

# ISRAEL

## & Christians Today

NEW ZEALAND  
and  
SOUTH PACIFIC

August 2023  
Av – Tishrei 5784

CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
NEW ZEALAND

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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A Jewish man praying on the Dead Sea shore. | Photo: Flash90

## Standing with Israel in Prayer

■ **Roger F. van Oordt & Rev Cornelis Kant**

Christians for Israel International

**Israel is going through a time of crisis. The population is deeply divided, and polarisation only seems to be intensifying.**

On Monday, 24 July, the Knesset voted in favour of the government's proposed reforms concerning the powers of the Supreme Court. Anyone who reads the analyses and comments carefully gets the impression that this is actually more of a battle for or against the person of Netanyahu. Israel has lived in an environment of enmity and threat since its re-establishment in 1948. Also, in international politics, Israel is often isolated. However, because of the current internal divisions, it seems as if Israel no longer needs enemies, one political commentator wrote. This is certainly disastrous for a country and people like Israel. After all, the people of

Israel are still called to be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (*Exodus 19:6*) to the God of Israel.

In the Bible, we also read that the people of Israel sometimes went through a period of internal division and strife. At the time of Nehemiah, the Jewish people returned from the Babylonian exile and the walls of Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. However, it was not an easy task. The Israelites faced opposition from the outside, as well as internal divisions. It was an extremely dangerous situation that made the people even more vulnerable. It is striking how many similarities there are between the situation of Nehemiah and Ezra then and the situation in which Israel finds itself today. At the time of Nehemiah, the problems were revealed in an impressive way: the people as a whole confessed their guilt and humbled themselves before God (*Nehemiah 9*). They also promised to live according to the Word of God from then on.

As Christians for Israel, it is not appropriate to choose sides. The Jewish people have their own government and parliament. We have told the Jews for almost 2,000 years what they should and should not think and do. Although everyone will have his or her opinion, we always want to stand with the people of Israel because the God of Israel has made an everlasting covenant with the Jewish people as a whole. What we can do is pray for Israel. To add our supplications and humiliation to the supplications of Israel so that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob may have mercy on His land and people.

"But You, O Lord, abide forever, and Your name to all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion; For it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed time has come." (*Psalms 102: 12-13*)

**We would like to encourage you to read and meditate on the entire Bible book of Nehemiah in your quiet time with God in this period.**

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Upgrade for the Ancient Tower of David



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

## Colophon

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

### Mission

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

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# The Battle for Jerusalem is Intensifying

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

**The current crisis in the 'Palestinian territories' is evidence that things are moving and shaking in the spiritual realms. We live in a time when good and evil are coming to their fullness and the judgment of the nation's approaches.**

This war in heaven is having its impact on earth—including in the political domain. Satan is mobilising the enemies of Zion to oppose His purposes with Israel and the Church.

The United Nations has become a stronghold of Babel. The tsunami of anti-Israel propaganda is engulfing the nations. Political and legal institutions are being mobilised to destroy the Jewish state, thus undermining all that the Lord has achieved over the last century in restoring His people in accordance with His word.

In other words, the world is on a collision course with God.

Deceived by the enemy, the nations of the world are encouraging the hostile elements in Palestinian society to use violence to exercise their 'right of self-determination'. Behind the scenes, Iran is financing and mobilising them to advance the revolutionary agenda of the regime in Tehran, which established the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in 1979 to ensure the integrity of the Islamic Republic. A massive organisation involved in almost every aspect of life in Iran, the IRGC is Iran's vehicle to carry out its international revolutionary operations. The IRGC is mandated by Iran's constitution to pursue "an ideological mission of *jihad* in the way of Allah, that is, extending sovereignty of Allah's law throughout the world."

Recently, Israel was engaged in a furious fight in Jenin and is still engaged in other hotbeds of Palestinian jihad in order to confront and eradicate the IRGC-sponsored terrorism.

Israel has no choice. It's an existential battle.



Dark clouds over Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

What are we, the church of Christ, called to do in this situation? We are not a political organisation nor a worldly institution. We do not fight with earthly weapons. No, the identity and calling of the church is heavenly and spiritual. Essentially, we are called to fight a spiritual war and to be a prophetic witness to the nations about the redemption of the world achieved through Christ and the hope of the coming Kingdom.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains the 'mystery' of the restored and redeemed relationship between Jews and Gentiles, achieved through Jesus Christ:

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (*Ephesians 2:19-22*)

"This mystery is that through the gospel,

the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." (*Ephesians 3:6*)

Later, he explains, "the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence." (*Ephesians 3:9-12*)

So, we have spiritual work to do - to fight against all principalities and powers and to declare God's will.

But, of course, this has a practical application. We must, amongst other things, intercede, support, comfort and defend the Jewish people as the Lord plants them in the land.

Given the growing opposition in the world (and within the church), this work is more important than ever.

## Prayer Points

### Israel

- This year marks not only the 75th anniversary of the State of Israel but also of the Israeli army. It was officially established a few days after Israel declared its independence. Give thanks for all those times when the army has successfully defended Israel.
- In recent times, a number of Israeli citizens have been killed in terror attacks. Many times they leave a family behind. Pray for comfort for the bereaved families in this intense grief.
- "There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!" (*Joshua 10:14*). God listens to Joshua when he asks for the sun to stand still so that Israel can continue fighting. Give thanks that God fought for Israel then and that He still does today because they are His beloved people.
- 'The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something and enter God's realm where everything is possible' (Corrie ten Boom). The prayer for peace for Israel, sometimes seems like a

prayer too big to pray. But with God, all things are possible. Pray for peace between Israel and the Palestinians and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

### Israel & the Nations

- It is very difficult for Jews from certain countries to emigrate (make *Aliyah*) to Israel; think of countries like Iran and China. Pray that these Jews will nevertheless manage to move to Israel.
- In recent months, antisemitism on Twitter has increased. It mainly involves tweets with conspiracy theories about Jews. Antisemitism is also rife on other social media. Pray for people to stand up to this and for antisemitic posts to be blocked.

### Christians for Israel

- "The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (*Psalms 119:130*). Pray that more and more Christians will understand God's continued faithfulness towards Israel and that they will support and love Israel. Give thanks for God's prophetic Word.

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

# The New Iranian Front in Israel's Heartland

## ■ Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

**Israel is facing a new Iranian front in Judea and Samaria, the heartland of the Jewish state.**

This new front is, in fact, an old one, as Israel has been coping with never relenting Palestinian terror emanating from towns and cities under the control of the Palestinian Authority, ever since the late PLO leader Yasser Arafat was allowed to set up camp in Ramallah.

The current wave of terror that is plaguing Israel started at the end of March 2022 when what then was thought to be 'lone-wolf' terrorists staged deadly terror attacks in Israeli cities such as Beer Sheva and Tel Aviv.

The wave of terror attacks resulted in a new comprehensive IDF operation that was dubbed Wave Breaker. This operation focused on the arrest of terrorists in various Palestinian cities and villages, mostly during nightly raids, and on completing Israel's security fence.

**The current wave of terror that is plaguing Israel started at the end of March 2022 when what then was thought to be 'lone-wolf' terrorists staged deadly terror attacks in Israeli cities such as Beer Sheva and Tel Aviv.**

Although the Israeli security services said these raids were successful, they did not reduce the number of terror attacks.

The only things that changed were that the terror attacks were more and more carried out in Judea and Samaria with the terrorists increasingly using rifles and other fire weapons in their attempts to murder Israelis.

In contrast to the lone-wolf attacks that marked the first wave of terror last year, the current wave is organised by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a wholly Iran-sponsored terror organisation.

There is even evidence that the lone-wolf attacks were inspired by Iran's activities on the internet, where the regime created accounts which spread anti-Zionist propaganda and incited the Palestinian masses.

The regime in Tehran is not only sponsoring Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) but supports Hamas as well. Both Palestinian terror groups have been busy establishing new terror squads in virtually all cities under PA control after receiving instructions from the Iranian regime.

The Iranian leaders openly brag about this new front in Judea and Samaria.

In June, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Al Khamenei wrote on his Twitter account that "Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian resistance movements have found the main key to fighting the Zionist regime. The continually growing authority of resistance groups in the West Bank is the key to bringing the Zionist enemy to its

knees, and this course must be continued."

Hossein Salami, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, furthermore, admitted his organisation had found ways to supply weapons to the terror groups in PA-controlled territory under the noses of the Israeli security services.

The weapons mostly enter Judea and Samaria via the Jordanian border, as the arrest of a Jordanian diplomat with his car full of firearms recently made clear. In another instance, a Jordanian doctor was caught with more than a thousand bullets in the trunk of his car at the beginning of July.

Theft of firearms and other military items from IDF bases is another source for the delivery of weapons to the various terror groups.

After another IDF operation in the town of Jenin which ended up in an hours-long gun battle and saw PIJ using tactics that it had copied from Hezbollah, such as the use of powerful roadside bombs, the

political echelon, together with the security brass realised the strategy had to be changed.

As in Gaza, during the last mini-war against PIJ, the Israeli security services had to deliver a devastating blow to the terror groups in Jenin and had to dismantle the terror infrastructure in the town of 49,000.

The decision to change the strategy against the Iranian proxies was no doubt also inspired by what two Palestinian leaders had said about the Iranian build-up in the territories under PA control.

First, there was an anonymous PA official who said that the Iranians "are already here" in the PA-controlled areas.

Then there was a speech by PIJ terror group leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah that made it clear Israel should take decisive action against Iran's growing influence in the PA-controlled cities.

The Secretary General of PIJ said his group was "establishing battalions of fighters in all Palestinian cities in the West Bank."

Al-Nakhalah especially praised the Jenin battalion, which had lost many members through IDF actions or terror attacks.

The PIJ leader also revealed that there was close cooperation with Hamas and that some newly established battalions had a mixed PIJ/Hamas cadre.

The terror groups in Samaria and Judea are controlled by the joint Hamas/PIJ war room in Gaza, Nakhalah said, while he also revealed Iran gave instructions to his

organisation to form the new terror groups.

During al-Nakhalah's recent visit to Tehran, he and Hamas leaders had been told by Iran's leaders that there was a strong need to "better organise and arm the resistance" in Judea and Samaria.

Today, Palestinian terror groups in Israel's heartland can produce lighter weapons locally, the PIJ leader added.

Shortly after al-Nakhalah gave his speech, the IDF, together with the Israeli Border Police and in cooperation with the internal security service Shin Beth began an operation in Jenin that had the hallmarks of the last mini-war against PIJ in Gaza.

The operation, dubbed Bayit VaGan, unexpectedly started with airstrikes carried out by drones against 20 selected targets in Jenin.

Thereafter huge D9 bulldozers sprang into action ploughing through the verges of access roads.

The bulldozers were used to detect and

destroy mines and roadside bombs after, during the previous IDF action in Jenin, IDF soldiers were injured when a powerful roadside bomb was detonated under their armoured vehicle.

Thereafter troops entered Jenin, accompanied by airborne fighter jets of the Israeli Air Force that circled in the skies above Jenin.

The IDF soldiers and Border Police knew exactly where the weapon storages and the laboratories that produced weapons and even crude rockets were located, some of them underground.

The Israeli show of force apparently overwhelmed the roughly 300 Palestinian terrorists in Jenin who decided to go into hiding or fled the town.

The Israeli operation may have led to a (temporary) halt of the terror emanating from Jenin but inspired others to step up their attacks elsewhere.

Shortly after the end of the Jenin incursion, rockets were launched at Israel from Gaza and from southern Lebanon as Palestinian terrorists stepped up their attacks against Israelis in both Samaria and Tel Aviv.

It has become clear that the so-called Iranian 'Resistance Axis' was not deterred and would continue the war of attrition against Israel in preparation for the long-anticipated multi-front war against Israel.

## Short News

### Israel's Firefighting Efforts in Greece



In July, Israel assisted firefighting efforts in Greece for a number of days under extreme temperatures, exceeding 45 degrees Celsius. Over two days, Israeli aircrafts conducted numerous sorties in coordination with Greek counterparts, dropping substantial quantities of water on raging blazes. Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said: "The firefighting planes of the 'Elad' squadron operated with great professionalism and completed their operational activity. The pilots and ground crews of the Fire and Rescue Services and the Israel Police have enabled the State of Israel to assist Greece during critical times." The fires in Greece caused severe damage, mainly to forests and buildings.  
| Photo: Israel Police Spokesperson's Unit.

### Netanyahu Successfully Undergoes Pacemaker Surgery

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu underwent a cardiac pacemaker implantation procedure in July. Doctors at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan said the operation was successful and the 73-year-old Netanyahu was discharged a few days later. During the operation, which was carried out under general anesthesia, Justice Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Yariv Levin acted in Netanyahu's place.

### Festival for Bookworms



Books, books, books: the Hebrew Book Week took place in Israel in June. This annual week-long event celebrates Hebrew literature. Large open-air book fairs in cities such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are a veritable feast for bookworms. Young and old alike cannot resist the attraction of the markets. It attracts thousands of visitors. Books are often offered at a reasonable price, and there are special offers at bookstores. Besides the book fairs, there are also various literary events, such as lectures, meet-and-greets with authors and workshops.  
| Photo: Flash90

# It's Time to Dismantle the United Nations

## ■ Melanie Phillips

**The moral corruption of this global body has knocked the free world off its compass.**

The malevolent scapegoating of Israel by the United Nations has long been a scandal.

These abuses are regularly highlighted by tireless UN watchdogs such as Hillel Neuer, the executive director of UN Watch, and Anne Bayefsky, president of Human Rights Voices and director of Touro's Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust.

Last week, Neuer testified before the US House Foreign Affairs Committee. He described how Israel is routinely demonised by the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Neuer also revealed that, in retaliation for exposing this bias, the head of UNHRC Eric Tistounet has been running an antisemitic dirty tricks campaign against him.

After hearing this, the chairman of the hearing, Rep Chris Smith (R-NJ) expressed outrage and promised to take up this harassment with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in order to put a stop to it.

**Last year, the UN General Assembly condemned Israel in no fewer than 15 resolutions compared to 13 for the rest of the world together...**

The problem with the United Nations, however, is far more fundamental.

In May 2021, after Israel took military action in Gaza against Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which had been firing thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians, the UNHRC created a commission that targeted not the attackers but their Israeli victims.

The commission's scope is vast and one-sided, covering the 'root causes' of the Middle East conflict and alleged 'systematic discrimination based on race.' Unprecedentedly, it has no end date—because the UN's animus towards Israel is never-ending.

The UNHRC appointed Navi Pillay as head of the commission. Pillay had previously called for sanctions against 'apartheid Israel'—the signature big lie of Israel-haters. The second commissioner, Miloon Kothari, had ranted about 'the Jewish lobby.' The third commissioner, Chris Sidoti, had said that "accusations of antisemitism are thrown around like rice at a wedding."

The commission has now released a report that widens its scope still further, attacking not only Israel but also its defenders, including private individuals and non-governmental organisations 'worldwide.'

The UN's campaign of double standards against Israel, ignoring or sanitising attacks against it while damning it falsely

as a human-rights abuser, goes on week in, week out.

The UN's resident representative in Jerusalem, Norwegian diplomat Tor Wennesland, recently made a series of willfully distorted, inflammatory and disgusting statements. Ignoring the barrages of rocket attacks from Gaza directed at Israeli civilians earlier this year, Wennesland condemned Israel's remarkably precise military strikes against PIJ leaders as 'unacceptable' because of the few civilian deaths that were unavoidably involved.

In an even more egregious attempt to avoid referring to Palestinian Arab terrorism, Wennesland referred to Lucy, Maia and Rina Dee, who were shot dead at point-blank range in their car by Palestinian terrorists, as having been killed "by perpetrators in a car with Palestinian plates."

Last December, Wennesland tweeted that he was 'horrified' that a Palestinian terrorist, who had attacked an Israeli soldier and border police officers, was killed in what he called a 'scuffle.' He sent 'heartfelt condolences' to the terrorist's 'bereaved family.'

Recently, the United States, United Kingdom and 25 other UN member states objected to the Pillay commission, which

they said was "further demonstration of long-standing, disproportionate attention given to Israel in the council, and must stop."

That was a welcome move. However, the United States and the rest of the free world should be going much further. They should be saying that the United Nations itself isn't fit for purpose.

This is because the world body contained the seeds of its own corruption right from the start.

The United Nations was created after the Second World War as an institution that would bring the world together to promote peace and justice. Yet most countries are not democracies and do not uphold human rights. So, by definition, any such world body was unlikely to promote peace and justice and more likely to promote the opposite.

So it has proved.

Last year, the UN General Assembly condemned Israel in no fewer than 15 resolutions compared to 13 for the rest of the world together, with just one resolution on Iran, one on North Korea and one on Syria.

As Neuer observed, the UN gives most of the world's worst human rights abusers a free pass. More surreal, abusers such as China, Cuba, Qatar and Pakistan actually sit on the UNHRC.

Last month, the UNHRC appointed to the



View of the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations. | Photo: Flash90

chairmanship of its social forum the Islamic Republic of Iran, the world's most dangerous terrorist state, which beats women to death for failing to wear approved head coverings and hangs gay people from cranes.

Yet the only country with a standing agenda all to itself at the UNHRC is Israel—the sole upholder of human rights and democracy in the Middle East. From 2006, the council has adopted more resolutions on Israel than on Iran, North Korea and Syria combined.

Last year, the UNHRC appointed Francesca Albanese as a special rapporteur on 'Palestine' with a mandate to investigate only Israel's supposed violations.

Albanese is not an honest broker. She has repeatedly equated Palestinian suffering with the Holocaust, falsely accused Israel of war crimes and genocide, and in 2019 wrote that America was "subjugated by the Jewish lobby." Last year, she told Hamas, "You have a right to resist."

In May the UN commemorated 'Nakba Day,' the propaganda term the Palestinian Arabs have given to the date on which the State of Israel was founded. It invited the head of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas to address it.

He used that platform to repeat the PA's murderous lie that Britain and the US had decided "for their own colonialist purposes" to establish "another entity in our historical homeland" because they "wanted to get rid of the Jews and enjoy having them in Palestine—two birds with one stone."

As for the WHO, Neuer observed that every year its annual assembly deviates from surveying global public health to hold a special debate singling out Israel. There is no such focus on Syria, where hospitals are repeatedly bombed by Syrian and Russian forces; nor on North Korea, which has one of the worst health systems in the world. On the contrary, the WHO recently elected North Korea to its executive board.

As ever, the deranged onslaught upon Israel stands proxy for the endangerment of the world itself.

A WHO mission to study the Covid pandemic's origins in China announced in February that the possibility that the virus had escaped from a laboratory needed no further investigation. The mission had been put under pressure to reach that conclusion by Chinese scientists who made up half the team.

The United Nations has been impotent over China's systemic abuses of its population and over Russia's war against Ukraine. Who can be surprised? Both China and Russia have places on the UN Security Council with veto power. The United Nations places foxes in charge of its hen house.

In a similar vein, Iran, which is racing towards developing nuclear weapons to further its war on the US and its intention to wipe Israel off the map, has been made vice president of the General Assembly.

Even more grotesquely, Iran has been made rapporteur of the General Assembly's Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Committee. This is despite its persistent violations of the Security Council resolution banning its ballistic-missile programme and its refusal to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The United Nations isn't just anti-Israel. It is morally corrupt at its very core. As a result, it doesn't just victimise Israel and empower its attackers. It doesn't just betray its charter commitments by endangering the wider world.

By supposedly promoting global peace and justice but actually promoting those dedicated to war, terror and tyranny while demonising their victims, the world body has also knocked the free world off its moral compass.

That world will only stand a chance of regaining its balance if it walks away from the United Nations and creates an alliance of democracies instead.

*Melanie Phillips, a British journalist, broadcaster and author, writes a weekly column for JNS. Currently, a columnist for The Times of London, her personal and political memoir Guardian Angel has been published by Bombardier, which also published her first novel, The Legacy. Go to melaniephillips.substack.com to access her work.*

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## “I Bear the Insult ‘Goebbels’ as a Badge of Honour”

■ Sara van Oordt-  
Jonckheere

Christians for Israel Netherlands

Palestinian Fatah leader Jibril Rajoub called Itamar Marcus the ‘Goebbels of the 21st century,’ referring to the Nazi propaganda minister during World War II. Itamar: “Rajoub accuses us of spreading lies, but we only expose the shocking truth. I bear his insult like a badge of honour. We reveal things about the Palestinian Authority they prefer to keep hidden.”

