

ISRAEL

& Christians Today

NEW ZEALAND

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Israeli Knesset: Trump inauguration a 'miracle'



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Jerusalem - "An Immovable Rock for all Nations" (Zechariah 12:3)

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor & Executive Director, Christians for Israel International



When speaking about the events leading to His return, Jesus taught that "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

No doubt He was referring to many passages in the Hebrew Tenach, in which Jerusalem is described as the city to which the Messiah will come, and from which the word of the Lord will go forth into the nations, and peace will cover the whole earth (see eg. *Isaiah 2*).

Are these words being fulfilled before our very eyes? In recent months, we have seen a series of decisions taken by many nations within the UN to disconnect the Jewish people from the old city of Jerusalem. There is no other topic that incites international political interest as much as the status of Jerusalem. Judging by the number of resolutions passed by UN institutions, removing the Jews from the city of Jerusalem is even more important than resolving the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

First there was the resolution passed in October 2016 by the UNESCO Executive Board denying the deep historical and religious connection between the Jewish people and the Temple Mount, and condemning what it sees as Israel's unjustified interference in the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and its failure to allow Jordan complete control of the Temple Mount under Jordanian "Awqaf". This resolution was submitted

by Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and Sudan (none of them well-known for friendly relations with Israel), and adopted by 24 states (with 6 votes against and 26 abstentions).

This was followed on 23 December 2016 by UN Security Council Resolution 2334, adopted by fourteen of the fifteen UNSC states (USA abstained), in which the Council declared that Israel's establishment of settlements in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had "no legal validity", constituting "a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the vision of two States living side-by-side in peace and security, within internationally recognized borders".

Finally, on 15 January 2017, just days before the Trump Administration was installed, about 70 nations met in Paris to discuss the stalled peace process. The "joint declaration" signed by many of those states (UK and Australia being notable exceptions) again reflected the nations' frustration that Israel continues to claim jurisdiction over Jerusalem. It reveals an almost religious determination to create a State of Palestine with its capital in the old city of Jerusalem.

The nations of the world simply have no idea what to do about Jerusalem, which has indeed become "a cup that sends all surrounding peoples reeling" (*Zechariah 12:2*). Ever since Israel took control of the eastern part of the city in June 1967, as well as all of the "West Bank", they have been angry and incensed by Israel's refusal to allow the nations to govern the city. When Israel passed the Jerusalem Basic Law in 1980, declaring that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel", all other states moved their embassies from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. Since then, each year the UN General Assembly has passed resolutions condemning Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and those Israeli's who have

gone to live in these territories. The nations grasp at "international law" to justify their anger, and provide a tool for them to express their objections.

All of this is in direct contrast to the Mandate for Palestine, that was established by the Allied Powers in 1920 and approved by the League of Nations in 1922. This Mandate adopted fully the British Cabinet's famous "Balfour Declaration", which envisaged "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The fascinating thing about the Mandate for Palestine is that it not only envisaged the return of the Jewish people to the land, it positively required Great Britain to allow the Jewish people to settle in the old city of Jerusalem and all of Judea and Samaria (known today as the "West Bank"). This is reflected in Article 6 of the Mandate for Palestine:

"The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes."

Since the early 1970's, the Arab nations, with support of various blocks of nations at different times, have used the UN institutions to completely undermine the effect of the Mandate for Palestine. And they have used international law to do so. Two arguments are normally made to justify claims that Israel's control over Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria is "illegal".

Both are disputable. The first is that Israel has "transferred" its own population into the territories which it occupied during the Six Day war in 1967, in breach of article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention. But the Fourth Geneva Convention probably does not apply to the West Bank as a matter of law. Even if it does, it does not make occupation illegal. It simply regulates the conduct of the "occupier", and protects the rights of those living in the occupied territory, pending the conclusion of a peace treaty. It certainly does not prohibit Jews from voluntarily moving to live in the West Bank.

Second, it is argued that the "settlements" are somehow obstructing the creation of a Palestinian state. This too is a specious argument, for at least two reasons. First, the Palestinians may well have a right to self-determination, but they do not have an automatic "right to statehood". Second, the mere presence of Jews in Jerusalem or Ariel can hardly prevent the creation of a Palestinian state – any more than Arabs living in Jaffa prevents the existence of the state of Israel.

But this conflict is about much more than international law. One senses there is a deep spiritual conflict between Israel and the nations concerning Jerusalem, that goes much deeper than matters of law or politics. At the end of the day, it is a controversy between the nations and the God of Israel, who is preparing all things for the coming of His Messiah, and the establishment of Jerusalem as the political and ecclesiastical capital of the world. The nations have a choice – either to "step aside" and allow God to deal with the Jewish people in His way, or to attempt to frustrate His plans.

