic relationship totally dominates the relationship, there's more to the story. So what does it really look like? What could it look like?

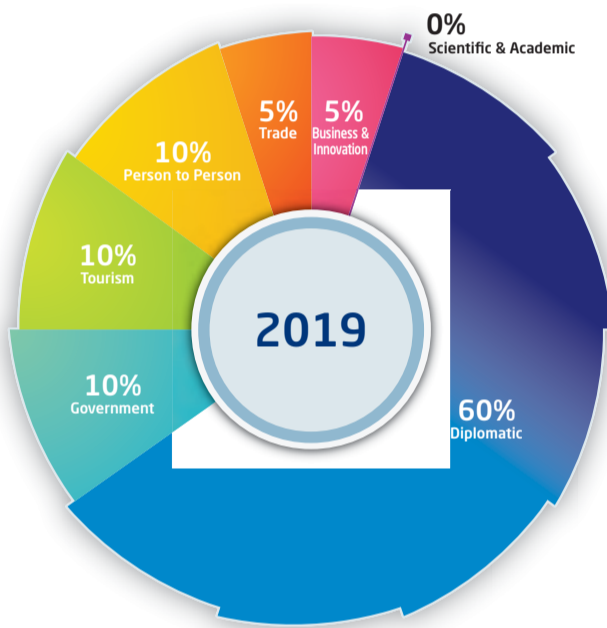
result of leverage from an existing Australian relationship where trade and business deals expanded exponentially since 1980 based on a solid foundation. Having Israelis resident in New Zealand is a good starting point as they can use their skills and knowledge to develop links.

Physical trade may not change a great deal, but we can certainly build up the business and innovation component. Let me ask you a question. Do you have an Israeli product in your home? Can you tell people about Israeli products available for sale in NZ? Perhaps you might point to Israeli foods in the Grey's Ave deli in Auckland or the Dixon Street Deli or Jewish Coop in Wellington? Just recently a friend told me about the Keter range that he had discovered in Mitre 10. He was most complimentary about the design and functionality. Keter started out in Jaffa in the very early days of statehood and manufacture a range of well-designed outdoor furniture made from resin. Today they manufacture in 29 plants

Israel has some impressive universities and research centres. Currently NZ is almost covid-free making us a desirable destination. Given most academics and researchers are quite comfortable speaking and communicating in English, the collaboration possibilities exist especially given that we already have Israeli academics on staff in NZ universities.

It all comes down to the human component. This is something we don't tend to appreciate or value. Yet it is quite significant. If we are to build our connections with Israel, it will start with the people. Where there's a will there's a way. What can you do? Remember we are both small nations with flexible, problem solving ways. When the Americans came here during WWII they went back to the US with fond memories and understanding that shaped the NZ-American relationship as many went on to become governors, senators and businessmen who pushed NZ's case. Let's hope the same happens with the Israelis.

The diplomatic relationship lays down the foundation. Get this wrong and it sours the whole relationship. The last few verses of our national anthem remind us of our purpose as a nation. Interestingly, nations' van refers to the UN and other international forums like the International Criminal Court. Yet interestingly, these were not in existence when it was written. We are to be loving towards other nations and to speak truth. Isn't it time to see this anthem being worked out especially in relation to Israel.



2019: How You Saw the Relationship

There is always a gap between the perceived and the reality causing over-emphasis of the **diplomatic** due to media coverage etc and an under-representation of the **person-to-person** segment. Remember the New Zealand Government plays a larger role in our economy compared to other nations. So combined, these two segments are significant. Over time they should diminish as others increase.

2020-2022: How It Could Be

Closer examination allows us to re-evaluate the relationship providing a lesser role given to **diplomatic** and a greater role to **person-to-person** based on the historic visitor numbers and ties. The future provides the opportunity to strengthen other segments, even if the border is closed. But it will take a lot of effort, not just on the part of the respective Embassies.

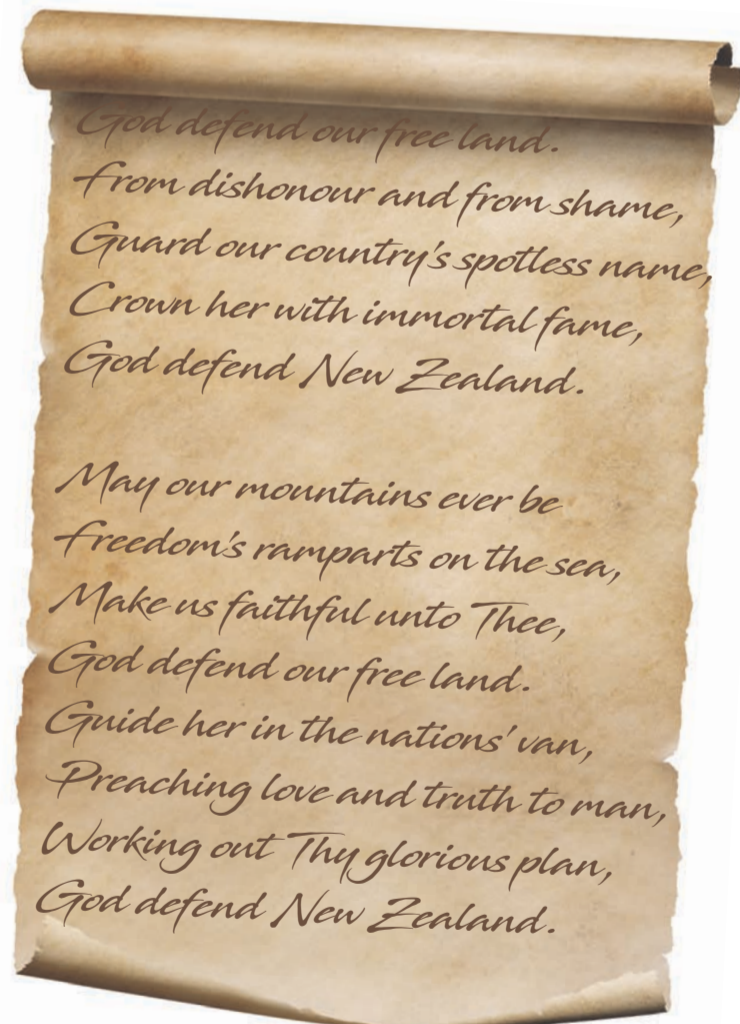
The diplomatic relationship makes headlines because it's reported and played out in a public way whereas the government relationship can be quite hidden, but remains nonetheless important. It covers such things as security threats, technology deals, cyber security, film deals, pensions, taxation, tariffs all the way to postal and freight arrangements.

In some countries like Asian countries, the dominant issue is trade. The diplomats pave the way, but their efforts are quickly dwarfed by private sector involvement. Most countries want to trade with Israel and we want this to be an important part of our relationship. But it will take people with a real interest in Israel and the wherewithal to develop it. Relationship building will take people keen on both sides to do it and perhaps come as a

and sell products globally. You can also view the range at Bunnings or on line. So do take a look and be on the lookout for other Israeli products to promote.

At the moment tourism is dead, but it has been a significant part of the relationship for some time. Over the last 20 years or more, Kiwis have been hosting thousands of Israelis in their homes and making ongoing connections. These tourists wanted to engage with Kiwis, they were not just sightseers. A lot of good will has been created as well as mutual understanding. In return Kiwis have had memorable trips to Israel and developed and/or extended friendships there.

Other areas of potential collaboration lie in the scientific and academic arenas. This could be in joint ventures, research, direct university links and sabbaticals.



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A Day in the Life of Israeli Politics

■ Rob Berg

President | Zionist Federation of New Zealand

There is the well-known phrase that 'a day is a long time in politics'. It would seem in Israel, an hour is a long time!

In the Jewish Calendar we are about to approach *Rosh HaShanah* and the start of the Hebrew year 5781. Unsurprisingly, in Israel, more emphasis of new beginnings is put on the Jewish New Year as opposed to the start of the Gregorian one, and many will be pleased to see the end of 5780.

Not only have there been two elections in 5780 (the first of the three recent elections was in April 2019 which was the Hebrew year 5779), but like the rest of the world Israel has had to contend with the Covid-19 in addition to the ever present possibility of a fourth election, a Palestinian Authority who seem to want anything other than peace with Israel, and the prospect of Prime Minister Netanyahu being convicted of bribery, deception and breach of trust. And that doesn't even include the ever-present threat of war and the re-ignition (pun intended) of the fire bombs being sent over to Israel from Gaza, the intent of which to cause an environmental disaster for Israel, and the potential to maim or kill Israelis living by the Gaza border.

Israel's Knesset (parliament) is 100% proportional representation, and since its inception has never had a government made up on one party. Different configurations of proportional representation have been attempted, and there have been a few National Unity governments, but the end result is the small parties hold a lot of power, disproportionate to their size, and a government that never quite knows when it may fall or if it will see out its full four-year term. The current government, the 23rd Knesset, is also not without its own challenges.

The Knesset is made up of 120 seats and the current government is a 'National Unity' government of sorts. The agreement between the two major factions, Likud (Benjamin Netanyahu) and Blue and White (Benny Gantz) will see Gantz, an ex-IDF Chief of Staff, take over as Prime Minister after two years. However, many in Israel and many commentators are sceptical as to whether or not this will actually happen. Gantz is a novice in political terms and many, including his original 'coalition' partners on the Blue and White slate, have become increasingly frustrated with him. Their trust was significantly eroded when he went into government with Netanyahu after stating throughout the last three campaigns that he would never go into government with Netanyahu. However, Covid-19 hit Israel, and Gantz



Benjamin Netanyahu (L) and Benny Gantz (R)

declared for the sake of Israel's response to the pandemic, that a national unity government was in Israel's best interests, even if that meant partnering with Netanyahu.

Netanyahu, Covid-19, Criminal Charges and Peace Agreements

As with most countries, Covid-19 and the Israeli government's response has dominated politics. When Covid-19 first hit Israel, Netanyahu was widely praised both in Israel and abroad in the way they had handled the pandemic. There were even video conference calls between Netanyahu, Scott Morrison and Jacinda Ardern to discuss tactics and the possibility of safe air routes.

Despite the criminal charges, things for Netanyahu were looking good and Covid-19 seemed to be on the way down. Israel, having introduced some of the harshest restrictions in the world, began to ease these to get the economy re-started, but with catastrophic results. Covid-19 has come back with vengeance and Israel is seeing record numbers of daily infections. With the High Holidays coming up this does not bode well, and with unemployment at nearly 20%, the economy is in tatters. The large tourist influx for the High Holidays, an important time of year for the hospitality, food and travel industry in Israel, is now a mere dream.

