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Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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President Reuven Rivlin met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White party leader Benny Gantz at the President Residence in Jerusalem on 23 September 2019. | Photo: Flash90

Who Will Govern Israel?

Yochanan Visser

Christians for Israel Correspondent in Israel

The second Israeli parliamentary elections within six months yielded no clear winner. President Rivlin has mandated PM Netanyahu - who is facing possible indictment - to try to form a coalition. The potential kingmaker is Avigdor Lieberman. Israel is heading into uncharted political waters.

In the elections on 17 September, the Blue and White Party of Benny Gantz, Moshe 'Bogie' Ya'alon and Yair Lapid won 33 seats - a loss of 2 compared to April, but two seats more than the Likud Party of current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Likud Party of Netanyahu, the longest-serving Prime Minister in Israel's history, gained only 32 seats, a loss of three seats compared to the April election.

The President has the power to appoint one of the elected 120 Members of Knesset (MKs) as the next potential prime minister of Israel. The designated

premier must then attempt to form a coalition that has the confidence of a majority of Knesset members. If that cannot be achieved within the timeframe set down by law, new elections will be required.

The left-wing bloc of parties to which Blue and White belong includes the Democratic Union, which only won five seats, and the Labor Party, which formed a union with the Geshar party prior to the elections. The Geshar-Labor merger won only six seats a historic low for the party that ruled Israel for decades since the founding of the state. In total, the centre-left bloc won only 43 of the 120 seats in the new Knesset and is not even able to form a majority government with the help of the joint Arab list which won 13 seats.

On the other hand, the right-wing bloc led by Likud won a disappointing 55 seats, insufficient to form a majority government. This group comprises Likud: the Sephardic Orthodox party Shas with nine seats; the United Torah Judaism, an Ashkenazi ultra-orthodox party with eight seats, and Yamina, a national religious party with seven seats.

Yisrael Beiteinu became the biggest winner of the elections with nine mandates, a gain of four compared to April. The party of the Russian-speaking Avigdor Lieberman quit Netanyahu's government in November 2018 because of a disagreement about a law that sought to impose mandatory military conscription for ultra-orthodox Yeshiva students. The difficult personal relationship between Netanyahu and Lieberman also played a role in the background.

Lieberman supports a national unity government of secular parties consisting of Likud, Blue and White and Yisrael Beiteinu but so far has refused to endorse either Gantz or Netanyahu.

On 24 September, President Reuven Rivlin formally gave Netanyahu four weeks to form the government, after meetings at the President's Residence with Netanyahu and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz to try to agree on a unity government failed to bring about a breakthrough.

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Belaya Tserkov Memorial



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Colophon

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Mission

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

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Spirit of Grace and Supplication

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The Israeli elections on 17 September – the second elections in only six months – failed to produce a clear winner. The country is in a political stalemate, and no-one has a simple solution. The reign of PM Netanyahu – who has dominated Israeli politics for two decades – may be coming to an end. Never has the political leadership of the nation seemed so fractured. President Rivlin will need a lot of wisdom to navigate the nation through this crisis in leadership.

But of course, we only see the outside – the visible manifestations of unseen realities. Like the reverse side of a tapestry, it all appears chaotic, frayed and unorganised. But the weaver of the tapestry is completing His perfectly designed creation.

The prophet *Zechariah*, in *chapters 12-13*, speaks of the time when Jerusalem will become a “cup of trembling” and a “burdensome stone for all nations”, and the nations will come against Jerusalem. The Lord will intervene to save Judah and Jerusalem. After that, the Lord will cleanse the land of all uncleanness and idols.

God is restoring Israel not because the Jewish people are perfect, nor to make them the most powerful nation on earth in their own strength, but in order to reveal His holy name to the nations.

The nation of Israel will have to go through great difficulties when its situation looks hopeless, and it is unable to save itself. Only then can God show His greatness. “Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.” (*Ezekiel 38:23*).

To be clear: we do not expect another holocaust. And it is not only Israel that will endure times of trial and tribulation. Many Christians too, tragically, will have to endure the time of tribulation ahead.

But we do expect the Jewish people and



President Reuven Rivlin, PM Benjamin Netanyahu, and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz, shake hands at the memorial ceremony for the late President Shimon Peres, in Jerusalem. | Photo: Flash90

the nation of Israel to face a crisis from within, and seemingly invincible opposition from without. Then will the nation turn to the Lord for its salvation.

To achieve His goal, the Lord has said He has to do a number of things in the nation of Israel in the last days. First, He has to bring His people (all twelve tribes) back from the nations, plant them in the land, and settle them there. Second, He will bring up the nations against Jerusalem, only to save it and destroy Israel's enemies. Third, he will give unity to the nation (this includes reuniting the two and ten tribes – the kingdoms of Judah and Israel). Fourth, He will cleanse it of all its idols and uncleanness, and pour on it a spirit of grace and supplication.

There will be no true national unity without repentance, cleansing and supplication.

Israel faces challenging times ahead. Israeli politics has become very polarised. Minority groups, like the ultra-orthodox *haredi* and the Arab Palestinians, have been stigmatised. If true national unity is to be achieved, Israel's leaders must create a new political culture. This involves inclusion, rather than demonisation, of the wide diversity of groups that make up Israeli society. That is easier said than done, and will require a new spirit.

We in the nations who have been saved by Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah, have a calling not only to repent of our own sins but also to intercede on behalf of His people at this time of national crisis. Let us pray that the Lord will have His hand of grace over His people, protect them from their enemies, and give them the ‘spirit of grace and supplications’ that He has promised to pour out on them (*Zechariah 12:10*).

Let us pray especially for President Reuven Rivlin, who plays a central role. He is a fourth-generation Jerusalemite, whose beloved wife recently passed away, and who has a special heart for his nation.

In this edition of *Israel & Christians Today*, Alex Rychin, author of an important new book on Zionism, explains how the concept of Zionism has been distorted and misunderstood (*pages 3 and 9*). This has many forms, including the modern BDS movement (*page 9*) and the falsification of history, such as promotion of the idea that Jesus was a ‘Palestinian’ (*page 12*).

On the other hand, there is a growing understanding in many nations, of the justice of the Jewish cause, and its importance both for the nations and the church today: Rwanda (*see page 8*), Romania (*page 7*), and Indonesia (*page 8*), to name some examples.

Prayer Points

By Pieter Bénard

Israel

- ‘But I trust in you, Lord; I say, “You are my God.”’ (*Psalms 31:14*). Pray that the elected members of the Knesset in the recent elections will quickly form a coalition of parties to form a government that will lead the country well at this crucial time in Israel's history.
- Over the past several years, Iran has been trying to expand its influence in the Middle East, at times aggressively. Iran is also constantly at odds with the United States. In the past Iran has taken tensions with other countries out on Israel. Pray that Iran will not be able to harm Israel.
- God's Word speaks about the return of Israel (Aliyah) hundreds of times. Some keywords and phrases to look for include ‘restore’ (your fortunes), ‘bring back’ (to your land), and ‘return’ (to the Lord your God). Thank God for the continuing Aliyah.

Israel & the Nations

- Pray for the countries surrounding Israel: Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. Pray that these countries may seek peace with Israel instead of war. Pray for the Christians in these countries, that they will not be discriminated against and that they will receive the strength from God to persevere in their faith.
- Pray for the Jews who live outside Israel. Pray that, now that anti-Semitism is on the rise, that they will feel protected by God.

- ‘Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”’ (*Matthew 28:18*). Give thanks that the nations do not hold the ultimate power in this world, but that King Jesus has the ultimate control.

Christians for Israel

- Give thanks for the very successful Christians for Israel training conference in Nepal. Approximately 200 pastors and church leaders from all over Nepal participated in this conference in June. Some had to travel for as long as 16 hours to attend. Pray that the pastors and church leaders may pass the message on.
- “All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness that the man of God may be competently equipped for every good work.” (*2 Timothy 3:16*) Pray that Israel and the fulfilling of prophecies about Israel will be among the topics discussed at church activities, like Bible study groups, youth groups etc.
- Pray that the mission of Christians for Israel, “to make Christians aware of the significance of the Jewish people in God's dealings with the world”, will be understood and supported, not only by Christians but also by non-Christians. Pray that they will become curious about what we do and the source of our inspiration and strength – the Bible.

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

Short News

Terror Now Coming Through the Mail



Terrorists in Gaza know how to find their way to the online shops too. From all over the world, all sorts of things are ordered. The list of items the Israeli postal services don't forward is steadily growing, especially in recent years. Some of those items could be used for terror. Drones, night-glasses, compasses, mini cameras, and advanced diving gear are only a few of the articles on the list. Initially, the items on the list and in the mail were limited to predefined equipment for digging tunnels. Currently the rules are applied to much more advanced equipment that can be used for terror attacks.

Ghetto Currency Devaluated

Of all ghettos, concentration camps and extermination camps in Europe during the Holocaust, Theresienstadt was most remarkable. It was a "showcase" for the outside world, meant to spin a web of lies for suspicious organisations and people: Jews had a roof over their heads, employment and they even had the use of leisure. Nothing was further from the truth. Theresienstadt even had its own currency – also to pull the wool over the eyes of the outside world.

Every Jew had to exchange all his money and sometimes his property as well for this currency. Ruth Brass owned six banknotes from Theresienstadt - that belonged to her father Lionel Schalit, a well-known Zionist. She donated the notes to the national library. The library in its turn is pleased with the donation because with it the documentation of the Holocaust is strengthened.

Volunteer Honoured



A volunteer from Zaka, an Israeli organisation that helps those caught up in disasters, was decorated by Guatemala for his work, as 'Ambassador of Peace'. Volunteer Shay Salomon is assisting two local Zaka branches in Guatemala, active since the volcano erupted in the summer of 2018.

| Photo: Zaka

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"Netanyahu has the best chance to form a government", he said. The deadline will be 24 October. The political situation is complicated by the fact that on 2 October the Attorney General (Avichai Mandelblit) is due to decide whether to indict Netanyahu on corruption charges.

So far Blue and White leader Benny Ganz and other prominent politicians of the new party have ruled out cooperation with Likud as long as Netanyahu is the leader of the party and subject to possible indictment. Prominent Likud members have indicated that they have no intention to drop Netanyahu as party leader and with that, the formation of a government of national unity looks an extremely complicated matter. Should Netanyahu be indicted, prominent Likud members will probably be more open to the idea of appointing a new party leader.

It is unlikely either party will be willing to form a government with the united Arab list. For tactical reasons, ten members of the united Arab list took the unusual step to recommend a Zionist party leader for

the task of building a workable government. The third-largest party in Israel decided on 23 September to recommend Benny Ganz in order to thwart the possibility that Netanyahu would receive a majority of recommendations. Likud shares Blue and White's view about forming a government with the Arab parties and will under no circumstances form a coalition with Arab parties that are considered hostile to the Jewish state.

Yisrael Beiteinu is, therefore, expected to assume the role of kingmaker in the coalition forming process once again.

Blue and White does not have any essentially different positions on national security than Likud, and this is still the most important issue in Israeli politics. Ganz is in favour of continuing the Israeli policy towards Iran and also doesn't oppose the introduction of Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley.



| Photo: flickr

Blue and White are, however, against Israeli sovereignty over the Jewish villages and towns in Judea and Samaria, the so-called West Bank and still supports the so-called Two-State-Solution.

The forming of a workable coalition could take at least until the end of December. This would mean that Israel will only see a new government at the beginning of 2020. If neither Netanyahu or Ganz is able to form a workable coalition, Israel will have to go back to the polls - yet again.

Red Terror: How the Soviet Shaped Modern Anti-Zionist Discourse

■ Alex Ryvchin

Co-Chief Executive Officer
| Executive Council of Australian Jewry

The Arab-Israeli conflict traverses many decades and manifests in regular wars, terrorism and endless political skirmishes on international forums. It is also a battle to establish narratives – victims and aggressors, Davids and Goliaths, oppressors and the oppressed. Language and the meaning given to basic concepts form a key part of the battle. Jewish people can justly establish a claim to the territory known as Judea and Samaria. While the later formulation 'West Bank,' coined by the Jordanians following their occupation of the area in 1948 is a bland geographic descriptor that strips the territory of its historical significance. The Associated Press recently stumbled into the morass of political language when it declined to identify the men who tortured and killed Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972 as Palestinian terrorists, instead calling them 'guerillas' and 'gunmen.' And there is no term in the vernacular of the conflict that is misapplied and distorted more than 'Zionism.'

Zionism, correctly understood, refers simply to the return of Jewish people to 'Zion,' one of several names given to Jerusalem and the surrounding lands in which the Jews lived and governed in ancient times. In the late 19th century, the idea of returning to those lands shifted from a seemingly intangible ideal and a wistful age-old expression of yearning for freedom to a precise, secular, political movement.

Zionism aimed to reconstitute a Jewish state in the territory the Jews knew as 'Eretz Yisrael' (The Land of Israel), which had

been renamed 'Palestine' following the suppression of the final Jewish rebellion by the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the year 135 CE. The Balfour Declaration, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (II), and a succession of binding instruments of international law from the San Remo Resolution to the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, had all recognised that the Jews were a distinct people with an unbroken connection to the land and a right to reform their state in some part of that land.

Zionism, therefore, was the foundational movement of the modern state of Israel. As such, those determined to erase an autonomous Jewish presence from the Middle East have assessed that if they can succeed in depicting Zionism as something loathsome and unjust, the case for Israel can be dramatically undermined.

The contemporary campaign to distort the meaning of Zionism and to associate it with popular concepts of evil largely has its origins in the rapid deterioration of Soviet-Israeli relations, which conditioned attitudes to Israel in the political left.

Zionism was once celebrated by the left as an organic movement of national return and a model for national liberation and decolonisation movements throughout the world.

Israel's victory in its War of Independence and refusal to succumb to far mightier foes was positively awe-inspiring to adherents of political movements predicated on toppling structures of power. As chronicled by Philip Mendes in his study of Zionism and the political left, "all international communist parties supported partition and the creation of a Jewish State." The US Communist Party

called Israel "an organic part of the world struggle for peace and democracy," while the French Communists viewed the Jewish fighters as the comrades of resistance fighters throughout the world.

But as Israel charted its own course, emerged from its wars economically and militarily superior to the Arabs, and became more ambitious and assertive in how it conducted its security affairs, the support of the Soviet Union and the international left entered a sharp decline, followed by a complete reversal.

As the Cold War set in, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, assured the US Ambassador that Israel was "western in its orientation, its people are democratic, and realise that only through the co-operation and support of the US can they become strong and remain free."

Israel's 'western orientation' became abundantly clear to the Soviet Union when Israel joined Britain and France in the Suez Campaign in 1956 to liberate a key maritime route linking Asia to Europe amidst threats to nationalise the canal by Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, a key Soviet ally.

The campaign, seen by Moscow as a direct threat to its strategic power in the Middle East, sent the Soviets into a state of foaming apoplexy, resulting in threats to deploy nuclear weapons against the British and French and to annihilate Israel entirely.

The Soviet Union had already cut diplomatic relations with Israel in February 1953, only weeks before the death of Stalin and after a period of rapid escalation of state anti-Semitism, culminating in the notorious 'Doctors' Plot,' in which Jewish doctors in the Soviet Union were accused of plotting to poison Party officials.

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Boris' Pro-Israel Cabinet



Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with British Foreign Minister, Boris Johnson, in London, England. | Photo: Flash90

■ James Patrick

Author | Theologian | Speaker

The British Parliament is going through its most tumultuous period in centuries, and no one can predict what the future will be for Boris Johnson or for the current Conservative government he leads.

But whatever happens with Brexit, the UK remains an important player in the international scene. The UK is a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council. Together with the US, France, Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan, it is a member of the Group of Seven (G7).

For the time being, Boris' government is in charge of developing and implementing UK foreign policy, including relations with Israel and its neighbours, as illustrated in Netanyahu's surprise visit to London to meet Boris on 5 September 2019. A Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn would take a radically different position to Boris and his government on the question of Israel and the Palestinians.

Boris Johnson has appointed one of the most pro-Israel cabinets of recent times. The four highest ministerial positions in the UK government, the so-called Great Offices of State, are now all held by vocal and unapologetic supporters of Israel, who have weathered public opposition to their convictions.

Boris Johnson, Prime Minister

Boris prizes his own Jewish heritage; his maternal great-grandfather having been a Russian Jewish immigrant descended from a Lithuanian rabbi. He says he first spoke in favour of the state of Israel around the age of 18, and in summer 1984 he volunteered with his sister Rachel at kibbutz Kfar Hanassi in Galilee. Being a budding journalist, he also interviewed Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

In November 2015 while Mayor of London, he led the first-ever London-Israel trade mission, but made headlines when Palestinians cancelled meetings with him for outspokenly opposing BDS as 'foolish' and dismissing proponents of a recent academic boycott of Israel as irrelevant "corduroy-jacketed, snaggle-toothed, lefty academics".

In 2017, as Foreign Secretary, he was instrumental in the Balfour Declaration centennial celebrations, and wrote an associated Telegraph article setting out a classic British version of the two-state solution.

He then oversaw the first-ever official Royal visit to Israel, by Prince William in June 2018, which was deliberately

timed to mark the centenary year of the Balfour Declaration. That same month, he committed the UK to opposing all anti-Israel resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council under its infamous Item 7 that singles out Israel, calling it "disproportionate and damaging".

In a July 2019 interview with Jewish News, he said that he "could see the logic" in moving the British Embassy to Jerusalem but believed "the moment for us to play that card is when we make further progress". He promised that "wild horses wouldn't keep me away" from becoming the latest PM to visit Israel, a "great country" that "I love" and has described himself as a "passionate Zionist".

Dominic Raab, Foreign Minister & First Secretary of State (de facto Deputy PM)

Dom Raab was raised in the Church of England due to his mother's faith but emphasised in a Tory Party conference speech in 2018 his pride in his Jewish ancestry. His father, who died when Dom was 12, came to Britain as a Jewish, Czech six-year-old on the Kindertransport during World War Two.