Our task as Christians is to make our nations aware of the consequences of their choice, and to intercede before the throne of God on behalf of the Jewish people.

Before it is too late.

Emergency Aid Ukraine

By Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel Ukraine

Due to the extreme and prolonged cold in Ukraine, poor Jewish families, in particular, are enduring difficult times. For this reason, Christians for Israel is organizing additional emergency aid in order to raise funds for extra food parcels.

Because of the ongoing civil unrest and the violence of the last few years, life is very difficult for Ukrainian people. The local currency has dramatically dropped in value due to the economic downturn. Because of this, people living on benefits

or small pensions can barely make ends meet. The choices they have to make are heartbreaking. Will I buy a meal or medicine? Do I pay for food or for rent? Will I feed my children or will I turn on the heat? The harsh winter months make this even more burdensome.

The food parcels are regularly distributed among Holocaust survivors, poor families, Jewish refugees, children and the sick. A food parcel is more than a bag of food. It's a sign of your friendship and support,

a testimony to our Jewish brothers and sisters that they are not alone.

Will You help?

The cost of one food parcel is 10 euros or US \$11. For this amount we buy wholesale products. The parcels are packed by volunteers and distributed throughout Ukraine. Will you help with one or more food parcels? Your support is desperately needed. Please also pray:

- Pray especially for survivors of the Holocaust. Pray that they know we pray

for them and remember them.

- Pray for protection of Koen and his team who visit the Jewish families, who travel long distances or poor roads.
- Pray for safety for the Jews in Ukraine. Especially for those living in the war-torn east of the country.
- Please pray for this emergency aid. Pray that many Jewish families and elderly will be helped and encouraged by this.
- Be thankful that we as Christians may feel called to support the Jewish people!

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Israel Welcomes President Trump with Open Arms

Sourced from Breaking Israel News

Israeli and American-Jewish leaders congratulated President Donald Trump on his swearing-in, as the new Republican commander-in-chief promised an "America First" agenda in his inaugural speech.

"Congrats to my friend President Trump," Netanyahu wrote on Twitter. "Look forward to working closely with you to make the alliance between Israel and the United States of America stronger than ever."

Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon also warmly welcomed Trump, saying, "A true friend of Israel will enter the White House today. Thank you President Trump for your unequivocal support, we look forward to welcoming you to our capital of Jerusalem."

"After the shameful resolution that was adopted by the Security Council, Israel looks forward to strengthening our most important alliance and leading together towards a new era at the UN," Danon said, referring to December's Resolution 2334, which condemned Israel's settlement policy and passed after the Obama administration's refusal to veto the measure.

"From this moment on, it's going to be America first," Trump said. "Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be



made to benefit American workers and American families."

Following Trump's address, Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center delivered a benediction for the incoming administration. "Eternal God, bless President Donald J. Trump and America, our great nation," Hier said. "Dispense justice for the needy and the orphan, for they have no one but their fellow citizens. A nation's wealth is measured by its values and not its vaults."

Leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, a coordinating body on international and national concerns for 52 national Jewish groups, said they "look forward to working with President Trump and his

administration to deepen the historic special relationship between the US and Israel."

Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) leaders said they "appreciate our new president's determination to eliminate the scourge of radical Islam, and his quote of one of our favorite lines from *Psalm 133*, often sung by the Jewish people, about dwelling together in unity." Trump said in his speech, "We will shine for everyone to follow. We will eradicate radical Islamic terrorism from the face of the earth. When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice. The Bible tells us, 'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity.'"

Short News

David Friedman as US Ambassador Concerning



The Jewish Telegraphic Agency Religious Action Center has joined the list of liberal Jewish groups objecting to President Donald Trump's nomination of David Friedman as US ambassador to Israel. They questioned whether Friedman has "the temperament or judgment to represent the United States in a sensitive diplomatic position." Friedman has funded construction in settlements and rejects the two-state solution.

UN Envoy: 'A True Friend Will Enter White House'

UN's ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon congratulated US President Donald Trump on his inauguration and called him 'a true friend of Israel'.

"Thank you President Trump for your unequivocal support, we look forward to welcoming you to our capital of Jerusalem," he said. "After the shameful resolution that was adopted by the Security Council, Israel looks forward to strengthening our most important alliance and leading together towards a new era at the UN."