“Every child wants to be a martyr.” “The Jews are the descendants of monkeys and pigs”. “We love death as others love life”. These are not statements by fringe fanatics, but they are statements—in Arabic—on the official media outlets of the Palestinian Authority, often made by leaders of the same authority.

Itamar Marcus is the founder and director of ‘Palestinian Media Watch’ (PMW), a research institute that monitors Palestinian Authority-controlled media: radio, television, newspapers, textbooks and online broadcasts. A team of PMW Arabic translators spends many hours a day monitoring, translating and analysing various media from the Palestinian Authority, Fatah and Hamas. The translated material is published by PMW and used to expose the abuses worldwide. They do this because Palestinian leaders use different messages to the international community in English than to their own citizens in Arabic. PMW notes that the Palestinians are lied to and brainwashed on a large scale by their own leaders. The PA tells its people that the Jews are so evil and racist that the whole world hates them. Children are urged to become martyrs for Allah, for the ‘Palestinian cause’. PMW brings these practices to light and raises the issue in international politics and media.

Recently PMW exposed another shocking example of the Palestinian Authority’s glorification of terror. Two Palestinian terrorists murdered an Israeli woman, Lucy Dee, and her two daughters, Maia and Rina, in April this year. A month later, when the terrorists were caught and killed in a shootout, PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh posted pictures of the two murderers on his Facebook page with the words, “Glory and eternity to our righteous martyrs.” The PA sees the murder of three innocent women as a glorious way to achieve eternity. Fatah posted a video on its Facebook page of a 10-year-old girl reciting a poem: “You are not made for happiness but for martyrdom.” Itamar: “Inciting children to martyrdom is pure child abuse. It is crucial for the future of Israeli and Palestinian children that we bring this to light.”

**Why did you start PMW?**

Itamar: “We have to go back thirty years in history to answer this question. In 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed between Israel and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation). The Palestinian Authority



Itamar Marcus, founder and director of Palestinian Media Watch (PMW)

(PA) was created as the official representative of the PLO. For a moment, there was hope for a peaceful solution. But barely a year later, Palestinian suicide bombings began. I hired two Arabic translators, and from my parents’ house in Jerusalem, we watched Palestinian television broadcasts. No one in Israel had the faintest idea that the PA’s messages in the international media were very different from what they presented to their own people.”

“I decided we should focus on what the Palestinian leaders are teaching their children. Palestinian children on TV called on other children to become martyrs, to murder Israelis with machine guns. Religious leaders were already calling for a genocide of the Jews.”

“When I started PMW in 1996, we had no idea where this would lead to. As early as 1998, we published a report on incitement in Palestinian textbooks. The information was there, but before PMW started, nobody was aware or took it seriously. I kept hoping that politicians and journalists would listen and wake up. Clearly, the Palestinian leadership never had the intention of genuinely pursuing peace. Most Israelis realise this now. But because the government did not take the signals seriously at the time, we had to pay an incredible price for our naivety: 2,000 deaths.”

**How do the Palestinian leaders react to what you are doing?**

“They have nicknames for us. Jibril Rajoub (a prominent Fatah leader) once called me Goebbels, referring to the Nazi propaganda minister. The comparison is, of course, bizarre because Joseph Goebbels spreads lies while we expose the lies. It’s sad, but coming from his mouth, I take this insult as a badge of honour. Hanan Ashrawi (a prominent Palestinian MP) once said: “PMW waits until a Palestinian opens his mouth, and then they pounce on it.” The PA once wrote in an article about us: The fact that the PA is not happy with us proves to me that we are on the right track, that we are doing something right, revealing what they prefer to keep hidden.”

**What is the impact of your work?**

“I speak in parliaments all over the world. Recently I was in Norway, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium. Soon I will

be speaking in the US Congress and in Ireland. Everywhere I go, I meet government leaders and members of parliament and point out the shocking facts of Palestinian indoctrination and their child abuse. And that regularly leads to changes in foreign policy and condemnations of violence.”

**You have been doing this work for almost thirty years now. When is your work done?**

“When the world recognises that the PA is not a peace partner. Leaders around the world make the crucial mistake of fighting the symptoms rather than the cause. For example, they say: “Is there incitement in Palestinian schoolbooks? Then we will correct those books.” But this does not solve the underlying problem. These are not isolated mistakes of the Palestinian leadership; it is a reflection of their policy. If they change the books because we force them, they will teach hate elsewhere. They encourage terror, they give bonuses to terrorists, they raise their children in hatred, and they proclaim that Israel will be destroyed. They really believe this. There must be a new leadership, enforced by the international community.”

**What can people do to support your work?**

“PMW is a non-profit organisation; we live on donations. You can support our work financially. But you can also do more. I meet people all over the world who tell me that they have been using and distributing PMW materials for years. My call is: go to our website [www.palwatch.org](http://www.palwatch.org) and sign up for our newsletter. Study our material and forward it to journalists and politicians. If you read articles accusing Israel, please contact these journalists and forward our material to them. Not every journalist who writes negatively about Israel hates Israel. Many of them are simply misinformed. The same goes for many politicians and ministers. Every time you inform someone, you make sure the truth comes out. This is the best way to help Israel.”

Watch the full interview here:  
<https://www.c4israel.org/news/interview-itamar/>  
Or scan on the QR code.



### Short News

#### The Israel Antiquities Authority



The Israel Antiquities Authority The Antiquities Department of Israel has launched a major campaign to gather archaeological finds owned by private citizens. Citizens regularly take-home special finds, often unaware of the historical value of their discovery. In many cases, these are coins, metal tools and books. Heritage Minister Eliyahu said: “The antiquities that are returned help compile Israel’s historical narrative.” | Photo: Shutterstock

#### Antisemitic Cartoon

British daily *The Guardian* has apologised for posting a cartoon depicting Jewish and outgoing BBC chairman Richard Sharp. Some say it was a typical antisemitic caricature of Sharp. The cartoonist drew him with a mean-looking grin and a strikingly large nose. It also depicted a squid, which is often used to portray that Jews are supposedly in control of all parts of society. After much criticism, the cartoon was removed.

#### Israel’s Population Nears 10 Million

Israel’s population nears 10 million. This represents a 12-fold increase in the population since the state’s founding in 1948. The Central Bureau of Statistics published the figures to mark the country’s 75th Independence Day. There are 9,727,000 people living in Israel. Of those, about 73.5 per cent are Jewish, 21 per cent are Arab, and 5.5 per cent belong to one of the minorities.

#### Extraordinary Mural



Mexican artist Julio Carrasco Bretón created a huge mural which is 44 metres long and five metres high. The mural entitled ‘Am Yisrael Chai’ depicts the history of the Jewish people, from the creation of the first human being to the establishment of the state of Israel. The mural adorns the arrivals hall at Ben-Gurion Airport and was unveiled on 20 June. It was gifted by Mexico in celebration of the Jewish state’s 75th Independence Day. | Photo: Flashgo

# Israel Leverages Abraham Accords to Become ‘Global Communications Power’

**(12 June 2023). Israeli government ministries on Sunday approved a plan to lay fiber-optic cables along the oil pipeline between Eilat and Ashkelon.**

The creation of an international communications corridor along the Europe Asia Pipeline Co. (EAPC) would allow for the transmission of digital data between Asian countries, with an emphasis on Abraham Accords nations, to Europe and the West, said Israeli officials.

Israel believes this will lead to investment by international companies, the establishment of server farms, economic growth, the creation of jobs and more, and “catapult Israel’s economy to new heights.”

“Today we are reaping more fruit of the historic Abraham Accords that we brought. We will connect fiber-optic cables from Asia, Arab nations, from Eilat to Ashkelon and the rest of the world. This will attract investors and turn Israel into a global communications center. This will jumpstart the Israeli economy,” said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Trump administration-brokered Abraham Accords normalised relations between Israel and four Arab countries—the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan.

“This is certainly major news, mainly for the South and the cities of the periphery,” said Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi, adding: “In [Saturday’s] *Torah* portion, we read (*Numbers 13:17*): ‘Go up here into the Negev, and go up into the mountains.’ Together, we have already conquered the summit of this mountain and, with God’s help, we will yet conquer more mountains.”

In its statement, the PMO referenced the Spice Route, one of the most well-known and important trade routes of antiquity, extending from the southern Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean Sea coast. It was part of a network of trade routes between Europe and the East, along which goods such as spices, silk, precious stones, dyes and exotic animals were transported.

“Today, in the modern digital world, the products are information, knowledge and



From left: UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump and Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani at the signing of the Abraham Accords at the White House, 15 September 2020. | Photo: White House

technology. We are again turning the State of Israel into the vital route of the world through which will pass knowledge and bits along fiber optic cables that will

link Asia and Europe,” said a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office.

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## Morocco Cancels Hosting Negev Forum

■ **Joshua Marks**

**(21 June 2023). Rabat reportedly made the decision in response to Israeli announcements on expanding communities in Judea and Samaria.**

The Moroccan government has canceled plans to host the Negev Forum next month over recent Israeli announcements regarding the expansion of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria.

US and Israeli officials confirmed Rabat’s decision to the *Times of Israel* on Tuesday.

It would have been the second gathering of foreign ministers from Israel, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and the United States in the spirit of building upon the Abraham Accords normalisation agreements. The inaugural event was held in southern Israel in March 2022, and since then three steering committee meetings have taken place—in June 2022 in Bahrain, a virtual meeting in October 2022 and in Abu Dhabi in January 2023.

“It is another sign in the deterioration of the Abraham Accords,” Professor Eytan Gilboa, an expert on US-Israel relations at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan and a senior fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, told JNS.

The Morocco event was originally planned for March, but the North African country’s government postponed it four times before canceling it completely. The US official said that a date had not been finalised but had been ‘pretty locked up’ for mid-July.

According to the official, two announcements regarding Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria had derailed the summit.

On Sunday, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced the approval of more than 4,500 new housing units for residents of Judea and Samaria. Hours later, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Cabinet passed a resolution handing Smotrich near-full control over planning approval for existing Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria.

Smotrich, the leader of the Religious Zionism Party, is also a minister in the Defense Ministry.

The resolution also reduces red tape for expanding existing Israeli communities and retroactively legalises some outposts in Judea and Samaria.

Gilboa said that Israel has always maintained good diplomatic relations with Morocco but that the African country had no choice but to nix the summit because Israel went against commitments it made at the Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh summits. According to a joint statement from the 19 March meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh released by the United States, that included an “Israeli commitment to stop discussion of any new settlement units for four months, and to stop authorisation of any outposts for six months.”

Gilboa said that it was a difficult decision for Morocco to make as the host country for the Forum.



The steering committee of the Negev Forum in Abu Dhabi, 9 January 2023. | Photo: UAE Foreign Ministry/JNS

“Morocco didn’t really have a choice but to cancel this meeting because the meeting signifies the importance of the Abraham Accords and I believe that there is some crisis between Israel and members of those Abraham Accords,” Gilboa said, calling the developments ‘disappointing.’

Expanding Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria ‘taints the atmosphere’ around the Biden administration’s efforts to forge a diplomatic agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the US official added.

“I would be singularly focused on doing absolutely nothing that would prevent the Saudi deal from getting done, but they

haven’t been able to do that,” the official said.

Gilboa said that Netanyahu was beholden to his Likud Party’s coalition agreements with other parties in his government.

“The more extreme members of his coalition are applying pressure on him that is stronger than his foreign policy considerations like the Abraham Accords and relations with the United States,” the professor said.

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# Third Pipeline to Boost Output at Israel's Leviathan Gas Field

(2 July 2023). "The expansion will allow us to supply more energy to the local, regional and global market."

The Leviathan gas field, located in Israel's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the eastern Mediterranean, will soon increase production, an energy consortium announced on Sunday.

The \$568 million project will see a third pipeline laid from Leviathan to an existing production platform about ten kilometres (six miles) off the coast near Moshav Dor and Zichron Ya'akov, with the gas flow starting in the second half of 2025.

According to the partners behind the project—NewMed Energy, Chevron Mediterranean Limited and Ratio Energies—the new pipeline will boost production capacity from about 12 billion cubic metres annually to nearly 14 billion cubic metres per year.

Leviathan is the largest gas field in Israel's exclusive economic zone, located about 120 kilometres (75 miles) west of Haifa. It was discovered in 2010 with estimates of

605 billion cubic meters of exploitable gas reserves.

"The third pipeline project is an initial, significant and important step in expanding Leviathan," said Yossi Abu, CEO of NewMed Energy.

The expansion "will allow us to supply more natural gas to the local, regional and, very soon, also the global market," Abu continued.

Leviathan currently supplies gas to Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

The Israeli Cabinet in May approved a 900 million shekel (\$246 million) project to expand natural gas exports to Egypt.

A 65 kilometre (40 mile) pipeline will be constructed along a route between Ramat Hovav, south of Beersheva, and Nitzana, near the Sinai border, via Ashalim, allowing for an additional 6 billion cubic metres of natural gas to be exported to Egypt each year.

Also in May, Israel's Energy Ministry certified the discovery of a new maritime



View of the Israeli Leviathan gas field gas processing rig. | Photo: Flash90

natural gas deposit, the country's fourth-largest to date.

British-Greek energy company Energean can now begin drawing up plans to

develop the field, named Katlan, which is entirely inside Israeli territorial waters.

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# Saudi-Iran Rapprochement and Saudi-Israel Normalisation: No Contradiction Intended

■ Dr Yechiel M Leiter

With the announcement of the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, it appeared that the strategic direction of the Middle East had reversed course.

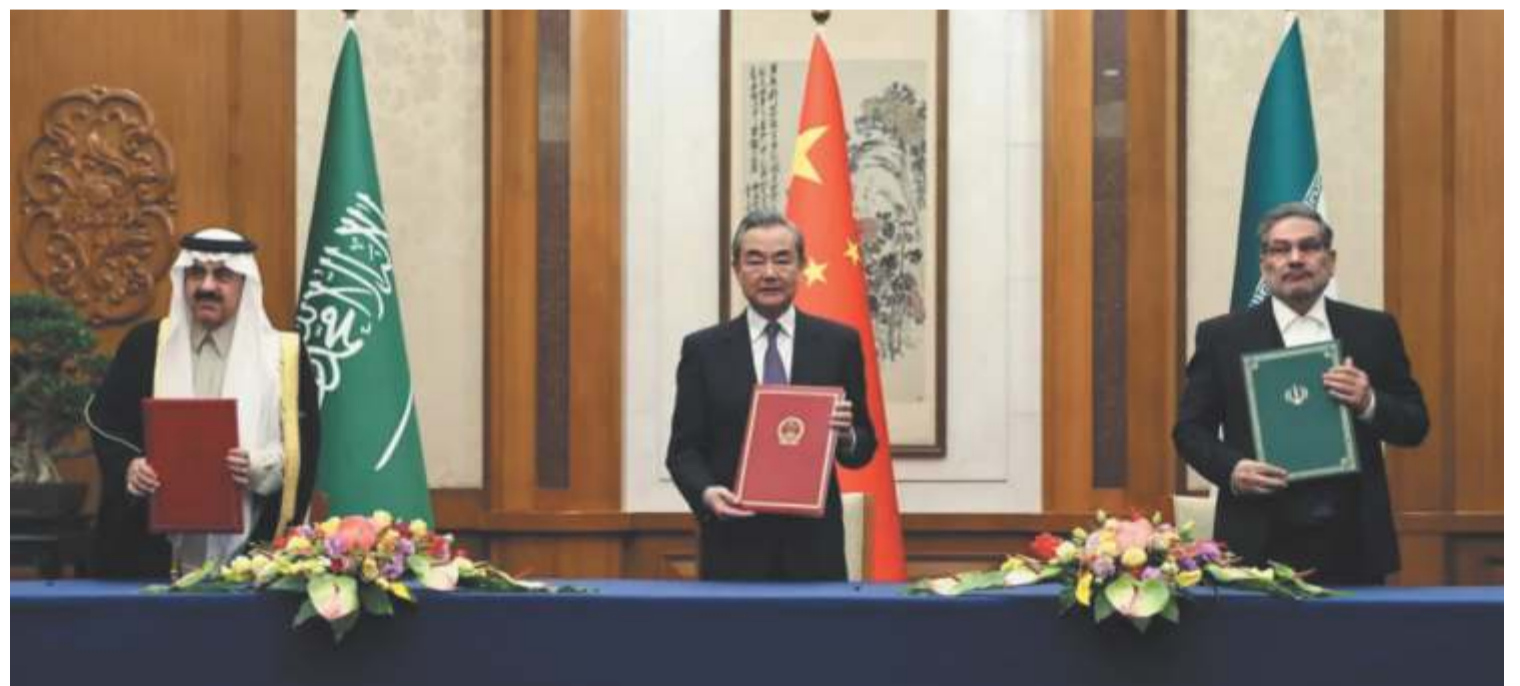
What seemed to many as a one-way drive along the Abraham Accords freeway toward normalisation and peace was suddenly thrust across the political guardrail into oncoming traffic. An embrace of Iran appears, *prima facie*, to be a shunning of Israel.

However, while that reading is a possible interpretation, it is an unlikely one. Instead, we will argue that the Saudi Arabia of Mohammed bin Salman is committed both to depriving Iran of nuclear weapons and, at the same time, gradually normalising relations with Israel.

- Saudi Arabia's return to 'diplomatic relations' with the Iranian regime neither contradicts its commitment to alliances intended to prevent the ayatollahs from attaining nuclear weapons nor does it jettison a process of normalisation with Israel.

- There is an argument to be made that Riyadh's unexpected re-engagement with the Iranian regime is a change of tactics, not strategy; a bearhug, intended to squeeze the belligerency out of its nemesis.

- The Saudis' intention is to feed a starving Iranian population, build their



Top Chinese diplomat Wang Yi (center) attends a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani (right) and Minister of State and national security adviser of Saudi Arabia Musaad bin Mohammed Al Aiban (left) in Beijing on 10 March 2023. | Photo: China Daily

crumbling roads, bridges, waterways, and urban infrastructure, and empower the Iranian people to regain their dignity and identity; then use its economic leverage to derail the nuclear program and bring down the terror-sponsoring ayatollahs with it.

- If the Saudis thought rapprochement would enable Iran to move closer to achieving its nuclear ambitions, they would obviously not pursue such a deal. The conclusion must be drawn, then, that this is a move intended to stop or at least stymie their menacing neighbour.

- Meanwhile, a functional rapprochement between Israel and Saudi Arabia has been in place for a number of years and is progressing, qualitatively and quantitatively, at an impressive rate. From joint business ventures to meetings of intellectuals and policy researchers at international conferences, from Saudi Arabia opening its airspace to Israeli overflights and Israeli participants at sports events on Saudi soil, to the Kingdom's blessing of the Abraham Accords, the rapprochement with Israel is practical, while the rapprochement with Iran is, as yet, declarative.

And as I have argued, Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Iran might actually be the cleverest aspect of the ongoing Saudi rapprochement with Israel.

Read the full article: <https://jcpa.org/article/saudi-iran-rapprochement-and-saudi-israel-normalization-no-contradiction-intended/>  
Dr. Yechiel M. Leiter is Director-General of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He has served in senior government positions in education, finance, and transportation. He received his doctorate in political philosophy from the University of Haifa. His post-doctorate study of John Locke and the Hebrew Bible was published by Cambridge University Press. Published by Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs on 24 May 2023. Republished with permission.

# Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast '23

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

Over 400 Christians from 50 countries gathered in Jerusalem in June for the seventh annual Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. The gathering follows the biblical command in *Psalms 122:6* to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. Jewish rabbis and Israeli Members of Knesset attended this two-day Prayer event in Jerusalem. Every year this prayer event takes place at the invitation of Members of the Knesset. This year Member of the Knesset, Mr Matan Kahana, was our guest host in the Knesset. Many pastors and leaders of Christian Israel organisations attend this prayer event, including several Christians for Israel leaders.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog welcomed the audience with a video speech expressing his gratitude to the Christian communities for standing with Israel. Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen announced that Hungary will move its Embassy to Jerusalem. The Knesset spokesman apologised for the recent protest from orthodox Jews against a Christian prayer event near the Temple Mount. He emphasised that freedom for all religions is fundamental to Israel, as expressed in

Israel's Declaration of Independence. This was highly appreciated by the audience.

A variety of speakers addressed the audience, such as Albert Veksler, director of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast and American-Israeli communications strategist and best-selling author, Joel Rosenberg.

Hananya Naftali, the media advisor for Prime Minister Netanyahu, told us that it is important "to win together with Israel in the Media storm".