Dom studied international law at Oxford and Cambridge, and witnessed Palestinian anti-Semitism first-hand while studying at Birzeit University near Ramallah during the summer of 1998 and working for one of the lead Palestinian Oslo negotiators assessing West Bank projects for the World Bank. As a Foreign & Commonwealth Office legal adviser from 2000 to 2006, he spent four years working on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, among other matters.

He has supported a two-state solution and criticised Israeli settlement expansion, but defends the blockade of Gaza as entirely legitimate. In a 2011 article for *The Times*, he rejected calls to recognise a Palestinian state, arguing that "Peace requires political leadership, not a legal mirage".

Raab is likely to delegate Israel-Palestinian issues to the Middle East Minister, currently Andrew Murrison since May 2019. Back in 2015, Murrison said, "I back a two state solution on '67 borders and hope that this will be achieved soon so that the international community can recognise Palestine and Israel. I deplore Israel's action and have said so in the House if you want to look it up but it must be able to defend its civilians against Hamas inspired terrorism."

Sajid Javid, Chancellor

As a non-practising Muslim, Sajid Javid has supported the

Jewish State since he was a boy. He traces this back to his brother's school trip to Israel around 1978, when their Pakistani immigrant father explained to them Israel's history and special place, making him want to visit. Two decades later, he and his church-going Christian wife, Laura, chose Israel as their honeymoon destination.

At Exeter University, he became close friends with fellow Conservative Association leader Robert Halfon, who was an activist in the Union of Jewish Students. Halfon went on to become political director of Conservative Friends of Israel, and now, as a senior Tory backbench MP, is a vocal supporter of Israel in Parliament. In December 2012, just two years after they became MPs, Sajid boldly told the CFI annual lunch that, while proud of his British Muslim heritage, Israel was the only Middle Eastern country he would consider living in.

While serving as Business Secretary (2015–16), Sajid stood up to regular calls to back BDS by boosting trade with Israel. Then in February 2017 as Communities Secretary, he promoted the IHRA definition to local councils around the UK. Becoming Home Secretary in 2018, he proscribed Hezbollah in its entirety in February 2019, and in July he became the first UK minister to visit Israel and Western Wall for almost twenty years.

Priti Patel, Home Secretary

Born in London to Ugandan-Indian parents, Priti Patel is a former vice-chair of Conservative Friends of Israel, praised by fellow MP Theresa Villiers as one of Israel's staunchest friends in Parliament.

Soon after being appointed International Development Secretary, she responded to reports that the Department for International Development (DfID) money was being used to pay convicted Palestinian terrorists and their families. In October 2016, she ordered a review of the funding procedure and temporarily froze around one-third of Britain's aid to the Palestinians. The review resulted in DfID announcing significant changes to future funding for the Palestinian Authority.

In November 2017, she left Theresa May's government under a cloud, after a holiday in Israel during which she held several undisclosed meetings with Israeli ministers including Netanyahu, and with IDF commanders in the Golan Heights. On her return from holiday, she had urged the Government to give some of its aid budget to the Israeli army, noting how the IDF was helping victims of the Syrian war in the Golan Heights.

Israel Blessing Families Worldwide

■ **Mandy Worby**
Christians for Israel Australia

Did you know that Australia and New Zealand respectively, lead the world in skin cancer? According to the 2018 statistics compiled by the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF)¹, the top 10 nations for the highest rates of melanoma are:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  1. Australia |  6. Sweden |
|  2. New Zealand |  7. Germany |
|  3. Norway |  8. Switzerland |
|  4. Denmark |  9. Belgium |
|  5. Netherlands |  10. Slovenia |

Skin cancer is deadly, and it affects people all over the world, but Israeli scientists may be very close to helping combat this disease in the most convenient of ways. Scientists at Tel Aviv University (TAU) appear to have developed a nano-vaccine for prevention of melanoma, one of the most aggressive forms of skin cancer, and this nano-vaccine has been quite effective in mouse models.

Professor Satchi-Fainaro, one of the researchers of the project said, “The war against cancer in general, and melanoma in particular, has advanced over the years through a variety of treatment modalities, such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and immunotherapy; but the vaccine approach, which has proven so effective against various viral diseases, has not materialised yet against cancer. In our study, we have shown that it is possible to produce an effective nano-vaccine against melanoma and to sensitise the immune system to immunotherapies.”



| Photo: Shutterstock

The process of developing this nano-vaccine required tiny particles made of a biodegradable polymer that they packed with two peptides, which are short chains of amino acids, found in melanoma cells. These particles were then injected into mouse models with melanoma and according to Professor Satchi-Fainaro, these particles, “...acted just like known vaccines for viral-born diseases. They stimulated the immune system of the mice, and the immune cells learned to identify and attack cells containing the two peptides – that is, the melanoma cells.”

The researchers are very excited about this development, because if skin cancer can be treated and even prevented through the development of nano-vaccines, perhaps such

treatments can be developed to treat other forms of cancer as well.

Professor Satchi-Fainaro went on to say that the research, “...opens the door to a completely new approach – the vaccine approach – for effective treatment of melanoma, even in the most advanced stages of the disease. We believe that our platform may also be suitable for other types of cancer and that our work is a solid foundation for the development of other cancer nano-vaccines.”

This is yet another example of Israel blessing the world.
Genesis 12:3

¹<https://www.wcrf.org/dietandcancer/cancer-trends/skin-cancer-statistics>

Israel Alzheimer’s Medical Centre

■ **Bryce Turner**
Executive Director | Christians for Israel New Zealand



Mr Nitai Eliash, CEO of the Israeli Alzheimer’s Medical Centre in Tel Aviv, recently travelled ‘to the ends of the earth’, visiting supporters in Auckland, New Zealand. Nitai was invited to address an audience of Christians for Israel supporters in New Zealand, where he passionately described the amazing vision which

the Centre is implementing. In true Israeli spirit, the centre is planning to offer its specialist Alzheimer’s knowledge to countries around the world. Friends in NZ needing assistance and counselling will be able to communicate with specialists at the Centre through its call centre service by phone, email, Whatsapp or Skype, 24/7. Christians for Israel New Zealand, together with members of the New Zealand Jewish community, are partnering with the Israel Alzheimer’s Medical Centre to raise funds for medical equipment desperately needed at the Centre.

The Sophie & Abram Stuchynski Israel Alzheimer’s Medical Centre opened in 2001. A nonprofit organisation, it is the only one of its kind in Israel specialising exclusively in providing services to people with Alzheimer’s and other dementia-related diseases. There are currently around 200 inpatients living in five wards. Every year hundreds more patients and their families are supported on an outpatient basis. The centre also trains professionals and engages in collaborative research with renowned academic institutions. The Alzheimer’s Medical Centre offers other services for patients who live within the community such as a 24/7 call centre, a daycare centre and special home services to elderly.



| Photo: Israel Alzheimer’s Medical Centre

The call centre provides advice, information and tools for the diagnosis and prevention of Alzheimer’s disease, dementia and associated behavioural and communication difficulties, delivering immediate support and guidance for family members of patients with Alzheimer’s. For communities around the world, the call centre is now available in English, Hebrew and Spanish.

The daycare centre offers Alzheimer’s outpatients who live in the community opportunities to socialise and participate in activities. This is a unique facility in Israel, rare in the entire world, and it is open 24/7.

In Israel, special home services include the assessment and adaptation of the home environment to suit the circumstances of the patient, assessment of agitation, insomnia and other behavioural issues, involvement in-home care, and provision of pharmacological and non-pharmacological solutions.

Besides the ongoing work, the team believes it is extremely important to promote knowledge and raise awareness of Alzheimer’s disease, regularly holding lectures from experts from all fields, and hosting delegations of professionals from around the world who come to observe the unique treatment model. In addition, the centre manages a ‘technology incubator’ aimed at developing innovative technologies such as electronic sensors, brain games, robots, fall detectors and pressure gauges that can improve the safety, security and quality of life of people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s.

There are approximately 180 staff members, including a multidisciplinary team that specialises in Geriatrics. Treatment plans utilise all the various therapeutic frameworks – medical, nursing, occupational, and social disciplines – to provide a comprehensive treatment solution and give residents and their families, quality of life.

Short News

Drilling Rigs Underway



Mid-July 2019, the first of five production platforms for natural gas was towed from Texas USA to Israel. This summer the remaining platforms will follow. The enormous platforms weigh 38,000 metric tons each and will be lifted onto already fitted pillar foundations. An operation that will take four weeks in total. Once in position, the platforms will process natural gas from the biggest offshore Israeli gas field, the Leviathan gas field, for the Israeli market. | Photo: Noble Energy

Unsafe in Europe

Jewish inhabitants of Europe, especially teenagers and young adults, are considering moving elsewhere because they feel unsafe. This is evident from a report by the European Commission which states that 41% (in the 16 to 34-year age group) are considering emigration; 45% intentionally choose not to wear recognisable Jewish items for fear of safety.

Jordanian Books Inferior

Jordanian textbooks were partially improved in the last few years. Tolerance and moderate Islam receive more attention, but as far as the image of Israel is concerned, there is not much good news. The survey reports that Israel is "mainly described as a Zionist entity without rights or history."

Safe Beach



Thirteen beaches near Tel Aviv got a blue flag. The flag is awarded to beaches that meet the highest international standards concerning safety, beauty and accessibility for disabled persons and environmental protection. | Photo: Flashgo

Facebook Induces Depression

Israeli research shows results that are not favourable for Facebook lovers. The study shows that lounging around for fifteen minutes on Facebook is enough to increase the chances of getting depression. The reason is that Facebook affects people's self-respect.

The Outcry - Psalm 2 - Part 7a



Three Jewish men praying at sunset | Photo: Shutterstock

■ **Johannes Gerloff**
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This article is the seventh instalment (split into 2 parts) in a series of contributions to the interpretation of Psalm 2.

The Anointed Servant of the Lord in *Psalm 2* does not accept the terrible task of smashing the nations with an iron rod (*verse 9*), without emotions. He cries out: "Be reasonable, kings! Be warned, judges of the earth" (*verse 10*). Messiah calls upon the mighty of the world: "Aim your reason for this, bring this to your understanding!" He asks them to hold on and to show intelligence and discernment.

Historically, Radak assigns this statement to David, the son of Ishai, who, one thousand years before our era, called this out to the Philistine kings who had assembled to fight against him. However, this call to accept reason in the face of the living God, pervades the millennia up to the present time, wherever the people of Israel have fulfilled their prophetic calling. Rashi remarks at this point: "The prophets of Israel are merciful people. They exhort the nations of the world to depart from their wickedness, because the Holy One, blessed be He, extends His hand to the evil and the righteous alike."

Prophets who were connected to the heartbeat of their God never surrendered without contradiction to an announcement of judgment. Fatalism is alien to biblical revelation. Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Jeremiah and Daniel are but a few for whom a word of judgment was the occasion to contradict God, to negotiate with Him. The foremost task of a prophet has always been intercession before God and then, quite naturally, the pleading call to repentance to those for whom judgment threatens. Even today, rabbis assume that only the good promises of God are incontrovertible. When God predicts evil, misfortune is not inevitable. God is always open to considering the repentance of a sinner and is even ready to change His mind.

Abraham Ibn Ezra observes the poetic structure of *Psalm 2* stating: "The 'Be

reasonable!' [*in verse 10*] stands opposite to the 'Against the Lord' [*in verse 2*]. The 'judges' are parallel to the 'kings' because, in fact, the king's main task was to judge the people."

Samson Raphael Hirsch, in his unique way of interpretations, is able to shine light on many subtleties of the Hebrew language. He also draws attention to certain intertwining within this psalm which can only be understood in Hebrew: The (*hivasru*), 'Be warned!' is to be understood as: "Submit yourselves to the (musar), instruction and discipline". And Ibn Ezra observes that the (*hivasru*) is the opposite of 'their bonds' (*mosrotemo*), which the Gentile nations and their rulers seek to throw away in *verse 3*.

The message of this psalm is poetically woven into the choice of vocabulary and the use of the word roots. He shows through sound-like and related words that 'repentance' is a deliberate about-face, a conscious turn against the current with which one has previously swum. Such a U-turn is even able to change an established and publicly proclaimed decision of God Himself.

Amos Hakham emphasises: "Even though the Lord has given authority to [the messianic Servant of the Lord] to destroy [the rebellious nations], he has no pleasure in their demise. Rather, he wants them to go the right way." The God of Israel seeks the insight, the repentance and the healing of the one who has gone astray. Biblical prophecy is always a call to repentance. Therefore, in Scripture the forecasts of judgment are never unconditional and irreversible.

This heartbeat of God and His confidants is already audible in the first words of *Psalm 2*. Luther writes: "For the prophet too, as though he were deeply sorry for their iniquity, starts with a question, namely: 'Why do they rage?' Why do they expose themselves as an object of mockery? Why do these fools intend impossible things? Oh, that they would come to their senses and become wise."

And Radak paraphrases the basic message of the psalmist: "Realise that you have not

the slightest chance to reverse the doing of God. He commanded me to be king. How can you turn 'against the Lord'? Come to your senses! Take it to heart! For you cannot thwart the work of the Lord."

Martin Luther furthermore observes the moral courage of the Messiah: "How bold and how – as we might say nowadays – agitating and infuriating is this exceedingly insolent prophet, who puts his mouth in the sky, daring to attack not the lowest and the common people but the highest heads and even kings, to teach those who are bumptious by their title and office as teachers of the people, and certainly because of the custom and the honor which they deserve according to their delusion (*opinionis honore*) may not suffer this exceedingly great insult."

"Serve the Lord with fear", the Anointed One of Israel challenges those nations who are united against the Lord: "Rejoice with trembling!" (*verse 11*). Align your plans with His will, "want what He wants and serve Him! Fear Him and know that He is entitled to power and might, and not you who assembled with a large crowd" (Radak).

Luther dares to object: "That is a strange saying and in our eyes weird. For fear causes hatred and fleeing, not service (*famulatum*), and trembling is totally contrary to the joy." But as contradictory as this may seem to modern man, Paul already knew: "His compassion for you is overwhelming, when he thinks of all your obedience, as you have received him with fear and trembling" (*2 Cor 7:15*). And Rashi recalls *Isaiah 33:14*, which also talks of a trembling that seizes the apostates. Ultimately, this fear leads to cheers and joy, "if your service is to the Lord." In an excellent way Hirsch sums up this spiritual principle: "The Gila [= joy] that grows of Reada [= fear and trembling] and is based on Reada is the highest bliss, of which a creature that is talented with awareness before its Creator, of which a human being is capable before his God."

The full text of this article, including extensive footnotes, can be found at www.cqisrael.org/teaching-articles/

Romania - Understanding the Times

■ Tudor Pețan

President | Alfa Omega TV, Romania

Among the first thematic TV series produced by our studio 20 years ago was *The Final Countdown*. Together with our guests on each show, we analysed the signs of the end times and the returning of the Lord Jesus, relying on the passages of Scripture found in *Matthew 24* and *Mark 13*.

Then, 12 years ago, we began a strategic partnership with Christians for Israel International. Along with the publication of literature in Romania to dispel 'replacement theology', we began to organise annual 'Prayer for Israel' conferences in Romania. Understanding the times has been a central subject regardless of the specific theme of each edition.

We never risked then, nor even now, to propose any hypotheses or calculations of time, being mindful that "...about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father," *Matthew 24:36*.

A first category of signs, which we considered merely 'the beginning of birth pains', accentuated that 'the pains' became acute and grew in frequency: wars and rumours of wars, persecution, terrorism, earthquakes and other unusual natural phenomenon, disease and epidemics difficult to control, false teachings and lying prophets, political and religious leaders who lead many astray, corruption and a lack of loyalty and honour, a falling away from the faith or a 'lukewarm' state, the abounding of transgressions, attacks on the family and life given by God, the diminishing of love.

Afterwards, we see the expansion of globalisation for which we are given rational arguments concerning security, protection from terrorism, a more rational administration of resources, population control, health, free travel, education, communication means, finances, freedom of religious expression. Notions such as 'political correctness', ecumenism, anti-discrimination, and 'hate crime' have worked their way into our everyday language, causing one's faith to be practised privately behind closed doors, 'human rights' replacing God's commands.

These realities take on new meaning if we view them from a biblical perspective: the alliances between nations and leaders, the radicalisation of Islam, the evolution of Turkey, Brexit and a new dynamic among nations, the secularisation of Europe and a growing spirit of populist nationalism the positioning of Russia, nuclear threat from Iran and North Korea, China's rise and the 'back to Jerusalem' movement, violent persecution against Christians, and the Syrian and Middle East conflicts. Whole chapters in the Bible beg to be re-read and understood: *Isaiah 17* (about Damascus), *Isaiah 19* (Egypt, Assyria, Israel) *Ezekiel 36-38* (the restoration of Israel, Gog, Magog, Gomer, and the judgment of the nations).

A second category of signs of the times includes the restoration of Israel and the spreading of the Gospel. Israel 'sprouts leaves', grows and even blossoms. There is great evidence of explosive economic growth, as well as in areas of infrastructure, agriculture, science, research, IT, the military and information.