Trump: Promise to Move US Embassy to Jerusalem



At his pre-inaugural Chairman's Global Dinner in Washington, US President Donald Trump reiterated his commitment to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"Of course I remember what I said about Jerusalem," Trump said. "You know that I am not a person who breaks promises," he added.

Trump has decided to stick with his plan to move the embassy in the face of warnings from Palestinian officials against it, including Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, who said it was crossing "a red line", as well as outgoing US Secretary of State John Kerry, who claimed it would lead to a regional explosion. At the dinner, where many foreign diplomats were introduced to Trump, he expressed his eagerness to build a strong relationship with Israel. "I already cannot wait to begin working with Israel," Trump stated.

Franklin Graham at Inauguration: 'Rain is a Sign of God's Blessing'

Courtesy of Israel Today

The Reverend Franklin Graham reminded President Donald Trump that throughout the Bible the presence of rain was a sign of God's blessing.

On Friday 20 January, Trump was sworn in as president at the traditional National Mall ceremony. The weather was cloudy and eventually resulted in rainfall as Trump spoke.

Rev. Graham, one of the clergy present who prayed for the new president, explained in his remarks that the weather might be a sign of blessing.

"Mr. President, in the Bible, rain is a sign of God's blessing. And it started to rain, Mr. President, when you came to the platform," said Graham. "And it's my prayer that God will bless you, your family, your administration, and may He bless America."

Following his comment on the rain, Graham proceeded to read first from

1 Timothy 2:1-6, which exhorts believers to pray for their leadership.

He then concluded with *1 Timothy 1:17*, which reads "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

On his official Facebook page, Graham posted a photo including a caption of the Bible verses he quoted from, noting that it was "an honor to read the Word of God at today's Inauguration for President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence."

"Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, Senator Roy Blunt said in his remarks that today is a celebration of democracy. Today is also a celebration of God's blessing and mercy on the United States of America," wrote Graham.

"We need to pray for our leaders and seek His wisdom, His direction, and His favor as individuals and as a nation."

Graham was one of three clergy who gave benediction remarks. The other two were Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center; and Bishop Wayne T. Jackson of Great Faith Ministries International of Detroit, Michigan.

"We're not enemies, we are brothers and sisters. We're not adversaries, but we're allies. We're not foes, but we're friends. Let us be healed by the power of Your love and united by the bond of Your Spirit," prayed Bishop Jackson.

"Today we pray for our 45th president, the vice president, and their families. Given them the wisdom to guide this great nation, the strength to protect it, and the hands to heal it."

Israel Under Fire Again

By Graeme Lee, Publisher

The NZ Foreign Affairs Minister Murray McCully, thinks that the only option that he has is "to push for peace". So on 23 December 2016 he promoted the passage of Resolution 2334 in the United Nations Security Council, just days before New Zealand's two-year seat in the Council expired. His backers were the anti-Israel nations of Malaysia, Yemen and Libya.

The resolution goes well beyond the West Bank Settlement issue. It says the east section of the Old City should be fully occupied by Palestinians and includes the Holy Sepulchre and other areas.

It should be noted that the resolution was originally planned by Egypt but under pressure from various quarters it withdrew. However Obama from the US seems deliberately to favour abstention instead of vetoing the resolution. He has done this in the past so why is he inconsistent now?

The Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, has properly accosted Mr McCully in a phone call to New Zealand. He said the UN resolution was a "declaration of war". He has called the

resolution a shameful anti-Israel action! PM Netanyahu has taken further action to withdraw the Israeli Ambassador from New Zealand Dr Yitzhak Gerber. He has also banned the NZ Ambassador to Israel and warned of further sanctions in the future!

Another event was the last speech of the outgoing US Secretary of State John Kerry. He angered Israel in his anti-Semitic speech. Kerry, it should be noted, had four years to promote the two state solution of Israel and failed to do so.

A further contributor was the Education Minister of Israel Natfli Bennett, who said that Israel had done nothing wrong! The days of treating the 450,000 Jewish settlers as "second class" citizens was over.

The Jewish community and all the Israel support groups in New Zealand have sent a letter to the new Prime Minister of NZ the Right Honourable Bill English. The letter of some eight clauses details the error of McCully's actions. This was sent 28 December 2016.