Add the discontent with how Netanyahu has been perceived to have responded to Covid-19 and his pending court case, demonstrations against Netanyahu have rapidly increased in recent weeks from a small group of left-wing activists to a far more broad and large number of Israelis

who feel it is now time for Netanyahu to step down.

However, Netanyahu is unlikely to go anywhere just yet, and he and his supporters will point to his security record, his economic policies pre-COVID and his recent successes with peace with parts of the Arab world. It is no question that the recent peace deal with the UAE, the first peace deal with an Arab country that is peace for peace and not peace for land, is a major breakthrough and a potential game changer. Even since the announcement of the agreement, Kosovo is now looking at a peace deal with an Embassy in Jerusalem, and Serbia is moving its Embassy to the Capital. As more Arab countries push for full diplomatic ties with Israel, it's hoped that this will force the Palestinians back to the negotiation table before they completely risk missing the boat, but this time with a real desire for peace.

So the big questions facing Israeli politics right now are: Will Netanyahu be convicted of his alleged crimes? Will the current government fall resulting in 4 elections in 18 months? Will Benny Gantz actually get to Prime Minister after two years?

These are just some of the questions facing Israeli politics, and I haven't even touched on the opposition or the Arab Joint List being the third largest party in the current Knesset (so much for apartheid!).

I started by saying an hour is a long time in politics in Israel. Chances are by the time you read this, everything I've written would have changed!

Alzheimers Centre During Covid-19

■ Bryce Turner

Executive Director | Christians for Israel New Zealand

As of late September, Israel remains in the grip of its second lockdown to try and prevent the spread of Covid-19. With over 230,000 cases, around 160,000 recovered, and nearly 1500 deaths, the population of approximately 9 million has been hit extremely hard. Currently ranked 24th in the world for Covid-19 impact, the population is battling to come to terms with the new normality of being locked down.

Whilst the Covid-19 lockdown measures have severely restricted the activities of most citizens; there are still the inevitable essential services that must carry on. Even putting in place as many protective measures as possible, there is still an increased risk to those essential workers. Even more challenging is the role of looking after some of the most vulnerable members of society, those who are unable to look after themselves.

The incredible team at the Israel Alzheimers Centre face that increased risk every day. Working with patients who are often unable to understand the use of masks or the extra hygiene procedures, and with many who are unable to vocalise their fears and concerns, creates even more need for the dedication, commitment and patience that the staff

Even more challenging is the role of looking after some of the most vulnerable members of society...

team bring every day. While social contact with the outside world is even more difficult, the role of the staff team members becomes even more critical; are not only they the caregivers and medical professionals but also the friends and support, the social lifeline with the outside world.

Nitai Eliash and his amazing team continue to take care of their patients. As a charitable trust, the hospital has to seek additional support in order to increase its capacity and service to those affected by Alzheimers and dementia. Christians for Israel New Zealand, together with supporters all over New Zealand, have committed to raising sponsorship to buy an ultrasound bladder scanner. This excellent piece of equipment will assist with the monitoring of patients who are unable to vocalise their pain or discomfort, alleviating the need for more painful and invasive procedures – often involving catheterisation.

If you would like to support this special project, please use the coupon on the back page (*Israel Alzheimer's Centre: Bladder Scanner*), and we will get it to Nitai and his fantastic team.



Holocaust Memorials at Yad Vashem

In this new regular column, we look at Holocaust memorials at Yad Vashem. Each issue, we will feature a different memorial and tell the story and message behind each one. We thank Mikaela Hood from Villa Maria College in researching and writing each article.

The Hall of Remembrance

The Hall of Remembrance was Yad Vashem's first Holocaust commemoration site proudly opened in 1961. This monumental structure made from basalt boulders, from the Sea of Galilee, is centrally located at Yad Vashem, Mt Remembrance. As you enter this dark, windowless, cave-like building, the eternal flame softly illuminates the hall. This cold and uninviting setting is offset by the light which creeps in between the walls and the roof, evoking a sense, that even in the darkest moments there is light. Around the hall, the names of the death camps, infamous concentration camps and killing sites are carved into the rough concrete floor. Beneath this floor, lies a crypt which now houses the ashes of Holocaust victims. The Hall of Remembrance serves as Yad Vashem's premier site for memorial ceremonies and where leaders and ambassadors lay a wreath during official visits to Israel.



Book Review

By Pastor Nigel Woodley

Holocaust Exposed (Explored):

The Biblical Account of the Jewish Tragedy

By Pastor Nigel Woodley

The question of the twentieth century is answered in Holocaust Exposed (printed) and Holocaust Explored (eBook). The book is a first in that it offers a comprehensive Biblical account and answer to the greatest tragedy in human history. Whereas many have spoken before on the horrors of the Holocaust, this book allows the Keeper of Israel to have His say. The lessons of the Holocaust can only be fully understood in the light of the Holy Scriptures. This book will teach you:

- The tragedy was no surprise to the prophets of Israel.
- The outrage that occurred was not because of divine retribution against the Jews, but rather it was a sinister plot of satanic forces wanting to destroy the embryonic Jewish State before it was born.
- The death throes of a people became the birth pains of their statehood.
- The resurrection of Israel in 1948 heralded the soon return of Jesus Christ.
- And much more...

The book is about the modern journey of the Jewish people and their plight during the Nazi Holocaust of Hitler's Europe. It covers the period from the end of the nineteenth century; particularly focuses on the turbulent years of the

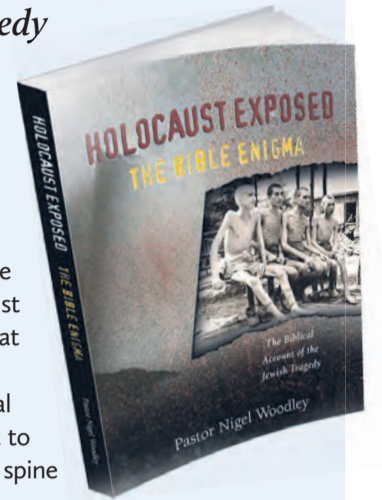
Second World War; and beyond.

The reader is given a good grounding of the events that led up to the Holocaust; the Holocaust itself; and the events that followed it. Sound facts and figures, and personal testimonies, add weight to the subject matter. The spine that holds everything together is the prophetic Scripture of the Bible.

The book was published in 2009, commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War.

"The ground that was soaked with so much Jewish blood has become sacred ground. The era of this enormous tragedy has also become sacred. I have received a mandate from Heaven to report comprehensively on what God has to say about that era. It is my duty to God to report on the Holocaust from His book" – Pastor Nigel Woodley (Author).

You can purchase the hard copy or eBook here:
<https://fortheProtectionofZion.com/product/holocaust-exposed/>



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The Closing Assembly - Shmini Atzeret

■ Pastor Nigel Woodley

Pastor | Flaxmere Christian Fellowship Church, Hastings

The *Shmini Atzeret*, the closing assembly (*Lev. 23:36*) marking the end of the annual cycle of Biblical feasts, is observed by Jews each year in conjunction with *Simchat Torah* (rejoicing with the Torah). It happens in the Gregorian calendar around October – its Biblical counterpart being the 22nd day of the seventh month – *Tishrei*; which is the day following the seventh day of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles). Coinciding with this closing assembly is the completion of that year's Synagogue Torah reading portions, from *Deuteronomy*, and the beginning of the new portions of Scripture starting in *Genesis*; hence *Simchat Torah* – rejoicing with the Torah.

Traditionally, the closing assembly – *Shmini Atzeret* precedes *Simchat Torah*, which is celebrated the day after in Jewish communities living outside of Israel. *Shmini Atzeret* is a Biblical holiday, whereas as Rabbinic Judaism introduced *Simchat Torah* in the common era (CE). In Israel today, both celebrations – *Shmini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* – are celebrated on the same day as a public holiday. Outside of Israel, Jews celebrate *Shmini Atzeret* on the 22nd of *Tishrei*, and *Simchat Torah* the following day. To save any confusion, the following chart should help bring clarification:

OBSERVANCE	TABERNACLES (SUKKOT)	SHMINI ATZERET	SIMCHAT TORAH
7th Month	Booths – 7 days	Eighth Day	Rejoicing with the Law
Within Israel:	15 to 21 Tishrei	22nd Tishrei	22nd Tishrei
Outside Israel:	15 to 21 Tishrei	22nd Tishrei	23rd Tishrei

Shmini Atzeret is the closing assembly marking the completion not only of Tabernacles but also of that year's cycle of feasts. These started in the first month with *Pessach* (Passover); continued in the third month with *Shavuot* (Pentecost); and finished in the seventh month with *Sukkot*. All three feasts were the pilgrimage festivals where the Jewish people were commanded to go up to the place chosen by the Lord (Jerusalem) each year and appear before Him (*Exod. 23:14-17*). The closing assembly also marked the change in seasons from summer to winter. All pilgrimage feasts were, in God's wisdom, chosen to take place in the warmer months around summer, and the six-month lull where no pilgrimage feasts took place happened to be around the more unfriendly winter months when travel and pilgrimage were more difficult. The Jewish festivals of *Hanukkah* (December) and *Purim* (March) are biblical feasts of celebration still observed by Jews today; however, whereas as both are biblical and occur outside of the



Western Wall of the Temple in Jerusalem. Many religious Jews in traditional white robes gather for prayer. Morning Sukkot. | Photo: Shutterstock

summer months, yet they are not among the pilgrimage festivals to which Israel was commanded to go up and observe in Jerusalem each year.

The closing assembly marked the change in season between the closing of summer and the beginning of winter. After *Shmini Atzeret*, prayer for the early rains would begin, so that the ground

could be softened for the ploughing needed for sowing into the next year's harvest. It marked not only the end of the biblical cycle of feasts for another year but also the end of the agricultural year. The main harvests had been gathered – grain, grapes, and olives, known popularly in the Bible as 'the grain, new wine and oil'.