And all of this happening under conditions of maximum hostility:

- amplification of anti-Semitism
- economic and commercial boycotts
- political resolutions against Israel
- the intensified struggle for Jerusalem
- the increase of internal and external violence

In *Mark 13* we are urged to keep our eyes on the 'fig tree', with the immediate interpretation: "As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that He is near, right at the door." *Mark 13:28-29*

Whole paragraphs in *Romans 11* intensify this urging upon us as Christians, "I do not want you to be ignorant of this



Tudor Pețan, Rev Willem Glashouwer and Victor Otet (representative of Orthodox Churches in Romania) at the Alfa Omega studios.

mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in," *Romans 11:25*. How close are we to the moment that the number of Gentiles which will enter the Kingdom is complete? I believe we are at the beginning of a final intense harvest, a spreading of the Gospel message in places where it was not previously possible until now. Muslims are already exposed to the Gospel in Europe and among their own population with supernatural appearances of Christ. Powerful works are taking place in India, China and Asia, where there is a great opening for the work of the Holy Spirit among Catholics (including those in Romania) and the Orthodox. Revival is growing even in North Korea, the nation that is the most closed to the Gospel (Open Doors 2016 report). The Lord is breaching borders by mobilising prayer and intercessory networks in all the world. On a recent broadcast of *Alfa Omega TV*, one pastor told about a young lady from his church who began to study Korean at university trusting that she will soon be able to minister in Korea the moment the walls come down. Because "the gospel must first be preached to all nations". *Mark 13:10*

In this intense preaching, for the final harvest, the Lord wants to use every believer in his area of influence: every missionary, church, organisation, and media entity to strategically win communities, cities, and nations. Holy Spirit activates people of prayer and intercession, with strategic piercing prayers and prophetic proclamations. In this context, the spiritual partnership of 12 years between Christians for Israel International and Alfa Omega TV takes on a greater importance for the Romanian nation: a divine partnership "for a time such as this..."

The Lord uses mass-media; video resources; printed materials (Alfa Omega TV has published seven books and booklets of Christians for Israel International); new technology and new-media coverage globally as well as for penetrating areas which are inaccessible by using classical means. In mass-media, in the work of the Church, and in personal ministry we need to be open to new modes of operation. Just like the last fishing expedition on Lake Tiberias, following Jesus' resurrection, He doesn't ask us to change the direction of the boat (that is, our vision) but merely to throw out the net in a different way, on the other side, the right side of the boat. This instruction comes to us after a whole lifetime as 'fishers of men' who have been readying the boat and its position in order to throw the net over the left side of the boat.

We thank the Lord for all He brings to Romania through Christians for Israel International and through other pro-Israel media voices; this helps us to understand the times, anticipating His Second Coming and ushering in the moment by spreading the Good News to every creature.



The Italian group with some of the olim that will soon go to Israel

Italians Visit Ukraine

■ Koen Carlier

Christians for Israel Ukraine

From 10-19 August 12 Italians went to Ukraine for a working trip. Most of the participants, including six young adults, were in Ukraine for the first time. The trip was organised at the request of Edda Fogarollo, who has been responsible for Christians for Israel in Italy since 2011.

The programme included a visit to a Jewish mass grave, a visit to the Jewish school in Bela Tserkva, the packing and handing out of 1,000 food parcels and listening to the stories of Holocaust survivors in different *stettls* (villages where many Jews used to live). In small groups they visited some elderly people in their homes, met a rabbi who fled from Donetsk because of the war and finally made a three-day visit to Odessa; a large port city on the Black Sea with a rich Jewish history.

The Italian group visited the Holocaust Museum in Odessa. The museum has a scale model of nine large warehouses, where more than 23,000 Jews from Odessa were burned alive. One Jewish man who survived this tragedy as a small child recently passed away. Apartment buildings have now been built in the area, as well as a memorial, reminding visitors of the horrible events that took place there.

The group visited Tikva (meaning 'hope'), an organisation in Odessa which works together with Christians for Israel, taking care of Jewish orphans and children who come from broken families. They offer them the chance of a good education and many go on to Israel with an Aliyah Study Programme.

At one of the Jewish schools, the group unloaded 500 food parcels and distributed them to a number of Jewish families. The group also visited the local Jewish Agency, who were very informative. The head of the Jewish Agency, Shmuel Shpak, said there are still 30,000 Jews in Odessa, with regular direct flights from Odessa to Tel Aviv with 'Olim' (immigrants to Israel).

The group met with some Jewish families who were to make Aliyah at the end of August. These families explained why they had decided to leave Ukraine and how much time they had spent arranging their documents. A number of young families will integrate into Israel through the First Home in the Homeland programme, where they will receive an intensive Hebrew course during the first five months.

During a Shabbat meal, the group met Loeba, a Jewish woman, visiting Odessa after making Aliyah 30 years ago with her one-year-old daughter. She told us how her father had survived the Pechora Concentration Camp and that she made Aliyah to raise her four children in a free country as a Jewish family.

The group told Loeba their story and the history of Christians for Israel, which was founded in the Netherlands, almost 40 years ago. Suddenly she interrupted them and said: "When I made Aliyah and arrived with thousands of other Olim from the Northern country [former Soviet Union] to Israel, we lived in caravans for a few years, due to the lack of houses. The area was called 'Hollanddorp' (Holland Village). Does this have anything to do with you?" We explained that this was indeed a project of Christians for Israel in the early 1990s. 'Hollanddorp' was built in the hills near Bethlehem to help newcomers with shelter and integration.

Rwanda Keen to Learn about Israel

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

An answer to prayers! That's what you might call my visit to Rwanda. Two sisters from a Christian women's congregation have been praying for years that the message about Israel could be spread into the churches in the African country Rwanda. This country has been suffering tremendously following the tragic genocide in 1994 that cost over a million lives.

"I am so happy with this good message about Israel. That's what we need to hear in our church and in our country"

Suddenly we received an invitation to speak about Israel at the annual gathering of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda. This gathering is an annual four-day event, attended by over 3000 church members, 140 church pastors and 80 evangelists. A wonderful opportunity to reach so many Christians with the message about God's everlasting faithfulness to Israel and the Jewish people. "I am so happy with this good message about Israel. That's what we need to hear in our church and in our country", the President of the Presbyterian Church, Rev Dr Pascal Bataringaya told the audience afterwards.

The Rwandese Christians were eager to learn how to put their relationship with Israel into practice. Some pastors were a little reluctant at first out of fear of a new form of idolatry, because they see some of their countrymen going to Israel and coming back from Israel with anointing oil, water, and sand from the Holy Land, and scattering it over their fields in the hope of a blessed



New pastors being ordained at a worship service during a national conference of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, attended by over 3000 people.

harvest. I thanked them for expressing this reticence because it gave me the opportunity to explain that this is not what we stand for. We do not bless Israel from a prosperity perspective to be blessed ourselves. We want to bless Israel because God loves Israel and keeps His promises and covenants.

They were also eager to learn about similarities and differences between the Holocaust genocide of the Jews in Nazi Germany and the Rwandese genocide of the Tutsi tribe in 1994. Hate propaganda, instigated by the

government, played an important role in both tragedies. I told them how dangerous the current negative and often untrue propaganda against Israel is in our time.

During these four days many new pastors were ordained, and we enjoyed wonderful African music. We spoke about building up a new partnership between the Church and Christians for Israel International so many church members may be inspired and encouraged by information and Bible studies about Israel. Let us pray for these new future developments in Rwanda.

Paradigm Shift on Understanding About Israel

■ Chan Siew Fong

Regional Trainer | Christians for Israel Asia

The second 'Train the Trainers' Christians for Israel Asia-Pacific Training and Leadership Conference in Indonesia kicked off in Surabaya on Thursday 19 September in a local restaurant with 75 pastors eager to learn about Israel. All of them received an Indonesian copy of the *Why Israel?* study guide cum workbook; some of them were seen poring over the pages even during break time.

Team members' interactions with some participants revealed concerns about whether a new doctrine or denominational position was being advocated. Reverend Cornelis Kant soon put these concerns to rest, teaching on Replacement Theology, anti-Semitism and Theses I, II, V and IX of "The Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel", followed by Reverend Dr Conrado Lumahan's nine of twelve reasons for standing with Israel. The 'Train the Trainers' segment, to equip pastors to cascade teaching on Israel to their congregations using the workbook, was conducted by Christians for Israel Asia Regional Trainers, Chan Siew Fong (chapters 1 to 5) on Day 1 and Chan Kuen Yoon (chapters 6 to 10) on Day 2.

The most gratifying part of the conference was the Q-and-A session at the end of Day 2. Questions like how churches worldwide could be brought together to declare their repudiation of Replacement Theology evidenced the paradigm shift the team had worked to achieve. However, a question about the extent to which the return of the Jewish diaspora to the Middle East had



A participant asking a question at the second 'Train the Trainers' Christians for Israel Asia-Pacific Training and Leadership Conference in Indonesia

contributed to the conflict there suggested a need to incorporate, even in brief, the history of the rebirth of Israel in 1948 in future training programmes.

At the end of the conference, every participant was presented with a certificate of appreciation.

The power-packed organising team behind this conference consisted of Pdt. Dr M Ferry H Kakiy

(Deputy Bishop of Gereja Bethel Indonesia), Pdt. Brigjen Harsanto Adi, M.Th (President of Indonesian Pastors' Association), Pastor Henoeh Budiyanto, Hizki Laluyan and Christians for Israel Asia Director, Reverend Dr Wilson Ng working in concert with the ever-cheerful Pastor Petrus Soebyantoro, the local, on-the-ground coordinator and his amiable line-up of pastors, worship team, ushers and support crew.



News from the NZ Desk

■ **Bryce Turner**
New Zealand Executive Director



To all our dear readers and supporters, welcome to the October edition of *Israel and Christians Today*. Thank you so much for joining us, we really appreciate the time you take to share in our news and the support you give to this work. Again, we bring you

some fantastic articles in this edition, sourced from all over the world. Our New Zealand and South Pacific section features Christians for Israel Fiji director Lepani Makubuna with a perspective on Israel's blessing to the world (pg NZ3), we bring you the second part of a very special series *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* documenting the history of New Zealand's political relations with Israel (pg NZ2), and our friend Perry Trotter shares from his heart whilst standing on the sepulchral ground of Auschwitz (pg NZ4).

Watching television over the last few weeks has been an interesting mixture. The All Blacks opening game in the Rugby World Cup was thrilling, although it has to be said that for drama the political scene in Israel is not far behind! As I write, Israel is locked in a virtually even election result – their second election this year. Noticing that England too seems to be in political turmoil, and then loud voices in the USA are trying to challenge the Presidency, these certainly are interesting times. In the face of all this instability, Ps. Nigel Woodley brings some great Biblical commentary (pg NZ6).

In August we were encouraged with a visit from Mr Nitai Eliash, CEO of the Israel Alzheimer's Medical Centre who, while only in New Zealand for a brief visit, managed to fit in a meeting with supporters in Auckland. Nitai shared of the amazing vision that is the Alzheimer's Medical Centre and, together with members of the Jewish community, we have decided to respond to an urgent need for some specialist medical equipment (pg NZ4).

Also in August, it was a great privilege to join together with the Auckland Jewish Community in a historical first for New Zealand, to celebrate the wedding of Rabbi



Rabbi breaks a glass under the wedding canopy symbolising the mourning for the Temple in Jerusalem - even on such a happy occasion. It also signifies the end of the wedding ceremony.

Friedler. Believed to be the first time a serving Rabbi has been married in New Zealand, and the first time that a serving Rabbi has married a Jewish New Zealander, the Auckland Hebrew Centre was an amazing scene of joy, dancing and food as a very diverse range of people joined together with the Jewish community in celebration. We hear a little of the wonderful journey that brought the Rabbi and the new Rabbinet together (pg NZ8). I know that *Israel and Christians Today* readers all across New Zealand and the South Pacific will join me in congratulating Rabbi Nathanel and Deb Friedler, and we pray great blessing upon them as they serve together.

As this edition goes to print we rejoice with our Jewish brothers and sisters in wishing them a happy Rosh Hashanah – the Jewish New Year celebration. This will welcome in the 'High Holy Day' period, through to Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement, and on to Sukkot – the Feast of Tabernacles.

compare with the experience of visiting the Holy Land and it is a wonderful privilege to be able to lead New Zealanders to visit Israel, ensuring that they get the very most out of the journey. If you are interested in visiting incredible Israel (pg NZ6). There are still some spaces available, but the tour is filling up fast.

Thank You!

Thank you to those wonderful people who faithfully continue to support the various projects we sponsor. It is a great privilege to forward those funds, and I know it is hugely encouraging to know we are supporting them from all the way down here.

Thank you also to those who have contributed towards our own ministry costs. As we have shared previously by newsletter and in *Israel and Christians Today*, Christians for Israel New Zealand continues to work through the reality of increasing costs. To continue making the paper – our main resource tool, with a growing circulation of about 8000 now - available free of charge, we have to contend with ever-increasing costs in production, paper, printing, and of course postage. This is a big challenge for our small team, but we are very grateful for your continued support and prayer as we share the true, biblical understanding of Israel. To those who have responded to this need, we pray that you will indeed be blessed.

Please enjoy this edition of *Israel and Christians Today*, and thank you for joining us in support of Israel.



Photo: pxhere

Study Tour

Following another amazing study tour in March 2019, we are delighted to offer you our fantastic new revised itinerary, departing 21 February 2020. There is simply nothing to

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The Good, the Bad and the Ugly - Part 2

Joanna Moss

NZ Friends of Israel | Wellington

In Part 2 of this series, we will deal with the Bad, i.e. the 50 years 1960-2010. In Part 1, the Golden Age we saw how an enlightened Prime Minister and a team of supportive foreign diplomats could work effectively in Israel's favour in foreign forums. It serves as an example. But we also saw how a government or a few key individuals could block something if it chooses, e.g. Jewish immigration.

We saw that New Zealand developed a set of principles that would guide our foreign affairs in the decades to follow, irrespective of which party was in government. The following principles reflect the desire for global order and fairness, coupled with strength from institutions, as the best means for a small nation to operate in a big world:

1. Membership of international bodies as a means to resolve global issues
2. Rules-based diplomacy as the best approach for collective security
3. The principle of *Being Seen to be Even-handed*

Israel and New Zealand's Striking Similarities

In 1952 New Zealand signed the ANZUS Treaty that marked the beginning of our realignment from Britain towards America. This realignment would be the hallmark of the centre of our diplomatic relations in the years to come.

Both NZ and Israel were in nation-building mode in the 1960s. They ran similar economic policies – strict currency controls, high taxation, import licensing and import substitution, coupled with a massive public service, that dominated the economy and labour unions. Consumer goods were in short supply. Exports were heavily slanted towards primary products. Interestingly both nations had similar-sized populations.

All around the Western World Israel was seen as a marvel and viewed through a romantic lens, heralding the miracle of the return to the biblical homeland after 2,000 years of exile. Jewish and non-Jewish Baby boomers alike were captivated and keen to see with their very eyes and be a part of the miracle of Israel on Kibbutzim. On the political scene, there were new states emerging across the globe right through to the 1970s. Many of the Arab nations would attempt to frame Israel as a decolonisation issue. Israel as a nation came into existence following the break up of the Ottoman Empire followed by the British mandate. The Arab nations regarded the land, formerly known as Palestine, as their rightful territory. With the end of the "colonial" power exercised by the British, they claimed that the land should have become theirs. That view was rigorously countered in diplomatic forums by our UN representative Frank Corner and by PM Holyoake. (Old arguments can re-surface!!)

Across the nation, Kiwis were glued to the news of the Six-day war as Israel was attacked. The miracle was proclaimed in the media, and the people marvelled at Israel yet again. But some people were not so sure about them taking land. (It wasn't pointed out to them that the original mandate division had given all the land west of the Jordan to Israel and that Jordan had taken it initially). PM Holyoake's take on it was "A little less David and a bit too much Goliath" an expression that would have been understood by a biblically literate population. Beginning then and particularly from the Lebanon War onwards,

A Tale of Two Refugees

700,000 Arabs leave or are expelled after defeat once Israel is born. Some Arabs remain (Both recent and long-standing residents)	850,000+ Jews Fled or kicked out from across the Middle East post-1948 (Many had lived in their communities for millennia)
Placed in Refugee camps	Placed in camps and immigrant centres
UN Funded (ongoing)	Non-UN funded
Remain in camps. Not Integrated	Integrated into society
Not Granted citizenship & full rights	Granted citizenship & full rights
Refugee Resettlement Goal - Failed	Refugee Resettlement Goal - Succeeded
VISIBLE & INCREASING	INVISIBLE

Israel takes on a new persona. Israel is no longer a small, vulnerable state subject to Arab aggression. It is also the beginnings of Palestinian sympathies from an underdog natural inclination in the NZ psyche coupled with ongoing concern for the plight of the 700,000 refugees. But this was only part of the story.

Forming Opinions on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

NZ's view on the Arab-Israeli conflict was that the Arabs were humiliated in war and had deep resentment over Israel's development as a thriving nation and a sense of injustice over the land taken. On the other hand, they viewed Israel as unwilling to make concessions for the sake of settling disputes and as a state that made use of the notion of *offence as the best means of defence*, justifying it on the basis of being the only argument that Arabs understood. In resolving these two opinions, Kiwis marginally favoured Israel, but they continued their annoyance with Israel over its failure to observe UN resolutions applying the second principle of the NZ policy plank. But when they did, the NZ government was quick to praise them for it. Within the Ministry of External Affairs a growing annoyance and antipathy towards Israel begins building for its failure to comply with international law and an ongoing focus on the repatriation of refugees issue. Interestingly, New Zealand was an early donor to UNRWA, the Palestinian relief organisation. Israel's isolation in international forums is noted.

"Within the Assembly, Israel walks a lonely path."