Ze'ev Orenstein, director of International Affairs for the City of David Foundation, revealed how a "busted sewage pipe may have saved the biblical heritage of Israel". He explained how during the repair of a sewage pipe south of the Temple Mount, the access road from the Siloam pond to the Temple Mount from biblical times was discovered. This has now been completely excavated and is open to the public.

Frederik Ekholm, Vice Chair of International Christian Chamber of Commerce, spoke about how Christian businessmen can support Israeli business.

On behalf of Christians for Israel, I was invited to speak about the biblical connection between the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish people. I explained from the Bible why it is impossible to divide the



Matan Kahana, Member of the Knesset, speaking at the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. | Photo: Christians for Israel

city into East and West or to transfer the city under international supervision. Jerusalem belongs to the Jewish people.

Rabbi Yehuda Glick called upon all Christians worldwide to come to Jerusalem and pray on the Temple Mount. Since it began in 2017, the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast has experienced miraculous

growth. It has been held in many nations, from Dallas and Houston in the US, Rome, The Hague and Tallin in Europe, Kampala and Ghana in Africa, and recently in Australia. It is always encouraging to attend this prayer event, to join in prayers, to listen to good speeches and to meet many brothers and sisters worldwide.

# Israel Expresses Gratitude to C4I Germany

## ■ Dana Nowak

Christians for Israel Germany

**75 years of Israel and 25 years of Christians for Israel Germany—100 good reasons to celebrate. This was the motto of the big anniversary celebration of C4I Germany during March in Neu-Ulm (southern Germany). The main speaker was historian Michael Wolffsohn. Representatives of Jewish and Christian organisations addressed the audience. The President of the State of Israel, Yitzchak Herzog, expressed his gratitude to C4I Germany in a video message.**

President Herzog praised the work of C4I Germany. On the occasion of the anniversary conference, he sent a video greeting from Jerusalem, stating, "I am pleased to be able to attend this event from afar and to congratulate you and show my appreciation for an organisation that has done so much for Israel and for German-Israeli relations.

"C4I Germany was founded on a strong

sense of ethical responsibility for the Jewish people." The organisation has "transformed the cruel treatment of our people in a dark past into an attitude of solidarity and generosity in the present—especially when it comes to *Aliyah*, currently from Ukraine and Ethiopia," Herzog continued. He ended by saying: "I would like to thank all of you for your efforts to bring understanding and healing to history and to the relationship between the Christian and Jewish worlds. May you continue to be a force for good and generosity in this world for many years to come."

One speaker at the conference was historian and journalist Michael Wolffsohn. In his lecture, he examined 75 years of the State of Israel in the context of 3,000 years of Jewish world history. Josias Terschüren, who heads the Politics and Society division at C4I Germany, spoke about the biblical roots of our mission—standing with Israel as Christians. He emphasised that this

mission also includes the political world and society. "We believe that Israel has a glorious future. We believe in Israel's calling to serve as a blessing to the nations. We believe in peace in the Middle East and throughout the world. We await the coming of the Jewish Messiah and we know that until then we are commissioned to support God's plans for the restoration of Israel on all levels, in particular politically and through the media." Among the guests were also representatives of Israeli organisations with which C4I Germany has been working closely for years.

Rafi Heumann, an envoy of the Jewish organisation Keren Hayesod, said in his greeting, "As a Jew, as an Israeli, and as a representative of a Zionist Israeli organisation, I would like to thank each of you very much for your commitment to Israel, for all that you do, and for always having Israel in your hearts."

Other speakers at the conference were Rev Cornelis Kant, Executive Director of

Christians for Israel International, and Roger van Oordt, Honorary Consul of the State of Israel and former Executive Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands. Van Oordt pointed out that C4I is on Iran's sanctions list. He stressed the importance of praying for Israel and the work of C4I. "God's enemy does not want us to do this work," van Oordt said. He encouraged the guests to pray for the Jewish state in their congregations, even if Israel is not a topic there.

During the conference long-time C4I Germany chairman Harald Eckert was given a ceremonial farewell. Harald led the organisation for 15 years and then handed over the chairmanship to Luca Hezel. Closing the conference, C4I Germany Chairman Luca Hezel thanked all guests, friends and supporters. "We will continue to stand with Israel. All of us, not only the staff, are Christians for Israel."

| Photos: Christians for Israel Germany



C4I Germany Chairman Luca Hezel (left) presents former chairman Harald Eckert with a copy of the first issue of the newspaper 'Israelaktuell', of which Eckert was the editor.



Historian Michael Wolffsohn with C4I Germany's Josias Terschüren and Dana Nowak



The music duo Shaul and Julia Ben Har from Israel





# Keep Calm and Carry On

## ■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director | Christians for Israel NZ

The last year has been an eventful one for the whole world. Whilst we are theoretically past the ravages of Covid, our country seems to be stuck on a path to 'woke' mind control; people doing what they are told, believing what they are told to believe, afraid to step out of line with societal norms for fear of 'death by label'—being marked as any one of the myriad of derogatory terms applied to anyone who can still think for themselves and not always agree with the prescribed position. Putting your hand up in support of Israel, for example, is so often met with cries of outrage—those whose understanding of Israel reads straight from the pages of PA propaganda. Unfortunately, despite the 'information age' we live in, even those who should know better—Christians—still seem reluctant to research the truth (let alone open their bibles!) about Israel.

Ironically, even when we see our brothers and sisters in Israel out protesting—exercising their democratic right to think for themselves and express an opinion—the news media portrays this as something dangerous and somehow 'evil'. Never mind that Israel is the only country in the Middle East where citizens can protest without fear of persecution, imprisonment or even execution. Regardless of where one might sit on the issue of Israel's judicial reform—Israelis and Jews around the world are heavily divided—it is important to recognise what is taking place. This is democracy in action, with all the messiness that sometimes accompanies it. People are exercising their democratic rights, protesting over changes to that democracy. For many supporters of Israel the images seen on our televisions have been of great concern, and the accompanying news stories—with the inevitable sensationalism that is always heightened whenever Israel is featured—have given the impression that the country is falling apart. The passion and commitment with which many of our Jewish brothers

and sisters have taken to sharing their opinion on the issue—passion we have come to respect and indeed, expect—has been delivered with an even higher fervour than usual. And yet in conversation with Israeli friends around the Holy Land, many are barely aware of the protests. For a large percentage of Israel it is simply business as usual.

So what do we make of the passion, the protests, the government of Israel? Israel is a sovereign, democratic country, which holds its leaders to a very high standard. We believe God is working in Israel, just as He said He would. Our support of Israel does not depend on the outcome of a vote in the Knesset, but on the instruction of the God of the Universe. Obviously we pray for peace and calm, but in the same way that we challenge foreign powers for their—usually ignorant—condemnation and 'dictating terms', it is not our place to be picking political sides and making campaign statements. Whilst not minimising the seriousness of the democratic process, Israel is not going anywhere until God says so. Our support of Israel is not conditional on whether we like—or even fully understand—the political issues of today, yesterday or even tomorrow. Celebrating just its 75th anniversary this year, the modern State of Israel is still working through relative infancy. But Israel is real, alive and well, and we know that there is so much more ahead in God's plan for this special place.

So... we are often asked.... Will you still be visiting Israel? Of course! Our team are excitedly looking forward to our next Israel Study Tour in November. It is an amazing privilege to travel the Holy Land with a group of New Zealanders, to be part of what is inevitably a life-changing experience.

Advocating for Israel and educating for a true and accurate biblical understanding of Israel's unique place is a privilege, especially when opposition in our own country continues to escalate. This edition of *Israel and Christians Today* brings you news of worrying events closer to home.



Amongst many fantastic contributions Joanna Moss comments on Wellington's disgraceful recent attempts to force recognition of a State of Palestine. Tony Kan challenges the anti-Israel lobby, and Nigel Woodley brings a political analysis on Palestinian Statehood. International Lawyer Andrew Tucker reflects on the increasing incompetence of the UN, and Christopher Archer shares an observation of the Jewish antecedent of Christian Baptism, just some of the fantastic articles inside.

Our team has worked hard to bring you the very best news and information, and this edition is extra-large to fit it all in! Thank you for your support, may you be blessed by these pages. | Photo: Shutterstock

## DON'T MISS OUT—BOOKINGS ARE ABOUT TO CLOSE

**5-20 November 2023**

Escorted by Bryce Turner and Graham Simpson of Christians For Israel New Zealand



For further information and a detailed itinerary, contact Olive Tree Travel:  
Toll free NZ: 0800 874 867, Email: [steven@olivetreetravel.com.au](mailto:steven@olivetreetravel.com.au),  
or download from our website: [www.c4israel.org.nz](http://www.c4israel.org.nz)



# Wellington City Council Friends Ramallah

## ■ Joanna Moss

Wellington Jews have always played a prominent role in Wellington from establishing business to civic affairs. In fact Wellington has even had a Jewish mayor, Ian Lawrence (1980's) and two deputy mayors (Ian Lawrence and Helene Ritchie). During the modern era, a Jew has been elected to Wellington City Council (WCC) continuously from the early 1970's to 2020's with prominent names such as Helene Ritchie (1977- 2016), Ruth Gottleib (1986-2001) and more recently with photographer Simon Woolf (2013-2022), son of Inge Woolf, founder of the New Zealand Holocaust Centre. The Jewish community ethos of community service and giving back to a city that gave them refuge was well understood. That was until the 2022 elections when the Council was split by Greens and Labour members on one side and independents upon the other, with not a Jew in sight.

During the election process the Green Party mobilised the youth, sweeping into office two young members Nikau Wi Neera in the Maori Ward and Samantha Paul (currently 2023 Wellington Central electorate Green Party candidate) and Mayor Tory Whanau; who was previously Green Party Parliamentary unit head. It was Iranian Golriz Ghahraman MP leading the charge in Parliament to see the state of Palestine recognised, yet failed and the Green Councillors responded by trying to achieve it at a local government forum. Alas the initial 3-pronged remit ran amok with both Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) and council staff and what emerged was a watered-down version to just a Friendly-city status leading to a Sister-city Ramallah motion. The fact that these Labour and Greens councillors didn't understand the basic principles of jurisdiction and core business did not seem to faze them.

Once the initial remit became public, both Jewish and Israel group members were mobilised to write in and



Wellington. | Photo: Shutterstock

voice their opposition and they did. Speakers were invited to submit their applications and only notified the day before. Sadly, they were only given five minutes to speak. Against the motion were: David Zwartz (Jewish community), Ian Dunwoodie (lawyer), Joanna Moss (Wellington Christian community and Israel groups) and Nigel Woodley (Protection of Zion). It became clear that the left-wing WCC members saw it as a Jewish/Israel vs Palestine issue and were not interested in the facts, advice given nor the impact on LGBTQ+ or longstanding service of Jews to the city. The pro-Palestine group came in with a slick clip painting Ramallah as akin to Wellington with cafes, nightlife and even a film festival all with only 39,000 residents (same as Whanganui). Later

the Mayor dominated *The Post* front page with her bad behaviour in public.

Interestingly, the 9-7 vote for Palestine took place on the Moslem festival of *Eid Al-Adra* commemorating the proposed sacrifice of Ishmael by Ibrahim, observed in New Zealand main centres. This is the parallel event to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (*Genesis 22*). On the Hebrew calendar, it was the day after 9th *Tammuz*, the day the walls of Jerusalem were penetrated heralding the fall. The month-long period from 9 *Tammuz* – 9 *Av* marks a period of solemn reflection of loss for Jews worldwide. *Tisha B'av* (9 *Av*) marks the date of the destruction of both Temples and many other Jewish calamities. It looms large in Jewish consciousness and is worth noting.

## Sending a Blessing from NZ



Many of you will be familiar with Richard Brunton's delightful, pocket-sized book *The Awesome Power of Blessing*. Maybe you've read it and given it to a friend. It's been a big seller and people especially love the testimonies within. But did you know that the book is now in 46 languages with over 16.5 million in print and with an ambitious target of 24 million by the year's end.

Now guess which language is not among the 46 languages—Hebrew. But that is about to change. The story began a few years ago when Richard Brunton came and spoke at Shulamit and Paul Ataya's Church Fellowship in Auckland about the book and his plans. Shulamit was deeply touched by it, but little did she know then what was to transpire. Richard wanted the booklet translated into Hebrew and someone used Google Translate to do this. Richard then asked Shulamit to proofread it and, well, it was a bad translation filled with grammatical and other errors. It was then that Richard asked Shulamit as a native-born Israeli whether she would be willing to translate it. Richard couldn't have chosen anyone better, someone whose very life exemplifies blessing. But God knew. After some prayer, Shulamit agreed and said to her husband Paul, the first thing we need is a really good English-Hebrew dictionary! It was a mammoth task. Then along came Covid and put a spanner in the works. It quickly became apparent that this wasn't merely a case of translation as some

interpretation was required to get the essence of the book into a Hebrew context—after all **they are the people of the book and the source of the blessing phenomenon** so would be the harshest critics.

Therefore, it had to be both accurate and impactful in Hebrew, whilst sitting within the culture—no mean feat. Much prayer and reflection went into it as Shulamit sought God's guidance and blessing. The job was spurred on by a very large request from a messianic fellowship in Israel.

Shulamit enlisted the support of a group of Israelis to help and review the text as she wanted the very best result. Then came the tricky question of what to call the Messianic Jews as they are not comfortable with the term Christian, given historically-driven negative connotations arising out of centuries of persecution from 'Christians'. But she wanted a word that was truly authentic and chose *Meshichiyim* (Hebrew for Messianic), to reflect the ancient believers and provide clarity. Next came the question of the title which was resolved by consultation with a long-time Israeli friend living in New Zealand.

Like a lot of assignments, God weaves connections into the story. First it was Penelope, Richard's secretary, whose mother attends Paul and Shulamit's prayer for Israel group and who was a great source of encouragement. Then there was the editing, production and typesetting. Who should be in charge of this aspect, but a man called Andrew Killick, who they had known as a youth and were now getting reacquainted with as an adult.

Shulamit grew up on a kibbutz and came to faith whilst living in Australia in 1980/81 before coming to NZ to study at Faith Bible College in 1991. She has always been a bridge builder and regularly hosts Israelis and also speaks

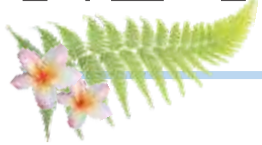
at various groups and churches. Her gentle spirit and desire to build others up comes through naturally and she is much loved by believers here and elsewhere. Shulamit so wants Israelis to connect with the Lord who is the author of blessing and that this book will be a blessing from the Ends of the Earth.

On the book's website [www.richardbruntonministries.org](http://www.richardbruntonministries.org) it reads "Hebrew version coming soon". The typeset book has just been submitted for printing, so not long to go. Shulamit is heading to Israel shortly and hopes to connect with the copies over there. Let's pray and watch the testimony page on the website for comments in Hebrew. Meantime let the blessings flow....

## UN Autumn Session Alert

The UN recommences on 5 September with the opening of the General Assembly when national leaders make their statements. The general debate will commence on 19 September.

Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to pursue Labour government policy in the UN until the new government is sworn in. Please pray for the NZ-Israel relationship, our UN voting pattern on Israel resolutions, the existing and new Foreign Minister, Ambassador Ran Yaakoby, NZ Ambassador Zoe Coulson-Sinclair and for MFAT officials in Wellington and overseas.



## New Zealand and Israel at 75



Jews praying at the Western Wall. | Photo: Lightstock

### ■ Tony Kan

President | NZ Friends of Israel Association Inc

New Zealand has a long history of standing up for the plight of the Jewish people that dates all the way back to the end of the nineteenth century. Governor George Grey advocated in Parliament that the New Zealand Government request of the Tsar that just laws be passed in relation to the Jewish people.

Later Peter Fraser led the government that supported the establishment of the modern state of Israel through its advocacy at the San Francisco Conference and its vote for UN Resolution 181. Fraser recognised the moral debt the world owed the Jewish people because the world was unwilling to intervene when news of Nazi oppression became known.

### But Things Have Changed

Today the political landscape has changed. Rob Berg, the former President of the Zionist Federation of New Zealand, said that Israel's enemies tried to destroy Israel by war, and in defeat, they turned to terrorism; when that proved ineffective, they turned to political activism.

Neil Scott, the secretary of the Palestine Solidarity Network of Aotearoa, has said that the only good Jew is one who opposes the existence of Israel. Opposition to Israel is the new antisemitism.

Berg points out: "The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement says it is about the welfare of the Arab Palestinians, but if they truly cared, they would be lobbying the neighbouring Arab states to resettle the refugees."

Instead, they are focused on the destruction of Israel.

Lara Kiswani, Executive Director of the Arab Resource and Organising Center and BDS activist, says, "Bringing down Israel will really benefit everyone in the world and everyone in society, particularly workers." A key element of antisemitism is the trope that Jews represent an existential threat to the world.

Anti-Israel opposition is just antisemitism in a different guise.

New Zealanders are being fooled into fighting Israel, 'The White Colonist'.

The anti-Israel lobby is tapping into local support by calling the 'Palestinians' the indigenous people who are being displaced by white colonist Jews. "We're resisting colonialism in Palestine, and colonialism entails all of occupied Palestine, from Haifa to Jerusalem, to Ramallah..." says Kiswani. This resonates because of historic Treaty of Waitangi breaches. But it is a lie.

**None of these evils were overcome without action. Prayer must be the starting place. If you don't feel like praying, then start there. Ask God to change your heart.**

Nanaia Mahuta (Current Minister of Foreign Affairs), Golriz Ghahraman (List MP for the Green Party), and Duncan Webb (MP for Christchurch Central) have been drawn into and convinced by these lies.

Their fight is our fight, and to fight, we must act.

I am writing to a Christian readership. The Bible is clear: Our future is inextricably tied to that of the Jews. Their enemies are our enemies. Love your enemies with the truth.

We need to fight lies with truth. But what good is truth if it isn't given a voice?

History shows God often acts through His people. Slavery seemed immutable. The Clapham Sect proved it wrong. The Iron Curtain seemed invulnerable. It fell in just over 70 years. Antisemitism has been around for thousands of years. It, too, seems obdurate.

None of these evils were overcome without action. Prayer must be the starting place. If you don't feel like praying, then start there. Ask God to change your heart.

Be a citizen of New Zealand and participate in the democratic process. Democracy works on votes. Show our politicians that a significant proportion of the electorate support Israel.

Start petitions and present your results to them. Promote the truth and write to

your newspaper, your MP, your councillors, and your Mayor. Be savvy. Be gracious and compassionate. Be patient but relentless. Educate your children and their children.

This is a marathon, not reality TV. This is a multi-year, if not multi-generational, fight. Stay the course.

The Bible is history, not a fable. The Jews are the indigenous people of the Land. They are not colonialists. Regarding Jews,

their people are our people because they are God's people. Their fight is our fight.

*Tony Kan, is the President of the NZ Friends of Israel Association Inc (www.nzfoi.org), a registered charity that fights prejudice and intolerance through raising awareness of Jewish history and culture.*

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## Philanthropists in Israel

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

### Zohar Zisapel



Zohar Zisapel (15 February 1949—20 May 2023) was an Israeli businessman. He founded the RAD Group of companies with his brother, Yehuda.

Zohar Zisapel was born in Tel Aviv, one of three children of immigrant parents from Poland who owned and ran a shoe store on Herzl Street, then one of the city's main arteries. Upon graduation from high school he enrolled as a student at the Technion—Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa. He received his B.Sc. and M.Sc. in electrical engineering and later earned an MBA from Tel Aviv University.

Upon completing his undergraduate studies at the Technion, Zisapel served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Zisapel worked for the Electronic Research Department of the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv and rose to become its head. In 1979, he received the Israel Defense Prize for his work.

In 1981 Zisapel resigned from his position at the Ministry of Defense and cofounded RAD Data Communications with his brother, where they developed RAD's first product, a miniature modem that revolutionised the industry.

The Zisapel brothers expanded their focus beyond miniature modems. While RAD would go on to release its first fiber optic product in 1986 and its first multiplexer one year later, the Zisapels were developing new ideas for communications products for enterprise applications, including adapters for servers and security appliances, integrated network management solutions, video conferencing infrastructure and development tools, wireless devices, and other industry niches.

One of Zisapel's charitable contributions was to donate fully equipped computer rooms to educational institutions that serve children at risk and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. More than ten such projects are undertaken each year by RAD at a cost of approximately \$500,000 annually. Zohar and Yehuda Zisapel also donated \$4.5 million to establish the Sara and Moshe Zisapel Nanoelectronics Center at their *alma mater*, the Technion, named in memory of their parents.