The signatories were:

- Bridges for Peace NZ
- Celebrate Messiah NZ
- Christians for Israel NZ
- Christian Friends of Israel NZ
- Ebenezer Emergency Fund Trust NZ
- International Christian Embassy



- Jerusalem NZ
- Israel Focus Group Greenlane, NZ
 - NZ Friends of Israel
 - Prayer for Israel NZ
 - Praying for Israel Groups Tauranga, NZ
 - Shadows of Shoah
 - Auckland Hebrew Congregation
 - Australasian Union of Jewish Students
 - Beth Shalom Progressive Congregation
 - B'nai B'rith International
 - Council of Christians & Jews Auckland
 - The Jewish Federation of NZ
 - The NZ Jewish Council

The Jewish organisation B'nai B'rith Auckland published an article in the NZ Herald on 7 January 2017. It said they were ashamed that our Minister of

Foreign Affairs has used the final moments of his tenure to push forward a clearly one sided, inequitable and destructive resolution. They further said the resolution is unbalanced and places the settlements as the primary impediment to peace, while paying lip service to the refusal of Palestinians to negotiate a peace agreement. Other clauses were also included.

It was reported that the incoming President of USA Donald Trump, has said he will reverse the decision when he takes office on 20 January 2017.

Many believe the resolution first put forward by Egypt was withdrawn after pressure by the President Elect.

Uncovering Jewish History

Courtesy of Aish.com

Cutting edge technology is unearthing fascinating new evidence regarding the Jews of Vilna.

In recent years, Israeli archeologists have been uncovering secrets from the past, namely synagogues and other Jewish buildings in Vilnius, Lithuania, which were destroyed during World War Two by the Nazis, and an escape tunnel used by Lithuanian Jews during the Holocaust. In the process, these scientists have reminded the world that the history of Vilnius is largely the history of its Jews.

Before World War Two, Vilnius (*also known as Vilna*) was home to one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe. 100,000 Jews called the city home, nearly half the population, including some of the most famous rabbis of the modern era.

Known as the "Jerusalem of Lithuania", Vilnius was home to 105 synagogues and six daily Jewish newspapers. At the heart of this bustling Jewish life was the Great Synagogue of Vilnius, built in a grand 17th Century lavish Renaissance-Baroque style. In the middle was a huge hall used to study Torah and host communal events. Around this building were 12 synagogues, Jewish schools, mikvahs, the Jewish community council building, the famous Strashun Library, and kosher vendors.

The Nazis ransacked and burned the Great Synagogue and its surrounding buildings in June 1941. German soldiers and local collaborators killed 95% of Lithuania's Jews.

In 1944, when the Soviet Army captured Vilnius, a modern school was built atop the Great Synagogue's ashes. "My parents told me that my school was on top of the synagogue but no one knew where," explained Amit Belaite, a member of the European Union of Jewish Students. For decades, the spot where the Great Synagogue and its surrounding buildings unknown and unremembered.

In 2015, a team led by Dr. Jon Seligman of the Israel Antiquities Authority and Prof. Richard, Director of the Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford, set out to uncover the site of the synagogue, approaching the site the way they explored archeological ruins. They conducted a Ground Penetrating Radar survey and in July 2015, announced they had located the underground ruins of the buildings.

"We felt tremendous excitement when we located signs of possible remains," Dr. Seligman explained at the time. An archeological dig was quickly planned of the area and started recruiting scientists, archeologists and volunteers from Israel, Lithuania, and Jewish communities around the world.

"The goal is to ensure that the Jewish heritage of Vilnius is understood as an important and inseparable part of the Lithuanian and Jewish heritage. It's important that the site be preserved forever, for the benefit of everyone who arrives there in the future," Drs. Seligman and Freund promised. Nearly two years on,

the researchers have uncovered some ground-breaking new evidence of Jewish history in the region.

At the site of the Great Synagogue, researchers in 2016 unearthed part of the buildings for the first time in decades. Treating the site as an archeological dig, using vast screens to sift earth and uncover artifacts, volunteers from Britain, Canada, Israel, Lithuania, and the United States revealed part of a staircase and underground passageways. As researchers continue to excavate the site, Lithuania's government weighs plans to rebuild and memorialize part of the synagogue.

Having identified underground ruins, the professors decided to use their radar equipment to explore a nearby site – the Ponar Forest (*today known as Paneriai*), where Jews were said to have dug an escape tunnel, using only their bare hands, under the very noses of their Nazi captors. Although 11 surviving Jews insisted that the tunnel in Ponar had saved their lives, over the years many people became skeptical of this fantastic-sounding story, dismissing it as a myth. Without the physical evidence of the tunnel, whose location had long been lost, even some sympathetic people had trouble believing the survivors' account.

In 2004, the entrance to the tunnel had been discovered, but the tunnel itself could not be mapped.