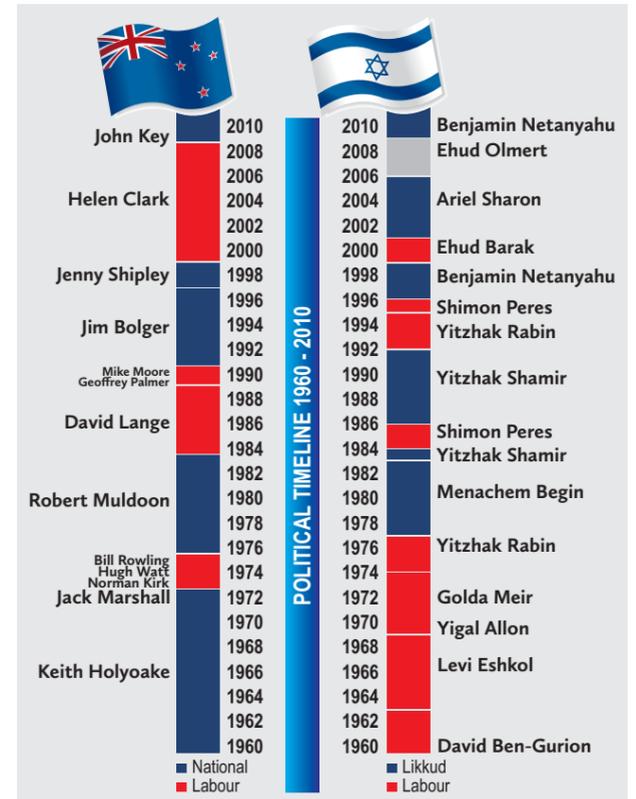
Sports-loving New Zealanders stood in disbelief as the 1972 Munich Olympics unfolded day after day with masked gunmen walking around unchallenged. Could this be possible? It offended Kiwi notions of fair play and stirred sympathy for Israel. Golda Meir's famous sentiments "they're killing Jews in Germany again" reverberated around the globe being only 27 years since the end of WWII, thus bringing back holocaust imagery, unwanted refugees and awareness of anti-Semitism to a new, post-war idealised generation. Israel was once again seen as a Jewish refuge nation.

NZ's Position in 1974 (Malcolm Templeton Interview¹)

Palestine	Israel
• Right of Palestinian self-determination	• Right as a sovereign state to live in peace & security
• Right to establish an independent state if they wish	• NZ's opposition to terror & violence
• PLO to play a role, but not be the sole legal representative	• Need for Israel to withdraw from the 1967 Occupied territories
	• Need for Refugees to be repatriated or compensated

Later added: Need for a balanced and constructive approach with an emphasis on the promotion of dialogue.

Norman Kirk had a deep affection for Israel and a romanticism towards it. He enjoyed rubbing shoulders with like-minded Israelis at forums particularly the ILO (International Labour Organisation). Kirk made sure that NZ lobbied to ensure that Afro-Arab countries would not exclude Israel from UN forums and international institutions. He set in motion plans for an Israeli embassy in Wellington in 1973, way ahead of his



time. These plans were interrupted by the Yom Kippur war. The Embassy was opened by his successor Bill Rowling who oversaw the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) gaining Observer status! The Labour Party was beginning to move away from Israel. When Likkud came to power in 1977, they were dismayed.

Things Begin to Change

This era marked the beginning of attempts to link Zionism with apartheid and, as part of a commitment to indigenous people, Zionism with imperialism and colonisation (sound familiar? – the old arguments get recycled). New Zealand abstained from Res 3379 condemning racism as it saw it as an anti-Semitic witch-hunt.

As a WWII veteran in the Middle East, Muldoon's love affair with Mother Britain brought back to mind injustices over Mandate era terrorism. Consequently, PM Robert Muldoon adopted a form of benign friendliness towards Israel. He saw NZ as a small, isolated state and Israel as merely being one part of a group of like-minded states. Once the impact of the oil shocks hit and Britain entered the EEC, New Zealand was forced into adopting a 'grocery foreign policy' that hinged on getting oil from the Middle East and selling lamb in return. Trade demanded NZ's diplomatic presence in the Middle East. Israel was side-lined. Israeli Ambassador Morris' criticism of the NZ Government did not go down well.

New Zealand viewed Israel's perceived unwillingness to follow international law and use undue force in the Lebanon War as a basis to condemn Israel and harden diplomatic relations.

Fourth Labour Government's Anti-Israel Tendencies & Subsequent Re-Balancing

The mid-1980s saw the passing of the political guard from war-era politicians to post-war idealists and agitators who saw the plight of the Palestinians and viewed Israel as the aggressor. They were also typically anti-American from the Vietnam protest generation. Rightly or wrongly, they linked issues – apartheid, Palestine, nuclear weapons and decolonisation and favoured social justice concerns. Under PM Lange, there was an informal boycott on visiting Israel (sound familiar). In society, it became fashionable to hold disdain for Israel. Pro-Palestinian groups lobbied government, and the Jewish lobby was weak to counter. But where were the Christians?

The left-wing support did not go unchecked. Support for the underdog Palestinians came under fire from right-wing conservatives who argued that this position was lacking an understanding of the big picture and was naive and simplistic.

Continued on page 3



Israel: A Blessing or a Curse?

■ Lepani Makubuna

Christians for Israel Fiji

In this month's article, I want to focus specifically on how Israel has truly been a blessing to the world in this day and age, apart from the universal role that Israel has played in God's overall plan of redemption both in the past and in the coming future.

Today, Israel has blossomed into a country with an economy much of the world envies. Why? Because God has His hand on the little Jewish nation and is using it - as He promised - to bless the world.

Israel's technological advancement shouldn't surprise us because God said Israel would bless the world. Our cell phones, tablets, and computers all employ Israeli technology; and many medicines and medical procedures used today were developed in Israel.

Israel has taken its advanced solar power technology to Africa to pump water from the ground without electricity. Alongside this, Israel's drip irrigation system has allowed them to use a minimum amount of water. As a result, starving Africans can now grow and develop their own food. What a great blessing!

Well, Fiji is no exception. I want to place on record and give glory and praise to the God of Israel that Fiji has been blessed through Israel by way of humanitarian aid, through the medical field and also in the field of agriculture. On this note, we wish to say a big 'vinaka vakalevu' (*thank you*) to the State of Israel for your love and support to our nation and its people from the past and in the future.

Israel is blessing the world, and the world should be blessing Israel. In *Genesis 12:3*, God told Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who



| Photo: pxhere

curse you". This promise to Abraham is instructive to Gentiles. If we, as Gentiles, want to be blessed by God, we must love and bless His chosen people.

This is a call to the churches, the nations, its people and its leaders, including our beloved country of Fiji and there is no halfway mark. Either we stand in total solidarity with Israel, or we don't. Whichever position one takes will determine either a blessing or a curse in the end. This would be one of the real tests of the church's commitment to biblical truth - to know whether a church holds to the literal interpretation of Scripture on where it stands on Israel as opposed to reading what Scripture says and not accepting it at face value.

Israel is a miracle from God, and it is critically important for Christians to understand that our salvation is rooted in the covenant promises God made with Israel and that modern Israel's existence today proves that God is faithful and He will again use Israel as He completes His plan of redemption for mankind.

Choose blessing... by blessing Israel!

"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:1-3

Continued from page 2

By contrast to Labour, National PM Bolger (1990-97) and Don McKinnon as Foreign Minister were far more sympathetic, and their tenure marked the return to the even-handed approach.

McKinnon's visit in 1992 was the first visit by a senior NZ official in 17 years and opened up the political dialogue. He hoped that a Palestinian state would take out a lot of Middle Eastern angst. During this period the Oslo Accords were signed dividing Judea and Samaria into zones A, B and C with differing governing and security regimes.

This National Government recognised that NZ needed a diplomatic presence in Israel and appointed Mr Gad Propper as Honorary Consul, a position he continues to hold. In December 2016 he was awarded a NZ Order of Merit and in 2017 named Diplomat of the Year in Israel.



(2nd from left): Honorary Consul General of NZ to Israel and Chairman of Ossem, Mr. Gad Propper receiving Diplomat of the Year Award in 2017.

The Clark Era (1999-2008) - Disdain for Israel and the Passport Scandal

Helen Clark had a long-standing involvement in the Labour Party group on Palestine. Her anti-Israel position was not hidden. She was a harsh critic of the security wall. When the Mossad passport scandal arose in 2004 in which fake NZ passports were used by Israeli agents here, she took a hard line on Israel. The next day Jewish graves were desecrated. On 15 July, New Zealand imposed diplomatic sanctions, and diplomatic relations remained broken for over a year.

Foreign Minister Phil Goff stayed on a Kibbutz in the 1970s but switched sympathies following his involvement with the International Union of Socialist Youth. In 2003 he controversially met with Yasser Arafat, a year after the Israeli Embassy closed. Then David Zwartz was made Honorary Consul. Winston Peters stood in contrast as a supporter of Israel as did Richard Prebble and Rodney Hide from the Act Party. Rodney noted that NZ as a democracy should support the only democracy in the Middle East and equated Anti-Israelism to Anti-Semitism.

The election of John Key as NZ's second Jewish Prime Minister in 2008 promised the hope of a new era in NZ Israeli relations. The Jewish connection was not lost on Israel. Plans were set in motion to re-open the Embassy in Wellington.

Hannah van Thorthuysen, Masters Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington 2010

Peacekeeping - Did You Know?

- The first UN Peacekeeping mission began in 1948 post the Israeli War of Independence supervising the truce between Israel and her five neighbours. It is known as UNTSO.
- NZ began peacekeeping in the 1950's and in Israel in 1954. We are still involved today. Our peacekeeping activities in the Middle East are with the UNTSO (blue berets) and the non-UN Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO) wearing brown berets in the Northern Sinai. The MFO supervises the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.
- NZ currently commits up to eight NZDF personnel to UNTSO.
- The MFO began its duties on ANZAC Day 1982 (Another thing to remember on ANZAC Day). NZ Representatives take part in Armistice Day, ANZAC Day and Battle of Beersheba ceremonies in Ramleh, Jerusalem and Be'er Sheva.
- NZDF recruitment for the MFO Mission is from all three services and is up to 26 personnel. NZ plays a key role in driving and driver training. Personnel are on six-month rotations, so large numbers of our forces have served or know someone who has served there. Many have toured Israel and so are very familiar with the country and situation.
- Ongoing Links: We were there in WWI and again in WWII, then back in 1954, and we are still there, and we are not leaving.

Prayer Points

- Give thanks for our Honorary Consuls in New Zealand and their many years of faithful service.
- Give thanks for our concern for refugees and desire for constructive help and a resolution to the conflict. But pray for a reality check.
- Repent of Christians not advocating for Israel and understanding its significance.
- Repent of not seeing Israel as a like-minded democracy and not standing up for the Judeo-Christian heritage we received from them.
- Repent for our naiveté in foreign policy, instances of Anti-semitism and inconsistency in policy.
- Repent of not being a friend to Israel, especially to a friend in need.



Short News

NZ First to Vote in Israeli Elections



On 5 September 2019, Israeli representatives who are stationed outside of the State of Israel sent in their votes for the Israeli Election. Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand, Dr Itzhak Gerberg, cast the first vote in the Israeli elections on at the Israeli embassy in Wellington. "Here in Wellington, we are the first to participate in the celebration of Israeli democracy," said the ambassador as he cast the first vote, officially kicking off the second Israeli election for 2019.

MPs Call for Moving Embassy to Israel

Two New Zealand National Party MPs have challenged the government to move the Israeli embassy from Turkey to Israel. Todd McClay, a former ambassador for the Cook Islands and Niue to the European Union and current National Party spokesperson for Trade, spoke first. Simon O'Connor, Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, spoke immediately following.

Kosher Mud House Wines Popular in Israel



NZ wines are becoming more popular in Israel. Sauvignon Blancs are on the rise. One of the best value examples of this new wave is a New Zealand wine called Mud House. Now for the first time there is a kosher cuvée. The wine is a classic 2019 Kiwi Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough. Aromatic with lashings of tropical fruit, grapefruit and tomato plant, it is crisp with a great, refreshing acidity.

Honoured to be in Palmerston North

Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand, HE Dr Itzhak Gerberg, was honoured recently to be hosted by civic and community leaders in Palmerston North for an evening of beautiful musical performances, moving speeches and overwhelming support for Israel. Dr Gerberg said on Twitter, "Sincere thanks to all who made this visit possible and to the nearly 400 people who attended the event!"

Kiwi Assistance Needed

■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director

The Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Center hosted Bryce Turner, head of Christians for Israel NZ (C4I NZ), and his wife Eleanor during their visit to Israel in March 2019. It was then a great privilege to invite the centre's CEO, Nitai Eliash, to speak to an audience during his recent visit to Auckland. Christians for Israel NZ together with the Israel Focus Group hosted Nitai who shared of the amazing work being carried out at the Alzheimer's Centre. C4I NZ and the centre look forward to strengthening the ties between both institutions.

Nitai shared, "One concept currently being developed is the sharing of the Alzheimer's Centre's extensive knowledge of Alzheimer's and dementia care, and opening the 24/7 call centre service for our friends in NZ, Jews and Christians alike, everyone. Those who need assistance and counselling can communicate with the Centre's specialists by phone, email, Whatsapp or Skype".

The Sophie & Abram Stuchynski Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Center opened in 2001 as a nonprofit organisation. The Israel Alzheimer's Medical Center is the

only one of its kind in Israel that specialises exclusively in providing services to people with Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases.

There are currently around 200 inpatients living in five wards, and every year they also treat hundreds of patients and their families on an outpatient basis through services such as consulting, diagnosis, and support. The centre also trains professionals and engages in collaborative research with renowned academic institutions. The Alzheimer's Medical Center offers other services for patients who live within the community such as a 24/7 call centre, a daycare centre and special home services to elderly.

There are approximately 180 people employed at the centre, including a multi-disciplinary team that specialises in Geriatrics. The treatment plans at the centre combine all the elements that can help the patients according to their condition, and the various therapeutic frameworks – in the medical, nursing, occupational, and social disciplines – provide a comprehensive treatment solution to the residents and provide them and their families with quality of life.



Urgently Needed - Ultrasound Bladder Scanner

An ultrasound bladder scanner allows for the non-invasive topical examination of a patient's bladder. This device is critical for nursing departments such as those of the Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Center. Patients in these departments frequently encounter bladder difficulties, and due to their condition are unable to express their discomfort or pain. This device enables an accurate reading of the patient's condition without having to use a catheter or other implements, thereby avoiding an invasive procedure that is often accompanied by mechanical injury or contraction of an external infection.

Christians for Israel New Zealand, together with friends from the Jewish Community, have recognised this urgent need and committed to raising the \$15,000NZD required to provide this vital equipment. We would like to be able to provide this piece of medical equipment as a gift from New Zealand by the end of 2019.

If you would like to contribute to this special project, please fill out the coupon on the back page.

Auschwitz and Faithfulness



| Photo: Perry Trotter Photography

■ Perry Trotter

Creator of Shadows of Shoah

Auschwitz. In popular culture, the term has become an archetypal symbol, a metaphor for ultimate evil. So mind-bending were the actions undertaken at this, the largest mass murder factory in human history, that Auschwitz has become ground zero on the moral landscape.

It was only in August this year, for the first time, we visited Auschwitz. On three different mornings, I arrived before dawn to film and photograph in and around what has become the very symbol of Europe's determination to purge itself of Jews.

And yet, while our visit to Auschwitz was

deeply disturbing, it has not been the most impactful aspect of our visit to Europe. Rather, it has been the overwhelming impression that much of Europe has not, and probably will not, take responsibility for the Holocaust. While the Nazis were the drivers, their work would not have been so devastatingly successful but for the active (or passive) cooperation of vast numbers of ordinary Europeans. There seems little acknowledgement of that reality. Instead, there are too many cases of active denial and, increasingly, an aggressive rewriting of national histories.

So what is Europe to do with its ancient hatred now that most of its Jews have been

murdered or have since departed? Answer: the age-old animosity has reinvented itself as anti-Israelism. Anti-Zionism now channels that which drove the Holocaust. And what are those to do who are committed to standing with Israel and the Jewish people? As the storm clouds of antisemitism continue to gather, what is to be our response?

In a word, faithfulness.

Each of us differs in our gifting, our circumstances, our resources. Whether it is our place to pray, to speak, or to act, we must recommit ourselves to faithfulness in the role into which we are called.



Peace in the Face of Peril

Ron Matsen

President and CEO | Koinonia House & Institute

An Eye-Opening Excursion

Over the past few decades, Koinonia House has encouraged people to donate to our Israel Relief Fund. As the fund builds over time, we look for ways in which we can assist the people of Israel. In the past, we have given funds for a wide range of items including the purchase of emergency services equipment, blankets to IDF soldiers, and civil defence support just to name a few. As 2018 drew to a close, we became aware of a unique opportunity that really resonated with us. Brian Hughes, who is a long-standing member of our Board of Directors, informed us that in discussion with the Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand he was made aware of an exciting opportunity to support a children's play facility in Sderot. With the exchange of a few emails of introduction I found myself being ushered into a world I could never have imagined. After careful and prayerful consideration, the Board of Koinonia House unanimously agreed to donate the accumulated Israel Relief funds to a very special play area in Sderot, Israel.

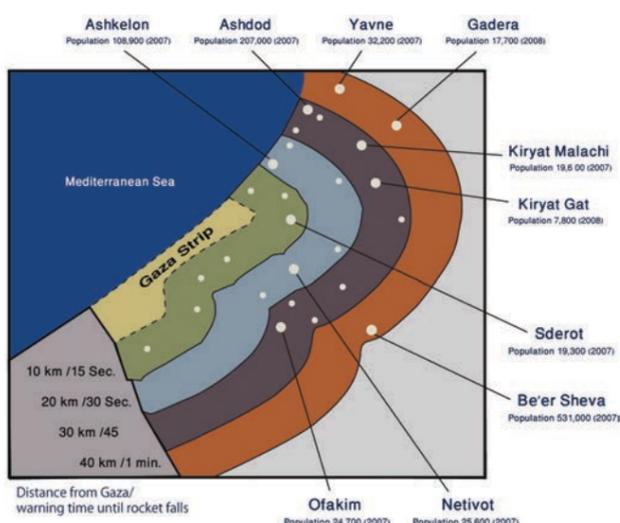
It was decided that, following our 2018 BASE Tour to Israel, my wife Marcie and I would travel to Sderot and make a formal presentation of our financial support for their ongoing project to provide a bomb-proof indoor playground for the children of the city. As we enjoyed the pleasant drive south from Jerusalem through the fertile western plains of Judea, I experienced a mixture of excitement and trepidation, given the fact that just three weeks earlier more than 300 Qassam rockets had been launched into southern Israel with most of them being aimed at Sderot.