All the festivals of the Lord were relative to the harvest. In effect, they were pre-harvest, mid-harvest, and post-harvest celebrations: Passover (*Pessach*) occurred at the beginning of harvest, and no sickle could be taken to the standing grain until first a sheaf had been waved before the Lord as an offering at the time of Passover (*Lev. 23:14, Deut. 16:9*). Pentecost (*Shavuot*) means weeks and was so named because a week of weeks (49 days) was counted from the time of the aforementioned wave offering until the fiftieth day when they were to bring their offering of first-fruits before the Lord. Tabernacles was the last of the festival offerings commemorating the end of the harvest. The pilgrimage festivals and offerings were a wonderful way of

acknowledging the Lord of the harvest, "who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest" (*Jeremiah 5:24 NIV*).

Each of the pilgrimage festivals have their commemorative significance. Passover commemorated their deliverance and redemption from Egypt through the blood of the lamb. Pentecost coincides with and therefore commemorates the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. Tabernacles commemorated their living in temporary booths and shelters during their desert wandering for forty years.

Each of the festivals were prophetic. Passover was a shadow which had been cast prophetically from the future Passover Lamb Jesus, who would deliver and redeem mankind from his slavery to sin. Pentecost was a shadow of the first fruits of the Spirit, which was to be poured out upon all flesh – so that the law of God would now be written not on tablets of stone, but upon tablets of human hearts. Tabernacles, after the full harvest had been brought in, is a shadow being cast from a more future reality, perhaps when "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (*Revelation 21:3 KJV*).

A possibility for what the closing assembly – *Shmini Atzeret* – could mean prophetically: whereas the NIV calls it the 'closing assembly', the KJV calls it 'a solemn assembly'. It could therefore be a shadow of the more solemn appearance of human beings before a 'great white throne' (*Rev. 20:11*), after which the unrighteous 'will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life' (*Matt. 25:46*).

ADF International to UN: NZ's Euthansia Bill 'Alarming'

GENEVA (23 September 2020) – At a dialogue with the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons, ADF International delivered a statement on the dangers for the elderly when euthanasia is legalised. The international human rights organisation drew attention to the coming referendum on the legalisation of euthanasia in New Zealand. It addressed the threats it would pose to the elderly and vulnerable.

"A fair and just society cares for its most vulnerable. The potential impact that the legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide via the End of Life Choice Act of 2019 would have on older persons in New Zealand is deeply alarming. While the eligibility requirements are supposedly strict, the experience of other countries, where the practice is permitted, shows that once the door is open to intentional killing, there is no logical stopping point. If human dignity becomes linked to a person's state of health or self-determination, it loses its inherent and

objective character. Legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide will further increase social pressure on the elderly, who may be led to believe that their lives are 'completed' and 'no longer worth living,'" said Giorgio Mazzoli, Legal Officer, United Nations for ADF International.

The Reality of Euthanasia Laws for Society

Belgium serves as an example for the negative effects euthanasia can have on society. The country legalised euthanasia in 2002. In 2014, the law was amended to include children with no lower age limit. The youngest child to be euthanised in Belgium was only nine years old. Between 2003 and 2018 the number of people euthanised grew by about 1000%.

Just recently, ADF International submitted what could be the final legal arguments on behalf of Tom Mortier in his case against Belgium at the European Court of Human Rights. The case is Mr Mortier's last chance to seek

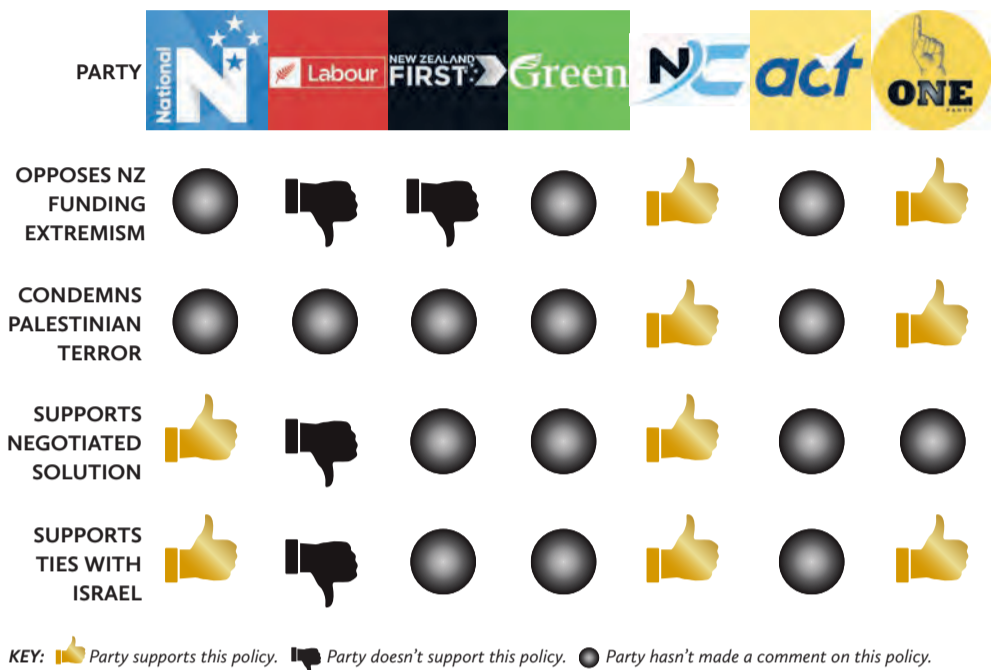
justice for the loss of his mother, who was euthanised by lethal injection in 2012. ADF International argues that the Belgian euthanasia law fails to protect the fundamental right to life.

"International law has never established a so-called 'right to die.' On the contrary, it solidly affirms the right to life – particularly for the most vulnerable among us. One look at the tragic facts of Tom Mortier's case exposes the lie that euthanasia is good for society. The sick, suffering, elderly, and vulnerable in our society deserve the utmost respect and care. The detrimental effects of euthanasia on individuals and society have become very clear in countries that have already gone down this path. There is nothing progressive about a society that refuses to care for its most vulnerable members. We strongly encourage New Zealand to take a step in the right direction," said Robert Clarke, Deputy Director of ADF International and lead counsel for Tom Mortier.



2020 Voters' Guide for Israel Supporters

In conjunction with the Israel Institute of New Zealand, we've put together a brief guide for the upcoming election, rating each party on four categories relating to policy toward Israel. Here's how they stack up (graphic, with explanations below). For more information about anything in this guide, go to <https://bit.ly/2020VotersGuide>.



THE ISSUES

Oppose Funding Extremism New Zealand gives at least \$1m to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which has been found to employ staff who have praised Hitler, denied the Holocaust, glorified terror, and incited violence on social media. UNRWA also runs schools that use textbooks which the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination said "fuels hatred and may incite violence". We looked to see if any party had voiced opposition to Kiwi tax dollars funding this extremism.

Condemn Terror There have been periods of intense attacks on Israel, including hundreds of missile attacks, flaming kites, and violent riots from Gaza; and stabbing, shooting, and explosive attacks by Arab Palestinians from Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). There has also been clear incitement to terror from Arab Palestinian leaders, including the 'pay to slay' policy of the Palestinian Authority (the PA financially rewards Palestinians and/or their families for the murder of Israeli civilians). We looked to see if any political party has condemned these terror acts or incitement.

Support Negotiated Solution It is widely acknowledged that a just and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is likely to only come from direct negotiations. We looked to see what position each political party took in this regard.

Support Ties With Israel The modern state of Israel has, in the past 72 years, made the desert bloom and become an international leader in agri-tech, medicine, cyber-security, green-tech, food-tech, and other fields. The innovation agreement (and associated 'landing pad' in Tel Aviv) between Australia and Israel is estimated to contribute to bilateral trade worth approximately \$2b annually. We looked to see if New Zealand political parties had expressed a desire for closer ties with Israel.

PARTY POSITIONS

National Party National has not made any comment on New Zealand funding extremism; nor has National has mentioned Palestinian terror or the incitement to terror from Palestinian leaders. However, the party has apologised for their role in UNSC2334, showing a willingness to encourage a negotiated solution rather than pressuring only one side to make concessions. And National MPs have indicated they would like to have a NZ embassy in Israel (rather than the ambassador being based in Turkey), clearly showing a desire for closer relations.

Labour Party The Israel Institute of New Zealand has contacted Prime Minister Ardern about New Zealand funding extremism and she has failed to respond. Labour has not mentioned Palestinian terror or the incitement to terror from Palestinian leaders. One of their MPs has, however, expressed support for the discriminatory BDS campaign. BDS singles out Israel for opprobrium and is incompatible with a negotiated solution. When confronted by the Israel Institute of New Zealand, Labour leaders condoned the MP's support. Even if the stated policy of Labour is to support a negotiated solution, their actions speak louder. This also speaks to Labour's desire for closer relations with Israel.

New Zealand First The Israel Institute of New Zealand has contacted Foreign Minister Peters about New Zealand funding extremism and he has failed to respond. NZ First has not mentioned Palestinian terror or the incitement to terror from Palestinian leaders. Nor have they made any comment about a possible solution to the conflict or NZ-Israel relations.

Green The Green party has not made any comments on any of the issues canvassed in this guide. However, there is a history, beyond the last election, of antagonism toward Israel. For example, in 2016 Marama Davidson joined the 'Freedom Flotilla' publicity stunt to 'end the blockade' of Gaza - essentially in aid of Hamas. More recently, Golriz Ghahraman falsely suggested Israel was committing 'genocide' and 'apartheid' and falsely said Jesus' mother was a Palestinian. Although, James Shaw did very recently clearly condemn the antisemitism inherent in the BDS campaign.

Act Act has not made any comments on any of the issues canvassed in this guide. However, Act responded to the Israel Institute of New Zealand to say while they do not comment on international affairs, they are supportive of Israel. Act leader, David Seymour has hosted the Israeli ambassador on a number of occasions and made a point of meeting him following his return after NZ co-sponsored UNSC 2334.

New Conservative The New Conservative Party has a clear policy position on Israel. They have committed to NZ withdrawing funding of UNRWA, partly based on its promotion of extremism; New Conservatives have clearly stated their opposition to terror against Israel, expressed support for a negotiated solution, and clearly stated their desire for a New Zealand embassy in Jerusalem.

One Party One Party has clearly said they will stop the use of Kiwi tax-payer money "funding UNRWA, which is implicated in fostering antisemitism and encouraging radicalism, until there is evidence of reform." One Party has also clearly condemned terror against Israel and have pledged to designate Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Hezbollah as terrorist entities. While they have not stated a view on a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, One Party strongly supports closer ties, including a New Zealand embassy in Jerusalem and stronger trade ties.