Zisapel was the father of two children: a daughter, Klil, an accomplished artist and Hebrew writer whose books have been translated into German, Dutch and Chinese, and Michael, a physician.

Zohar Zisapel died from cancer on 20 May 2023, at the age of 74.

# No Recognition for 'Palestine'

## ■ Ps Nigel Woodley

For the Protection of Zion I Speak Up

News surfaced in Wellington's *The Post* on Tuesday, 16 May 2023, that a Wellington City Councillor had filed an official notice calling for Wellington City to recognise 'Palestine'. The day of the breaking news happened to be the same day that a group of MPs were receiving a petition on Parliament grounds which called for the NZ Government to give formal recognition also. I got wind of it in Shannon, where I had stopped for a quick cuppa with 14 other supporters of Israel who were travelling down to Parliament to protest the petition. Adding to this was information from a reliable source suggesting that Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta was also considering giving formal recognition. This led to an intense campaign by *For the Protection of Zion*, which involved emailing every member of Parliament as well as every Wellington City Councillor. The campaign culminated with two full-page advertorials being placed in Stuff's *The Post*, the capital newspaper in Wellington, on 23 and 24 June, and another one in the free delivery of the *Independent Herald* on 29 June. It took over three weeks to come to an amicable agreement with the legal team at Stuff to publish my article, and involved compromises from my original version. It must be noted that other advocates for Israel were also doing their part. On Monday, 26 June, it was reported in *The Post* that the city councillors had agreed to drop both ideas of recognising 'Palestine' and lighting up the Michael Fowler Centre in Palestinian colours on 15 May 2024. However, they would still pursue a special city-to-city relationship with Ramallah and try to eventually formalise a sister-city relationship. I am sad to say that on 29 June, the Wellington City Council voted 9-7 to proceed toward this endeavour. I was at the meeting and spoke against the move along with other pro-Israel advocates—David Zwartz, Joanna Moss, and Ian Dunwoodie. That story is for another time.

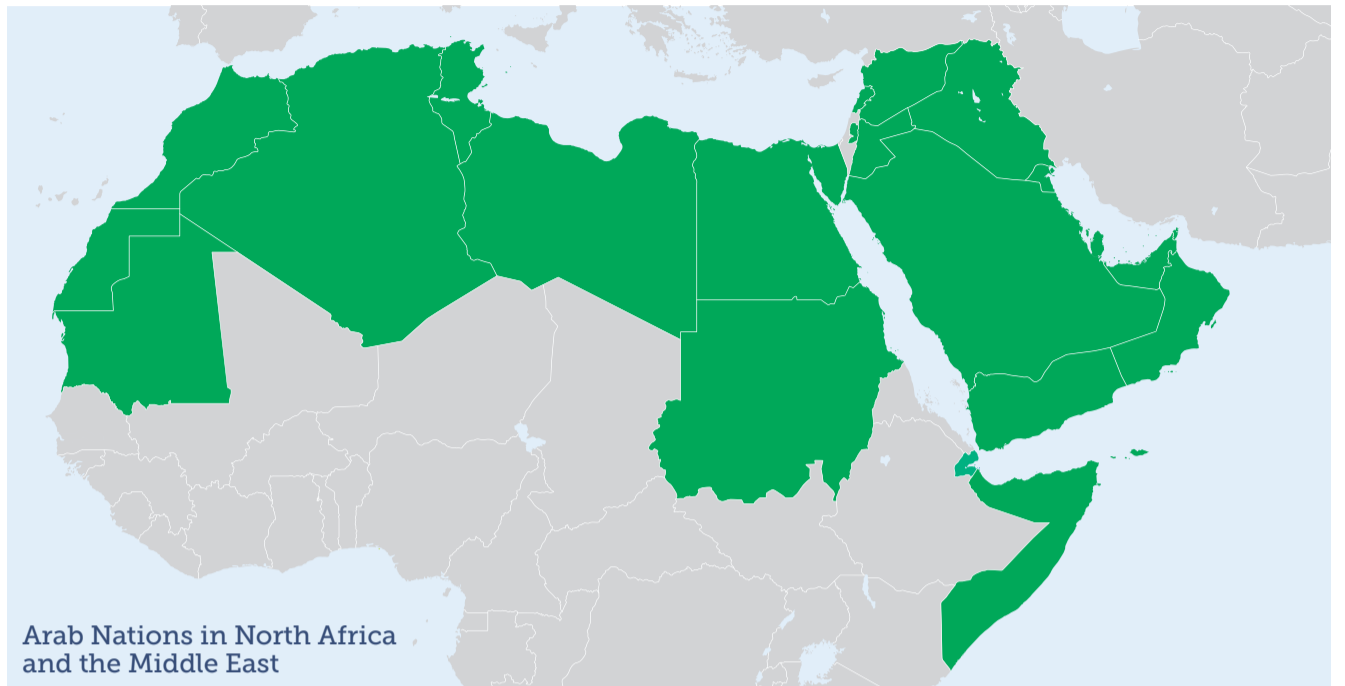
The following is the text which finally went to print, which campaigned against the recognition of a Palestinian state:

### The Palestinians are not Ready for Statehood!

The opinion stated in this article can be corroborated with referenced material from genuine sources at <https://fortheProtectionofZion.com/the-palestinians-are-not-ready-for-statehood/>

Recognition of Palestinian statehood at this time would be a major blunder and would play into the hands of terrorist leaders in Hamas and corrupt leaders in the Palestinian Authority. In the opinion of this writer, they are not ready for statehood, and some of the reasons are stated below:

- When rockets are fired indiscriminately into Israeli population centres, often without any military provocation from Israel, then one must wonder what will happen if the Palestinian leadership in Gaza are granted official recognition from the nations of the world. Hamas is still recognised as a terrorist organisation by many, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. In the latest round, during a five-day period in May, over 1400 projectiles were sent toward the Jewish State. Since the beginning of 2021, over 7,000 rockets have been fired toward Israel. Thousands more have been fired since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007.
- The Palestinian militants often fire rockets from their own population centres and, in doing so, put their own people at risk. This and the previous point have been called war crimes.
- The Hamas Charter of 1988 has called for the destruction of Israel, and although they have indicated a softening of this stance, their actions speak contrary. Palestinian leaders both in Gaza and the West Bank call for the future liberation of all Palestine, which would mean the elimination of the State of Israel. Often, we hear



Arab Nations in North Africa and the Middle East

**Arab Lands in Green**—The Palestinians are a part of the larger Arab peoples of the Middle East and North Africa. The 22 Arab nations occupy a land area of 13,486,861 km<sup>2</sup>. Israel's land area is just 21,671 km<sup>2</sup>—less than 0.2 of 1 per cent of land occupied by the Arab nations.

in the chants of those supporting Palestinian statehood, "From the river to the Sea, Palestine will be free".

- The Palestinian Authority refuses to continue negotiations with Israel, although this was a precondition to statehood as outlined in the Oslo Accords of 1993.
- Palestinian leaders refuse to acknowledge Israel as the Jewish State. One of the primary reasons for the establishment of the State of Israel after the Holocaust was to offer a place of refuge for Jews facing persecution anywhere in the world.
- Palestinian schoolbooks funded by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency incite antisemitism in their education system. This should not be tolerated. Nor should statements to incite bloodshed be made like those that PA President Mahmoud Abbas made in 2015, "We welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem..."
- Palestinian leaders refuse to renounce terrorism. This should be a prerequisite to any form of recognition.
- The Palestinian Authority rewards terrorists with "pay for slay", where those murdering innocent Israelis are given rich financial rewards, which also become incentives to carry out such attacks.
- Erroneous and false claims against the people and land of Israel are often made, denying the historical connection of the Jewish people to the land.

New Zealand's acknowledgement of such statehood under these circumstances would be an affirmation of all the above and would make us culpable for what follows. Recognition under these circumstances plays into the hands of the terrorist leaders who will be emboldened by our support. **It is the opinion of this writer that such recognition will not bring about a peaceful resolution but will perpetuate the conflict.** This article mainly deals with security concerns as to why there should be changes before recognition is given, yet much more could also be said about changes and advances that would need to take place administratively, economically, and politically.

This writer believes that the Palestinians should be persuaded to go back to the negotiating table to make peace with the Israelis who are waiting rather than be rewarded with recognition for their terrorism and intransigence. It is apparent to some that the Palestinians are deliberately bypassing direct talks with the Israelis, something they had agreed to do. It seems they are trying to find a way around their commitment by involving nations who do not appear to appreciate what is at stake.

**New Zealand should refuse recognition of Palestinian statehood** until the following conditions are met:

- The Palestinians should negotiate with their 'peace partner', Israel and come to an agreed settlement.
- They should renounce terrorism against the Jewish State.



Israel's Size with New Zealand

**Israel's 1967 Lines**—The Palestinians demand that Israel retreat to the lines it possessed prior to the Six-Day War in 1967, when it was forced to fight for its survival. These lines were vulnerable and indefensible, a weakness of which Israel's enemies took advantage. It would leave Israel with an area one-thirteenth the size of New Zealand, in which nearly ten million people live.

- They should acknowledge legitimate Jewish claims to the same land and negotiate—that is why there is a dispute which needs to be solved through dialogue.
- They should cease their apparent delegitimation of Israel and not make erroneous and false claims such as "Israel is an apartheid state" when in fact, Israel is the only liberal democracy in the region.
- They should hold democratic elections both within the Palestinian Authority and Gaza Strip before any recognition is given. There have been no democratic elections in the Palestinian Authority for many years, something which is strictly in their power to perform.

At least three times in modern history, the Palestinians have been offered statehood with generous concessions of land with the blessing of the Israelis—1947, 2000, and 2008—but each time, they have turned down the opportunity, and this has perpetuated the conflict. The message should be conveyed to the Palestinians that they must work it out with the Israelis first.

It would be hypocritical of New Zealand to try and impose on Israel a pre-determined resolution by officially recognising Palestine, while New Zealand has enough of its own unresolved internal issues to deal with.



## UN Not Only Biased—Also Incompetent



### ■ Andrew Tucker

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

The UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry into Israel and the Palestinian territories has demonstrated its incapacity to function as an

independent tribunal based on the rule of law.

Its incompetence was made clear during the recent presentation of the Committee's third report.

At that presentation, one of the members of the Committee—Mr Miloon Kothari—claimed that Ukraine and 'Palestine' should be 'dealt with' in the same way, namely, "international law uphold[s] correctly the rights of Ukrainians to resist, and we would like to see the same standards being applied to the case in Israel and Palestine."

This absurd claim is not only false, it is grossly misleading by suggesting that Israel has somehow illegally attacked territory belonging to the State of Palestine.

According to Professor Geoffrey Corn, a leading international expert on international humanitarian law (the law of war), "equating Ukraine's international legal status in response to Russian aggression with that of the Palestinian Territories is a fundamental distortion of international law."

Professor Corn explains: "Since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, there have been few clearer examples of a member State's right—pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter—to act in self-defence, and the right of other Member States to come to that victim State's aid, than the situation Ukraine. Russia's initial and most recent invasion of Ukrainian territory was a blatant violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter prohibiting the use of force against another member State. Ukraine's 'resistance' is not only legally sanctioned by Article 51 but also by deeply rooted principles of customary international law permitting a State, which is the victim of an armed attack, to use all proportional means to protect and defend itself."

Corn: "Nothing about the ongoing situation between Israel and the Territories is even remotely analogous to this situation. First, Israel's continuing presence in the Territories is not the result of an unlawful armed attack against a Palestinian State. Indeed, even the notion of such a State remains contested between the Parties, both of which entered into an international agreement [the



Palestinian demonstrators burn tires during a protest over the Israeli military operation in Jenin on 3 July 2023. | Photo: Flash90

Oslo Accords—ed.] indicating that the final status of the Territories must be decided through mutual subsequent agreement. Second, even accepting the generally agreed position that Israel is bound by the international law of belligerent occupation in the Territories as the result of gaining control through military action in 1967 (not against Palestine, but against Jordan), that law provides no 'right' of self-defence analogous to Article 51."

"At best, the law of belligerent occupation acknowledges that the occupying power will encounter resistance efforts within the occupied territory; and, when those resistance fighters operate on behalf of the State whose sovereign territory is under occupation, international law may accord such individuals prisoner of war status if captured. But occupation law is fundamentally neutral on the issue of whether the occupying or occupied State was or was not acting as an aggressor or in self-defence; it is instead a legal regime triggered by the de facto reality of occupation. Therefore, suggesting that Palestinians are vested with a 'right' of resistance analogous to that of the Ukrainian people—a right ostensibly derived from the assumption that Palestine, like Ukraine, is the victim of an armed attack in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and is therefore exercising an inherent right of State self-defence—is factually untenable, historically distorted, and legally invalid."

In 2022, Mr Kothari stated in an interview that Israel's occupation has "been illegal from the beginning". That is untrue: occupation is not illegal under international law.

He added, "I would go as far as to raise the question of why [Israel is] even a member of the United Nations. Because... the Israeli government does not respect its own obligations as a UN member state. They, in fact, consistently, either directly or through the United States, try to undermine UN mechanisms".

Mr Kothari is not a lawyer and should not be placed in a position where he can misrepresent and misuse legal principles and mechanisms—without any possibility of review or appeal—to advance his own political agenda.

As UN Watch and other organisations have demonstrably shown, the Committee is fundamentally one-sided, and members of the Committee are all heavily biased against Israel.

But as Mr Kothari's recent statements show, the Commission is not only biased; it is also incompetent.

It is time for UN member states to take their responsibility seriously and disband this dangerous body.

For further information, and to make a donation directly to *thinc.* [www.thinc-israel.org](http://www.thinc-israel.org)



## 'Israel 1948' Exhibition Available for Hire

At this year's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations in Auckland, the Zionist Federation of New Zealand (ZFNZ) launched its 'Israel 1948' Exhibition. The exhibition was curated in Germany in response to the large amount of misinformation, deliberate or otherwise, and lack of context regarding the creation of the modern State of Israel.

The ZFNZ has produced an English version consisting of over 30 separate pull-up banners (1m wide x 2m high) that detail the links to the Torah, addresses



antisemitism throughout the ages, and looks at the return of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael following the expulsion by the Romans and the eventual Declaration of Independence. The exhibition concludes with modern-day examples of anti-Israel propaganda.

The ZFNZ is adding three additional banners that look at New Zealand's contribution, through the ANZACs, to the defeat of the Ottomans, in what was then Palestine, during World War I.

The exhibition is easily transportable and is available for hire. It provides an excellent opportunity to tell the story of arguably the most miraculous, and only, return of a people in modern-day history to their ancient and ancestral homeland.

The exhibition is planned to be displayed at 108 Greys Ave, the former site of the Auckland Hebrew Congregation, in August prior to being shown around the country. A small admittance fee will be charged. Monday–Sunday 10th–25th. Hours: 10am–4pm.

Should you wish to hire the exhibition, please contact Neville Baker on [treasurer@zfnz.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@zfnz.org.nz)



# Jewish Antecedents for Christian Baptism

■ Christopher J Wilson  
Archer

Co-chair | NZ Israel Friendship Association

The recent release of the movie, *The Jesus Revolution* reminded many of my generation of what we experienced during the late sixties and early seventies. During those years thousands of young men and women from the 'drop-out' generation embraced the 'One Way Jesus' lifestyle. One of the phenomena, which characterised that revival movement, was a whole-hearted embracing of water baptism. Tens of thousands of young people descended on beaches around the world to be immersed in water and come up again intending to follow a radically different Christian faith. If box-office responses to this current movie are anything to go by, we could be facing a resurgence of interest in baptism from the current youth generation. This essay probes the biblical and historical Jewish antecedents for Christian baptism.

It seems strange that few commentators examine the Jewish antecedents of Christian baptism. Jewish immersion practices cast light on the significance which baptism held for early Jewish Christian disciples. Lack of connectivity with such practices is surprising considering the dominant role that John 'the Baptist' played in the initial ministry of Jesus. One obvious question is to ask: "Why did vast crowds go to be baptised by John in the River Jordan in the first place?" In his Gospel, Luke has this to say: "All the people—even the tax collectors—agreed that God's way was right, for they had been baptised by John. But the Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism." (Luke 7:29,30).

There is hostility here, but no suggestion that John was doing anything wrong (according to Jewish Law) by baptising people in the river Jordan. Quite the opposite, as we shall soon see.

'Ritual purification' was required by the Oral Law as well as the Mosaic Law before any Jew came into the presence of God, usually performed by a ritual immersion in a large bath (often in the basement of a house). Immersion in water was carried out in a *mikvah* (plural *mikvot*). Excavations in Jerusalem and in other places within Israel have unearthed large baths or *mikvot*. This word is closely related to

another Hebrew word *tikvah* meaning 'hope' so the word *mikvah* (or *mikveh*) signifies the hope of new birth. The prophet Jeremiah says, "Lord, you are the *mikveh* (hope) of Israel; all who forsake you will be ashamed (or dried out). Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water." (Jeremiah 17:5-6)

So *tevilah* (full-body immersion) in Jewish ritual, marks a change from being *tamay* to *tahor*—from being ritually unclean (impure or unfit for the presence of God) to ritually clean. This was considered necessary because anytime somebody came into the presence of God, they needed to approach *tahor* (pure). Excavations around the Dead Sea in the last 50 years have revealed evidence of a first century community known as the Essenes, who were directly associated with the origins of the Dead Sea scrolls. In the ruins they discovered nine *mikvot* and documentation showing that disciples in that community would immerse themselves twice daily. Even today, some Orthodox Jews immerse themselves daily. That is clearly the allusion to Jewish practice which Peter had in mind when he wrote in his epistle, "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body (or morally, depravity) because of the pledge of a clear conscience reconciled to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21)

In the purification rituals associated with the Second Temple *mikvot* played an essential role. The pool of Siloam, mentioned in the New Testament, was indeed a large *mikvah*. Before attending the temple, a Jewish man would strip naked and descend the 'descent stairs' to the *mikveh* and immerse himself, then climb the 'ascent stairs' (about a 500 metre climb) where he would be given a white robe symbolising the ceremonial washing away of his sins. Obviously, this was not a 'mixed gender' event! In recent years the tunnel connecting the Pool of Siloam and the Temple has been excavated and opened to tourists.

Archaeological evidence throws significant light on the events of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:44, where we read that, "Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." We might ask how was it possible to baptise 3000



An ancient *Mikvah* with entry and exit steps.

people in one day? If all 3000 converts were men, perhaps they simply joined the queue descending to the Pool of Siloam (or maybe into the Pool of Bethesda, another large community *mikveh*). There is no mention, here, that women were included in this 'Pentecostal' mass baptism event.

The first specific reference to baptising women comes with the mission of Phillip to Samaria. In Acts 8:1, we read, "But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women." It is possible that women were baptised at an earlier time, but if that occurred it would not have been in the presence of men. There are further references to Gentiles being baptised, namely Cornelius (Acts 10), the household of Lydia who was a prominent Greek woman, and the local jailer and his household at Philippi (Acts 16). This progressive inclusion of women, particularly in Gentile churches, throughout the pages of the *Book of Acts* certainly testifies to recognition of a new role for women in the Christian community which was not present for Jewish women in the second temple period.

While we have seen that *tevilah* (full-body immersion) had an important role in the Jewish rite of purification, baptism was clearly an initiation rite for the Christian community that was not repeated in a person's life. Jesus commanded his apostles to, "Go and make disciples of all nations,

baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19). After baptising them they were to teach their converts, not keep rebaptising them. For Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, ritual purification, apparently, still had a role to play as long as the Temple stood at the centre of Jewish worship, as illustrated by no less a person than the apostle Paul. When he returned to Jerusalem, after he had reported to the church leaders, we read, "The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end, and the offering would be made for each of them" (Acts 21:46). This would clearly involve *tevilah* in the Pool of Siloam, but he obviously did not consider that to be baptism.

As we leave this summary of Jewish antecedents, it is interesting to note that in the Babylonian Talmud several different options are said to be acceptable for immersion. Good *mikvot* are said to be those with running ('living') water, but the best *mikvot* are rivers or seas. By now we should understand why John's baptism was accepted by the Jews and Christians. Synagogues would have high water demands so it also explains why synagogues were often located beside sources of flowing water. Immersion baptiseries have been unearthed in early Christian churches well into the fourth century CE.

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# Loewenstein's Utopian Delusion



The holy land of Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

## ■ Dr Sheree Trotter Historian

On 8 July, RNZ broadcaster Kim Hill interviewed self-described atheist Jew Anthony Loewenstein about his latest book, *The Palestine Laboratory: How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation around the World*.