On Sunday, 11 November, in the hours after a failed covert Israeli military operation, 17 rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel of which three were shot down, causing sirens to sound in Sderot. The next day at least 300 projectiles, of which 60 were intercepted, were fired from Gaza into Israel during the day, wounding nine civilians.

The Constant Threat

Since 2001 there have been more than 20,000 projectiles launched from Gaza at the cities of southern Israel. As the Qassam rocket has a limited range of about 10 km (6.2 miles), cities like Sderot are the prime target for these weapons of terror. In 2001 Sderot had a population of 20,000. Within only a few years, 25% of the city's residents had moved to find a safer place to live.

According to a recent study, 40% of children in Sderot have PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). Prof. Ruth Pat-Horenczyk, Director of Children and Adolescent Services of ICTP from the Hebrew University explained, "Even during wartime, the level of PTSD among children nationwide hovers somewhere between 7 and 10 percent" Because of the constant, threat the town's 3,000 children, were forced to remain indoors all day rather than risk the chance that they wouldn't be able to reach a bomb shelter quickly enough during a rocket attack.



Distance from Gaza and warning times until rockets fall



Inside the Big Blue bomb shelter

"These children are afraid every day, every hour of the day," said Dinah Hourai, a school teacher in Sderot. "Wherever they go, and whatever they do, they must think about what they will do if an alarm sounds. The question is always 'where will I hide?'"

Safe Play Zone

Upon arriving into the city of Sderot, I was immediately startled by the site of mini bomb shelters on every street corner, at every bus stop, and along every long public pathway. I shuddered at the thought of what it must be like to live a normal life on the front line of a war that seems to have no end.

Our first visit was to a building the locals call 'The Big Blue Box'. Following a rocket attack in 2008 a decision was made to build the playground on the very site where a rocket had hit the city. In 2009 the Jewish National Fund-U.S. provided an initial US\$5 million for a safe recreation centre. Anti-shockwave walls surround it (painted in blue, yellow, green and red), it is nearly 2,000 square meters (21,000 square feet) in size, and has room for 500 people.

"Where they seek to destroy and harm, we will build and reclaim," said current Mayor Davidi. "We are strong, and we are standing bravely in the face of the attacks that have continued for over a decade. We will continue to protect and defend the borders of Israel. We will not bow to terror - just the opposite, we will rise like the phoenix, and we will continue to build and rehabilitate the destruction."

Marcie and I were greeted with open arms as we entered the huge concrete bunker. As we entered, we immediately heard to sound of children playing. The facility manager gave us a tour of the facility, introduced us to some of the staff, and showed us a video of the plight of the people of Sderot He then let us meet some the children and take a selfie. Truly an amazing and humbling experience.

Meeting the Mayor

Following our visit to the playground, we were then driven to the City Council building in the centre of the city where we met Mayor Alon Davidi. He is a pleasant, soft-spoken young man who has been the mayor since 2013. When we arrived, he was quick to express his deep appreciation for the gift from Koinonia House and told us that it came at a very opportune time. Given the typical fiscal constraints of running a city he told us how they wanted to add an extension to the Blue Box but lacked the funds. He then went on to explain that our donation would now allow them to move their expansion project forward. He gave us a beautiful little sculpture that was made by a local artisan out of the remains of a Qassam rocket. The sculpture has three main elements; a dove, sitting on an olive branch, rooted in the centre of a map of an undivided Israel.

Living Life in 15-Second Intervals

During our visit with Mayor Davidi I asked him to give me some insight into what it was like to live on the front line.

"We live life in 15-second intervals," he replied. "No matter where we are, no matter what we are doing, we live our lives constantly aware that at any minute of the day or night we may be called to respond to the rocket-attack warning which gives us only 15 seconds to get to a bomb shelter." In Sderot every building has one, every home has one, every possible vulnerable area has one. Every person, citizen or visitor, in Sderot carries the extra burden of having their ears tuned to the warning sirens and their lives ready to be interrupted at a moment's notice. Nevertheless, while the world around them seeks to destroy them, the children of Sderot play in safety; at least for now.

An Epilogue

The people of Sderot have learned to live life with constant anticipation for the unexpected. In the midst of tension and threat of terror, the people here have learned to cope because they have taught themselves to have hope. The citizens who live here, with this constant threat, willingly do so because they believe that they can make a difference for the State of Israel.

What would happen if we, as Christians, lived our lives in 15-second intervals? Not motivated by the fearful anticipation of a sudden attack from an enemy, but because we believe that we are Christ's hands, feet, and voice to this generation and that Jesus Christ is really coming back SOON. Our constant anticipation should be that we could meet our Messiah at any moment and then face the Judgment Seat of Christ (*Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10*) where our fruit-bearing as Christ's disciples will be rewarded.

In times of trouble, where is your "strong tower?" (*Psalms 61:2,3; Proverbs 18:10*) What consumes your time, talent, and thought? (*Philippians 4:6-8*) Are you willingly living in the face of the adversary for the Gospel's sake? (*Ezekiel 22:30*)

For Marcie and me, our visit was not simply the conclusion of a visit to another site in Israel, shake a few hands, make a presentation, and then move with life as before. Our trip to Sderot gave us a graphic and living example of how we as Christians should be 'living on the front line.'



Remains of Qassam rockets



The Stability of Our Time

■ Nigel Woodley

Pastor | Flaxmere Christian Fellowship Church, Hastings

Isaiah 33: 5-6 The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. And **He will be the stability of your times...**

Historically the world has not seen the upheaval, chaos and devastation of the last century or so. Through two world wars—each surpassing all others in scope, magnitude, displacement and destruction; unheard of man-made tragedies by which new phrases have had to be coined, phrases like **Holocaust** (*Shoah*), **genocide**, **ethnic cleansing** have all been invented to explain the evolution of man's depravity. And yet in the midst of it all, we are given the assurance that God still sits on His exalted throne far above the chaos, confusion and calamity. Not only that, but He reigns supreme—**He dwells on High!**

Israel herself has faced huge threats within this timeframe. From the Holocaust which raged before her modern statehood to the wars forced upon her in her statehood, it is only by the miracle of this "Higher Power" that she has survived. Today the growing threat facing Israel is Iran. In 2019 Iran has no nuclear capability militarily, but what will that look like in 2029? Iranian leaders and chanting crowds have for years been 'prophesying' the doom of Israel—"Death! Death! To Israel!" Although some may right-off such chanting rhetoric as harmless, nevertheless we have a precedent in modern history. In the 1930s, what began as words and proclamations in Nazi Germany materialised into reality. Life experience has taught many of us that what we don't cast off and renounce today we will have to embrace tomorrow. I don't think we should allow the most sincere peace-lovers among us convince us that the world without God can produce a world utopia so



| Photo: pxhere

that the world is then chanting "Peace, Peace" when at the same time the Lord is saying **"there is no peace for the wicked"** (*Isaiah 48:22*). The world without God does not have a good outlook. For the answer we look to God. His answer is the coming of the Messiah. *1 Corinthians 16:22* sums it up, **Come, O Lord!**

In the meantime, we have many promises concerning Israel's stability in these troubled times. Some follow:

Jeremiah 31: 36 regarding the set order of the universe: "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the Lord, "will Israel ever cease being a nation before me."

Ezekiel 37:22 regarding the perpetuity and unity of the

nation: "I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them, and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms."

Joel 3:17 regarding God setting His embassy in Israel's capital: "Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her."

Zechariah 9:8 regarding the Temple Mount and Israel's claim to it: "But I will encamp at my temple to guard it against marauding forces. Never again will an oppressor overrun my people, for now, I am keeping watch."

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Why Visit Jerusalem?

Part 6 - Magnet for Christian Visits

■ Rev Dr Kameel Majdali

Director of Teach All Nations

In **Part 1** of our series we learned that Christians have been visiting the holy city of Jerusalem since the beginning of the church. Today, incoming Christian tourist numbers into Israel, with the goal of visiting Jerusalem, is 60% or more.

In **Part 2**, we learned about how 'tourism' affects numbers of Christian visitors.

In **Part 3**, we saw how since the 1967 War the 'tourist factor' and tradition of pilgrimage have caused the number of visitors to Jerusalem to increase dramatically.

In **Part 4**, we sought to define if the Christian visitor is a 'tourist' or a 'pilgrim.'

In **Part 5**, we will continue to explore the identity of Christian visitors as tourists or pilgrims.

Here in **Part 6** we will explore the nature of today's Christian visits to Jerusalem.

Onward Christian Pilgrim

First, it is this author's conviction, after six years of study and a 95,000 word thesis, that any Christian who visits a holy city such as Jerusalem is a 'pilgrim,' whether they consciously and proactively seek to be, or not. Why? Pilgrimage is simply a 'long journey to a sacred destination.' The Bible teaches that all believers are on a long journey to the city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God (*Hebrews 11:10*). So, our rationale is simple: if the earthly life of a person of faith is one long journey to the sacred destination, then visiting the holy city would be part of the larger pilgrimage.

This generous and inclusive label stands strong, even if the Christian visitor has all the hallmarks of a normal tourist. So, they can float on the Dead Sea, hike at En Gedi, visit the popular non-biblical sites like Masada, plant a tree, go shopping, and other 'secular' activities and still be a pilgrim. Like the Christian faith itself, being a pilgrim is not so much a matter of 'what you do' but more like 'what you believe.' The faith in the heart, rather than the activity of the hand, is what makes you a pilgrim.

One of the evidences of 'faith in the heart' is the Christian pilgrims' willingness to travel to the Middle East, even though it has pockets of strife and instability (for example, Syria, Libya and Yemen). Those who are mere tourists do not travel to a 'war zone' to have a holiday but the person of faith will. They believe God has led them to make the journey and will protect them along the way.

Do the labels 'tourist' and 'pilgrim' matter? Some can argue 'No.' This author says 'Yes.' Here is the reason: when you call someone a pilgrim, you recognise them as a person of faith. Second, a journey of faith will lead to the things of God. Furthermore, a reward awaits the person who 'believes' and 'seeks.' *Hebrews 11:6* says it so well: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that



| Photo: pxhere

cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (emphasis mine).

So if a person understands that their trip is not just for tourism, but is truly a journey of faith, they will be more mentally, emotionally, and spiritually prepared. A great reward awaits them.

This can apply even to the person who is blissfully unaware of these things. This author's mother, raised in church while young but grew up to be a successful, unchurched, career woman, came for a visit to Jerusalem. Most of her time was spent visiting people and shopping. During the entire period she had only one day of touring Biblical sites and she spent much of it in the local diamond showroom! Yet, years later she commented how 'close she felt to God' while in Jerusalem and eventually became a believer.

The Nature of Christian Visits

Since the June 'Six Day War of June 1967,' there have been changes in the nature and number of Christian visitors. Prior to this date, following the 1948 war, Jerusalem was a divided city. Israel held the western sector and Jordan the eastern, including the Old City and the Mount of Olives.

This meant that Jordan was the custodian of most of the Biblical sites. The partition of the city did affect tourist numbers. A person could only cross from one side to another via the Mandelbaum Gate, but there were restrictions. Local Jerusalemites, East and West, Jew or Muslim, could not cross to the other side of the city, full stop. Christian citizens of Israel were allowed a 3-day visit to the Old City once a year. Foreign pilgrims were allowed passage through the Mandelbaum Gate. Needless

to say, the division of the city did not help foster increasing tourism. While local Christians from Middle East countries would have visited Jordanian-held Jerusalem, numbers of visitors from Europe and the rest of the world were limited.

To understand the nature of Christian visits today, let's compare and contrast them with what happened in the past. Early Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem was a truly voluntary action motivated by love for the person of Christ and/or desire to see the site of biblical events. No religious merit was accorded for the visit. Byzantine and medieval practices such as shrine visitation, liturgy, indulgences, and veneration of relics were minimal or non-existent. Visiting the city, holy people who lived in the city, or pious study, were some of the intentions of these early visitors (e.g. Melito of Sardis, Origen, the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, Egeria). The pilgrim could have sojourned in Jerusalem for weeks, months, even years. Modern Christian Jerusalem visits are increasing in tandem with mass tourism. Both have influenced each other. Tourism has given the pilgrim fast efficient travel, comfortable lodging, and a sightseeing element in respect of non-Christian or non-holy sites. Pilgrimage has made holy sites part of the program in many, perhaps most, tour itineraries. **To be continued.**

Rev Dr Kameel Majdali is Director of Teach All Nations (tan.org.au), an international Bible teacher, and has led 35 holy land tours. His PhD from Melbourne University was about this very topic. He has written 11 books, including: Melbourne to Jerusalem: A Pilgrim's Progress in the 21st Century. He currently lives in Oxfordshire, UK, and ministers throughout Europe with TAN.

Jewish Immigration up 30% in 2019

■ Bradley Antolovich

International Director | For Zion's Sake

This is indeed really good news for us at For Zion's Sake because it means that there will be many new *Olim* to assist and comfort in their immigration process. We need your prayers and support now more than ever as the Lord continues to bring his children home from the four corners of the earth. Because of you, For Zion's Sake is here in Jerusalem to welcome them with His love

and blessings in Yeshua's name!

Immigration by Jews and their relatives to Israel rose by nearly 30% in the first half of 2019 over the corresponding period last year.

The 29% jump to 16,005 arrivals owed largely to movement by Russian speakers from countries facing financial problems, nationalism, and crackdowns on civil liberties.

Immigrants from countries that were part of the Former Soviet Union or were under its influence that have not yet joined the

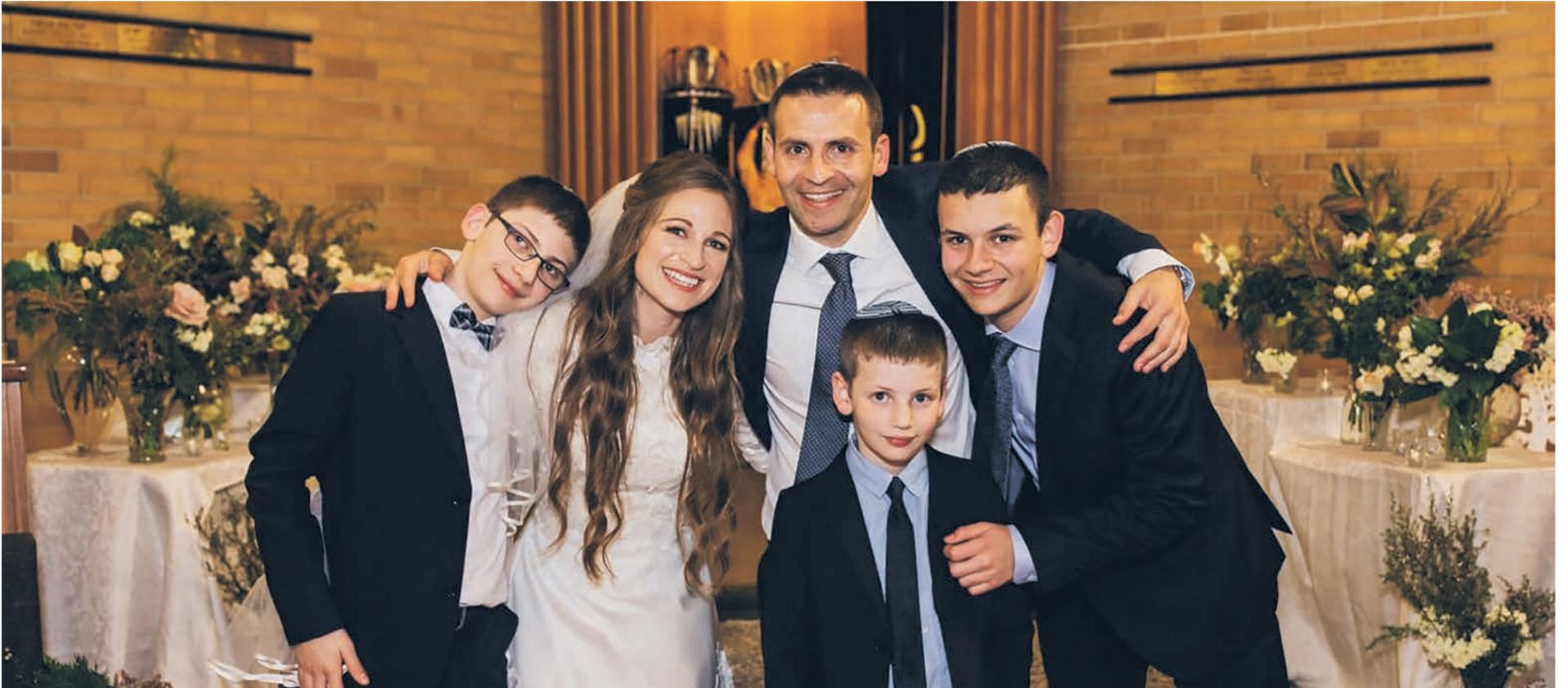
European Union accounted for two-thirds of the 12,366 immigrants in the first half of 2018. They comprised 74% of the figures for 2019.

The vast majority of Russian-speaking immigrants came from Russia, where aliyah rose by 72% to 7,884 arrivals this year, and Ukraine, which saw a 9% rise to 3,007 immigrants. Aliyah from the United States remained without major changes with 910 arrivals in the first half of 2018 and 843 in the months January to June of 2019.





An Historical First in Auckland



Rabbi Nathanel, Rebbetzin Deb and the Friedler boys - now a family.

The Jewish community in Auckland recently experienced a historical event! The wedding of their Rabbi: Rabbi Nathanel Friedler.

It is extremely unusual for a Rabbi to get married in New Zealand, but what makes this completely unique in New Zealand history is that the bride is a local kiwi girl.

Rabbi Nathanel Friedler is the Senior Rabbi of the Auckland Hebrew Congregation. Last month he was married to Deborah Levy in a ceremony at the synagogue surrounded by 450 friends, family and community members.

For both the Rabbi and Deb, this is their second marriage and it is absolutely divine providence that the two of them even met.