Through a Lens of Israel Relations

Dr David Cumin

Director | The Israel Institute of New Zealand

A lot can happen in one year and there's no better example of that than 2020. So the refrain of 'They had nine years' used in the previous election to advocate a change of government resonated quite well from the perspective of NZ-Israel relations. New Zealand had continued to join the bullies and vote disproportionately against Israel at the United Nations; no Minister spoke out against any of the terror attacks against Israel; our government continued to give money to UNRWA, which incites violence and teaches Arab Palestinian children to hate Jews; and there was, of course, the infamous co-sponsorship of UNSC 2334 by National MP, Murray McCully, acting as Foreign Minister. Sadly, the 52nd government of New Zealand has had a dismal record when it comes to Israel. Kiwis are still able to materially support Hezbollah and Hamas because they

aren't designated as terror entities; our tax money still goes to incitement via UNRWA; and there has still been no Ministerial statement condemning terror against Israel - whether the arson attacks from Gaza or any of the murders by Arab Palestinians coming from Judea and Samaria. And the deviations from continuing egregious policy have not been good.

The Labour party has condoned one of their MPs actively promoting the discriminatory Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign against Israel. The same MP, Dr Duncan Webb, hosted a lunch for the Kiwi who joined the 'flotilla' stunt in aid of Hamas, accused 'a strong Zionist Jewish lobby' of controlling US politics, and opposed Wellington City Council adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism.



Dr Megan Woods – Minister for Housing, Research, Science & Development, Energy & Resources and Ambassador Dr Itzhak Gerberg, Israeli Ambassador to NZ, after signing an agreement on Cooperation in Technological Innovation, Research & Development, 5 March 2020. | Photo: Embassy of Israel in NZ

Continued on page 7



The Glorious Relationship with God

An Overview of the Tabernacle - Part 5

■ Alison Marshall

Tour Guide | Timna Park | Israel

One day a year (Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur), the High Priest would enter through the third veil into the Holy of Holies, with hot holy coals, incense, and blood. *Lev.16.*

This veil had golden Cherubim embroidered on it. A picture, or reminder, of the Cherubim God, placed East of Eden guarding the way back to the tree of Life. *Ex.26:31; Gen.3:24.*

Inside this innermost chamber was the Ark of the Covenant; a wooden box covered with gold and a solid gold lid, with two gold Cherubim at either end facing each other. *Ex.25:10-22; Ex.26:34; Ex.37:1-9.* Here the glory of God came to dwell. *Ex.29:43; Ex.40:34-35.* It was a picture of God's throne in heaven, where He sits enthroned above the cherubim. *Ps.80:1; 99:1; Is.37:16; 1 Chron.13:6; 1 Sam.4:4; 2 Sam.6:2; 2 Kings 19:15.* God had told Moses that when it was built, He would come and speak to Moses from between the Cherubim. *Ex.25:22; Nu.7:89.*

Inside the Ark was the second copy of the two stone tablets of the law that God had written. *Ex.25:21; Deut.10:1-5; 1 Kings 8:9.* The original tablets had been thrown down and broken at the base of Mt. Sinai when Moses found the children of Israel had broken their covenant with God by worshipping a golden calf idol. *Ex.32:19; Deut.9:10-17.* These tablets were a testimony to The Word of God.

Outside and in front of the Ark was a golden bowl of Manna to remind the people of the bread with which God fed them in the wilderness, the bread from heaven, which was God's provision. *Ex.16:32-34.*

Also, outside and in front of the Ark was Aaron's rod, with his name on it, that budded and fruited overnight to prove that God had chosen Aaron as High priest. *Nu.17:1-11.* The rod was a dead stick that came to life overnight. It is a clear symbol of resurrection; a testimony that Aaron was God's choice. *Nu.17:8* says it budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds, all at the same time. The almond tree is the first fruit tree to blossom every spring, and the last fruit tree to set its fruit around nine months later. This makes it a symbol of first and last.

God's people were shut away from His presence. The Cherubim were still guarding the way back to Him, and Life in total fellowship and intimate relationship with Him, as it was in the Garden of Eden. *'but into the second [inner Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies], only the high priest enters [and then only] once a year, and never without [bringing a sacrifice of] blood, which he offers [as a substitutionary atonement] for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. By this, the Holy Spirit signifies that the way into the Holy Place [the true Holy of Holies and the presence of God] has not yet been disclosed as long as the first or outer Tabernacle is still standing'* *Heb.9:7-8.*

The High priest would, once a year, represent the people and enter the inner sanctuary with blood to atone for, cleanse from, and take away the sin that was separating



Photo (above) showing what the Ark of the Covenant, and (below) the Ten Commandments with Aaron's budded staff may have looked like inside the Holy of Holies.

them from God. It was a picture, a foreshadowing, of what God had planned to finish once and for all. He Himself would come and atone, cleanse, and take away sin forever. To make us anew, a new creation without the inbuilt iniquity, so that He can be in a glorious relationship with us. *'Therefore if anyone is in Christ [that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior], he is a new creature [reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit]; the old things [the previous moral and spiritual condition] have passed away. Behold, new things have come [because spiritual awakening brings a new life].'* *2 Cor.5:17.*

When Yeshua died on the cross and completed our atonement, cleansing, and taking our sin away; the curtain before the Holy of Holies with the Cherubim was torn from top to bottom. *Matt.27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38; Luke 23:45-46.* God removed the Cherubim guards that He had put there, and now the way is open for us to return to His presence In the Messiah. It is a representation of the torn body of the Messiah, that we may now enter in. *'by this new and living way which He initiated and opened for us through the veil [as in the Holy of Holies], that is, through His flesh,' Heb.10:20.*

The Ark represented God's earthly throne, and the items associated with it represented the Messiah and are listed as being inside the Ark. *Hebrews 9:3-5.* Even the incense altar is spoken as if it was in the Holy of Holies. My take on this is that the curtain was gone so yes, the golden altar is in front of the Ark. The stone tablets, Manna, and the rod that budded, all together represent Yeshua.

- The Word of God. *John 1:1-5 & 14.*
- The Bread from Heaven. *John 6:35 & 38.*
- The Almond Rod (raised from the dead). He is The Resurrection and The Life. *John.11:25; Acts 2:29-32;*



Rom.1:3-4. After completing His mission as the Pure Passover Lamb of God, He was raised from the dead, the seal of God's choice of Messiah. *Is.26:19; Matt.22:31-32; Luke 20:35-38; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:2, 10; Acts 10:41-43.*

- The Almond Rod (first to flower; last to fruit) The First and the Last! Christ is called the first fruit from the dead. *1 Cor.15:20, 23;* He is also called the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning, and the End. *Rev.1:8, 11; Rev.21:6; Rev.22:13.*

The Holy items, as God asked them to be placed in the Tabernacle, form a cross on the ground; therefore, you could say that The Cross is the foundation of the Tabernacle. These Holy Items had to be carried by hand, *Nu.4:15,* never on an ox cart; Christ carried His own cross. *John 19:16-17.*

Such a great price, God paid to be able to bring us back into an intimate relationship with Him, never to be separated again. Hallelujah.

Alison Marshall is a New Zealand born believer in Jesus and has been a Tour Guide for the Tabernacle in the Wilderness since 1999 at Timna Park in Israel. www.berean-to-berean.com

Continued from page 6

Through a Lens of Israel Relations

There was also a Green MP who made comments about Israel that the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand called 'grotesque', 'reckless', 'inflammatory' and 'fuelling to hate speech'.

The most positive NZ governmental development of the past three years was the signing of an agreement on Cooperation in Technological Innovation, Research and Development. Although work on the agreement was

initiated and largely negotiated by the previous government, it is indeed a welcome development and New Zealand stands to gain much from this opportunity.

The National Party has taken much more positive steps. Leaders have expressed regret at participating in UNSC Res. 2334, whereas only the process that led to it was critiqued in the NZ First-Labour coalition agreement. Two National MPs have also expressed a desire to move the NZ ambassador to Israel from Ankara, Turkey, to Israel. And the Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group was reinvigorated with National MP, Alfred Ngaro, at the helm.

There are also two minor parties - The One Party and New Conservatives - that have emerged with clear and positive policy positions with regard to Israel.

If you want to see a strong NZ-Israel relationship and for New Zealand to be more in line with traditional allies showing true support for Israel, the Israel Institute of New Zealand has created a voters guide summarising party positions on key topics and highlighting MPs deserving of praise and scorn. Check it out and consider your vote carefully - it'll be another three years until the next one and a lot can happen in just one of them.



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Calling Israel Supporters

We occasionally get queries from people who are looking to connect with prayer groups and other Israel supporters in their area. We would like to pass details on to join other like-minded groups. If you would like to help us connect people with other supporters of Israel in your town, please supply your contact details, and become a **C4I Connect**. Please email us on info@c4israel.org.nz, and supply your name, phone and email address. Please put **C4I Connect** in the subject line. Or, complete the response form below and mail it to **Christians for Israel NZ, PO Box 12006, Penrose, Auckland 1642**

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Israel on Trial *By Andrew Tucker*

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Sovereignty is Critical

■ Sondra Baras

Director | Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

Israel liberated Judea and Samaria in 1967, in response to Jordan's unprovoked attack against Israel from that area. However, Israel did not apply sovereignty to this area at the time, unlike its immediate application of sovereignty in Jerusalem, liberated at the same time. Ever since Judea and Samaria have been the subject of negotiations between Israel and various Arab partners. And that, unfortunately, has created a sense among many that Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria is temporary.

From the Oslo Accords to this very day, plans have been put forward to create a Palestinian State in Judea and Samaria. This has created a hesitancy in both the Israeli and the international response to Arab terrorism, which, in turn, has created an even greater impetus for the terrorists to persist, believing that just a bit more pressure will produce the desired withdrawal.

The settlement movement, in contrast, has always been predicated on the belief that history, law and Biblical considerations support Israel's exclusive claim to Judea and Samaria. When Israelis re-established the Jewish community in Hebron in 1968, they were not only returning to an area where Jews had been brutally massacred and driven from the city in 1929, but they were renewing a Jewish presence in a city that had been a Jewish centre since Abraham's time. And it is that notion of return that has fueled the establishment of more than 150 communities throughout Judea and Samaria, numbering close to 500,000 people today.