Kim Hill opened the interview with the question, “Are you preparing yourself for a diatribe from those who call you a self-hating Jew?” As well, she might, given Loewenstein’s cynical interpretation of Israel’s reasons for developing weapons and surveillance technology. He claims that Israel has become the foremost weapons and surveillance technology manufacturer because it’s had the Palestinians to practise on.

Indeed as the interview progressed, Loewenstein made clear that he believes Israel was born in sin and it would be better if it did not exist if, in his words, it “requires suppression of Palestinians”.

Maybe Loewenstein really is a self-hating Jew or perhaps just a delusional utopian. Either way, his one-sided polemic sorely lacks historical and political context and undermines his credibility.

### Historical Context—Born in Sin?

Loewenstein makes the bewildering claim that no country has a right to exist; they just exist. However, he asserts that Israel, along with other settler states like New Zealand and Australia, were born in sin. Given that conflict is associated with the birth of most states, why is it that Loewenstein only directs his condemnation towards one nation and not the surrounding Arab nations or the country of his birth, Australia? Why such a monomaniacal obsession with Israel? Even if you don’t like how a nation was born, it doesn’t follow that you should work hard to undermine the security of the state, especially if it is a functioning democracy that holds many of your values. Would Loewenstein apply the same standard to the birth of a Palestinian state, given that with the current trajectory, it would likely be accompanied by much bloodshed? Where does

Loewenstein stand on Ukraine’s nationalist struggle? Does he agree with the Russian view that Ukraine is an imperialist invention and inherently Nazi? Does Loewenstein think Ukraine has a right to exist and defend itself from Russian incursions? Or is his condemnation reserved only for Israel?

Hill rightly pointed out that Jews certainly have more claim to the land of Israel than Europeans did to NZ or Australia.

Indeed, Jewish connection to the land of Israel reaches back more than 3,000 years. Jews are the only people who have had sovereignty over the land at least twice during that period. They are indisputably the indigenous people of the land, meaning that their unique culture developed in close connection with the land of Judea and Samaria.

Roman colonisers renamed the region Syria-Palestina in an act of cultural erasure following the 132-135 CE Jewish revolt. Arab connection to the land began in the 7th century with the Muslim colonisation of the region, and thereafter control of the land changed hands several times. The land was under Ottoman control for 400 hundred years until the end of WWI.

Meanwhile, Jews in the Diaspora started returning to the land in earnest in the nineteenth century, largely as a result of persecution, re-joining the indigenous Jewish population that never left.

While a number of Arab families owned land in the regions of Judea and Samaria, the people who today call themselves Palestinians never had sovereignty over the land. Palestinian identity began with Yasser Arafat in the 1960s. Indeed, prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, Palestinians referred to all those who resided in Palestine, whether Jew or Arab.

At the end of WWI, the victors took it upon themselves to decide the fate of the Ottoman Empire. The mandate system was devised, a caretaker ship arrangement until the respective states could rule themselves.

During the period 1922-1947, Britain took over the mandate for Palestine. (Britain

also had the mandates for Jordan and Iraq). Palestine was seen as a future home for the Jewish people, while Jordan was set aside for the Arabs. While the establishment of a Jewish home in their ancestral land was envisaged, the rights of all peoples in the land were to be upheld.

From the outset, many Arabs fought against this plan, while the Jews set about developing the land and the infrastructure of a future state. After WWII and the attempted annihilation of European Jewry, the world could no longer deny Jews a home of their own. Indeed, the reluctance of the world to accept more than a few Jewish refugees into their countries underlined the need for Jews to have a state.

After many attempts by Britain and other powers to arrive at a mutually agreed governing arrangement between Arabs and Jews, the UN proposed a two-state solution. The Jews accepted the plan, even though it was much less than they had hoped for; the Arabs rejected the plan and started a civil war. The Jewish leadership declared statehood in 1948, and five surrounding Arab nations immediately attacked with the intention of destroying the fledgling Jewish state. The 1948 defensive war was a fight for survival.

Whether it’s the long connection to the land, the international recognition of the rights of Jews to a homeland or the industriousness of the Jews in building the infrastructure of statehood, Loewenstein’s attack on the birth of Israel, and only Israel, is deeply problematic. Why is it that he is not interested in undermining the existentially necessary security of any other nation?

### Palestinian Agency

Loewenstein ignores Palestinian agency. He ignores the fact that Palestinians could have a state if they were willing to make peace with Jews. Numerous peace offers have been rejected, including in 1947, 2000, 2008, 2009 and 2020.

The Oslo Peace Process of 1993-1994 was followed by suicide bomb attacks on innocent Israeli citizens in restaurants and buses. The Palestinian response to the

2000 peace offer was the launching of further terror attacks that led to the death of approximately 1,184 Israelis. This spate of terrorism also led to the building of the security wall and checkpoints, which have proven successful in reducing terrorism but have made life more difficult for Palestinians.

In 2005, Israel ordered the evacuation of all Israeli settlements within Gaza, handing over the land to the Palestinians in a unilateral attempt to establish peace. Instead of the establishment of a flourishing state, it opened the way for the terrorist organisation Hamas to gain control of the strip, with a stated goal of eliminating Israel. The Hamas Charter rejects all peace talks with the State of Israel and stresses the terrorist organisation’s commitment to destroy Israel through a long-term holy war (jihad).

Palestinian leaders cultivate Jew-hatred and glorify violence and martyrdom, from the school curricula (that New Zealand supports financially and politically) to the ‘pay for slay’ incentivisation of the families of martyrs, to the pronouncements of religious and political leaders inciting violence against Jews.

The Palestinian leadership has shown no willingness to live in peace with their Jewish neighbours. The weapons industry has developed from a simple need to defend the country from those intent on killing Jews and destroying Israel. Would that we could live in a world where defensive armaments were not necessary, but this is Israel’s reality.

Loewenstein’s view appears to be that all weapons are evil, even those that are designed to protect civilians. However, he has nothing to say about the weapons used by terrorists, who kill indiscriminately. The glaring hypocrisy and double standards seriously undermine the credibility of his argument.

## Embassy News

### ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY IN WELLINGTON



The Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission, Yael Holan, with US Ambassador, Tom Udall

The Ambassador then returned to New Zealand to celebrate Israel's 75th year of independence in Wellington. At the celebration he stated: Ambassador We are grateful to MFAT, Members of Parliament, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, NZ business community, New Zealand-Israel Friendship Groups, and many of our wonderful friends for joining us. We appreciate all of your kind words, warm friendship and support of the State of Israel.

The evening included speeches from the Ambassador and New Zealand's Deputy Secretary for the Europe, Middle East and Africa, and Australia Group, Rob Taylor, with music from local Israeli band: the *Wellingtones*.

### AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO AUCKLAND



The Ambassador with Rt Hon Chris Hipkins

The Ambassador Ran Yaakoby later travelled to meet with Prime Minister Chris Hipkins following the Prime Minister's post-budget address in Auckland hosted by the Trans-Tasman Business Circle. Referring to the following reception, held to commemorate Israel's 75th Anniversary, the Ambassador comments: "We would like to thank Henri Eliot, our Honorary Consul, for hosting the Embassy staff and our wonderful friends in Auckland."

### HASTINGS RALLY—75th ANNIVERSARY

Following the Auckland meeting, the Ambassador then joined a public rally in the city of Hastings, New Zealand also to commemorate the 75th anniversary. At the rally, attended by over 300 people, the Israeli flag flew over the city council chambers.

The event included activities such as face-painting and dancing. A prayer for peace in the region was offered, as the event occurred shortly after over 1,000 rockets were fired into Israel.

## Events in the Pacific

### SAMOA

Ambassador Ran Yaakoby recently completed a visit to a number of independent Pacific nations. His first official visit was to Samoa, where he presented his Letter of Credence to the Member of the Council of Deputies, Afioga Le Mamea Tuiletufuga Ropati Mualia .

The Ambassador met with Hon Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa



The Ambassador visiting Moataa & Iva Primary School.

Sovaleni. Together they agreed to continue to pursue joint collaborations in the areas of agriculture, water management, and renewable energy with the support of MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation.

The Ambassador also met with King of Tonga, His Majesty Tupou VI. His Majesty is a true friend of Israel.

Last year, Israel's embassy in Wellington donated Home Biogas units to Tonga. These systems, which turn organic waste



The Ambassador with a Home Biogas unit.

### TONGA

The Ambassador then travelled to Tonga where he met with Prime Minister Siaosi

and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministers of Communication and Information Technology, Health, and Women, Community and Social Development and other members of government.

The Ambassador states: "We look forward to enjoying even closer ties with Samoa following the visa waiver agreement entering into force on 6 July 2023."

into renewable energy, are being used for domestic use in remote villages. The Ambassador was able to see the systems in action.

During his trip, the Ambassador visited St Andrews High School, where he donated laptops on behalf of Israel's embassy in Wellington. In collaboration with Adam and Gila Milstein Family Foundation and MASHAV, these laptops will be used for computer classes to help young Tongan students broaden their opportunities for the future.

## Bula Vinaka from Fiji

### ■ Raphael Jordan

Christians for Israel Fiji

We are able to report some good news about Fiji's relations with Israel. The Fijian Coalition Government has made an official announcement to set up an Embassy in Israel. This is a milestone for Fiji and, indeed, a giant leap for C4I Fiji. We are hoping and praying the Fiji Embassy will be established in Jerusalem.

Additionally, the Fijian Government, through the Office of the Minister for Tourism and Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Minister Viliame Gavoka, announced to have three chartered flights per year to Israel from Fiji. The future is exciting. We are witnessing God in action. In May, my wife Ana and I were invited by C4I NZ to attend the C4I International Forum in Jerusalem. C4I Australia invited Lepani and Salote Makubuna, who represent the Solomon Islands.

The C4I Forum was a huge success and very rewarding, as we had last set foot in the Holy Land ten years ago. It was encouraging to meet C4I representatives from more than forty countries in attendance including many from Europe.

One of the highlights prior to the Forum was our tour led by C4I NZ Executive Director, Bryce Turner, accompanied by Johan and Cathy Eksteen. Cathy is the Office Administrator for C4I NZ. We visited Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, Capernaum, where Jesus preached, the Jordan River—Baptism site, Ein Gedi, where David hid from Saul, Qumran, where the lost sea scrolls were found, the Fortress in Masada and we had a swim in the Dead Sea. The team was billeted in Samaria at a Moshav in ROI (meaning, the Lord my Shepherd), well-guarded by the

Israeli Defence Forces. The Moshav is a similar set-up to a Kibbutz, but a smaller version. To say the least, we were so blessed to have been hosted by Ruth and her family.

After arriving in Jerusalem, we made a quick dash for a Yoshav (a settlement) in Rimonim to visit a family friend, Debbie Elfassy.

Debbie prepared a hearty lunch for Ana, Salote, Omer (an Israeli friend) and myself. Debbie was so happy to host us for lunch because this was her first time meeting us in person.

I personally met Debbie on Facebook. She had informed me that her daughter Tamar was in Fiji with her family. Debbie was able to join us a few times with Tamar (who now resides in NZ) during our virtual prayer meetings with C4I (Fiji) during Covid.

We also had the privilege of visiting and meeting Fiji's Honorary Consul to Israel, Mr Rafi Dayan and his beautiful family. We shared *Sabbath* dinner together.

The Forum highlights were many; the lecture sessions and the tours to visit the Negev Desert, the burial site of David Ben Gurion (first Prime Minister of Israel) and C4I International ongoing projects in Revivim, Negev Desert (First Home in the Homeland), Jews who have made *Aliyah*;



Raphael Jordan, Ana Rokomokoti and C4I NZ Executive Director, Bryce Turner at David Ben Gurion International Airport, Israel.

Shilo, where the Tabernacle stood for 400 years before it was relocated to Jerusalem and Ofra, where Abraham sojourned with his nephew Lot.

It was our first time attending the Forum. We are forever grateful to have met resilient men and women of God, who continue to reach out to the Churches and to our Government Leaders to support, and bless ("I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse" *Genesis 12:3*) and love Israel ("Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you" *Isaiah 43:4*).

On our return to Fiji, we spent a few days in New Zealand, where we had the pleasure of catching up with Yael Holan, the Deputy Head of Mission with the Israel Embassy in Wellington.

The comforting of the Jewish people has been a continuous occurrence and evident on this trip. I can confidently say my cup runs over, and my heart is filled with God's blessings.



## Calendar Themes

Throughout this year, we will be elaborating on the themes of the C41 2023 Israel Calendar: Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee—75 years of Heritage.

### August: Ethiopian Jews



Ethiopian Jews were persecuted in Africa for a long time. Thus, once the news came that they could leave for Israel, many Jews left their land and villages and came to Gondar, the departure point. There they encountered mass poverty and discrimination, an inordinate wait, and divided families. Some are still waiting twenty years later. Christians have been supporting the Jewish Agency by paying for flights to bring them home in batches. According to the Rabbinate, those with ancestors who converted to Christianity are no longer Jews, and only eligible to enter Israel on family reunification grounds.

Beta Israel has their own unique culture and celebrates the festival of Sigd (shown) 50 days after Yom Kippur. Previous Embassy Deputy Kasa Bainsay-Harbor is one and was airlifted to Israel as a child.

### September: Soviet Jewry



Although commonly known as Russian Jews, Soviet Jewry encompasses many Jews who left post-Berlin wall collapse, including Ukrainians, Bulgarians and those from the Caucasus and Stans, adding 20% to Israel's population. Some were adults, and others were children, known as Generation 1.5. Many were professional or skilled immigrants who struggled with Israel's heat, language and culture, but eventually spearheaded high-tech industries harnessing their talents for Israel's good. They stressed education for their children.

These immigrants formed significant cultural enclaves. Like the Ethiopians, they also faced discrimination but fiercely held on to their language and culture as Europeans. Those differences created a disconnect, especially for Generation 1.5 and the next generation, now in their thirties. Today the younger generation is asking how their distinct culture fits into modern Israel.

# Experiencing God's Blessing—Part 2



Street in the old district of the Mishkenot Shaananim of Jerusalem, Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock

## ■ Keith Buxton

Former National Director | Bridges for Peace Australia

This is part two in a series of five articles sharing some thoughts from the Torah portion, or *parsha*, named *Ekev—Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25*.

The biblical teaching on God's blessing shows us that true blessings are not gauged ultimately, or even necessarily, by outward conditions and circumstances. To be blessed by God includes—perhaps more than anything else—experiencing His favour, guidance, wisdom, strength, protection, presence and peace.

As a Christian, I am most blessed when I enter into all that God has purposed for me, even in the midst of the hardships of life, because I am indwelt by the Spirit of God and an entirely new life of love, relationship, and service to the Lord opens up for me. That is another message in itself!

The promised blessings of provision, health and security awaiting the children of Israel as Moses spoke to them on the other side of the Jordan were, as we have seen, amazing! Let us now look more closely at the conditions in our Torah passage for the children of Israel to experience these blessings in their lives.

We recall that it was true for the children of Israel—and true for every believer—that He shall receive blessing from the Lord who (1) holds fast to the Word of God, (2) displays true humility, and (3) demonstrates obedience to our Lord.

Our Torah passage develops these three important conditions for experiencing the amazing blessing of our God—first of all, holding fast to the Word of God. We read here how Moses takes time to give to the people various reminders of the importance of obeying God's Word and His ways. Then there will be blessing!

There is here a simple principle which in the busyness and the complexity of our own modern life we can so easily forget, or just ignore. That principle is this: if we listen to and give priority to God and His Word, He will care and provide for us, He will protect us, and He will even lovingly restore us when we go off track.

In *Deuteronomy 8:3* we read: He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Dr Raymond Scheindlin, Professor of Medieval Hebrew Literature at the New York Jewish Theological Seminary, said of these words: “Not what we put into our mouths sustains us but what comes out of God's mouth: His words, His teaching, His decree of death and life, of famine and plenty.”

## ■ We need to know and obey the instructions for living that He has lovingly given to us.

Jesus quoted this Scripture in *Matthew 4:4*—“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Bread is important. We talk of providing food as ‘keeping bread on the table’. When there is no more bread in the house we naturally feel the urgency of going to the local store to buy groceries.

What Jesus is saying, however—and what God was saying to the Israelites—is that mankind needs more than physical food alone to live. We need to know and obey the instructions for living that He has lovingly given to us.

Paul says to Timothy in *2 Timothy 3:16*: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

The Hebrew word ‘Torah’ is usually translated ‘law’, often for many with a negative connotation, feeling that it refers to oppressive and arbitrary regulations. In the Hebrew it more accurately conveys the meaning ‘to point out, teach, instruct, or give direction.’ That is highly positive! And so, we are blessed to have teaching and loving guidance given to us by a loving God, so that we may really know how to live.

We read in *Psalms 1:2*: But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law, he meditates day and night. The Jewish

*Tanakh* (or Scriptures) renders this verse more helpfully this way: Rather, the teaching of the Lord is his delight, and he studies that teaching day and night.

What influences you when you make decisions in life? How easy it is to be influenced by the social media, by ‘inspiring’ motivational speakers, by people who pressure you, especially perhaps, as a pastor friend of mine suggested recently, by what others you know well are quick to suggest. He went on to quote the comment that “you are the sum of the five people you spend the most time with.”

How much time do we spend in the Word of God? It is so easy these days to not engage with God in and through His Word. We are surrounded today by so many ‘weapons of mass distraction.’

When we succumb to the temptation to listen to others before we listen to the Lord and before we discover what He wants to say to us in His Word, we are then prone to ‘fake it’—giving the impression in countless ways that our relationship with the Lord is deeper than it really is.

And you know something? We are the losers, missing out on the blessings that flow from intimacy with the Lord through His Word. Listen to the delights that flow from giving priority to God's Word in your life (*Psalms 119:9-16*):

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O Lord! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

Wise biblical advice for every one of us!

# Centenary of the Mandate for Palestine

## The Fall-out from British Betrayal of the Mandate—Part 5

### ■ Hugh Kitson

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

The White Paper of 1939 was effectively an abrogation of the British Mandate for Palestine.

In a fierce debate in the House of Commons, Winston Churchill, who a year later became Prime Minister, vehemently opposed the White Paper. Denouncing the British government he famously said: “Now there is the breach. There is the violation of the pledge. There is the abandonment of the Balfour Declaration. There is the end of the vision, of the hope, of the dream.”<sup>1</sup>

### Appeasement Bought with Jewish Blood

It was also a death sentence for an innumerable number of Jewish people trapped in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The late Professor Shalom Lindenbaum, an Auschwitz survivor who was later imprisoned by the British in both Atlit (in Israel) and Cyprus, described the 1939 White Paper as a “political appeasement that was paid [for] with the blood of the Jewish people.” He went on to express what many Jewish people who lived through that period and survived the Holocaust felt: “By preventing Jews from escaping Europe—for them to arrive here [in Israel] and not take them in—this was real co-operation with Hitler!”<sup>2</sup>

### Churchill: Jews in Palestine by Right

When he was Colonial Secretary with the responsibility of implementing the Mandate for Palestine in the early 1920s, Winston Churchill had stated emphatically that the Jews were in Palestine “as of right, and not on sufferance” (1922 *White Paper*).

But from the mid-1930s onwards, the British Government treated the Jews of Palestine as if they were there on sufferance, and not by right.

### Records of the San Remo Conference Buried

While it is absolutely true that without Great Britain there would be no State of Israel today, the British betrayal of the Mandate, and the Jewish people in their hour of need, was not just a moral failure which the British establishment has refused to acknowledge, but a legal one too.

The British Government, and especially the Foreign Office, have gone to great lengths to cover up this failure. The official records of the San Remo Conference were buried deep in the National Archives and were only discovered in the mid-1980s by a Jewish.

### Canadian Lawyer, the Late Howard Grief

Much of the truth of what really happened in the Mandate era has only come to light in recent decades.

The truth is that Britain violated the terms of the Mandate on almost every single level. Sadly, in the end, the Jewish nation was born in spite of Britain, rather than because of us.

### The Exodus Incident

The Labour Government that followed Churchill’s electoral defeat in 1945 became politically opposed to the emergence of a Jewish state at any cost, and actively set about trying to thwart such a possibility.

The Royal Navy blockade against Holocaust survivors trying to get to their ancestral homeland—nearly all of them penniless refugees who had lost all of their family members and had nowhere else to go—is just one example. Not only was it an act of extreme cruelty that caused the drowning of some 3,000 Jewish people at sea, but it was a flagrant violation of the terms of the Mandate. The *Exodus* incident in 1947 exposed their plight for a horrified world to see.