As a young Israeli Rabbi beginning his career, Rabbi Nathanel was offered a post in Adelaide, Australia - a city he had never heard of and had certainly never thought of

living in. His next post was in Perth. Then, five years ago, he was recruited to join the Auckland Hebrew Congregation as their Senior Rabbi.

At this time, Deb had left New Zealand and was living in Europe. A couple of years later, when her first marriage failed, she planned to move to Israel. But things were not so simple, and she needed to make a trip to New Zealand first to obtain her Jewish religious divorce. To do that, she needed to meet with the Rabbi - who was also going through a divorce.

Through God's divine plan, two people who had not planned to be in New Zealand ended up meeting there at the same time, under the same circumstances, and the rest is history.

The Jewish law requirements of divorce stipulate that both parties need to give consent in order for a marriage to end. For Rabbi Nathanel, obtaining consent from his

ex-wife was a process that took several years. During this difficult time, Deb was living with her parents here in Auckland as they prayed for a resolution.

Deb also used this time to develop a close relationship with Rabbi Nathanel's three sons. Ultimately, when the Rabbi was freed from his previous marriage, it was the boys who proposed to Deb!

Now, having married a Rabbi, Deb takes on the role of *Rebbetzin* (Rabbi's wife), which involves joining him in his spiritual leadership of the community. It is an honour they both feel passionately about.

Rabbi Nathanel and Rebbetzin Deb have both been involved in interfaith activities with the Christian community and are very grateful for the outstanding support and commitment that Christian Friends of Israel have for the land and the people of Israel.

GET SORTED FOR CHRISTMAS EARLY WITH THESE EDITOR'S PICKS

**Purchase Israel 70 Years...
Get Jerusalem 50 Years FREE**



Israel 70 Years

2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel. After ages of diaspora, the Jewish state was reborn in 1948. A true miracle. This magazine celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the State of Israel. It is beautifully illustrated, with in-depth articles, inspiring interviews, photos, facts, time-lines and more.

\$25.00



Jerusalem 50 Years

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, following the Six Day War of June 1967, after 19 years of division. Historically and politically, spiritually and culturally, Jerusalem represents the heart and soul of the Jewish people.

**Half Price Trilogy Book Set
by Willem Glashouwer**

Why Israel? Trilogy

Get an inside look from a Biblical, historical and prophetic perspective at God's work, written by Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer. Explore the Biblical significance of Israel and the Jewish people for Christians today, the significance of the city of Jerusalem, and explore what some biblical terms have in common.



\$30.00

Trilogy book set includes *Why Israel? Why Jerusalem? and Why End Times?* RRP \$60

DVD's and Study Guide Books are also available to purchase individually or as a set of three.

A Must-Have Book by Edjan Westerman - Limited Stock

Learning Messiah: Israel and the Nations: Learning to Read God's Way Anew

Israel's election, calling, and history make up a big part of Scripture. It could be said that they belong to the 'DNA of the Bible'. But why is it then that the Christian narrative about the Messiah, Israel and the nations, often seemed to have and sometimes even still has a different 'genetic structure'?

Does Israel—together with its election and promises—leave God's stage through a side door, when Jesus appears on stage? Does a changing of roles take place, within a different story? Does the Messiah function within it as some kind of 'black hole' in which the eternal election and calling of Israel disappear? How do we read God's way? This book answers these questions.

\$82.00



Israel Bans BDS-Advocates

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Christians for Israel Austria

Reps. Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, the first two Muslim women elected to Congress, were barred from visiting Israel in mid-August.

PM Netanyahu had initially signalled that the two Democrats could visit despite their support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS), which Israel has outlawed. When it became clear that Netanyahu reversed his decision at President Trump's urging, the situation appeared to go from bad to worse. Then facts and history had their say.

Both Congresswomen had rejected invitations to travel with other congressional members of both Republican and Democratic parties. Trips had been organised by ALPAC to brief new members on security issues and to include political perspectives as from the government as well as critics. The congressional groups met with Israeli leaders and Palestinians in Judea and Samaria. In addition to wanting to go alone, Tlaib and Omar reportedly refused any government briefings and Netanyahu said their itinerary mentioned only 'Palestine,' a country that doesn't exist and a word often used to deny Israel's right to exist.

PM Benjamin Netanyahu further remarked: "No country in the world respects America and the American Congress more than the State of Israel. As a free and vibrant democracy, Israel is open to critics and criticism, with one exception: Israeli law prohibits the entry into Israel of those who call for and work to impose boycotts on Israel, as do other democracies that prohibit the entry of people who seek to harm the country. Congresswomen Tlaib and Omar are leading activists in promoting the legislation of boycotts against Israel in the American Congress."



US Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, both Democrats, during a news conference in Washington, 15 July 2019. | Photo: AP Images

Their itinerary for their visit to Israel revealed that they planned a visit whose sole objective was to strengthen the boycott against Israel and deny Israel's legitimacy.

...it is no less than economic warfare designed to delegitimise and ultimately destroy the Jewish State.

US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman responded: "The United States supports and respects the decision of the Government of Israel to deny entry to the

Tlaib/Omar Delegation. The (BDS) movement against Israel is not free speech. Rather, it is no less than economic warfare designed to delegitimise and ultimately destroy the Jewish State."

When Israel announced that it would deny entry to Reps, Omar and Tlaib, the decision struck many as an unprecedented step. However, this measure has taken place before, when Israel's political enemies have attempted to enter the gates. Tlaib and Omar were not going in good faith. They hate Israel and have made anti-Semitic statements. Moreover, the BDS movement they support is not ultimately about borders. It's about Israel's existence.

Red Terror - Continued from page 3

Soon the state media was saturated with anti-Zionist propaganda, depicting bloated, hook-nosed Jewish bankers and all-consuming serpents embossed with the Star of David.

Anti-Zionism had become virtually indistinguishable from anti-Semitism. As the British political theorist, Alan Johnson, observed, "what 'the Jew' once was in older anti-Semitism - uniquely malevolent, full of blood lust, all-controlling, the hidden hand, tricky, always acting in bad faith, the obstacle to a better, purer, more spiritual world, uniquely deserving of punishment, and so on - the Jewish state now is..."

In time, these depictions appeared not only in Soviet publications but were distributed globally through communist parties and publications throughout the world. These ideas would eventually nestle in far-left circles in the West, including political parties, human rights organisations, militant trade unions, and of course, campuses.

The propaganda was highly compelling and steeped in long-established themes of Jewish bloodthirstiness, greed, corruption, manipulation and cunning. It would contend that the very existence of a Jewish homeland was not only a plot of imperialism but a mortal danger to the peace of the world.

It was what Hitler called the 'big lie' - the use of dramatically overblown fiction to deceive the public. Hitler, the supreme propagandist, observed that the bigger the lie, the more believable it was: "It would never come into people's heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously..."

The big lies about Zionism would soon find their way into the most influential forums in the world. When a sub-commission of the United Nations was tasked with drafting a convention on the 'elimination of all forms of

racial discrimination,' the proceedings naturally focused on apartheid, neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism. But the Soviets viewed the reference to anti-Semitism as a direct rebuke to their anti-Jewish measures and served up an amendment that 'was almost a joke,' even to the Soviet delegation itself.

The amendment inserted Zionism into the listed forms of racism. According to sources close to the deliberations, the Soviets understood "full well that the idea that Zionism is racism is an indefensible position," yet they floated it anyway, in part to turn the US-led initiative into farce, and in part perhaps, to see how far a 'big lie,' could go.

Ultimately, the Convention was adopted with neither anti-Semitism nor Zionism referred to - the ploy had worked. But the seed had been planted.

On 10 November 1975, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed resolution 3379 on the 'elimination of all forms of racial discrimination,' which determined that 'Zionism is a form of racism and discrimination.'

The US Ambassador to the United Nations Patrick Moynihan called the resolution "a great evil ..." that had given "the abomination of anti-Semitism the appearance of international sanction."

The proposition that the Jewish emancipation movement was actually a form of racism, now declared to be true by the United Nations, could then be used to purge mainstream Jewish voices from liberal campaigns and civil society organisations.

In 1977, student unions across Britain debated motions along the lines of Resolution 3379. York, Salford, Warwick and Lancaster went further, passing motions to expel their Jewish societies "on the grounds that they are Zionist and therefore racist."

The concept of denying platforms to fascist and white supremacist speakers on university campuses was now being applied to stifle mainstream voices who expressed

support for the state of Israel.

Moynihan foresaw this. An earlier UN resolution had, at the instigation of the Soviet Union, viewed "racism to be merely a form of Nazism." It followed that if racism was merely a form of Nazism and Zionism is a form of racism, then Zionism is a form of Nazism.

On this basis, anti-Zionist students could harass Zionists and be seen as taking a noble stand against Nazism. This twisted logic was applied by anti-Israel students at Sydney University in 2015 when they attempted to stop the public lecture of a retired British colonel for his earlier statements in support of Israel, and by the organisers of the Chicago Dyke March who blocked Jewish participants from marching with Stars of David on the basis that Zionism was a form of 'white supremacism.'

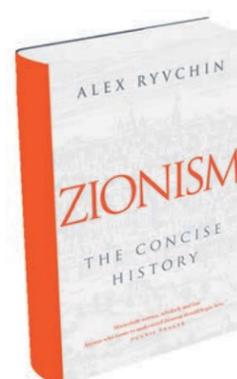
The theme of Jews becoming the new Nazis, a double blow that associates Zionism with supreme evil and mocks the victims of the Holocaust by equating them with their murderers, has become a mainstay of anti-Zionist discourse.

In a conflict as deep-seated and volatile as this, it may seem a trifling pursuit to seek to restore accurate meaning to terminology. But there can be no hope for peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians so long as the movement on which Israel was established

seven decades ago, the movement that expresses Jewish hopes and Jewish rights, is so poorly understood and so successfully distorted.

Alex Ryvchin is the co-chief executive officer of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. He is author of *The Anti-Israel Agenda* (Gefen Publishing House, 2017). His new book is *Zionism - The Concise History*.

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Jewish Festivals

Tzom Gedaliah

Fast of the Seventh Month

2 October 2019 at sunrise

A Jewish fast day to lament the assassination of the righteous governor of Judah of that name, which ended Jewish rule following the destruction of the First Temple.

Shabbat Shuva

Shabbat of Returning

4 October 2019 begins at sundown

Shabbat that occurs during the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Only one Shabbat can occur between these dates. This Shabbat is named after the first word of the Haftarah (*Hosea 14:2-10*) and literally means 'Return!'

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement

8-9 October 2019 sundown to sundown

The holiest day of the year for the Jews. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. Yom Kippur completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days.

Sukkot

Feast of Tabernacles

13-20 October 2019 sundown to sundown

A Biblical holiday celebrated on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei. It is one of the three biblically mandated festivals Shalosh regalim on which Jews were commanded to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Shemini Atzeret

Eighth Day of Assembly

20-21 October 2019 sundown to sundown

A Jewish holiday celebrated on the 22nd day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei. In the Diaspora, an additional day is celebrated, the second day being separately referred to as Simchat Torah. In Israel and Reform Judaism, the holidays of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are combined into a single day and the names are used interchangeably.

Yom HaAliyah

Recognises Aliyah

4 November 2019 at sundown

An Israeli national holiday celebrated to acknowledge Aliyah, immigration to the Jewish state, as a core value of the State of Israel, and to honour the ongoing contributions of Olim to Israeli society.

Sigd

50 Days after Yom Kippur

26-27 November 2019 sundown to sundown

A holiday celebrated by the Ethiopian Jewish community exactly 50 days after Yom Kippur, and according to Ethiopian Jewish tradition is also the date that God first revealed himself to Moses.

10th Thesis: Messiah

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

In this article, we continue our discussion of the 'Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel' published by Christians for Israel.

Thesis 10: We believe that one day, Messiah will come to establish His worldwide Kingdom, then the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead will take place and they will reign with Christ in His Kingdom on earth. We, therefore, pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Elaboration: We pray for the Peace of Jerusalem and are longing for the great day of the Coming of the Prince of Peace to Jerusalem, when He will be sitting on the throne of His father David in Jerusalem and rule over the house of Jacob, being the twelve tribes of Israel, and of His Kingdom there will be no end. We fervently wait for the day that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, of which Jesus and the Apostles together with all the prophets of Israel have been speaking throughout the ages. Messiah will come and rule from sea to sea, from shore to shore – as far as nations will exist on the face of the earth. 'He will be our Peace' (*Micah 5:1-4*). Then the veil will be taken away from the eyes and the ears and the hearts of Israel, as well as the veil that has covered the face of the nations.

Clarification: In *Acts 3:17-21*, the Apostle Peter says: "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what He had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so

that your sins may be wiped away, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets." Repent and turn to God in order that the times of refreshing will come! All prophets have spoken about the renewal of all things. First the restoration of the fallen tent of David (*Amos 9:11*) will take place and then the restoration of the nations, when the veil over their eyes will be lifted and the confusion will end.

Finally, the Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness will come. God will reign through His Messiah. And the nations will praise this King coming from the line of King David. *Psalms 72* speaks about it in beautiful terms, ending (*verses 17-19*): "May His Name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. Then all nations will be blessed through Him, and they will call Him blessed. Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to His glorious Name forever; may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen."

The veil of Israel shall be taken away (*2 Corinthians 3:12-16*) as well as the veil that covers the nations (*Isaiah 25:7*). Ultimately Messiah will swallow up death itself forever (*Isaiah 25:8*).

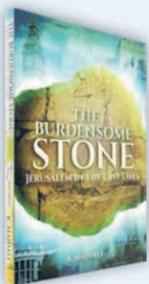
Comment: The church shares in the expectation of the Kingdom of God that was granted to Israel. The ancient Christian creeds (the Apostolic Creed and the Nicene Creed), however, are virtually silent about Israel. Yet, when we listen very carefully, we might hear hidden

references to the Jewish origins of our faith when the language echoes the language of Scripture. The belief in the coming of Christ in glory is one of them: "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end" (*Nicene Creed*).

Surely, this is a clear reference to the words of the angel Gabriel (*Luke 1:32-33*): "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Jesus will sit on the throne of His father, David. He is of royal ancestry, and He will reign over the House of Jacob. Though this part was left out of the ancient creed of the church, the words of the angel are very clear. Without a shadow of doubt, in biblical language the house of Jacob means the People of Israel. And so, there is no question as to where the throne of His father David should stand: in Jerusalem, the ancient and eternal capital of David, the heart of the land of Israel and the navel of the earth.

In our days, we witness the Messiah gathering His people home to the promised land. The restoration of Israel entails the restoration of creation as a whole. Each and every nation will receive its own God-given portion and will come under the reign of Messiah, a reign of blessing and peace for everyone who recognises His kingship. Today, when we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we may experience a taste of that peace. Let us pray, just as the Jews pray every day: "May Jerusalem be rebuilt speedily and in our days".

Book Review

The Burdensome Stone: Jerusalem in the Last Days
by Kameel Majdali

In his latest book, Dr Kameel Majdali offers his readers a foundational understanding of the role and significance of Jerusalem – past, present and future.

Throughout the book, he builds a solid case for why this small city, with no natural resources, occupies the hearts and minds of billions across the planet. He traces how this almost irrational international obsession is pulling the nations into position for the final End Time events.

In a characteristically engaging style, Dr Kameel blends fascinating facts (e.g. Jerusalem city law mandates the use of 'Jerusalem stone' in all building facades) with prophetic insights (e.g. Jerusalem is indeed increasingly becoming a burdensome stone to all nations).

While the subject matter may seem quite weighty (no pun intended!), the book is suitable not only for seasoned prophecy-watchers but also for those who are newcomers to the world of Bible prophecy.

Chapter one, in particular, is excellent for beginners as it provides a panoramic overview of Bible history, combined

with insights into the ongoing nature of the covenants of God.

Chapters two and four covers the history of Islam and Christianity in Jerusalem, and explore the reasons for the increasing modern-day controversy over Zion.

Sandwiched between these chapters, Kameel has included a chapter on the remarkable modern-day rise of Christian pilgrimage to the land of Israel – especially among Protestant/ evangelical believers.

The fifth chapter of the book provides fascinating insights into Jerusalem's role in Islam and why it has become a focal point of conflict between Israel and the Muslim world. While on this topic, Kameel also brings out thought-provoking spiritual insights into the true roots of the modern-day conflict.

Chapter 6 starts off the final section of the book, which deals with the role of Jerusalem in Bible prophecy. This particular chapter focuses on Psalm 2, while chapter 7 focuses on the dramatic prophecies of Zechariah. Both chapters provide a grand - but readable and engaging - overview of End Time events.

In chapters 8 and 9, Dr Kameel shifts his focus to the events occurring after

Jesus' second coming, and to the continued central role of Jerusalem even at that point in history. He speaks about Jerusalem in the Millennium and touches on the fascinating - and at times confusing - topic of the Temple during the 1000 year reign of Christ. Finally, in chapter 9, Dr Kameel turns to the topic of the New Jerusalem, and contrasts the glories of our heavenly home with the often-neglected topic of the Lake of Fire.

Ending the book on these sobering topics, Kameel closes with a straightforward appeal to the reader, bringing the message from the realm of interesting facts and prophetic insights to the very personal question of the reader's eternal destiny.

All in all, *'The Burdensome Stone: Jerusalem in the Last Days'* is a surprisingly readable book. While stuffed with facts and prophetic insights, the book brings clear and compelling personal applications, ultimately helping to prepare the reader for the times that are ahead.

Order from Vision Christian Store:
<https://store.vision.org.au>. Search for *The Burdensome Stone*.

Simchat Torah - The Joy of the Torah

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

Shemini Atzeret

Seven days is the feast of Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles. On the eighth day, the Bible tells us, there shall be a 'holy convocation' (*Leviticus 23:36*). In Jewish tradition, this day is called Shemini Atzeret (Eighth Day of Assembly), after *Numbers 29:35*. The Hebrew 'Atzeret' is translated as solemn or closing assembly. Outside Israel, one day is added to every Jewish feast to make sure that celebration in the diaspora would not deviate from celebration in Jerusalem. The Passover meal, for example, is held on two subsequent evenings. This goes back to ancient times, before there was a fixed calendar, when the days of the festivals were determined by observing the moon in Jerusalem. Likewise, Shemini Atzeret is observed for not one, but two days. On the second day, it became customary since the Middle Ages to celebrate the rejoicing of the Torah. That day became known as Simchat Torah, rejoicing the Torah. (In Israel, Simchat Torah and Shemini Atzeret are celebrated together on one day).