The application of sovereignty over these areas, therefore, is vital because it is an accurate expression of a reality that already exists. Proposals that consider the establishment of a Palestinian State in Judea and Samaria ignore the reality on the ground, and create an alternative, dream world. But so long as Israel does not apply sovereignty, that dream world will still exist and it will, indeed, fuel ongoing terrorism. Sovereignty is a definitive statement on behalf of the State of Israel that this area will belong to Israel forever. Once that understanding penetrates Arab psyches, most will quit fighting. It will look for ways to live with this reality.

Actually, to some degree this is already happening, as more and more Arabs in the area are openly advocating for Israeli sovereignty, believing their interests will be better served by a democratically-elected Israeli government, which guarantees fundamental human rights to its citizens, as opposed to the very corrupt and dictatorial Palestinian Authority.

Clearly, the Sovereignty movement received an enormous boost by the Trump Administration, which announced



View of the Jewish settlement of Kamei Shomron, in Judea and Samaria. | Photo: Flash90

its support for Israeli application of sovereignty in 30% of Judea and Samaria. In response, Netanyahu promised to apply sovereignty immediately but has not moved forward on this promise to date. Recently, upon the announcement of the UAE agreement with Israel, the United States declared that the sovereignty process was being put on hold. At the same time, Israeli political leaders have announced that the process is being delayed, not cancelled.

Had Netanyahu proceeded with sovereignty as promised, it would never have been halted for the UAE agreement.

Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria is not only the right and just thing to do, but it is the best way to promote true peace in the region. In addition, it will make it much easier to develop available land in the area and expand existing communities. The question is whether we have already squandered an opportunity that may never again return. Had Netanyahu proceeded with sovereignty as promised, it would never have been halted for the UAE agreement. The UAE agreement reflects the

Gulf States' strategic decision to prioritise an alliance with Israel over the Palestinian cause.

The real risk lies with the American elections. If Trump is re-elected, sovereignty will likely move forward shortly after the election. However, Biden is opposed to the very notion of Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. If he becomes president, it is unlikely that the Israeli government would move forward in the face of US opposition. If Biden does win, however, there may still be a window of opportunity. During the last days of Obama's tenure as president, and knowing that Trump was about to reverse his policies towards Israel, he engineered Security Council Resolution 2334, declaring the settlements illegal under international law. If Trump loses the election, he may well rely on this Obama precedent and recognise Israel's application of sovereignty, just before handing over the reins to Biden.

While it is far from certain that sovereignty will be applied in Judea and Samaria, there is no question that it is a step that should be taken. Let us hope that the leaders of Israel and the US have the courage and the wisdom to do the right thing.

Biblical Names

By Kees de Vreugd

Rebecca

Rebecca was a matriarch with a fascinating story. She was the wife of Isaac. They are the first couple of whom the Bible tells that they loved each other. Yet, it was not Isaac himself, but Abraham's servant Eliezer who brought her from Haran in Mesopotamia, somewhere in today's southern Turkey, near the Syrian border, where Abraham's relatives dwelt, to Canaan. Rebecca consents to going with him to be married to Isaac.

In Hebrew, the name is *Rivqah*. There are different explanations for this name. Some connect the name to the word *baqar*, 'cow', if the 'r' is removed. That is not impossible, however.

That happens sometimes. In linguistics, it is called metathesis. In the family, the name 'cow' would not have been out of place. Her nieces have the same sort of names. Rachel means 'sheep', and Leah means 'cow', too.

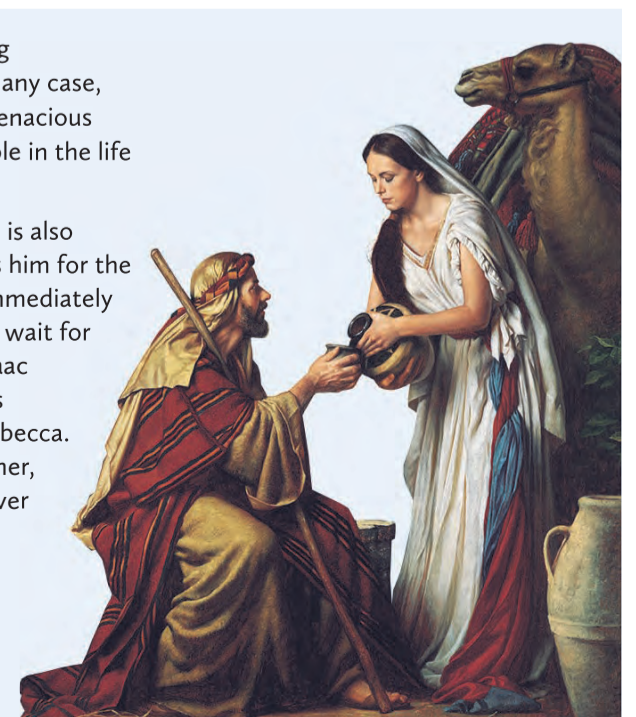
Another explanation of the name is that it is derived from an Arabic word *Qirba* (again a metathesis), which means 'waterbag'. In the context of the story, this is also imaginable. Water is a necessity for human and animal alike. And did she not water Eliezer and his camels?

The last explanation sees a link with the Aramaic word *Ribqa*, which appears in the Talmud. It means 'fattening', but is derived from the verb to tie. So you could also say 'the captivating'. I would

find this the most charming explanation. Rebecca is, in any case, fascinating, and certainly tenacious too, as appears from her role in the life of her son Jacob.

Her relationship with Isaac is also fascinating. When she sees him for the first time, from afar, she immediately stands beside her camel to wait for him, covered in her veil. Isaac brings her in the tent of his mother Sarah and loves Rebecca. After the death of his mother, Rebecca helps him rediscover his joy of living.

Rebecca at the well.
| Image: Micheal Deas



Jewish Festivals

Sukkot

Feast of Tabernacles

3-9 October 2020

Sukkot (Hebrew: *sukkōt*, or *sukkos*, Feast of Booths or Feast of Tabernacles) is a Biblical holiday celebrated on the 15th day of the month of *Tishrei* (late September to late October). It is one of the three Biblically mandated festivals *Shalosh regalim* on which Jews were commanded to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. *Sukkot* begins at sundown on Friday, 2 October 2020 and ends at nightfall on Thursday, 8 October 2020.

Shmini Atzeret

Eighth Day of Assembly

10 October 2020

Shemini Atzeret - the Eighth Day of Assembly is a Jewish holiday. It is celebrated on the 22nd day of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei* (first month of calendar). In the Diaspora, an additional day is celebrated, the second day being separately referred to as *Simchat Torah*. In Israel and Reform Judaism, the holidays of *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* are combined into a single day and the names are used interchangeably. *Shmini Atzeret* begins at sundown on Friday, 9 October 2020 and ends at nightfall on Saturday, 10 October 2020.

Simchat Torah

Day of Celebrating the Torah

11 October 2020

Simchat Torah, *Simhath Torah* or *Simkhes Toreh*, 'Rejoicing with/of the Torah,' is a celebration marking the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle. *Simchat Torah* begins at sundown on Saturday, 10 October 2020 and ends at nightfall on Sunday, 11 October 2020.

Yom HaAliyah

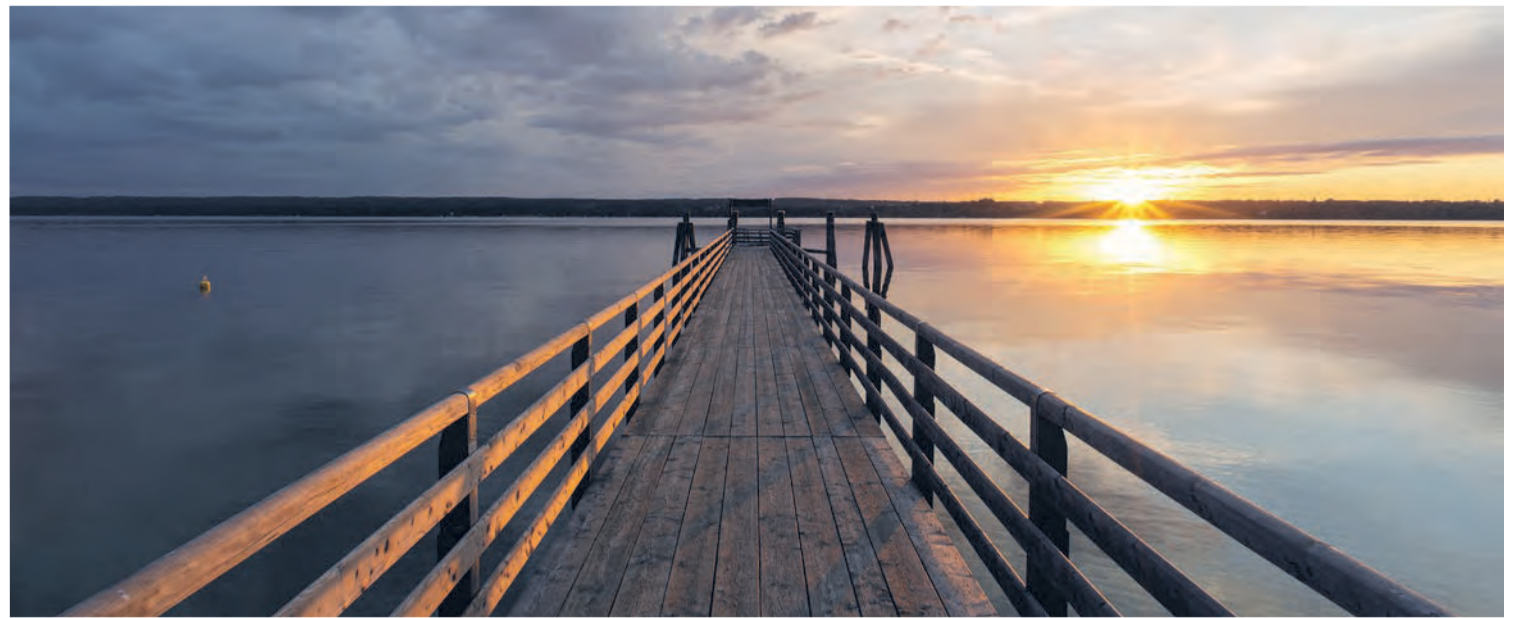
Recognises Aliyah, immigration to the Jewish State of Israel

25 October 2020

Yom HaAliyah (Aliyah Day) is an Israeli national holiday celebrated annually on the seventh of the Hebrew month of *Cheshvan*, to commemorate the historic events which happened on the tenth of the Hebrew month of *Nisan*. The holiday was established to acknowledge Aliyah, immigration to the Jewish state, as a core value of the State of Israel, and honour the ongoing contributions of Olim to Israeli society. *Yom HaAliyah* begins at sundown on Saturday, 24 October 2020 and ends at nightfall on Sunday, 25 October 2020.