As the likelihood of a Jewish state being declared increased—especially after the *Exodus* incident and the 1947 Partition Plan was passed by the UN General Assembly—the British Government’s policy was to keep the Jewish community in Palestine unarmed, while at the same time arming and training both the Egyptian army

and the Jordanian army (*the Arab Legion*).

### A Call to Annihilate the Jews of Palestine

The British Government did this knowing full well that the Arab League nations had declared ‘*jihad*’ against the emerging Jewish nation—which was nothing less than a call to annihilate the Jews of Palestine. After David Ben-Gurion’s declaration of independence, the Arab Legion attack on the newborn Jewish state was led by a serving British Army General, Sir John Bagot Glubb—otherwise known as ‘Glubb Pasha’.

Personally, I believe that it was only the hand of Almighty God that prevented another genocide of Jews just three years after the end of the Holocaust. But quite apart from the moral questions surrounding the actions of the British, there are also legal questions to consider.

### Arab Invasion Illegal

After World War Two, the United Nations was formed in 1945 to replace the League of Nations. The UN Founding Charter is itself an international treaty, and any nation joining the UN commits itself to be bound by that Charter. In other words, the UN Charter itself is part of ‘international law’.

Article 2 of the UN Charter forbids the invasion of a sovereign nation and the seizure of its territory. Andrew Tucker, an international lawyer who is Director of The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.), puts this legal perspective on Israel’s War of Independence:

“There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the State of Israel existed as a matter of law and fact on 14th May 1948. Those Arab nations attacked a state that existed under international law. I think it’s really arguable that Great Britain was fundamentally itself in breach of the UN Charter by being involved in the attack on Israel.”<sup>3</sup>

### Continued British Denial of the Truth

Today in Britain, if one writes to one’s Member of Parliament—or even the Foreign Secretary—about Israel’s historic and biblical rights in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, the letter will be passed on to the Foreign Office. A standard reply usually comes back stating that Israelis do not have the right of domicile in any part of what the Foreign Office has regarded as ‘*occupied Palestinian territory*’ since the Six-Day War of 1967.

Basically, the British Government, which calls itself ‘*a friend of Israel*’, has turned the legal rights of Israel and the Jewish people on their head. Britain’s cover-up of its continued violations of international law, both during its conduct of the Mandate and since, has had a devastating effect on the wellbeing of the Jewish state, as well as prolonging the conflict between Israel and the people who are today known as ‘*the Palestinians*’.

I would go so far as to say that Britain’s position has actually exacerbated the suffering of the people known as the ‘*Palestinians*’ by its support of the tyrannical regime of its leaders. Quite simply those leaders are not interested in living in peace beside Israel. They want nothing other than the destruction of the Jewish state.

### So What Relevance does the Mandate Have Today?

So, what bearing does the Mandate have on the legal rights of the Jewish people today? International lawyer Dr Cynthia Day Wallace explains: “Article 80 of the UN Charter assumes the powers given to the League of Nations, so that anything that was decided under the League of Nations, such as the San Remo Resolution, such as the Mandate of



Passengers on the Haganah Ship *Exodus* forced to return. | Photo: History Central

Palestine, are still legally binding under the UN Charter.”<sup>4</sup>

International human rights lawyer Dr Jacques Gauthier emphasises this still further: “Article 80 of the UN Charter, which is an international treaty, which is a source of rights and obligations, specifies that all of the rights given to any people prior to the execution and ratification of the UN Charter are to be protected, observed and honoured.”<sup>5</sup>

### UN Security Council Resolution 2334

In December 2016 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2334 which stated, among other things, that the Jewish presence in Judea, Samaria and the Old City of Jerusalem was “a gross violation of international law.” This resolution, which was largely drafted by the British Foreign Office, was only passed because President Obama refused to exercise the United States’ power of veto. Andrew Tucker questions the UN verdict:

“Do they have a right to enforce their will in this? No they don’t! There is no other dispute in the world that is resolved by the United Nations without the consent of the parties. The whole of the United Nations structure in international law is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of states.”<sup>6</sup>

Dr Wallace, a former legal advisor to the UN Secretariat in Geneva, puts another argument: “I believe that Resolution 2334 would be in breach of Article 80 of the UN Charter, if it were enforceable. But it’s not enforceable.” She goes on: “The United Nations is not a ‘*legal body*’—it is a political body. **The UN does not have the authority to make law**” (*emphasis added*).<sup>7</sup>

There are a number of other principles of international law that support Israel’s right to sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, which will be examined in Part 2 of ‘*Whose Land?*’ when we are in a position to complete it.

**In the final article of this series, we will examine the spiritual and prophetic significance of the San Remo Resolution.**

#### References:

1. Hansard, 23 May 1939.
2. Interview with Professor Shalom Lindenbaum in ‘*The Forsaken Promise*’ (2006). Produced by Hugh Kitson for Hatikvah Film Trust.
3. Quoted from an interview segment in ‘*Whose Land? Part 2*’.
4. Quoted from interview segments in Episode 9 of ‘*Whose Land? Part 1*’, produced by Hugh Kitson.
5. *Ibid.*
- 6-7. See note 3.

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

This article is the fifth in a six-part series exploring the significance of the British Mandate for Palestine. Part 6, ‘*The Spiritual and Prophetic Significance*’, will follow. To contact Hugh Kitson, email: [hugh.kitson@titledeedmedia.com](mailto:hugh.kitson@titledeedmedia.com)



# The Jubilee and Jesus' Return



| Photo: Deposit Photos

## ■ Pastor Enoch Lavender

Olive Tree Ministries | Australia

**Is there a link between the ancient practice of the Jubilee and Jesus' soon-coming return to earth? If so, what insights can we learn from this link as we look forward to Jesus' return?**

### The Trumpet will Sound

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first (*I Thessalonians 4:16*).

One central feature of Jesus' Return that theologians of all persuasions can agree upon is that it will be marked by the sounding of a loud trumpet. Bearing this in mind, let us turn to *Leviticus 25*, a chapter dedicated to the topic of the Jubilee year cycles:

Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month (*Leviticus 25:9*).

In other words, the Jubilee, like Jesus' Return, is announced with the Trumpet. What would this have looked like, and is there a link between the two trumpet soundings?

Life in the ancient world was tough, and many lived as farmers who were completely dependent on the produce of their fields. Those finding themselves in severe financial hardship could temporarily sell their land and even themselves into slavery. The laws of the Jubilee then stipulated that a friend or relative could 'redeem' or buy back the land and set those who had become slaves free. If no redeemer was found, God Himself decreed that the debts of the poor were to be cancelled, the slaves set free, and His people restored to their ancestral inheritance in the 50th year, the year of Jubilee.

Can you imagine the joy that the sounding of this Jubilee Trumpet would have caused in ancient Israel? At this once-in-a-generation trumpet blast, slaves were set free across the nation, and the poor were released from their long-held debts. In the streets of Israel, long-lost loved ones would be tearfully embracing and rejoicing together in the redemption of God. Could this ancient joy at the sound of the Jubilee Trumpet be a foretaste of the much greater joy to come at Jesus' Return?

There are only four portions of the Bible that directly mention the Jubilee. Two of these passages are technical descriptions of the laws surrounding the Jubilee, but the other two passages are of great interest to us as we explore the links between the Jubilee and the Trumpet of Jesus' Return.

### The Glory and the Trumpet

The twelve tribes of Israel had gathered at the foot of

Mount Sinai only three months after being set free from Egypt. In Egypt and at the Red Sea, they had dramatically witnessed the power of God through mighty miracles and signs that exceed anything most of us have ever experienced. Yet even the crossing of the Red Sea paled into insignificance compared to the encounter with the Glory of God, which they were about to experience in its full manifestation on Mount Sinai.

**For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first (*I Thessalonians 4:16*).**

Moses describes a thick cloud enveloping the mountain, thunder, lightning, smoke and the entire mountain shaking as the Lord Himself physically descended upon the mountain. Many scholars describe this dramatic appearance of God as being a powerful prophetic preview of the day when Jesus Himself will physically descend from the heavens. It is crucial then to note that God's awesome descent on the mountain was marked with an exceedingly long and loud trumpet blast:

When the trumpet (*yobel*) sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.....

And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai (*Exodus 19:13, 16-20*).

The word used here for trumpet is the word *Yobel* or Jubilee. In other words, the long blast on the mountain signifying God's descent was also a Jubilee Trumpet. Israel itself was truly in the midst of an amazing Jubilee experience, being set free from slavery and being on their way to inherit the promised land.

Could this *Exodus 19* descent of God's awesome manifest presence, marked by the sounding of the Jubilee Trumpet, be a foreshadow of Jesus' Return?

### Entering the Promised Land

In our world today it is not uncommon for bitter strife to erupt in families as they contest an inheritance. In the same way, while Israel's inheritance was in the Promised Land, many battles were ahead of Joshua as he led the people across the Jordan River.

Their first hindrance seemed impossible. They were charged with taking the impenetrable city of Jericho. Preparing for battle, Joshua encounters the Angel of the Lord, who gives him very specific battle instructions.

Before we look at these instructions, let us turn our minds back to the Jubilee practice for a moment. In *Leviticus chapter 25*, God instructed His people to farm

the land for six years and then let it rest in the seventh year. After seven such seven-year cycles, in the 50th year, the Jubilee would be proclaimed with the Trumpet sound.

As the people of Israel come to Jericho under Joshua's leadership, our first hint of a link with the Jubilee is God's rather unusual battle instruction to His people. He

commanded them to go in circles around the city for seven days and then finally seven times on the seventh day.

After these cycles were literally completed, the people were to sound the Trumpet:

It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him (*Joshua 6:5*).

While our English translations use the word 'ram's horn' or 'trumpet' throughout the story of the battle of Jericho, the primary word for trumpet used repeatedly throughout this chapter is *Yobel* or Jubilee. In other words, having marched around the walls in seven cycles, they were now to announce the Jubilee with the sound of the Jubilee Trumpet. And as they did, the walls would come crashing down, and they would begin to enter their inheritance!

### Joshua and Jesus

Moses, the great leader and prophet who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, told the people of a 'Prophet like me' (*Deuteronomy 18:15*) who would come. While Moses brought people to the edge of the promised land, it was only his successor, Joshua, who was able to bring the people into their inheritance.

Jesus' name in Hebrew is simply another form of the name Joshua. Jesus is truly the greater Joshua who came after Moses and is the only one who can truly lead God's people into their inheritance and into the Kingdom to come. He will one day soon come to earth to set up His Kingdom and to reign upon the throne of His father David, ushering in the Jubilee and His Messianic reign. What a day it will be!

*This is an excerpt from the upcoming book 'The Jubilee: Discover The End Time Mystery'. To pre-order a digital or print copy, please go to [www.olivetreeministries.tv/preorder](http://www.olivetreeministries.tv/preorder)*

# Celebrating Life in the Midst of War

## ■ Anemone Rüger

Christians for Israel

**Holocaust survivors in Ukraine are deeply thankful for the support they get from Christian sponsors.**

We are driving through a beautiful country at war. What a strange mixture. Terrible things happen; miracles happen. These two realities stand side by side in Ukraine as our team tries to bring hope and joy to the many Holocaust survivors who depend on local help. For every smile on their faces, the effort is worth it.

“Here in this village is where the Russian troops stood,” my colleague Kolya tells me as we head to the outskirts of Kiev for our next visit with Holocaust survivors and Jewish seniors in need. “They came in via Belarus, all the way here to Busovar. From here, they were going to take the capital. See that apartment block over there? That’s the one they hit.” Again and again, Kolya points to a destroyed bridge, a damaged house.

You have to look closely, as many of the country’s wounds are hidden behind nature’s lush green. Colourful flowerbeds line the simple houses in the villages. It’s hard to imagine that just a few hundred kilometres to the east, life has been hell for many months now.

On the eve of the outbreak of war a year ago, Kolya says, he returned tired from a trip and considered putting off refuelling until the next day. “But I felt prompted to do it right away. The next morning, around five, we woke up to war. As terrible as it was—we were prepared. We grabbed our things and were able to escape to a quieter area with our car filled up just before the big panic traffic jam.”

### “What you do for us cannot be measured!”

Today, the Jewish community of Belaya Tserkov is waiting for us. We have invited the mobile seniors from our programme to a restaurant—an unaffordable luxury for most and, for us, a good opportunity to spend some quality time with many of our elderly friends simultaneously.

People are approaching from all directions of the little square, welcoming us with a big hug and radiant smile. A wonderful sense of anticipation is in the air. I see a wheelchair arriving. Ludmila, a warm-hearted survivor who lost her mother in the Holocaust, embraces me, hardly wanting to let me go. “How happy I am, I cannot tell you!” It’s the first time we see each other since the Covid19 pandemic and the outbreak of the war.

“When we asked our people who would like to have coffee with Anemone and Alina, we could hardly manage the overwhelming response,” says Tanya, our contact person. “Ludmila can barely walk, but she was determined to be here!”

Slowly, the room is filling up. The long tables are getting set with *vareniki* (Ukrainian corn dumplings), *blinchiki* (stuffed crepes), salads and pastries. Tanya opens our gathering and a trio of musicians begins to play nostalgic coffeehouse music.

I take a moment to look around and study the faces of all the needy and elderly, who are usually just happy that we help them survive with some extra food and medication, and I realise what a special afternoon it is for everyone.

I convey the greetings of hundreds and thousands of



War damages nearby Kiev. | Photos: C4I

sponsors and friends to these war children of yesteryear grown old. They have become so dear to our hearts, and I encourage them to draw hope from the Psalms for each new day. Soon, I begin to eat as well, expecting the music and fellowship to continue at ease for the rest of the afternoon.

Then the first lady stands up and asks for attention. “What you do for us is beyond measure!” she says, her voice breaking. She wipes her eyes and hands us a bouquet of flowers.

One woman thanked us for the hairdresser who restored a bit of dignity and joy to her life with her home visit. Another praises the medical foot care, thanks to which she can now walk again. A Holocaust survivor calls me over and says in German for all to hear, “We love you!”

A well-dressed older gentleman approaches me and says, “If one of our officials had spoken here, he might have made big words, but people don’t care about such things. You spoke from your heart, how you believe and how you help practically—that went straight to our hearts. You gave such hope to the people here! It’s so important that we hear words like that now!” Then the music plays a well-known Ukrainian love song, and the seniors invite the ladies to dance.

The tears often come afterwards when I put these precious moments on paper. I received so much love and gratitude on behalf of you, dear friends and supporters when all I really wanted was simply to bring a ray of joy to the orphans and widows who had grown old. Everyone wanted to shake my hand again, to say thank you again; many were in tears. A moment of heaven on earth in the middle of the war.

### Escaped from Slavyansk

At the very end, Mr Abramov approaches me. He recites a poem full of warmth and gratitude and asks Alina to record it so that I can look at it again and again. He fled from Slavyansk, located in the middle of the war zone in eastern Ukraine, a year ago. Tanya asks me to write down his story—maybe we can include him in our programme.

Ivan was born in 1948, the year Israel was founded. “I didn’t have a father; I never knew anything about him,” Ivan begins his account. Instead of ‘unknown,’ the authorities simply put ‘Ivan Ivanovich’ on his birth certificate. “But I know quite a bit about Mom’s family,”



Team member Anemone with Holocaust survivor Ludmila



Group photo at the end of the get-together

Ivan continues. “They lived in a village near Izyum, not far from Kharkov. There was a Jewish estate manager there before the revolution. When my grandfather Samuil lost his wife in 1908, the estate manager adopted his three sons. Grandpa then married his maid and had three more children; one of them was my mother.”

When World War II began, Pawel, the beloved brother of Ivan’s mother, had to go to the battlefield; Grandfather Samuil had already died. Pavel ended up a prisoner of war in Germany. He spent four years in a camp; he barely survived. Upon his return to the Soviet Union, Stalin sentenced him to another ten years in the Gulag, punishing him for having fallen captive.

“Mom and Grandma didn’t escape,” Ivan reports. “Somehow, they managed to survive. They hid here and there in the villages. Grandma had destroyed her Jewish papers. Those were horrible times. They went through so much there that neither of them ever talked about it.”

In 1949, the family went to Slavyansk. Ivan became a mechanic, started a family, and helped build two businesses. A year ago, his whole family had to flee the burning Donbass. The Jewish community in Belaya Tserkov took them in.

Except for a tiny pension, Ivan has no income, and his children who fled have not yet found work. All expenses, especially those related to health care, have to be paid privately.

Many families find it difficult to leave as long as their conscripted relatives are not allowed to leave the country due to the ongoing war. For the elderly, it is an almost insurmountable hurdle to start over somewhere else in their advanced age.

Thank God for the local Jewish community workers who continue to be there for those in need in all the cities in our programme. And thankfully, there are always people in peaceful and more prosperous countries like yours who make room in their hearts and budgets to adopt the needy—one survivor at a time. Would you like to help?



Visit with Igor, who became bedridden after multiple surgeries



Semyon and Bassya fled the hail of rockets and joined friends in a holiday home far from the city

If you would like to support hundreds of Jewish seniors and Holocaust survivors in Ukraine and Moldova, please complete the coupon on the back of this newspaper.

## Believing Without Israel *After the Holocaust—Part 6*

### ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

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

After World War II, the effects of antisemitism and the deep tragedy of the Holocaust are slowly permeating the populations of Western Europe and beyond. How could six millions Jews be horribly murdered in the heart of Christian Europe, just because they were Jews? In the 1960s and 1970s, churches were also slowly becoming aware of how centuries-old anti-Jewish theology contributed to this tragedy. This awareness, along with the miraculous restoration of the state of Israel in 1948, contributed to a renewed perspective on Jews and Israel. Many churches have confessed guilt for their failures towards the Jews, both in their theology and in standing up for the Jews during the Nazi regime. No well-intentioned person would want and dare call themselves an antisemite today.

### Dialogue

During the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Roman Catholic Church renounced, in its document *Nostra Aetate*, the age-old accusation that all Jews are guilty of the death of Jesus. Churches came out with statements acknowledging that they had in the past considered Jews and Judaism in a wrong way. New



'Shoes on the Danube bank'—Memorial of the victims of the Holocaust on the bank of the Danube in Budapest, Hungary. | Photo: Shutterstock

with the people of Israel, yet you cannot say that the classical way of looking at Jews and Israel among pastors and church members has thus disappeared. On the contrary, many Christians in all churches consciously believe in Israel's continued place in God's Salvation plan with the world, but they probably belong to a minority.

between God and the Jewish people has been broken. They are no longer God's chosen people. The Christian church has become the (new) people of God. Jews are excluded from God's eternal salvation unless they repent, get baptised and join the Christian church. Being a Jew and Judaism are meaningless. The alleged break between God and the Jewish people has the character of punishment. This perspective has changed, particularly after WWII.

Replacement theology, or believing without Israel, is no longer primarily based on the idea of punishment among the vast majority of believers today. It is now based on the perspective that Israel only had a temporary role in God's salvation plan. God started His salvation plan for the world with one man, Abraham, and one nation, the Jewish people. But it has been God's intention from the beginning to include the whole world and all mankind in His salvation. The demarcation to the borders of Israel and the Jewish people was then temporary. With the coming of the promised Messiah and Saviour, Jesus Christ, God's offer of salvation by grace went out to the whole world and all mankind. With the commission of the apostles to the ends of the world, the unique position of Israel and the Jewish people then came to an end. Israel is thus no longer God's chosen people because God's election has broadened to the whole world, according to this renewed conception of replacement theology.

**Replacement theology, or believing without Israel, is no longer primarily based on the idea of punishment among the vast majority of believers today. It is now based on the perspective that Israel only had a temporary role in God's salvation plan.**

working groups were created to engage in dialogue with Jews to learn from each other. Learning houses and Israeli organisations were established in numerous churches. In many countries and churches worldwide, there is now a long-term and deep dialogue between Christians and church leaders on the one hand and Jews and Jewish rabbis on the other.

These new and impressive developments in the relationship between Jews and Christians have nevertheless not been able to prevent the fact that, in practice, replacement theology is still prominent within most churches. True, there are churches that, even in their church order, speak of an (unfailing) connection

For many pastors and church members, Israel and the Jewish people have little or no significance anymore in their personal faith or theological understanding. This is evidenced by the fact that Israel can count on fierce debates within churches. Israel has even become a sensitive topic within many churches. Many pastors prefer to avoid the topic of Israel to avoid divisions within the church community.