Torah

In Judaism, the Torah (the five books of Moses, the first five books of the *Old Testament*) is read in one year, each Shabbat having its own designated portion. Since ancient times, it has been customary to conclude the cycle of reading with the last chapters of *Deuteronomy* on Simchat Torah and to begin a new cycle (with the first five chapters of *Genesis*) on the Shabbat after Succoth. The Torah is always new and never finished. Therefore, Jews do not wait until the next Shabbat to start the reading of *Genesis*: the completion of *Deuteronomy* is followed immediately by the first verses of *Genesis*.

What is Torah? Often, the word Torah is translated as 'law'. But it may be better to understand it as instruction, or teaching. God teaches the way to live before Him. The Torah is God's Word of life.

And therefore, Israel rejoices in the Torah. Before reading



| Photo: unsplash

the Torah, thanks is given to God who chose Israel, and "who gave us a Torah of truth and thus planted eternal life in us." The children are blessed with a special blessing, for Jewish life is family life. Everything revolves around the children.

Marriage

So, too, Israel's relation with the Torah is understood in terms of a covenant of marriage. The person who is honoured with the completion of the annual circle of reading is called the 'Hattan Torah', the groom of the Torah. The one who is called up for the reading of the beginning of *Genesis* is called the 'Hattan Bereshit', the groom of Bereshit. 'Bereshit' is translated as 'in the beginning', and is the first word of the Bible, after which the book of *Genesis* is called in Hebrew.

During the service, the congregation takes out all the Torah scrolls, and marches around the synagogue, carrying the scrolls. Seven circuits are made with the Torah scrolls. At the completion of each circular procession (*hakafa*), songs and wordless melodies (*niggunim*) are sung, and people dance with the Torah. This is done both on the eve of Simchat Torah, and on the day itself.

Yoke

Why is there so much rejoicing in the Law? Judaism knows the concept of taking the yoke of Torah upon

oneself (besides taking up the 'yoke of the kingdom', which involves the daily recitation of the Shema: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one" *Deuteronomy 6:4*). A Jewish girl is considered religiously of age on the day after her 12th birthday. A Jewish boy becomes responsible for his religious duties on the day after his 13th birthday. Then he becomes a 'bar-mitzvah' – a 'son of the commandment'. He takes upon himself the yoke of Torah.

But that yoke is not a burden. If an ox pulled a wagon without a yoke, the rig would cut into the flesh, and the ox would collapse. The yoke enables the ox to pull the wagon without being hurt. A yoke makes it possible to carry a burden together.

Jesus says: "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (*Matthew 11:29*). He is pointing to the positive sides of the yoke. The Torah is not a heavy burden, under which one collapses. True, for the non-Jew, who would think he has to fulfil the commandments to be acceptable for God, it is. That is what Paul and the other apostles warn about (*Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1; 1 Timothy 6:1*). For a Jew, who receives the Torah as God's way of life, it is an easy yoke. For the Torah affirms and enriches life.

Walking in the Dust of Our Rabbi - Part 2

■ Mandy Worby

Christians for Israel Australia

We began in our previous programme to look at what it means to walk in the dust of our Rabbi. We learned a little bit about how, without understanding of Jewish cultural context at the time of Jesus' earthly life or the setting that the Bible was written in, we can easily put our own spin on what we read. For example, the masterpiece by Leonardo Da Vinci of the Last Supper was a Passover meal in reality but every single thing depicted in that painting is actually Biblically wrong. If Da Vinci had understood or researched what a Passover meal was actually like, that painting would have been vastly different.

We touched a little bit again on the difference between the Greek method of learning and the Hebrew or Jewish method of learning. The Greek primarily being that of a classroom where knowledge and information are imparted but the Hebrew method is very much that of a master and apprentice, a teacher and student learning side by side until a skill has been learned.

We also touched very briefly on the difference between Jewish congregations and Gentile congregations in that Jews had a decent head start when it came to knowing and understanding what God's standards or morals, ethics and behaviour was, but for Gentiles, it was very much a new concept. The Jewish church was much more ordered, thoughtful and disciplined when compared to the Gentile church in Corinth which was in an absolute mess. They had to learn the standards of God from scratch, but in order to do that they needed an example, a model they

could imitate; and that model was the Apostle Paul.

There was another difference between Jewish and Gentile believers...while Gentiles knew Jesus as their Saviour and God, Jewish believers also knew Him as their Rabbi. But what does that mean in practical terms? To follow your Rabbi meant you were obliged to memorise His words and live according to His Halakhah or His interpretation of how God's Word teaches us to live.

This is really important because it demonstrates to us that we are not the ones who determine what the Scripture means, He is the One who teaches what His Word means. Remember, Jesus is the author of Scripture because He is the Word made flesh who lived among us. (*John 1*)

People are always wanting to re-shape Jesus to fit their expectations. For example, a particular denomination ran a competition in the year 2000 called '*Jesus 2000*' because they were searching for a new 'image' of Jesus for the next millennium. The prize-winning painting was called '*The Jesus of the People*' and it was of a dark-skinned, thick-lipped, slightly feminine looking man and nothing about Him was even slightly Jewish.

If you study the Bible with other people, please be very careful about taking turns in sharing what you think a portion of Scripture means to you. Scripture means precisely what God intended it to mean when He revealed it. That means that we don't get to say what the Bible means...we're to study it so that we find out what it was originally intended to mean, and then we apply it to our own lives so we can live according to it.

But what does it mean to be a disciple?

Most of the church has been greatly influenced by the Greek mindset, which predominantly interprets Scripture spiritually or philosophically and analytically. From these positions, you can make Scripture mean anything you want. The Hebrew mindset is predominantly physical, practical and literal. That means interpretations of the Bible can be poles apart sometimes.

We predominantly look at spiritual applications of Scripture while the Jew would look at how to live out what the Scripture says practically. So, to be a disciple according to the Hebrew mind, is to practically and physically imitate your Rabbi, to obey Him in all things and even take on his persona and mannerisms. A Greek mindset in the area of learning is to sit in a classroom and absorb knowledge, and at the end of a period of learning, a test is given, you are marked on how much information or knowledge you've remembered, and then you get your score. A Hebrew mindset is one of a teacher and his disciple, his apprentice; the teacher gives the lesson, he provides a demonstration of what he does and then the disciple, the apprentice tries to duplicate his teacher. He keeps doing it until he gets it right. At the end, he knows he has a skill that he can replicate and teach to others.

This Hebrew mindset – which is very practical and literal – is what it means to '*Walk in the Dust of your Rabbi*.'

Part 3 will be published in the December Israel & Christians Today. These studies are based on the book '*Walking In The Dust Of Rabbi Jesus: How The Jewish Words of Jesus Can Change Your Life*' by Lois Tverberg. www.ourrabbiJesus.com

No Truth to the Palestinian Jesus

David Parsons

Vice President & Senior Spokesman | International Christian Embassy Jerusalem | www.icej.org

When Linda Sarsour tweeted recently that Jesus was a Palestinian, some might have thought it was an innocent mistake. But given that this same canard has stirred similar backlashes over recent months thanks to US Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota) and others, chances are Sarsour knew just how mischievous her actions were. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's son, Yair, certainly thought so.

Indeed, there is nothing innocent about the 'Palestinian Jesus.' It has ignoble origins, mean-spirited motivations and fraudulent ends.

The fabrication of a Palestinian Jesus has been a core part of the lexicon of Palestinian nationalism since at least the 1960s, as evidenced by news archive photos of a press conference held by PLO chief Yasser Arafat in Amman in June 1970. Over his shoulder hangs a poster of a gaunt, near-naked Palestinian nailed to a Star of David. The message is clear: the Palestinians are suffering at the hands of the Jews, just like Jesus did.

The Palestinians borrowed this hateful equation from several unseemly sources. First, it draws on classic Christian antisemitic motifs imported from Europe to the Middle East in modern times by church clerics and others. Islam has its own embedded antisemitic slurs, but the first blood libel against the Jews in the region came courtesy of Italian clergymen serving in Damascus in 1840. Even among British Mandate authorities stationed in Jerusalem in the 1930s, it was a commonly heard refrain that "the Jews killed Jesus... and they would do it again."

Nazi propagandists also exported their antisemitic imagery and ideology into the Middle East, both before the war and afterwards, when many received refuge in Cairo and Damascus. Some of the vilest antisemitic Nazi cartoons, especially those utilising the symbol of the cross, have been copied like stencils by Arab cartoonists for decades. The Palestinian Jesus is also modelled on the Nazi fiction of an Aryan Jesus: that the pure, noble Christ could never have sprung from the corrupt, evil Jews, but rather was of Roman or Germanic ancestry.

A third source is the liberation theology that flourished in Latin America in the last century. As Marxist elements started stirring revolutions throughout the region, many local Catholic priests began supporting the cause by portraying Christ as a revolutionary who fought Roman oppression. Although the Vatican would eventually warn that their scriptures were being wrongly used to justify violence against oppressors, the tenets of liberation theology were readily adopted by radical black activists in the US (e.g., Rev. Jeremiah Wright), the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa (Bishop Desmond Tutu), and

by the Palestinian nationalist camp.

Finally, Islamic culture has always had a penchant for openly tampering with the historical figure of Jesus. As Jerusalem Post op-ed editor Seth J. Frantzman rightly noted earlier this week, Islam acknowledges the links between Jesus and the Hebrew patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as the lawgiver Moses, kings David and Solomon, and even the tribes of Israel. But Islam also completely warps his identity in many other ways that are irreconcilable with the Bible, especially the New Testament. For instance, the Jesus of the Koran was born to Mary, but she just happens to also be Miriam, the sister of Moses. He is considered a Muslim prophet, but his claim to be the Son of God is flatly denied. In addition, the Muslim Jesus was never really crucified but ascended to heaven from where he will return one day to eradicate Christianity and proclaim Islam as the true religion.

Thus, we find in the Palestinian Jesus a toxic melding of a Marxist guerrilla and Aryan hero, along with heavy doses of Christian and Islamic anti-Semitism and supersessionism. The result has been a morbid competition among Palestinian leaders and elites as to who can come up with the sharpest quip, the cleverest analogy, the most creative metaphor equating the contemporary Palestinian plight with the sufferings of Christ.

At a news conference at the United Nations in 1983, Arafat called Jesus "the first Palestinian fedayee [militiaman] who carried his sword." When Arafat triumphantly took control of Bethlehem on December 1995, he told a throng gathered in Manger Square that he was there to liberate "the birthplace of our Lord the Messiah... the city of the Palestinian Jesus!" During a visit to the Vatican a few years later, Arafat even greeted Pope John Paul II as "the successor of Peter, the first Palestinian pope."

Arafat's successor, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, has described Jesus as "a Palestinian messenger of love, justice and peace."

Prominent PA official Saeb Erekat has referred to Jesus as the 'first Palestinian shahid [martyr].'

His colleague Jibril Rajoub once exclaimed: "The greatest Palestinian in history since Jesus is Yasser Arafat."

But the real masters at gilding the Palestinian Jesus are certain Palestinian Christians. Even though they should know better, it seems they have lived so long within a dominant Muslim culture that they too find it acceptable to tamper with the historical identity of Jesus.

Anglican priest Naim Ateek, the founder of the Sabeel Palestinian Liberation Theology Center, delivered an Easter message in 2001, lamenting that "It seems to many of us that Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around him... Palestine has become



Linda Sarsour gets backlash for 'Jesus was Palestinian' tweet

one huge Golgotha. The Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily."

Sami Awad, a sponsor of the biannual Christ at the Checkpoint conference, once gave a Christmas message where he likened Israeli troops searching for terrorists in Bethlehem with 'Herod's soldiers' who slaughtered the infants of the town two millennia ago.

But it was Edward Said, the tenured Columbia professor and Arafat speechwriter, who first popularised the Palestinian Jesus and then perfected it in poetic cadence. In his 1988 BBC documentary film *My Beautiful Old House*, the late Said spoke of the Palestinians have to endure "this endless Calvary... this constant crucifixion."

So to be sure, there is nothing innocent about the Palestinian Jesus. It is a vicious double-edged sword in that it: 1) seeks to rob Jesus of his Jewish heritage as part of the Palestinian disinformation campaign to sever the Jewish link to their ancestral homeland, especially in the eyes of the Christian West, and 2) aims to stir up hostility toward the Jewish people by exploiting classic Christian antisemitic motifs, most notably that the collective Jews of Israel are still crucifying the real people of Jesus in the land – the Palestinians.

This falsehood is extra devious in that most Palestinians know the Jewish people are reticent to claim Jesus as one of their own, due to all the Christian atrocities committed against them in his name. Yet if there is one positive coming out of this latest tussle over the Palestinian Jesus, it is that more and more Jews are beginning to reclaim Jesus as a son of Israel.

This modern-day trend started with Jewish scholars such as Martin Buber, who always spoke of Jesus as his "elder brother," and Prof. David Flusser, who viewed him as his favourite "rabbi." Now we can add the son of Israel's prime minister to that list.

Map 8 | Judea & Samaria

A tall mountain range controlling the narrow, low plains of Tel Aviv

The State of Israel has been in control of Judea and Samaria for over 50 years - almost the same time as the British and the Jordanians combined.

Israel's leaving the Gaza Strip led to massive rocket fire on Ashdod and Be'er Sheva.

The mountain range of Judea and Samaria reaches a height of 1,050 meters and dominates Israel's population center from Be'er Sheva and Ashkelon in the South to Netanya and Afula in the North.



Map 9 | A Cross Section

A tall mountain range controlling the narrow, low plains of Tel Aviv

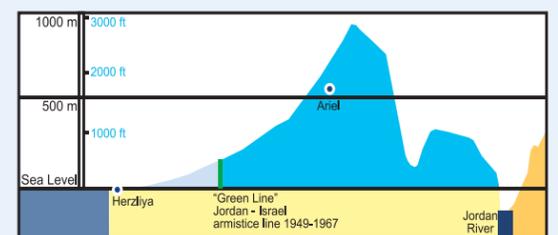
The height of the Coastal Plain from the sea to the Green Line rises from 0 to 100 meters above sea level.

The height of the area of Judea and Samaria is between 100 and 1,050 meters above sea level, and control of the area means full topographic control of the region.

It takes only three minutes to fly from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. Control of the mountain range allows the defense of Israel's eastern border.

Beyond that border lie Jordan, Iran and Iraq, with considerable political and security instability and risk.

The mountain range in Judea and Samaria allows for protection against aerial or other invasion from the east.



The Iranian Schindler

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Christians for Israel Austria

Abdol Hossein Sardari, an Iranian diplomat stationed in Paris, went to extraordinary lengths to protect Iranian Jews from Nazi persecution.

Born in 1914, Sardari was a member of the distinguished Pahlavi family. He left Teheran as a teenager to continue his education in Europe. In 1925 his family in Iran took control of the country in what was known as the start of the Pahlavi dynasty. In 1936 Sardari graduated in Law from Geneva University in Switzerland and joined the diplomatic service. He was assigned to Iran's prestigious Paris embassy in 1940, right at the time Hitler invaded.

France was carved up; the Nazis took over the north of the country, and a pro-Nazi French regime under Marshal Philippe Petain took over the south and established its headquarters in the town of Vichy. Most of the Iranian embassy staff fled to the relative calm of the Vichy sector. While the Ambassador, Sardari's brother in law, returned to Iran, Sardari remained behind as Consul General, heading up a scaled back staff in Paris. In his responsibility as Consul General he was driven by a sense of duty and personal responsibility to assist several hundred Iranian Jews in the city, at risk of Nazi persecution.

Paris was a popular destination for Iranians at that time, and a sizeable community settled there. Historian Fariborz Mokhtari, whose book *'In the Lion's Shadow'* details Sardari's story, states that the Iranian community was successful in the city. "They celebrated Iranian holidays, some of them owned big luxurious houses and stores."

Iran was a useful ally for Germany on the Soviet Union's south-western border. Germany was also Iran's biggest trading partner. Ties deepened after 1933 following Hitler's rise to power. In Hitler's worldview of racial

hierarchy, he cultivated the idea that Iranians, like the Germans, had superior blood. This view became policy when, in 1936, Hitler declared Iran to be an Aryan state. This served to massage the egos of Iranian nationalists. Diplomatic and business exchanges continued throughout the years of Hitler's rule.

Jews had been living in Persia for thousands of years, with the earliest Jewish presence dating to the exile following the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE. Under the new rule of the Pahlavi dynasty, which had ushered in a wave of modernisation and new reforms, the Jewish community saw greater protection under that dynasty. Reza Shah informed Hitler that he considered Iranian Jews to be fully assimilated Iranians and would take offence to them being blacklisted in any way.

Despite his annoyance, Hitler begrudgingly accepted this, at least in the short term while it was expedient for him that Iranian Jews would not be officially classified as enemies of the Reich.

This move would be exploited to maximum effect by Sardari, now the Consul General in Paris, who eyed an opportunity to protect his countrymen living under German occupation.

One of his first steps was to help Jews hide behind the elevated status given to Iranians in general by issuing new passports which made no reference to their religion. Later he would make the case that although the Jews of Iran did follow some of the traditions of Moses, they had lived in Persia so long and become so assimilated into Persian culture, they were no longer racially distinguishable as Jews. He classified them under a new term, 'Jugutus' - a group who followed some Mosaic practices but were not actually racially Jewish.