By Kees de Vreugd



| Photo: Shutterstock

Harsh Words of Jesus

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

"You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44)

How should you read such a text? Is this not pure anti-Semitism: the Jews have the devil as their father? There are some Bible expositors who pose that the roots of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism lay already in the New Testament. Others say that, in the first instance, the harsh words that are written and spoken in the New Testament about Jews reflect an internal Jewish dispute, whereby tough words are spoken between Jew and Jew.

We have to realise, that, in later times, readers have applied such texts to support their own negative approach to the Jews, even though this may be contrary to the plain meaning of the text.

It is for sure that such texts have been applied in (church) history to legitimate hatred and persecution of Jews. For example, it has often been remarked that Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher, with

an appeal to Martin Luther, called the Jews 'the people of the devil'.

Context

While these words were in the first instance directed at Jesus' Jewish audience, Jesus did not intend them as a general condemnation of the Jewish people as a whole, for all time. We have to consider these words in their immediate context. Who is Jesus talking to? It is remarkable, even astonishing, to realise that John, the evangelist, is recording what he heard Jesus say to "the Jews who had believed [in] Him" (verses 30-31)! So, the ones whom Jesus is addressing in these verses are not those scribes who were trying to lure Him into a trap. He is probably speaking to spiritual leaders: those Jews (Judeans) from Jerusalem who 'believe in Him'.

When He speaks about Himself being 'lifted up' (verse 28), He is referring to His impending death, and when He points to His heavenly Father, He appeals to their belief (verse 30). But while these Jews did believe in Him, apparently it was a belief that was content with just superficial

obedience, that would not cost their lives. Jesus seems to be saying: the 'truth' (verse 32) that a true son of the Father will learn when fulfilling the Torah, goes much further and even leads to death.

It is precisely for people immediately surrounding Him that Jesus often has such sharp words. Peter had a similar experience. 'Satan', Jesus called him once (Matthew 16:23).

And so, these words also say something very important to those who profess to believe in Jesus today (Jews and Gentiles): we may speak beautiful words about Jesus, but do we really know Him? Are we willing to follow Jesus' example as the Son of God and hold to His teachings, even to the point of death?

Instead of provoking us to condemn the Jews as a people, as many Christians have read these words over the centuries, Jesus' harsh words should urge us to self-examination and a deeper commitment to follow His example.

Two Types of Faith

by Martin Buber

In 1950, Martin Buber's book *Zwei Glaubensweisen* (Two Types of Faith) was published. Buber wrote it in Jerusalem during the days of the battle for Jerusalem (1947-1948). Writing it helped him, as he wrote in his foreword, get through the war 'in faith'.

Buber was a Jewish philosopher, born in Vienna (Austria) to an Orthodox Jewish family. He was raised, in Lvov (Ukraine) by his grandfather Solomon Buber, a scholar of Midrash and rabbinic literature, but he returned to Vienna to study philosophy, history and philology. He joined the Zionist movement and was one of the founders of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, founded in 1925. In 1938, he made aliyah and went to live in Jerusalem, where he became a professor at the Hebrew University.

Buber is known for his philosophy of existence as an encounter, which he developed in his book "*I and Thou*". In cooperation with Franz Rosenzweig, he undertook the translation of the Hebrew Bible in German, a project they

called *Verdeutschung* ('Germanification'), as they tried to preserve as much as possible the Hebrew style in German.

As a Jewish thinker, he also showed great interest in the New Testament, and he became one of the foremost intellectuals in the Jewish-Christian encounter. This was already visible in *I and Thou*, but is also evident in *Two Types of Faith*.

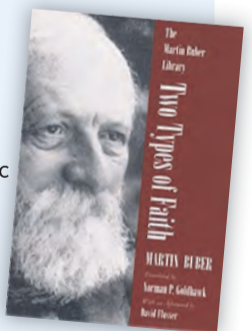
Which are these two types of faith? Buber discerns them in the Hebrew word *Emunah* and the Greek word *Pistis*. *Emunah* (which is related to the word *amen*) means to trust somebody, whereas *Pistis* means to believe something. *Emunah* means to trust the other (or: the Other) without any other motivation outside the Other. Buber describes this as the basic attitude of ancient Israel in the Old Testament and of Jesus. *Pistis* means to accept truth without any other motivation outside that truth. This characterises Greek thinking which influenced early Judaism

and is, according to Buber, a basic tenet in Paul, as well. Thereby, it became characteristic of Christianity. While Buber's view of Jesus as fully Jewish is definitely a critique of pre-World War II German critical New Testament studies, it is a pity that he did not untangle Paul from this frame. Today, we only start to learn to understand Paul from his distinctly Jewish background.

Yet, Buber also implies that both types of faith need each other. As he concludes: an Israel that strives for renewal of her faith by personal rebirth and a Christianity that seeks for renewal of her faith by the rebirth of the nations could tell each other unspoken things.

Buber's works remain a recommended read and are still available and reprinted in English translation.

Available from Amazon. Syracuse University Press; ISBN 978-0815630340



Are Israel's Enemies Also God's Enemies?

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

When we speak about the rise of anti-Semitism and hate against Israel, people sometimes say: 'They cannot capture God, so they capture His people Israel, the pupil of His eye'. I have always had a mixed feeling about that statement. It certainly applies to people who consciously turn against Jews and Israel with violence. However, there are countless Christians around the world who assert that they want to have nothing to do with Israel and who oppose any Israel-theology that advocates Israel's permanent place in God's plan of salvation. These are often very faithful people with love for God and His Son Jesus Christ. Can you then immediately call them enemies of God? That seems a bit extreme to me.

Hiding Israel

My attention, however, was attracted by *Psalm 83* regarding my mixed feeling. That Psalm speaks about people who turn against Israel: 'They have said, 'Come let us wipe them out as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more'. The Hebrew word translated here as 'wipe out' can also be translated as 'hide' or 'disappear out of sight'. The same word also appears in *Hosea 5:3* 'I know Ephraim and Israel is not hidden from Me'. The Lord God here wants to make clear that He is watching His people and that His people are not hidden from Him. Also, in *Psalm 69:5*, we come across this same word: 'O God, it is You who knows my folly, and my wrongs are not hidden from you'. Here again, it is not about wiping out, but about being hidden or not hidden from God. God sees and knows the guilt of the writer of the psalm. The attempt to



| Photo: Pxhere

'wipe out' the people of Israel as described in *Psalm 83* can therefore indicate both a violent attempt to exterminate the Jewish people and the denial and disappearance, concealment, of Israel. Could we, therefore, also think here of Christians? They are endeavouring to deny every significance of Israel and to make Israel's significance disappear from the Church and theology, so that 'Israel's name is remembered no more'. Remarkably, such an attitude towards Israel is described three times in *Psalm 83* as enmity against God Himself. Thus the Psalm poet says in *verse 2*: 'For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, and those who hate You have exalted themselves'.

Your 'enemies' and 'those who hate you' is like repetition using different words. And in *verse 5*, he says: 'Against You, they make a covenant'. In every instance, the psalm poet emphasises that the destruction or concealment of Israel is also inevitably a form of enmity against God. This conclusion sounds harsh, but it is almost inevitable. The prophet Zechariah already wrote that whoever touches Israel touches the pupil of God's eye. God remains eternally faithful to his people and has a great plan for the future with Israel. And so we turn directly against God Himself when we try to make Israel, in whatever way, disappear from the attention of the Church and of the nations.

Orphans - Part I

■ Mandy Worby

Christians for Israel Australia

James 1:26-27, "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

Aristotle the philosopher; Cyrus the Great; President Andrew Jackson; Nelson Mandela activist and former president of South Africa; First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; Malcolm X; John Keats the poet; writers Edgar Allan Poe, Leo Tolstoy and JRR Tolkien; musicians Louis Armstrong, Johann Sebastian Bach, Ray Charles, Ella Fitzgerald, Faith Hill, John Lennon and Tina Turner, Mark Schultz; entertainers Ingrid Bergman and Carol Burnett; Samuel Goldwyn the movie mogul; Lee Majors, Marilyn Monroe and Orson Welles; Babe Ruth the baseball player; Bertrand Russell the philosopher; Johannes Kepler the scientist; Apple founder Steve Jobs and Vidal Sasson, the beauty products magnate; fictional characters Frodo Baggins, Tom Sawyer, Oliver Twist, Cinderella, Jane Eyre, Huckleberry Finn, Pollyanna and Anne of Green Gables. Luke Skywalker of Star Wars, Mowgli of Jungle Book, Snow White, Superman, Tarzan and Wolverine...and my mother!

What do all these characters have in common? They were all orphans.

The Hebrew word for orphan is *'yatom'*, and it means 'fatherless'. During Biblical times if a child had a mother but no father, the child was considered to be an orphan because, during that time period, single-parent families were predominantly impoverished because the men were the breadwinners and not many women worked outside the home. Without the breadwinner, single mothers and their children were at the mercy of other people's generosity.



| Photo: Shutterstock

So, those who were 'fatherless' were considered orphans.

Today, especially in our western nations, there are greater provisions for single-parent families, and children with only one parent are not considered orphans at all, despite the fact that 'fatherless' children are becoming incredibly common...unfortunately.

How Does God Regard Orphans?

All through the Old Covenant Scriptures God warned His people not to oppress or afflict orphans and widows; these most vulnerable members of society were supposed to be defended and protected against corruption and malice and were to be protected against those who would target them to rip them off and manipulate them.

Exodus 22:22, 'You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.'

Deuteronomy 10:18, 'He (God) executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.'

Deuteronomy 24:20-21, 'When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow.'

Deuteronomy 27:19, 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan and widow. And all the people shall say, "Amen".'

We'll continue learning about orphans next time.

Burning Bright



The ancient Magdala stone with menorah relief found in the synagogue. | Photos: Shutterstock



Ruins of Migdala (Hebrew: Migdal) near the Sea of Galilee. | Photos: Shutterstock

Kay Wilson
Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

There is always construction going on in Israel, whether it be to house new Jewish immigrants coming from the four corners of the world, or infrastructure needed for a thriving economy. It was during the clearing of the ground to lay the foundations of a hotel that the ancient town of Migdal was discovered.