### Replacement Theology Renewed

The traditional way of looking at Jews and Israel, replacement theology, has undergone a profound change. Over the centuries, the classic way of thinking was: the Jews have rejected and killed Jesus, and so the covenant

113-118 and 136). Psalm 118 contains the words "Hosha'na—O Lord, do save, we beseech You" (verse 25). On the seventh day, while those words are sung, the *lulav* is walked around the *bima* (the elevation where *Torah* is read) seven times. This is called *Hosha'na rabba*, the 'great Hosanna'.

What fruits and branches are used? Traditionally, the *etrog citron* (*etrog* actually being the Aramaic word for beautiful, desirable) is taken for the fruit of beautiful trees. The palm branch comes from the date palm (*Hebrew: Tamar*). The word *loelav* for palm branch comes from post-Biblical times. In common parlance, it also denotes the whole bundle of branches, which further consists of a branch of myrtle (the 'leafy tree') and a willow branch.

These so-called 'four species' take on all kinds of symbolic meanings. One of the oldest homiletic explanations in the Jewish tradition is that the *etrog* stands for a man's heart, the myrtle for his eye, the willow for his mouth and the *lulav* for his spine (showing backbone).

Why these four? According to Maimonides, they were the most readily available products in the land of Israel, recalling the fertility of the land. They symbolise nature, rain, the cycle of the seasons, and things shared by all humanity. And thus, writes Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, they represent the universal meaning of the feast. | Photo: Shutterstock



### Loelav

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

We find a remarkable precept for the Feast of Tabernacles in *Leviticus 23:40*: "Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days." You must have seen it before, the palm branch and the citrus fruit as attributes of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the seven days of the feast, every morning during morning prayers, the bundle of branches is taken in the right hand and the lemon in the left hand and moved back and forth in six directions: east (forward), south (right), west (back), north (left), up and down, as a symbol of God's universal rule. Moving the *lulav* is associated with prayers for rain, but the *lulav* is also taken in hand during the singing of the *Hallel* (*Psalms*

## Prophecies Fulfilled in Our Time

### Return to the Promised Land

By Rev Oscar Lohuis

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” *Isaiah 43:5-6*



#### From all Over the World

The above-mentioned verses come from *Isaiah 43:5-6*. Isaiah prophesied in the 8th century before Christ. Prior to the Babylonian exile of the Israeli people (605 – 536 BC). Some therefore say that the above prophecy was fulfilled when the Lord brought His people back from the Babylonian exile.

It is certainly true that Isaiah wrote down prophecies about this return. But the above prophecy refers to the return of Jewish people from all over the world. From where the sun rises in the east to where it sets in the west. The Lord also speaks to the north and the south calling His children (the children of Israel) back to the Promised Land. The return from Babylon was a return from the east and maybe some from the north. But certainly not from the west and south.

#### Fulfilment

Events that happened to the Jewish people mid 19th century, shows us an entirely different fulfilment of the above prophecy. Jewish people began the return from around the world to the land of their forefathers. First, they came from Russia because of the pogroms in the east. Then they started to come from many other countries. Jews have now returned to Israel from more than one hundred countries worldwide!

From countries in the Far East, such as China and India, from countries in North and South Africa, North and South America, all European countries, from all Arab countries in the Middle East and from Iran and Turkey. More than one million Jews have returned from the Land of the North, the former Soviet Union. The predecessors of the present Jewish population in Israel collectively spoke more than eighty different languages. Amazing! It is the opposite of colonialism. Palestine, as a mandate area of a foreign nation, is history. The land is inhabited by the people whose history began there 4000 years ago. | Photo: Flash90

# The Only Way to Salvation

## ■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This is part twelve in a series of articles based on the book *Rejoice, You Nations, with His People*, by Johannes Gerloff.

Paul declares his love for the people of Israel (*Romans 9:1-3*), the riches of the chosen people (*Romans 9:4-5*) and God’s absolute sovereignty (*Romans 9:6-33*) as the basis of his theology regarding Israel. Now, he emphasises a fourth fundamentally crucial point:

**Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to the [one, true] God for them [is] that they may be saved.** (*Romans 10:1*)

The Apostle expresses his ‘heart’s desire’ in order to put the cry of his heart to his Heavenly Father into words: “That they may be saved!” Paul does not explain what his Jewish kinsmen are to be saved from. He leaves it to his readers to find this out through their own study of the Scriptures.

In the letter to the Romans, ‘salvation’ describes the turning away from all ‘ungodliness’ and the preservation ‘from God’s wrath’.

Salvation is the restoration of the ‘communion with God’ that was destroyed by man’s sin. Communion with God is ‘life’. In contrast, sin, as separation from God, brings about ‘death’ (*Romans 6:23*). We’ll have to keep this important observation in mind as we approach *Romans 11:15*, where the term ‘life from the dead’ demands an explanation.

The basic intention of *Romans 10:1-13* is to explain this personal dimension of salvation. ‘How shall I be reconciled with

God?’ is the question of every human being who has experienced “how evil and bitter it is for you to forsake the Lord, your God” (*Jeremiah 2:19*). It is this personal question that Paul has in mind. This is underlined by Paul’s choice of wording in *verse 9*, where he suddenly addresses the reader in a boldly personal manner, “...if **you** confess with **your** mouth... and if **you** believe in **your** heart... **you** will be saved”.

From Paul’s point of view, however, the salvation of an individual human being is inseparably connected with the groaning of the whole of creation (*Romans 8:22-23*). Therefore, it is no accident that our passage concludes with a quote from the Prophet Joel in *verse 13*. In the original context of *Joel 2:32*, we read of a redeeming event that shakes the foundations of the universe. Sun and moon are being changed, and God pleads to the Gentile nations, “For my people and for my heritage Israel” (*Joel 3:2*).

God’s saving grace not only gives us a pure conscience in the present and allows some of the elect to enter into His Kingdom. God’s foretold redemption contains the power to create a new heaven and a new earth—in which there will be no tears, no death, no suffering, no crying and no pain ever again (*Revelation 21:1,4*). In Biblical thinking, the personal salvation of a single human being, the salvation of Israel, and the re-creation of the entire universe are indivisibly interconnected.

Reconciliation with God is only possible if a person has been redeemed from ‘all iniquity’—to be a part of God’s people which is “zealous unto good works” (*Titus*

*2:14*). As a first observation regarding the term ‘righteousness’, we need to keep in mind that there are different ‘righteousnesses’. In our text, we read of a man’s ‘own righteousness’, which he seeks to establish, or of ‘the righteousness which is of the law’ (*verse 5*) and which opposes ‘the righteousness of faith’. Finally, in *verse 3*, the ‘righteousness of God’ is mentioned twice. ‘Righteousness’, then, is not an absolute term but a relative one. What is ‘righteous’ in the eyes of one person might be defined as ‘sinful’ by someone else. The decisive measure that defines what is ‘righteous’ and what is ‘unrighteous’ is the personality that sets the standard. Whenever, therefore, the term ‘righteousness’ appears without specification, for example, in *verses 4 and 10*, it has to be explained by the context in which it appears and how it is used.

The basic problem of mankind and the whole of creation is that they fall short of the glory they should have before God (*Romans 3:23*). They have lost their connection with God. The relationship between Creator and creation is broken. Today, human beings do not meet the standard originally set by the Creator. God, when He looked at all the things He had made, concluded, “Behold, it is very good” (*Genesis 1:31*). In our day, that is no longer the case. On the contrary, “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (*Genesis 8:21*).

Therefore, the whole of creation has been subjected to sin and death. It lacks the righteousness that counts before God—the ‘righteousness of God’.

## Tobias Krämer Awarded a Doctorate

### ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

Tobias Krämer, a theologian connected with our German branch, received his doctorate in theology cum laude from the University in Basel on 5 June 2023. His thesis, some 400 pages long, researches the origin of Christian water baptism. How do we imagine the development from John’s baptism to Christian baptism? Tobias has researched that question in detail.

Jesus, as God’s faithful Son and John as God’s messenger shared the same expectation. They warned of coming judgement and waited for the eternal kingdom of God. Jesus was baptised by John. This fact can hardly be overestimated. The baptism became a turning point for Jesus: Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit and, from then on, worked as the Messiah (the Anointed One).

Jesus Himself (parallel to John) baptised for a time but soon delegated baptism to his disciples (*John 3:22 - 4:3*). After His resurrection, Jesus extended his commission to his disciple to include the



Tobias Krämer holding his degree, standing next to his wife. | Photo: Jörn Krebs, STH Basel

making of disciples in a worldwide context (*Matthew 28:18-20*). From this perspective, baptism became a ‘Christianised’ form of John’s baptism. Jesus was baptised, He Himself baptised and instructed others to baptise., It is now in His Name that baptism still takes place. These are important stages in the development of Christian baptism. The origin of Christian baptism, however, lies in the baptism of the Jewish John the Baptist. This is clear, not least from the

title of the thesis: “In the beginning was John the Baptist.” It also underlines the connectedness of the Old and New Testaments.

Tobias has done an outstanding job. As an international organisation, we are proud that, once again, someone from our worldwide network has been awarded a doctorate in theology. Tobias, congratulations! We hope that we will be able to profit a lot from your acquired knowledge.

# Jesus' Jerusalem

## The History of Jerusalem—Part 4



The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock



### ■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

He was born a Judean but raised a Galilean. The first thirty years of His life were spent in an obscure village with less than three hundred inhabitants. Because of Him, His hometown has grown to 78,000 today. Regarding His famous ministry, it was also

Galilean, based by the shore of what is now the most famous body of water in the world, the Sea of Galilee.

Yet our King, Saviour, and Lord—Jesus of Nazareth—had an appointment in Jerusalem. Indeed, He had several, but the most important one occurred at the end of His natural life. While His visits to Jerusalem were occasional, they were also notable.

These visits started when Jesus was eight days old: the time of His circumcision and then presentation to the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem. A simple sacrifice was offered of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. While the sacrificial side of the visit was routine, some extraordinary things happened. A man named Simeon was told that he would not die before seeing the Lord's Christ with his own eyes. He prophesied that the infant would cause the fall and rising again of many in Israel (*Luke 2:21-35*).

After Simeon came an old prophetess Anna, daughter of Phanuel, from the obscure tribe of Asher. She pointed to this same infant as the means of redemption in Jerusalem—which was accomplished nearly thirty-three years later.

Jesus' next recorded visit was when He was twelve years old. His family took Him to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. When they returned to Nazareth, unbeknown to them, He stayed behind with the theological doctors, listening to them and asking questions. He astonished everyone with his words. Then the curtain descends between Jesus and Jerusalem, and we hear nothing more for eighteen years. At the age of thirty, at the Jordan River, the Triune God—The Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit made their visible public earthly debut at the site of John the Baptist's ministry.

Remember that much of Jesus' public ministry was done along the western, northwestern, and northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, from Magdala on the mid-western shore to Bethsaida on the Northeast corner of the lake. The eastern shore was Gentile country; hence, the herding of swine and the deliverance of the Gadarene demoniac. The southern half of the western shore was the area of Tiberias. Built by 'that fox' Herod Antipas on an abandoned cemetery, good Jews refused to live in Tiberias. There is no record of Jesus visiting the city, despite its proximity to His ministry headquarters.

When Jesus did miracles in Galilee, they were universally celebrated and acclaimed. Duplicate the miracles in Jerusalem, and the Lord received, at best, a mixed response. There were those who reacted just like the people of Galilee, yet others became resentful, hardened, and hateful. His popularity in Jerusalem was not helped by the cleansing of the temple at the early part of His ministry (*John 2:13-22*), with another round after His Palm Sunday entry into the sacred precincts just days before His crucifixion.

Another example of the mixed response to miracles occurred in the sheep market at the pool of Bethesda (*John 5*), where a man with an infirmity of thirty-eight years. Jesus came to him and commanded that he rise, take up his bed, and walk. Immediately, he was healed and was able to comply. Only one problem: it was the *Sabbath* day. The Jewish elite was highly offended, not impressed, by this powerful miracle. They viewed it as a violation of the *Sabbath*. The healed man went out of his way to tell them that his healer was Jesus; from that point, they persecuted the Lord until the time of His death. A similarly mixed response happened when Jesus healed the blind man at the Pool of Siloam; the whole of *John 9* is devoted to this miracle and the controversy surrounding it.

This mixed response, love-hate, double-minded attitude by Jerusalem towards Jesus was fully manifested in the last week of His life. During the Palm Sunday entry into the city, the crowd rapturously welcomed him. They called Him the 'Son of David,' which was tantamount to recognising Him as the Messiah—the Anointed One—and coming king. This was a threat to the current ruling Jewish religious establishment and the Roman occupying authorities. Jesus took time from the adulation to view the city of Jerusalem and weep, knowing its celebration of Him was brief, its soon-coming rejection of Him deadly, and its own destruction by Rome was a few years away.

A second cleansing of the temple and strife-riddled arguments with the scribes and Pharisees, the communal temperature was raised to boiling point. His enemies would not rest until He was destroyed. Within a few short days, Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, tried, convicted, mocked, humiliated, then crucified and buried in a new but borrowed tomb. Three days later, He rose from the dead. The city of His crucifixion and ratification of the New Covenant in His blood also became the dissemination centre of the glorious gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth. As it says in *Luke 24:47*: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. So, from the city where it all began, in the fullness of time, He will return.

To be continued.

## Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

### The Cost of Discipleship

In my twenty years of serving the calling of Jewish-Christian relations and studying the New Testament, I have always been fascinated by *Matthew 19:16-30*, usually entitled "*The Rich Young Man*." My preferred title for this episode is "*The Rejection to Become Jesus' Disciple*."

It is obvious that the rich man believes in eternal life, known in Hebrew as *Olam Habah*. This is contrary to the Sadducees, who only believed in the *Five Books of Moses* and did not believe in *Olam Habah* since there is no direct Pentateuchal source for this concept. At the time of Jesus, the Sadducees were one of the most influential streams of Judaism. The anonymity of the rich man's Jewish affiliation is quite shocking in a corpus usually identifying the questioner.

Although there is a *Mishnah* that states, "All Israel have a share to *Olam Habah*," it immediately lists the exceptions. These include anyone who does not believe that the resurrection of the dead is sourced in the *Torah*, a person who denies that the *Torah* is not divine, a heretic, and anyone who treats *Torah* scholars with contempt. (*Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1*). It is my contention that the movements of Judaism, at the time of Jesus who believed in *Olam Habah*, were fully aware of this maxim. Therefore, the issue was never about gaining *Olam Habah* but losing it.

Judaism doesn't believe in the notion that once you have *Olam Habah*, you always have it.

The initial response of Jesus to the rich man may come as a surprise for some Christians, "Keep the commandments." There is *Olam Habah* with living a *Torah* lifestyle! However, the questions of the rich man after Jesus's first response finally reveals how he views *Olam Habah*—as a get-rich-quick scheme. The rich man is looking for that small effortless investment to gain a permanent guarantee of *Olam Habah*. The rich man is seeking that one commandment that shields his *Olam Habah* investment forever.

Jesus sees an opportunity to disciple the rich man by helping him understand that *Olam Habah* should never be viewed as a commodity but a responsibility.

Jesus was offering the rich man discipleship at the highest level to realign his *Olam Habah* attitude. The cost was for the rich man to immediately see himself as a vehicle of God's material bounty. This is why Jesus said to the rich man, "If you wish to be **completely whole** (*shalem*), go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and so you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me" (*verse 21*).

The rich man had a fragmented approach to living an *Olam Habah* lifestyle, and in the end, he was unable or unwilling to become 'whole.' Therefore, he rejected Jesus's offer of discipleship. It was easier for him to live in his compartmentalised world.

The purpose of this life is to bring the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth. Our daily lives are opportunities to bring more of Him into this world via His *Torah*. It is a lifelong journey. However, it requires paradigm adjustment to see that our life not only affects this world but also *Olam Habah*.

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

# From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

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

The festival of *Rosh Hashanah*—the name means ‘Head of the Year’—is observed for two days beginning on 1 *Tishrei*, the first day of the Jewish year. It is the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, and their first actions toward the realisation of mankind’s role in God’s world.

### Annual Decree

*Rosh Hashanah* thus emphasises the special relationship between God and humanity: we are dependent upon God as our creator and sustainer, but God wants us to make His presence known and felt in His world. Each year on *Rosh Hashanah*, “All inhabitants of the world pass before God like a flock of sheep,” and it is decreed in the heavenly court, “Who shall live, and who shall die... who shall be impoverished, and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise.” But this is also the day God is proclaimed as King of the Universe. Jewish mysticism teaches that the continued existence of the universe is dependent upon the renewal of the divine desire for a world when we accept God’s kingship each year on *Rosh Hashanah*.

### Shofar

The central observance of *Rosh Hashanah* is the sounding of the *shofar*, the ram’s horn, which also represents the trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king. The cry of the *shofar* is also a call to repentance, for *Rosh Hashanah* is also the anniversary of man’s first sin and his repentance thereof and serves as the first of the ‘Ten Days of Repentance’ which culminate in *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. Another significance of the *shofar* is to recall the Binding of Isaac (*Genesis 22*), which also occurred on *Rosh Hashanah*, in which a ram took Isaac’s place as an offering to God; Abraham’s readiness to sacrifice his son is evoked, as a plea that the merit of his deed should stand by Israel as we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity. Altogether, faithful Jews listen to one hundred *shofar* blasts over the course of the *Rosh Hashanah* services.

### A Piece of Apple

Additional *Rosh Hashanah* observances include: a) Eating a piece of apple dipped in honey to symbolise our desire for a sweet year and other special foods symbolic of the new year’s blessings. b) Blessing one another with the words “*Leshanah tovah tikateiv veteichateim*,” “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.” c) *Tashlich*, a special prayer said near a body of water (an ocean, river, pond, etc.), in evocation of the verse, “And You shall cast their sins



A Jewish man blowing the *Shofar*, which is used to blow sounds on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. | Photo: Lightstock

into the depths of the sea” (*Micah 7:19*). And as with every major Jewish holiday, after candle lighting and prayers *Kiddush* is recited and a blessing made on the *challah*.

### Yom Kippur

*Yom Kippur* is the holiest day of the year—the day on which Jews feel closest to God. It is the Day of Atonement—“For on this day, He will forgive you, to purify you, that you be cleansed from all your sins before God” (*Leviticus 16:30*).

**The central observance of *Rosh Hashanah* is the sounding of the *shofar*, the ram’s horn, which also represents the trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king.**

For nearly twenty-six hours—from several minutes before sunset on 9 *Tishrei* to after nightfall on 10 *Tishrei*—faithful Jews ‘afflict their souls’: they abstain from food and drink, do not wash or anoint their bodies, do not wear leather footwear, and abstain from marital relations.

Before *Yom Kippur*, the *Kaparot* atonement service is performed; everyone requests and receives honey cake in acknowledgement that we are all recipients in God’s world and in prayerful hope for a sweet and abundant year; eats a festive meal; immerses in a *mikvah*; and gives extra charity. In the late afternoon, the pre-fast meal is eaten, following which the children are blessed, a memorial candle is lit, as well as the holiday candles. Then it is time to go to the synagogue for the *Kol Nidrei* service.

In the course of *Yom Kippur*, five prayer services are held: *Maariv*, with its solemn *Kol Nidrei* service, on the eve of *Yom Kippur*; *Shacharit*—the morning prayer, which includes a reading from *Leviticus* followed by the *Yizkor* memorial service; *Musaf*, which includes a detailed account of the *Yom Kippur* Temple service; *Minchah*, which includes the reading of the *Book of Jonah*; and *Ne’ilah*, the ‘closing of the gates’ service at sunset. The confession of sins (*Hebrew: Al Chet*) is said eight times in

the course of *Yom Kippur*, and Psalms are recited at every available moment.

The day is the most solemn of the year, yet an undertone of joy suffuses it: a joy that revels in the spirituality of the day and expresses the confidence that God will accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and seal our verdict for a year of life, health and happiness. The closing *Ne’ilah* service climaxes in the resounding cries of “Hear O Israel... God is one.” Then joy erupts in song and dance, followed by a single blast of the *shofar*, followed by the proclamation, “Next year in Jerusalem.” Then everybody partakes in a festive after-fast meal, making the evening after *Yom Kippur* a *Yom tov* (festival) in its own right.

Adapted from [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org).

## Facts Speak



The Gaza Strip has a 12-kilometre-long border with Egypt. Just 48 kilometres from this border lies the Egyptian city of El Arish. The city has a port and an international airport. It should be possible for everything Gaza needs to find its way to and from Gaza via El Arish, including the flow of people coming and going. However, Egypt keeps the border with Gaza closed nearly 100 per cent of the time.