Backed up with pseudo-scientific research, and playing



Sardari (second from the right in glasses) with the Iranian senior staff as they fled Paris in 1940

on Hitler's machinations towards Iran, as well as wining and dining Nazi officers in the city, Sardari managed to convince several senior Gestapo bureaucrats of his logic. His efforts led to a directive that Iranian Jews in Paris be exempt from wearing the yellow Star of David.

Sardari issued hundreds of passports and forms of documentation for Iranian Jews who turned to him for help. He also helped Jews who weren't of Iranian descent. After the war, Sardari had to return to Teheran where he faced disciplinary action for issuing unwarranted Iranian passports. It took him ten years to clear his name, after which he retired from diplomatic service and moved to London where he had family. He died in 1981.

Solomon's Temple Explained?

■ Israel Today

A team of marine biologists from Northeastern University's Ocean Genome Legacy Center described a newly-discovered freshwater shipworm, measuring 10 centimeters, found in the Abatan River in the Philippines.

The remarkable distinction of this shipworm from all others is its ability to feed on carbonate limestone, a kind of soft rock. Other shipworms feed on wood. This makes it the only species of worm capable of burrowing into and ingesting rock.

That is quite an amazing discovery, and it immediately brings to mind the mythical 'Shamir worm' mentioned in ancient Jewish sources. The Shamir is believed to have gone extinct following the destruction of the First Temple, an event that religious Jews believe dramatically

altered the entire world as it was known until that time.

One Jewish source says the following on this worm: "The Shamir is a creature about the size of a grain of barley, created during the six days of Creation. No hard substance can withstand it. How is it kept? They wrap it in tufts of wool and place it in a lead tube full of barley bran."

It's a surprisingly detailed description of how to keep these worms content and prevent them from cutting right through their containers. It's as if the author is saying, "Dear reader, we know you will find this hard to believe, but trust us. We know what we are talking about."

Clearly, expertise had been developed in the keeping and use of these creatures. One of the ancient uses for the

Shamir worms, it is said, was the cutting of the stones for Solomon's Temple. This, according to the sages, is the explanation for the otherwise inexplicable description of the cutting of the Temple's stones found in *1 Kings 6:7*, which reads: "When the house was built, it was with stone prepared at the quarry, so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house while it was being built."

To avoid the use of iron tools even at the quarry, the sages say that "with the Shamir, Solomon built the Temple." According to these writings, the stonemasons would mark the rock with a special ink. The Shamir worms would then be guided to begin eating away the rock along these lines, resulting in the rock splitting apart, "like a fig that splits open in summer and nothing at all is lost."

Biblical Names

By Kees de Vreugd

Jacob

Jacob, in Hebrew: *Ya`aqov*, is the third progenitor of the people of Israel. Sometimes, the prophets use the name Jacob to indicate the people of Israel (e.g. *Isaiah 43:1*). In the New Testament, the name also appears many times. We know the disciple James, and James, the brother of the Lord, one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

In *Genesis 25:26*, we read an explanation of the name Jacob: "Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name

was called Jacob." The Hebrew word for heel is *`aqev*, which we also can hear in *Ya`aqov*. It could be translated as "he grasps the heel".

Jacob did not yield an inch. "In the womb, he took his brother by the heel" (*Hosea 12:4*). Did he try to supplant his brother? That is what Esau was convinced of: "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times?" (*Genesis 27:36*) Esau uses the Hebrew verb *`aqav*, which means to follow, but also to supplant, and finally to deceive. The verb appears only three times in the Old Testament. Which

meaning applies? Jacob was at Esau's heels. Maybe Esau felt deceived by him: "Is he not rightly named 'He deceives?'" For a name explains somebody's character. Was that feeling justified? When Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew, Jacob's intention was abundantly clear. He may have taken Esau by the heel, but he did not lead him up the garden path. Esau was already there.

True, the second time, Esau was not there. As soon as he had left, Jacob stepped into his place to receive the blessing from Isaac. Jacob supplanted

Esau. So it had been from their childhood and on. "The babies jostled each other within her" (*Genesis 25:22 NIV*) when mother Rebecca was pregnant with the twins.

Jacob stands for the rivalry between the brothers. The younger one rises above, the older one. The older shall serve the younger. Maybe that is what Hosea means when he speaks of Jacob in the womb and his maturity. As an (unborn) baby, he supplanted his brother, and as a mature man, he was a prince before God. Jacob, who supplants his brother, grows to be Israel, Prince of God.

Short News

Flying Car



It is no joke, there really is an Israeli company, NFT Inc., that has revealed a design for a flying car. The flying car is meant to be an alternative to the helicopter that is used by wealthy businessmen to avoid the busy car traffic. After a short flight – maximum 550 kilometres at a speed of 160 to 240 kilometres per hour – you can land, fold in the wings, and continue driving with your car. The price tag is somewhere between 200 and 300 thousand USD. | Photo: newatlas.com

Man Finds 4,500-year-old treasure

An electrician in the Israeli Arab village of Arraba found a prehistoric copper dagger blade and storage artefacts while walking down a dirt road on his way to a customer's home. As he leaned against the mountain ridge, the rock crumbled, exposing ancient-looking storage jars and pouring vessels as well as a copper dagger blade previously attached to a wooden handle with nails.

Israeli Technology Eases Lake Chad Crisis

An Israeli invention that pulls water from air will be deployed in Lake Chad, Nigeria to ease the freshwater crisis. Lake Chad is the main source of drinking water for millions of people in Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria. The Watergen atmospheric water generator extracts water from the air and purifies it. The portable unit needs only a source of power (solar, diesel or electric) and at least 30% humidity in the ambient air – not a problem in the hot, humid Chad Basin.

3D Printing Gives Israelis New Hands



Israeli organisation Haifa 3D utilises cheap and cheerful technology to make 'superhero' bionic hands for adults and children. Superman, Spiderman, Hello Kitty or FC Barcelona? The option to customise and create colourful hands is just one of the advantages of using 3D printing technologies. Another is that the simple process results in a mechanical arm made of plastic. | Photo: Israel21c.org

Infamous Body of Water



Sea of Galilee. | Photo: flickr

■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

It is not the biggest in the world - though it has impressive dimensions.

It is not the most scenic - though it is picturesque and moving.

The number of fish it contains cannot rival that of many other bodies of water, yet its fish are world-famous.

Despite all this, it is the most famous body of water in the world.

Though it is a lake, we call it the 'Sea of Galilee.'

A Bible tour of the holy land is not complete without a visit to this majestic, natural tribute to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

While called 'Sea of Galilee' five times in the New Testament (*Matthew 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; 7:31; John 6:31*), it is also known as 'Sea of Chinnereth' (*Numbers 34:11*); Sea of Chinneroth (*Joshua 12:3*), and Sea of Tiberias (*John 21:1*). Its Hebrew name is *Kinneret*, derived from the Hebrew word '*kinnor*' which means 'harp.' Look at the lake on a map, and you'll understand why.

Its dimensions? The Sea of Galilee is 21 kilometres (13 miles long), 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) wide, 50 metres (164 feet) deep, 51 kilometres (32 miles) around the shore, 166 square kilometres surface (64 square miles) and 224 meters (734 feet) below sea level. Its fish content includes catfish and tilapia.

While these dimensions may not impress compared to North America's Great Lakes or Siberia's Lake Baikal, the fact is its a fish-filled, freshwater lake in the arid Middle East - indeed, the only one. That alone makes the Sea of Galilee special.

And there is more. The reason this lake is the most famous in the world, drawing hundreds of thousands of Christian pilgrims year-after-year, is because it was the stage for Jesus Christ's ministry,

particularly the North and North-Western shore. Though born in Bethlehem of Judea, Jesus was raised a Galilean in Nazareth. After commencing His ministry, He was rejected by the people of Nazareth and moved His headquarters to Capernaum on the northern shore of the lake. This move was a fulfilment of prophecy (*Matthew 4:12-17*).

In Jesus' day, there were up to seven cities on or near the lake, many with a population of 15,000 or more. These included Tiberias, Magdala, Gennesaret, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Hippos. Despite its long coastline, Jesus basically ministered in the NW shoreline of the lake, from Magdala to Bethsaida.

The ultra-fertile Plain of Gennesaret, between Magdala and the Mount of Beatitudes, would have been very familiar to Him. It is subtropical, meaning, you can grow almost anything on it. This plain also was the location of the great Afro-Eurasian Highway, linking Africa with Asia and Europe. Jesus once visited the Gentile-inhabited, swine-herding, eastern shore of the lake to heal the man filled with a legion of demons. We now call this man the 'Gadarene demoniac.' Despite its proximity, it is possible Jesus **never** visited Tiberias, both because of its founder (Herod Antipas) and its unsavoury reputation and lifestyle.

Consider the myriad of ministry activities that occurred near or on the Sea of Galilee, including:

- *Luke 5:4-9*: Catching a big haul of fish;
- *Matthew 4:18-19*: Disciples are called to follow Christ;
- *Matthew 5:7*: Sermon on the Mount, the most famous message in history;
- *Mark 1:23-28*: The Gadarene demoniac healed.
- *Matthew 8:14-15*: Peter's mother-in-law healed.
- *Matthew 11:20-24*: Cities of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida

rebuked.

- *Mark 4:35-36*: The Gadarene voyage;
- *Luke 8:23-25*: The stilling of the storm on the Lake;
- *Mark 5:1-20*: Gadarene demoniac healed;
- *Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:11-17; John 6:1-14*: The feeding of the 5,000 (the only miracle of Jesus mentioned in all four gospels).
- *Mark 6:45-52*: Jesus walks on water;
- *Matthew 15:32-38*: Feeding of the 4,000;
- *Mark 8:22-26*: Blind man healed at Bethsaida.

Even though twenty centuries have passed since the earthly ministry of Christ, a visit to the lake makes it feel as if time has stood still: the glittering water, the mauve hills, the serene atmosphere, the strangely familiar surroundings, all lend themselves to a moving experience as you recall these Biblical events on-site.

Finally, there is a spiritual lesson to be learned. The Sea of Galilee is fed by the Jordan River which sluggishly flows through the Great Rift Valley. One hundred kilometres to the south is a bigger but vastly different lake. In the southern lake, there are no fish, no freshwater, no thriving communities, no sound of birds singing or children playing, no grand holiday homes.

Here is the puzzle: both lakes are in the same country, same Great Rift Valley, and fed by the same Jordan River. So how can they be so different?

The answer is disarmingly simple: for every drop of the Jordan that flows into the Sea of Galilee, another drop flows out. Yet for the other lake, for every drop of the Jordan it receives, it keeps. That's why it is called Dead.

Consider this great paradox between the two lakes and then ask yourself. Which kind of person am I? One like the Dead Sea? Or like the Sea of Galilee? Follow the latter and live.



Sea of Galilee. | Photo: flickr

Olga and the Children of Belaya Tserkov

■ Anemone Rüger

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

"Today is a very important day, maybe the most important day in my life," said Natella Andrushenko, director of the Jewish School in Belaya Tserkov just south of Kiev on 27 August after the solemn dedication of a memorial to the first children murdered in the Holocaust on Ukrainian soil in the heart of the city.

Natella had been rallying up support for the memorial for years. "For a long time, I made a big detour around this topic," she said. "It's not popular, and it was too difficult for me - many of my relatives are lying in the mass graves around here. But the children gave me no rest. It was as if their blood was still crying out."

Merely weeks after the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the Einsatzgruppen of the SS started murdering the Jewish population of her town, once home to more than 20,000 Jewish residents. After the raid, 90 young children were left without relatives, kept without life support for two days in a locked building. Against the protest of the Wehrmacht leadership, the local SS squads had the children executed by local police officers.

In the summer of 2018, Koen Carlier, director of Christians for Israel - Ukraine, and Johannes Zink, pastor of a non-denominational church in Heidelberg, Germany, participated in a modest groundbreaking ceremony for a memorial to these children not far from where they had been held. Now, one year later, Johannes brought a group from his church and a significant financial contribution for the opening of the memorial, which was attended by many officials including the chief rabbis of Ukraine and the Netherlands, a representative of the Israeli ambassador, the regional governor and the local mayor, as well as survivors and witnesses.

"I am here to ask you for forgiveness for the pain, the suffering and the death our fathers and grandfathers brought to your city," Johannes said as he was handed the microphone, kneeling before an open-air audience of some 500. "We want you to know that today we choose to stand with you, God's chosen people..."

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel," Roger van Oordt, director of Christians for Israel - Netherlands declared to the audience from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

Indeed, one week later Dasha, a gifted student of the Jewish School and daughter of our contact person Tanya, joined a group of excited Jewish kids at Kiev airport on their way to start a new life in Israel as part of the Na'aleh



Olga, pictured with Anemone Rüger, is a Holocaust survivor from a village near Belaya Tserkov. She was saved by a Ukrainian lady but still struggles for survival today.

youth aliyah programme. She followed her aunt's family and her grandparents, who made aliyah last year; her mother still runs the Jewish Agency office in Belaya Tserkov and helps Christians for Israel find, comfort and support Holocaust survivors and needy Jewish seniors in her city.

On our route visiting needy babushky (grandmas) with food parcels in the surrounding villages, our team also knocked on the door of Olga's tiny hut. We noted paint peeling off the walls as our eyes got used to the dim light inside the main room used as both bedroom and living room. The electricity had recently been cut off as she had not been able to pay her bills, Olga explained. She helped herself with an oil lamp that would sell well in a Western antique store. Wrapped in a headscarf, her face radiated a kindness that seemed to contrast the stark reality around her. As I held her hand asking about her family, Olga began to cry. "Mom gave me away," she said in tears. "I was born in Kiev. Then they chased us to Babi Yar - mom, dad, my brother and me. At the last moment, mom was able to hand me to her friend Galya. Then they kept going. They were all shot. My Ukrainian mother brought me up; she saved my life."

We stood there in shock; our tears mingling with hers. How could it be that we found such a gem in such dirt after so many years? And yet we found her, 78 years after Babi Yar and Belaya Tserkov.

"People may think, why bother, why invest in these people so late in their lives," said Tanya, our local project coordinator. "But you are like a ray of sunshine, bringing hope back to their lives. Through your love, through your

practical support, these survivors experience being important to someone, even someone from a different country, and so they can go from this world in peace and dignity."

Please help us to bring hope back into the lives of the survivors of the Holocaust by donating for food parcels. A food parcel costs NZ \$17.

News from Bethlehem



Greetings to you from the City of David, Bethlehem, the birthplace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

We hope and pray that this letter will find you well. We so appreciate your efforts to make the family camps project possible, and we thank the Lord for placing in on your heart. We thank the Lord for the results.

One hundred eighty people joined in the family camps with their children. The families enjoyed the programme a lot, and they were very happy, thankful and satisfied together with their children!

During our time together, we tried to help them both spiritually and physically as the Lord leads us to do! There was time for Bible study, singing, preaching, games for the children and a special programme for the ladies. We thank the Lord for the twelve people who raised their hands to trust the Lord for salvation, and for the ones who participated in the Bible studies!

The brothers and sisters that went with us had a lovely and blessed time! You could see the joyful and radiant faces, and feel what this time of rest did in their lives! Thank you again for your support, and may the Lord bless you for making this possible! May the Lord bless your generosity, kindness and sacrifice to do His will!

In Christ,
Elvira & Naim Khoury
First Baptist Church Bethlehem



Despite massive protests preceding the event, some 500 locals and officials gathered in Belaya Tserkov on 27 August for the dedication of a memorial to the 90 first children who were murdered in the Holocaust on Ukrainian soil.

'Among them will be the Blind'

Carmen Ullersma
Aliyah Fieldworker Ukraine

We met Alexander and Valentina Fuhrman through the Rabbi of Mariupol in Eastern Ukraine. The rabbi told us that Alexander and Valentina had fled Donetsk and rented a small room close to the synagogue. Every day Alexander faithfully came to the synagogue for prayer before the couple left for Israel.

In August, Alexander and Valentina went to Haifa, where their daughter lives. Alina (another Aliyah fieldworker) and I visited the couple in Mariupol before they made Aliyah. They lived in a small, dilapidated room. The sparse furnishings were not their own, but belonged to the landlord.

History of Mother Nina

Alexander was born in December 1952 in Donetsk, the city that now lies in the separatist area. Alexander never knew his father and did not know where he was. His mother Nina was a Jewish woman. She was 14 years old when the war began. During the war, Nina and her whole family were loaded into trucks. They were taken from Donetsk to be killed in another place. Nina managed to jump out of the truck. Eventually she ended up in a village where local



Valentina and Alexander Fuhrman

care of Alexander. She took him to a boarding school, but every weekend she picked him up. Alexander has good

only see silhouettes. Alexander and Valentina have two daughters. One daughter lives in Belarus, the other in Haifa, Israel. To be with the children, Alexander and Valentina decided to go to Israel as well. This process happens often in Ukraine: first the children go, and then the parents follow. Their daughter invited them to come and live with her in Haifa for the first period. She is an accountant and is busy learning Hebrew. She is delighted with her life in Israel. The other daughter is now also considering going to Israel.

See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labour; a great throng will return. Jeremiah 31:8

people hid her. After the war she discovered that her whole family had been killed. She was the only survivor.

Alexander was two years old when his mother remarried. His mother started working as a tram driver. Because she had to work and had no family to help, she could not take

memories of his mother and stepfather. Nina passed away two years ago.

Close to our Children

Alexander became visually handicapped because of an accident and also arthritis. He is practically blind and can

It costs NZ \$300 to help a Jewish from Ukraine to Israel. Any amount is welcome; please fill out the coupon to participate in this fulfilment of Biblical prophecy.

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL NZ MINISTRY	DONATION	TEACHING RESOURCES	QTY	PRICE
<input type="checkbox"/> My donation for ministry costs, print & post	\$.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Messiah (Book) by Edjan Westerman Limited Stock	\$82.00
SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS		<input type="checkbox"/> Why Israel? (Trilogy Book Set) Christmas Special - Half Price	\$30.00
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N.B. Donation statements are generated annually at the end of the financial year. Christians for Israel NZ does not currently qualify for charitable status. However, we are reviewing our application this year.