Migdal that is mentioned in ancient Jewish sources is on the northwest side of the Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). In Hebrew, it was called Migdal Nunya, meaning 'fish tower.' The Greek was 'the place of salting the fish.' These names were chosen because it was famous for a tower that stood in the middle of the town. Fish that had been caught in the lake were salted and stored in the tower before being exported as far away as Antioch and Alexandria.

The Jewish residents of Migdal played an important role against the Romans during what was become to be known as the Great Revolt (66-73 CE). Josephus Flavius was based there. Also known as Yosef ben Matityahu, the controversial Jewish commander of the rebellion in the Galilee was taken prisoner by the Romans and in his new home in Italy, and as the adopted son of the Empire,

chronicled the Jewish war against his former captors. The New Testament says that Mary came from Migdal. Hence she was named accordingly as Mary Magdalene.

But the archaeological excavations reveal that ancient Migdal is not just a town; it is a town with a synagogue. And not just any old synagogue: but one with a stone engraved with a seven-branched menorah. In the wilderness, God commanded the Israelites to make a menorah. They were instructed to make sure it burns night and day in the Tabernacle. When the Tabernacle ceased to exist, the Menorah burned in the Temple.

There have been several impressions of menorahs discovered in Israel, whether it be in Sepphoris in the form of ancient graffiti etched into a Roman Road, or a huge stone carving in the Jewish catacombs of Beit Shearim, or on Mosaic floors in the likes of Beit Sha'an.

The Menorah at Migdal is different. It is dated between 50 BCE-100 CE, meaning it is actually from the time when the Second Temple was still standing. The synagogue is only one of just six other synagogues in the world dating to what is known as 'the Second Temple period.'

The Migdal menorah is depicted with what may be a three-pronged stand set on a square base. On either side

are amphora jars the kind used to store water or wine.

There is quite a lot of debate in Jewish circles as to what the stand of the Menorah actually looked like. What we do know is that it did not have a rectangular base, as seen in the Arch of Titus, which shows the cruel exile of the Jews to Rome. Incidentally, the plunder of the Jewish valuables from the Temple, was used to finance the building of the

When the Tabernacle ceased to exist, the Menorah burned in the Temple.

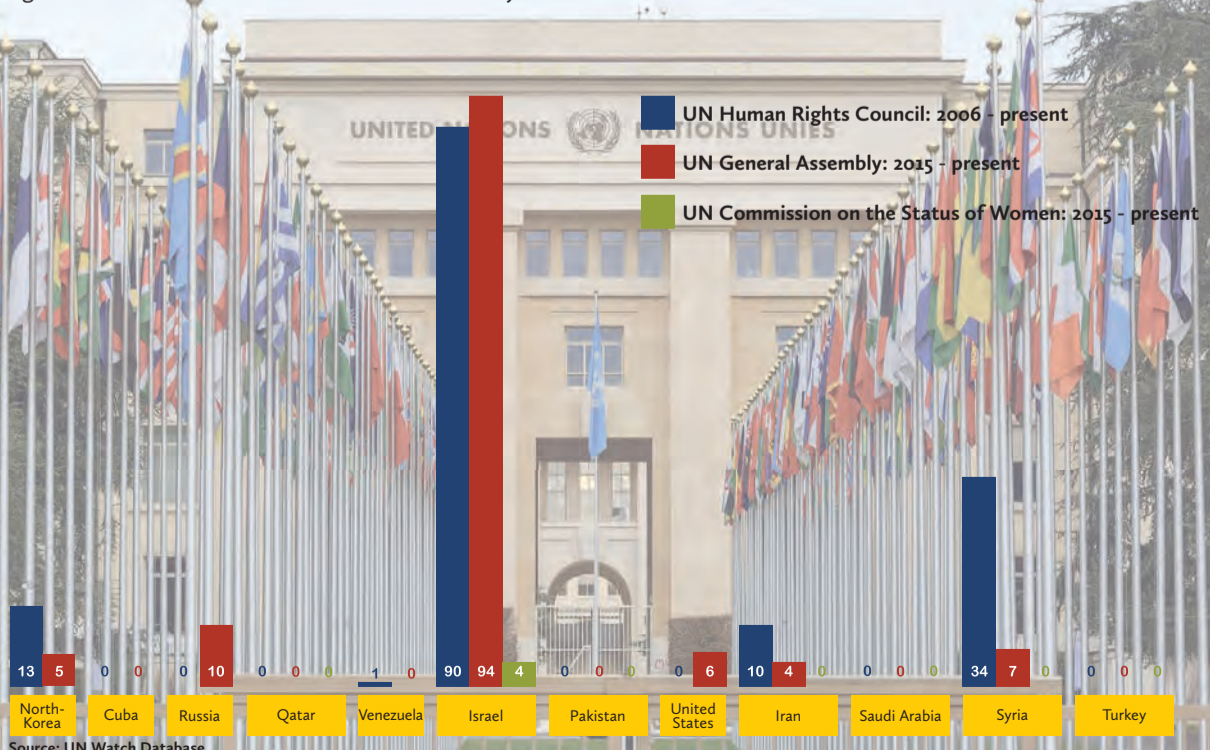
Colosseum. This image of a menorah with a square base was chosen as the national emblem of Israel, not because of a statement of historical accuracy as to how it looked. Still, instead, it was purposefully selected by the nascent state as a declaration to the world that that Jewish people have returned home after two thousand years of exile.

Most exciting about the Menorah that appears on the stone at Migdal is its early dating, enable us to assume it was done by an artist who had made the trip to Jerusalem and had actually seen the Menorah with his very own eyes in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Facts Speak

United Nations Resolutions

The number of UN resolutions against Israel has reached absurd proportions in recent years. While countries that are known for not taking human rights very seriously have single or no condemnation, Israel is blamed time and again. These facts do not enhance the credibility of the UN.



Some UN Organs

UN Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva. Israel is the only country listed on the Council's permanent agenda (Itaem7) and the only country subjected to an investigatory mandate that examines the actions of only one side, presumes those actions to be violations, and which is not subject to regular review.

UN General Assembly - decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. The Assembly has adopted its own rules of procedure and elects its President and 21 Vice-Presidents for each session.

UN Commission on the Status of Women is part of the United Nations, and works to promote women's political, economic, civil, social and educational rights. An annual meeting for the representatives of member States is held in New York to assess progress, identify what remains to be done and formulate new policies.

Short News

Cyprus Becoming a 'Treasure Island' for Israeli Companies

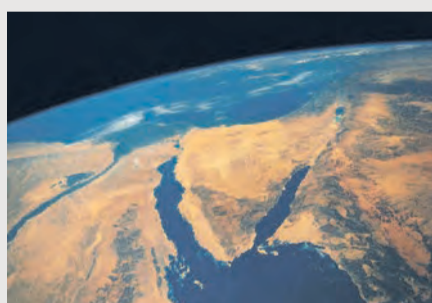


Cyprus is becoming one of Israel's most promising trading partners. This manifests itself in energy, defence, economy, tourism, research and innovation, health and more. Over the last five years, bilateral relations have also served as a basis for regional and international strategic partnerships, including the development of the trilateral partnership between Cyprus, Greece and Israel (with US participation) and the creation of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF). | Photo: Shutterstock

Israel and its 66 National Parks

Those who love nature and want to discover a variety of different landscapes should also plan a trip to Israel's nature reserves, once the Corona crisis is over. These reserves are managed by the "Israel Nature and National Parks Protection Authority". Apart from the preservation of the diverse flora and fauna, tourists get an insight into fascinating landscapes. Those who cannot travel in a guided group are also welcome as individual tourists.

DIDO III Medical Satellite Launched



Israel and Italy recently launched a tiny satellite dubbed DIDO III on a Vega rocket from the Kourou base in French Guyana. The overnight launch came as a joint effort by Israeli and Italian space agencies, while the Israeli-Swiss SpacePharma company developed the mini-satellite.

The satellite will work as a mini-lab conducting experiments in microgravity conditions. It will carry out several experiments in the fields of biology, chemistry and medicine, each supervised by Israeli and Italian researchers and will work autonomously. The tests in space are intended to bring certainty and new insights. The lab weighs 2.3kg and is about the size of a shoebox.

The Promised Land Overview



View from Mount of Precipitation, Northern Israel. | Photo: Flash90

Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.



We began this series, *Walk through the Land*, by looking at different regions, starting with the Sea of Galilee.

However, an overview of the entire land, though belated, would be appropriate, so we offer it in this edition. The regional approach will continue in the next edition.

A Good but Thirsty Land

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat, and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron, and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. *Deuteronomy 8:7-10*

Yes, the land of promise is a good land. The land is also a small one - 420km by 110km, topographically diverse, and strategically located. Its waters are modest - in brooks and underground sources - not mighty rivers. Yet it is a fertile land with a variety of wonderful foods - grains, fruit, olive oil and honey - if only you can bring water to the crops. The ancients were dependent on rain, while modern Israel also uses the National Water Carrier.

Crossroads

The land of promise is unlike any other. It literally sits at the crossroads as a land bridge between Africa and Eurasia. You literally cannot go from one landmass to the other without crossing through this tiny land. Other crossroads include:

- 1. Geography:** The Mediterranean is pitted against the largest mass of desert imaginable, including Arabia and Sahara.
- 2. Weather patterns:** Cool air comes from the Atlantic in the West and Russo-Siberia in the East.

Song of Songs 4:16: "Awake, O north wind; and come, you O south wind; blow upon my garden, let its spices flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

While the north wind is moist and life-giving, the wind from the desert is not. It is hot, dry, and extracts all moisture. We know it as the east wind, which blows around 50 days out of the year. In Arabic, it is called *Khamsin* (50) and *sharav* in Hebrew. The east wind deposits fine dust on everything, denudes the trees of vegetation, dries out the air, and causes mild-mannered people to become irritated. *Jonah 4:8:* God allowed hot sun and east wind to buffet Jonah, and he wished to die!

3. Highway: The name of the highway from Egypt to Mesopotamia is unknown in antiquity, though *Isaiah 9:1* refers to it as 'the way of the sea' or Via Maris. We call it the Afro-Eurasian highway. Its length is 2,850km from Thebes in Egypt to Ur in southern Iraq. In the Old Testament, it was unpaved, worn down by travel, no weeds, with either donkeys or camels pounding their hoofs on the hardened pathway. Camels were particularly robust, handling 180kg of goods.

4. The Roman Road: There was a marked improvement in the roads during the Roman times: paving stones, prepared roadbeds, ground levelling, and drainage made travel across the land and the empire much easier.