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[www.c4israel.org/video-on-demand](http://www.c4israel.org/video-on-demand)



## 50 Years Ago: Yom Kippur War

■ Ps Nigel Woodley

For the Protection of Zion I Speak Up | NZ

After the humiliating defeat of the Arab forces in 1967, the Soviet Union set about rearming a new breed of Arab fighters. In six years, Arab armies were ready to strike Israel again. Equipped with the latest in the Soviet arsenal, including what would prove to be the deadly SAM missile systems, they would strike on the holiest day in the Hebrew calendar—Yom Kippur, 1973. The Arabs won the war of secrecy to start with. It was only on the day of the planned attack that news began to filter through Israeli intelligence. Saturday, 6 October, was a high holy day, being both the *Shabbat* and the fast day of atonement. Early morning phone calls between the Israeli military and political leaders began an urgent mobilisation of Israeli forces.

It usually took 72 hours to fully mobilise their reserve army. The regular army is sufficient for keeping the peace but not for going into a major war. For the first time in Israel's history, her jet fighters were flying low over civilian areas and breaking the sanctity of Yom Kippur. It was the signal to the reserve troops to prepare for war. Secret codes were broadcast over the radio, calling different battalions to mobilise. All the secret signals were to prevent the enemy from knowing that the Israelis had learned of their intentions.



Major Ariel Sharon (with his head bandaged) is holding the map of Operation 'Knights of Heart'. To his left is Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Colonel Chaim Bar-Lev. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Israel's battlefronts—in the Sinai and on the Golan. Both world superpowers became involved. First, the Soviets were reinforcing the Arabs with hundreds of tons of supplies every day. A reluctant United States under President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger finally succumbed to Israeli pressure. The Israelis reminded them that they still had a nuclear arsenal hidden away in the vault if needed. The biggest planes in the US fleet

the Egyptian capital, Cairo. For the first time in 3,300 years, an Israelite army was back inside Egypt. *Exodus 13:18* tells us that when the Israelites went up out of Egypt, they went up armed for battle. This time they were going back down into Egypt, also armed for battle. If it were not for the enforcement of the United Nations ceasefire later in October, then Israel could have pressed her advantage all the way to both Arab capitals—Damascus and Cairo.

**The Israelis paid a high price in the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Approximately 2,500 Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting, and another 7,500 wounded... it was a traumatic and painful war.**

At precisely 14:00 hours, huge barrages of artillery, tank and airpower were simultaneously hurled at the Israelis: by Syrian forces on their northern front on the Golan Heights and by Egyptian forces in the south along the Suez Canal. Initially, Israel was stunned. Casualties were high. In the first three days, Israel lost 50 of her state-of-the-art jet fighter-bombers. Coupled with that were major incursions of enemy forces into their territory. Thousands of Egyptian tanks and tens of thousands of their troops had managed to cross the Canal and entrench themselves well inside Israel's front. In the north, the Syrians almost managed to push the Israelis off the Golan Heights. They came within minutes of crossing the vital B'not Yaakov bridge just north of the Sea of Galilee. This was the door into Israel proper and would have meant a disaster for civilians living in Galilee.

Lance Lambert, a Messianic Jew living in Israel, shared an interesting story in his book *Battle for Israel*:

"Another Israeli captain without any religious beliefs said that at the height of the fighting on the Golan, he looked up into the sky and saw a great, grey hand pressing downwards as if it were holding something back. In my opinion, that describes exactly what happened; without the intervention of God, Israel would have been doomed (*Lambert 13*)."

The greatest tank battles since the Second World War were taking place on both of

began a huge re-supply operation for the Israelis just in the nick of time. The Israelis did not have to open their nuclear vault.

At crucial times in the war, both Syria and Egypt stumbled. They did not fully appreciate the advantages that were before them, and each missed their opportunities. The Syrians had a clear path over the Golan and into Israel proper, but they hesitated and waited, and while they did, the Israeli reinforcements began rolling into the Golan and drove the Syrians back. Much the same happened in the south in the Sinai: the Egyptians had the advantage, and if they had pressed on, they would have been knocking on Israel's back door in no time. Their hesitation, as in the north, gave the Israelis time to lick their wounds, regroup and strengthen their forces for the inevitable counterattack. Whereas the Six-Day War had made the Israelis overconfident, it had made the Arab armies over-cautious. Soviet training had led them to do everything by the book. They were not dashing nor daring enough to drive those advantages home.

The result was that within three days in the north, the Israelis had bounced back, and their forces were rolling over the Syrian frontier into Syria proper. The Syrian capital Damascus was now under threat of being occupied by an Israeli army. It took a bit longer in the south, but in another week or so, Israeli troops were crossing the Suez Canal, now threatening

The Israelis paid a high price in the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Approximately 2,500 Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting, and another 7,500 wounded. For a small country of three million at the time, to have ten thousand casualties had a devastating impact. It was a traumatic and painful war. Not the prestigious victory of 1967, but a fight which, in the first few rounds, could have seen the Israelis knocked out completely. However, they managed to bounce back, and their momentum, in the end, could have taken them to the Nile in the south and the Euphrates in the north.

Israeli's Prime Minister at the time, Golda Meir, summed up the attitude of her nation during the emergency:

"This People, small as it is, surrounded as it is by enemies, has decided to live. And if we have to pay the price for living, we have to pay it. This is not a people that can give in. And we know that giving in means death means the destruction of our sovereignty and the physical destruction of our entire people. We will not be destroyed. We dare not be destroyed. Therefore, the spirit of our men on the front, the spirit of our people in every home, in every city, in every village, is a spirit of a people who hates war but knows that in order to live, it must win the war that has been forced upon it (*The Story of the Yom Kippur War*)."

Adapted from Nigel Woodley's eBook *Modern Israel is Still Biblical Israel*: <https://fortheProtectionofzion.com/product/modern-israel-is-still-biblical-israel/>

### Short News

#### Drone Taxis



As part of a government-led initiative, Israel is preparing infrastructure for a national airspace network of large drones that are designed to carry passengers and heavy cargo. The aim is to relieve Israeli road traffic, with its many traffic jams, and to provide commercial and public services more efficiently. The initiative is a collaboration of several government agencies led by the Transportation Ministry. A successful week of test flights was recently completed. | Photo: BY Creative & Productions

#### Autism Research Breakthrough

Every year, millions of people are diagnosed with autism. Research from Hebrew University in Jerusalem has revealed a direct link between nitric oxide in the brain and autistic behaviour. Dr Haitham Amal, who led the research, said: "I am hopeful that with our new understanding of the nitric oxide mechanism, we can begin to develop therapeutic drugs and help millions of children and adults living with autism around the world."

#### Israel Success

No fewer than three Israeli startups won prizes at the Aviram Awards ceremony in Morocco. The first prize was for QD-SOL, a company developing technology to produce green hydrogen from water using solar energy. The Aviram Awards is an annual competition for young entrepreneurs and startups from the Middle East and North Africa who work to improve life through business, innovation and technology.

#### High-tech Complex Opens in East Jerusalem



Israel opens a new industrial business campus in East Jerusalem to lure Israeli and international high-tech companies to operate in the Wadi Joz neighbourhood. It is part of the city's effort to increase the participation of the Arab population in the country's workforce. The campus is supported by an investment of \$ 2.8 million. About 20 local programmers have already started working at the campus for one of the tech companies. | Photo: The Times of Israel

# Upgrade for the Ancient Tower of David

## ■ Judith Segaloff

Tucked inside the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem's Old City stands an edifice that personifies the resilience of Israel's eternal capital.

The Tower of David has served as a Herodian fortress, a Crusaders' palace, an Ottoman entrance gate, and now hosts the renewed and state-of-the-art Tower of David Jerusalem Museum.

The \$50 million renewal and conservation of the museum, thanks to Dame Vivien Duffield through the Clore Israel Foundation, the Jerusalem Municipality and other philanthropic funding, has transformed a compound designed to keep intruders out to carefully plotted galleries filled with exhibits that explore and trace the history and the spirit of Jerusalem.

Turning the ancient structure into a modern and accessible museum was a formidable challenge for the architects and design team on the project. Using all the original architecture, except for one ceiling, they transformed the first-century fortress into a welcoming, comfortable, and handicapped-accessible modern museum with 215,000 square feet of galleries detailing Jerusalem's 4,000-year significance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

After 10 years of planning, three years of construction and the installation of a mile of fiber optic cables, the museum, originally founded in 1989, officially opened on 1 June, with an additional contemporary art gallery opening in November.

According to Caroline Shapiro, director of external affairs for the museum, the new flow that begins adjacent to the Jaffa Gate takes visitors through the museum in a way designed to showcase the city of Jerusalem. It still offers shady outdoor areas where tour guides gather their groups or where visitors can meet before beginning their exploration.

Curator Tal Kobo and her seven core team members combined actual artifacts culled from the site during excavations by teams of archeologists during the renovation with 3-D touch screens, mounted carefully to highlight the stone walls behind the glass.

Eilat Lieber, chief curator of the museum, understood the nature of the diverse audiences she had to reach, after her son took a school trip to the museum prior to its renovation and pronounced it 'boring.' History, he said, is boring. She pondered how to make it relevant to our time—and to the many different communities that converge in Jerusalem.

"We decided to use an interactive process," she explained. "We have the perfect location, and this building represents all the layers of history and of conflict," she said. "We realised that the evidence of the past will tell the story in different ways and engage visitors to find what is meaningful to each different person. The Tower of David is one of the most beautiful and well-preserved fortresses in the world. The history of Jerusalem must be told through technology and beautiful design."

With headsets and audio tours, her son came back on a class trip to experience

the 'new' museum. This time he didn't say boring. "This," he said, "is cool!"

The technology team for the museum comprised more than 50 people in five separate studios.

The designers chose a clean, minimalistic look to contrast with the heavy stone structure and enhance the power of the site. Even the cracks between the stones were conserved. Grouting was replaced by limestone. Elevators and ramps were installed.

"The two elevators were six years of heated discussion with the antiquities commission," recalls professor Tal Roi de Lange of Studio de Lange, one of the designers.

"The important design principle was to maintain context with the city," he explained. "Each space is different in both architecture and context. "Communication cables, electric wires and even lighting fixtures were carefully hidden."

But how do you light 215,000 square feet of castle without beams and ugly cables strung across the ancient ceilings?

The architects and designers met the challenge using 'floating' cement floors with LED lighting in between the crevice between floor and wall. Heating and cooling emanates from under the floors as well. Small but powerful sconces inserted in the limestone cracks between the stones were used to augment the natural lighting of the vaulted ceilings. The glass displays light up as well, offering effective and dramatic interaction.

And don't think the acoustics in a castle are optimal. According to Architect Yotam Cohen Sagi, they used 3D scans to conduct acoustic studies and tried three different materials until they were able to ensure that the sound traveled properly throughout the galleries.

"I have never been on so many site visits and to so many meetings for a project," Sagi explained. "There were so many layers, and we used old fashioned methods of measuring and leveling—holding strings. And then, just when you think you know what you're doing, you find ancient remains or artifacts and have to stop everything and call in the Israel Antiquities Authority," he said.

Every window and skylight is visible. At one point the visitor looks through a display and a window beyond the exhibit highlights the modern city of Jerusalem. History connects with high-tech Jerusalem itself.

All the 3D models face in the actual direction of their orientation, transporting the visitor to their exact location within the space of the museum. As large as each space is, the exhibits are designed to keep visitors engaged, without fatigue from the constant content. The technology is designed to communicate various content in different ways. Transparent touch screens allow 360-degree close-ups of real artifacts located in nearby cases in one space. Another space lends itself to ceiling projections, and another to multimedia presentations.



View of the Tower of David museum in the Old City of Jerusalem. | Photo: Flash90

The first gallery offers 3,000 years of history in three minutes—a multimedia presentation by Israeli cinematographer and Golden Globe winner Ari Folman. Through classic animation and video mapping, it traces the history and culture of Jerusalem.

A 'Bunting Map' from the Middle Ages portrays Jerusalem as the center of the world, flanked by Europe, Asia and Africa; the city on the shores of eternity. As you progress through the gallery, it's like being in a time tunnel, with a 40-foot-long interactive wall fueled by 12 computers.

As you progress through the Mamluks and Ottomans and finally find the interactive 3D globe, you are brought to almost the present time with a letter from Israel's first president, David Ben-Gurion, to a young boy.

If you enjoy maps, there are 14 interactive ones on offer, including an elevation map of Jerusalem, enhanced by special lighting and a 2.5 minute video that displays the entire city. Don't forget your audio guide (it's in three languages). As you progress through the museum, it will tell you what you're looking at, because at some point, it can become overwhelming. You will see a five-and-a-half-minute film by Jerusalem filmmaker Yair Moss, and Dale Chihuly glass exhibits adjacent to cannonballs from the Jerusalem revolt in days of yore.

Each religion is given its due. The Jewish room features the mosaic of Bet Alpha's Binding of Isaac and a large model of the Second Temple, complete with artifacts from that period, including a coin press for Hasmonian coins and a first-century lily coin. A Yeshiva University-created 3D scan of the Arch of Titus has been coloured and animated, capping off the Jewish exhibit.

A Jordanian Madaba Map with crusader coins features the Tower of David on the coins, with some featuring the Crusader kings and queens who took up residence in this very castle.

Underneath the minaret, which served as a mosque at various times during the city's history, there is a large model of the Temple Mount complex, featuring the Al Aqsa Mosque and a cutaway of the famed Dome of the Rock. For those of us who

have never been near or inside it, it is illuminating to see the Foundation Stone and other features of the Mount.

"With all its layers and incarnations, the Tower of David has never been a 'holy place,' explains Tal Kobo. "But the artifacts and the history symbolise the yearning to come back to Jerusalem."

For children who still think 'history is boring,' in addition to all the displays and visuals, every room is equipped with fun interactive games and quizzes for children. For the older generation and for those with special needs, the museum is one of the most accessible attractions in Jerusalem.

"We had to get permission for everything," explained Reut Kozak, accessibility coordinator for the museum. "From hanging signs to buildings and structuring the floors. The Mamluks didn't make the doorways wide enough for wheelchairs," she said. All told, only 15% of the museum is not completely accessible, she added.

Famous for its light shows at night, the new museum will feature noise reduction headphones and relaxed performances for people on the autism spectrum or who have sensitivities to sound. An app uses Bluetooth to access hearing aids for the hearing impaired and customises the sound for each ear, and there are audio descriptions for the sight impaired. A sensory map provides a guide that details dark, light and the noisier rooms, and there is a special audio tour guide for sight impaired. There are visuals with sign language on the app for the hearing-impaired.

The only area not accessible to anyone who cannot navigate the final 50 steps is the Observation Deck, but the museum has created a Virtual Reality experience for those left behind that will help them enjoy the 360-degree panoramic view from their phone.

And, thanks to the new flow, when you come out of the Tower of David, through what used to be the original entrance, the Old City is at your feet, ready to be explored in real time.

Originally published at [www.jns.org](http://www.jns.org). Republished with permission.

## Helping in all Circumstances *Koen Carlier about the situation in Ukraine*



(Left) Koen Carlier distributes food parcels in Zaporizhzhia thanks to your support. (Right) Often times our team in Ukraine is confronted with the devastation and misery of war as they visit people in towns and villages to provide food parcels, or pick them up for departure to Israel | Photos: C4I

### ■ Marijke Terlouw Christians for Israel Netherlands

Ever since the first nerve-racking weeks following the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022, hopes for peace remain unfulfilled. The war forced thousands to flee the country, seeking safety. Our team continued to do their important work and was sustained by your prayers. The situation has not improved in recent times. People have been displaced, prices are rising, and unemployment is enormous. In these conditions, the work of our C4I team continues. Koen Carlier shares about the situation.

**...you pick people up from apartments that have been destroyed. This really affects you as a person.**

“Perhaps you could say that our work has not changed much after more than sixteen months of war. We continue to do what we always did: help people in need, provide them with food, and assist with transportation to the airport when people want to immigrate to Israel. Except now people don’t leave from Ukraine but from Moldova. The most important thing we offer to people is hope. Hope for the future. The fact that we are able to help, comfort and listen is invaluable.”

#### Why do people leave Ukraine?

“Because of the war, there are no signs of improvement, and the end of the war is not yet in sight. Apartments are damaged, and will not be repaired for the time being, so this also doesn’t give people any hope. And relatives from Israel tell them: ‘Come to Israel’. For thousands of Jews, the war has accelerated their plans to go to Israel. Every week we drive to Kishenov, Moldova, two or three times to bring people to the Israeli consul for an interview, and shortly thereafter, they can depart for Israel. As a result of the mobilisation law, however, men between the ages of 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave. Therefore, many families wait and stay in Ukraine. When the mobilisation ends, we expect that at least a few thousand people will want to leave for Israel when they are able to leave as a family.”

*Koen, at the beginning of the war, you said, “Your prayer is the fuel that allows us to do this work.” How do you feel about this today?*

“This was relevant back then, and it’s still true today. In times of need, you help those in need. We must not

forget that this need was already there before the war. In 2014, Crimea was occupied, and the conflict started in the east of the country, in Lugansk and Donetsk. Then came Covid19, and now worse: a war in which the whole country is involved.

We ask for God’s protection and security. Of course, that is no guarantee. So we should not be careless about it. The Lord says: ‘I will call the nations to bring My people home’. It does not say: ‘I will call the nations when it is safe, when it is quiet when it is summertime.’ In other words, it says: under all circumstances. We have always been spared, and we see it as grace, as His protection. Because basically, anything can happen.”

**Surely you must encounter a lot of suffering when you meet and pick up people.**

“You hear about what is happening on the news. And at the same time, you pick people up from apartments that have been destroyed. This really affects you as a person. You listen; you hear what happened. The stories about families, about sons who are no longer there, the misery. But being there, helping, being able to comfort and encourage, that really makes a difference. We say to the people: we don’t understand everything either, but we know that the Almighty brings you home. This is true hope.”

**Do you read the Bible differently than before the war?**

“Most certainly! When I think of *Zechariah 2*, flee from the land of the north and save yourself to Zion. This is a warning to flee, but at the same time, there is a plan B after people flee: go to Zion. This is actually what I have been experiencing since 2014 when the conflict in eastern Ukraine broke out. The war forced many people to flee to Israel. Gradually, the borders closed more since 2014.”

**Could the situation get worse than it is now?**

“Yes, you have to expect that to happen. Russia can’t really go back; they started this. And if Ukraine would recapture territory, we have no idea how Russia will react. So we live from day to day.”

**So what does that mean for the work you and the team do?**

“Before the war, we were well prepared. And we still are. We have food supplies; we have fuel storage; we have a warehouse, a generator, shelters and enough minibuses. If something happens and there is a new flood of Jewish refugees, we can help them.”

If you would like to support our work among the needy Jews in Ukraine, please complete the coupon on the back of this newspaper.

## Overview of our projects

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

### Aliyah

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



### Hineni Soup Kitchen

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



### Holocaust Survivors

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



### Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

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



### Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

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



### Arab Christians

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



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, [www.c4israel.org.nz](http://www.c4israel.org.nz)



## Letter from Naim and Elvira Khoury

We recently received a letter from Rev. Naim Khoury and his wife, Elvira, from Bethlehem, who have a remarkable testimony of God's provision for their ministry, surrounded as they are with extreme poverty. The pastor couple would very much like to offer to members of their congregation a few days of relaxation

and for building up their faith. They are asking for help to cover some of the costs of those who cannot afford to attend the camp. Saleem Shalash from Nazareth also hopes to offer activities this summer to those who cannot afford it themselves. Read the letter from the Khoury's below.

Will you help Rev Khoury and Rev Shalash? You can donate by completing the coupon below selecting 'Arab Christians'. Thank you on behalf of them!

Dear friends,  
We hope and pray that you are doing well. We would like to tell you more about our summer family camp. The families will go away for a three-day period. We hope it will be a time of 'recharging', a time away from home and away from all the pressures. How relaxing that will be! And what a spiritual strengthening that will be, where we may grow in the Lord, find peace of mind and rest physically. The assistance is for those families who cannot afford to pay for this outing themselves. It includes food, accommodation, an edifying programme and children's activities. What a blessing this will be for all. With enough finances, we can organize a wonderful time for all. Last year (see photo), you helped the Arab Christians in Bethlehem too. With His help, we will make it happen. In His service, our King, the Messiah, Elvira and Naim Khoury



Rev Shalash with children of the congregations. | Photo: Church of Rev Shalash in Nazareth



Bethlehem summer camp.

## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL NZ MINISTRY

- My donation for ministry costs, print & post \$.....
- thinc. (countering anti-Israel 'lawfare') \$.....

### ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

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

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

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

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

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Check out our website for a full list of essential resources

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