5. The route of the Afro-Eurasian Highway: From Egypt and Northern Sinai, the highway went about 15km inland of the Mediterranean as it went northward along Israel's coastal plain, cut through a natural gap in Mount Carmel, entered the Armageddon Valley at Megiddo, then on to Galilee, Golan, and Mesopotamia. Since Israel's independence in 1948, the highway has been closed, though *Isaiah 19:23-25* predicts its glorious reopening from Egypt to Assyria (northern Iraq) via Israel.

Diverse Topography

Despite the diminutive size of this land west of the Jordan River, it has amazingly multi-faceted topography. You name it - it has it. Moonlike wilderness in the south and alpine high snow-topped mountains in the north (with a ski resort). Below sea level is the Rift Valley sector which also is varied, including a freshwater lake and a

saltwater lake in the same country, the same valley, and fed by the same river. The coastal plain is relatively straight, and solid limestone mountains are in the centre. On the eastern side of the watershed is dry desert; on the western side, it is green and forested, thanks to the cool, moist Mediterranean air and an energetic tree-planting programme.

Regions

We will travel from north to south, east to west. If you have access to a holy land map (the back of your Bible will do), join me on this quick overview.

East of the Rift Valley

Going north to south, we have the Golan Heights (Bashan), held by Israel, the Yarmouk River separating Golan from Gilead (in Jordan), then Jordanian Ammon, Moab, and finally Edom in the south, where Petra is located. It ends at Aqaba on the Red Sea.

Rift Valley

The Rift Valley is around 6,000km and goes north to south from Turkey, to the Red Sea, and into Africa, housing some of the great lakes, and ends in Mozambique in Southeast Africa. The valley is the spine and eastern border of the holy land.

The holy land portion of the Rift Valley starts in the north with the Huleh basin, then Sea of Galilee, the Jordan (River) Valley, Dead Sea, and finally the Arabah which leads to the Red Sea at Eilat.

North

Galilee (upper and lower) is in the far north, then the Valley of Armageddon (Central Valley), then the Central Hill Country, known as Samaria and Judea (the world calls it the 'West Bank'), followed by the Negev.

Bonus Regions

Mount Carmel in the north and the Shephelah (lowland) in the south.

Coastal Plain

Plain of Acre (Asher), south to Plain of Sharon, then Plain of Philistia.

From this tiny postage stamp of real estate has come the stage of God's revelation and humankind's redemption.

To be continued.

Rev Kameel Majdali, PhD (Melb) is Director of Teach All Nations (tan.org.au). His MA degree is Historical Geography of the Holy Land from the Institute of Holy Land Studies, now called Jerusalem University College.



Return from all Nations

Aliyah: Return Home

Aliyah – the return of Jews to Israel - is not limited to a particular region of the world.

Jews come home to Israel from around the world: Ukraine, Ethiopia, Yemen, France, India, to name a few. And, for the first time, a charter flight with Jews from Mexico arrived in Israel in August.

A first-of-its-kind charter flight from Mexico carrying 230 olim (immigrants), Masa Israel Journey volunteers and Israelis returning home landed at Ben Gurion Airport at the end of August. Dubbed “Operation Home,” the flight was organised by The Jewish Agency for Israel and Hanoar Hatzioni, with support from Keren Hayesod and a special gift from C4I (Christians for Israel).

Taking off from Mexico City, the special flight carried 50 new olim and 150 Hanoar Hatzioni graduates who will take part in Masa, a project co-founded by The Jewish Agency and the Government of Israel which today is the international leader in connecting young adults with immersive, long-term experiences in Israel. Additionally, “Operation Home” brought back dozens of Israelis who have been stranded due to the limited availability of flights during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Aliyah has never stopped, even during the most difficult crises the State of Israel has experienced,” said Chairman of The Jewish Agency Isaac Herzog. “Even now, during a global crisis, Jews from all over the world are realising the Zionist vision and making their new home in Israel. This is a story that touches all Israelis, as most of us are part of our family’s first, second or third generation here in Israel.”

Mexico is home to the third-largest Jewish community in Central America (after Argentina and Brazil) with approximately 50,000 Jews, most of whom live in the country’s capital of Mexico City. The Mexican Jewish community is highly organised, maintains close ties with the State of Israel and has an extensive education system featuring Jewish day schools and Zionist youth movements. Yet since the outbreak of coronavirus, many of Mexico’s synagogues and other Jewish institutions have closed, while schools and youth movements have moved to virtual operations.

“See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips.” *Isaiah 49:22*

The Corona pandemic has deeply shocked all of Mexico, and the Jewish community is suffering from a double blow – not only are most Jewish households suffering economically, with many Jewish businesses seeing a decrease of 70% in their income – but they are also the increasing target for abduction and anti-Semitic threats.

From the beginning of 2020 through July, The Jewish Agency has facilitated the Aliyah of 2,269 olim from Latin America compared with 1,839 during the same period last year, an increase of 23.3 per cent. For Mexico in particular, The Jewish Agency has opened 493 Aliyah cases since January, an increase of 32 per cent from last year.

“Today we’re seeing the beginning of a wave of immigrants to the State of Israel that will absorb about a quarter of a million new immigrants over the next five years, including young people, academics, entrepreneurs and professionals,” Herzog said. “This will be a diverse Aliyah from around the world that can also help spur economic growth.



Children arriving in Israel on a charter flight.



Mercado family with Jewish Agency Chairman, Isaac Herzog (far right) and Chairman of Keren Hayesod, Sam Grundweg (back). | Photos on this page: Dudi Salem, the Jewish Agency for Israel

The State of Israel must seize this opportunity. I call on the Government of Israel to meet with The Jewish Agency and other bodies involved with Aliyah to prepare a national plan to capitalise on this golden opportunity.”

After landing today, the new immigrants from Mexico began the required two-week quarantine, and are operating in compliance with Israel’s Ministry of Health guidelines and other coronavirus regulations. At the end of their quarantine, the olim will be integrated into local communities and absorption centres throughout the country. The members of Hanoar Hatzioni will begin Masa’s Israel Challenge and Shnat Hachshara programs, during which they will volunteer on kibbutzim and for Magen David Adom, among other sites and organisations.

The Mercado family, parents Carlos and Miriam as well as their four children, arrived on the August flight from Mexico City. After visiting Israel last year, they knew they wanted to make Aliyah.

“Here, I feel truly at home,” said Miriam Mercado. “In Mexico, we are always viewed as ‘those Jews’ and never felt safe to go out with a kippah. We knew we would always be a minority.”

Nevertheless, the Mercados initially hesitated to take the final step and move far away from their family to a country where they barely spoke the language. Yet the Covid-19 crisis led them to understand how they would be able to be comfortable in Israel and enrich their lives there. They began the Aliyah process in May, and have at last made their way to their new home city of Ra’anana.

“While we were in lockdown in Mexico City, we understood that we’d do just fine on our own in a new country,” Miriam said. “Being at home alone for three and a half months taught us that we’re a strong family, and a family capable of making this change. I want to thank The Jewish Agency, its Global Center and the Israeli Embassy in Mexico; it’s hard to put into words their endless and incredibly moving efforts to make our Aliyah happen.”



Young boy greeted by Isaac Herzog.

Yemen

Recently, a Jewish family from Yemen was able to leave the country and travelled through another country to Israel, where they were reunited with their families. They received help from an Israeli organisation, supported by Christians for Israel. This Israeli organisation is committed to preserving and promoting the culture and history of the Yemenite Jews. The Jewish community in Yemen has existed for 2500 years, but there are now less than one hundred people. The situation in the war-torn country has become increasingly hostile to the small Jewish population. It is, therefore, a risky operation to smuggle them out of Yemen. | Photos: Yigal Ben-Shalom



Ethiopia

Israel's government has approved the airlift of 2,000 Ethiopians before the end of the year. Minister of Immigration and Integration Pnina Tamano-Shata, Israel's first minister of Ethiopian descent, has been warning the government that Ethiopians waiting to make Aliyah face a humanitarian disaster related to the coronavirus. "I thank the finance minister who saw eye to eye with me about the importance of this issue. As it is said, anyone who saves one person is as if they saved an entire world," said Tamano-Shata. Ethiopian Jews arriving in Israel. | Photo: Flash90



France

Jews from France continue to return to Israel. In 2018 there was a special charter flight with 300 new olim (immigrants), organised by the Jewish Agency. | Photo: Flash90

North America

New immigrants from North America arrive on a special flight at Ben Gurion Airport. | Photo: Flash90



India

Descendants of one of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel, the Bnei Menashe, reside in Northeastern India. Throughout their sojourn in exile, the Bnei Menashe continued to practise Judaism just as their ancestors did, including observing the Sabbath, keeping kosher, celebrating the festivals and following the laws of family purity. And they continued to nourish the dream of one day returning to the land of their ancestors, the Land of Israel.

In a recent meeting with Shavei Israel Chairman Michael Freund, the Minister of Immigration and



Integration Pnina Tamano-Shata announced that she is moving ahead with plans for the imminent Aliyah of 722 members of the Bnei Menashe community of northeastern India. The first group is anticipated to arrive in Israel after the Jewish High Holidays. | Photo: Flash90

Ukraine

Photos of olim who departed from Kiev to Israel on 28 July with the help of our Aliyah team in Ukraine.

They were part of a group of 46 people, and they will integrate via the programme 'First Home in the Homeland.' On 15 September 2020, another group of 145 olim left from Ukraine. In October, more olim will be able to leave for Israel. | Photo: Christians for Israel Ukraine



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



Arrival of new olim at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel. | Moshik Brin, Jewish Agency

Biblical Assignment

We are grateful for your support

The Bible contains two commandments regarding the return of the Jewish people that involve non-Jews. First, we may proclaim the return; we can read this clearly in *Jeremiah 31:10*. The nations will be involved in the return; we can read this in *Isaiah 49:22*, which was written down thousands of years ago. When I think of the land of the North and how many volunteers from so many nations have been involved in the Aliyah work, I realise that what the Lord has promised also happens in His time.

Hear the word of the Lord, you nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.' *Jeremiah 31:10*

We are grateful for your continuing prayers and support. Thanks to your faithful support, we have been able to 'Bring the Jews home' to Israel, and we continue this effort, especially now that more and more Jews are deciding to make Aliyah. | Photos: Jewish Agency

You can donate by using the coupon below.

Koen Carlier

Aliyah Fieldworker
Christians for Israel Ukraine

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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.