During World War II, 100,000 people, including 70,000 Jews, were shot in the

Ponar forest, throwing their bodies into hastily dug pits. In 1944, hoping to hide evidence of war crimes, the Nazis tried to erase evidence of the massacre. They brought in Jewish prisoners, with their legs in chains, and made them dig up the mass graves, exhume the bodies, and burn them.

One prisoner, Isaac Dogim, was moving decomposing bodies when he recognized the necklace he'd given his wife for their wedding on one of the corpses. He'd uncovered her body and was now tasked with burning her remains. Horrified, Mr. Dogim planned an audacious escape. For 76 nights, Mr. Dogim and his fellow prisoners dug a 112-foot long secret tunnel ten feet underground, leading from the pit they slept in. They used their bare hands and crude tools for the digging. Finally, on the night of 15 April 1944, 40 prisoners filed off the chains around their legs and escaped through the tunnel. The tunnel was narrow, just wide enough for one man at a time. Guards quickly discovered the escape, and shot most of the prisoners, but 11 managed to escape into the surrounding forest.

Using Electrical Resistivity Tomography, a way of examining underground structures used in mineral and oil exploration, Prof. Freund, Dr. Seligman and their team found the tunnel and its exit. "It is a very important discovery, because this is another proof of resistance of those who were about to die."

Israel "Survives" Paris Peace Conference

Sourced from European Coalition for Israel

The organizers of the so-called "Paris Peace Conference", have experienced a partial backlash from this badly timed international summit conference, just days before the inauguration of the new US President and the swearing in of his new administration in Washington.

With no representatives from the new US administration or from the two parties who are directly involved, the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, the conference essentially offered no new concrete proposals on how to restart the stalled peace process in the Middle East.

The French initiative may instead have accelerated a geo-political shift by further alienating the British government from Brussels. British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson intentionally kept away from the Paris conference, but he gave the British representative clear instructions not to sign any statement of its conclusions, thus giving a clear indication of where the loyalty of the British government will lie in the future. Australia also refused to sign the final document. Canada and many EU member states chose to send only second-

ranking officials to the summit instead of their foreign ministers. Newly appointed UN Secretary-General António Guterres also chose not to attend.

The fallout was again reflected just one day after the Paris summit, as the 28 EU Foreign Ministers met in Brussels for a pre-scheduled EU-Council meeting where a luncheon had been devoted to discussing the outcome of the Paris summit. The British Foreign Secretary decided to block the adoption of the Paris summit conclusions by the EU foreign ministers, hence causing further embarrassment for the EU during a week which was intended to demonstrate EU solidarity and unity for the peace process. The British stance was supported by a handful of Eastern European countries.

"The Paris Peace Conference may have failed in its stated objective to re-start the peace process, but it has helped to galvanize grassroots support for Israel around the world", said ECI Founding Director Tomas Sandell in a statement in Stockholm recently, where he was to speak in the national parliament. Sweden currently holds the rotating chair of the UN Security Council.

ECI had been raising awareness of the upcoming conference in Paris through an



active social media campaign already for weeks. Many Christians travelled to Paris to show their support for Israel while many more hosted prayer vigils in churches and rallies around the world.

In the conference conclusions, the participants (except for the UK and Australia) confirmed their support for a two state solution with a call to the two parties directly involved in the peace process to restate their commitment to this solution. They also supported urgent steps in order to reverse the current negative trends on the ground, including continued acts of violence and ongoing settlement activity, and to start meaningful direct negotiations. But the text of the final conclusions was softened after pressure from the outgoing US administration; criticism of Israeli settlements was balanced by the inclusion of a statement of the need to stop (Palestinian) terrorism and incitement.

Short News

Israeli Unemployment Rate Hits 30-Year Low



Israel's unemployment rate has dropped to 4.5%, marking a 30-year low, reported the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). The CBS found that for the first time in Israel's history, unemployment among Israelis aged 25-64 hovers near the 4% mark. Men's jobless rates were set at 3.8%, and among women in this age group unemployment was at 4.1%.

Among Israelis aged 25-64, 85% of men and 75.5% of women are employed. Employment rates among teenagers aged 15-18 remained unchanged, at 61.2%, the report said.

Israel Develops Praised Prostate Cancer Treatment

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, with roughly 40,000 new cases diagnosed in the UK every year. Current treatments, such as radiotherapy and surgery, regularly cause lifelong incontinence and 90% of men struggle with erectile problems. Using lasers and a drug made from deep-sea bacteria, Israeli scientists have now developed a non-surgical method to treat men in the early stages of prostate cancer, drastically improving their chances of completely eliminating the disease without the need to remove the gland. In the treatment, doctors inject a light-sensitive drug derived from deep-sea bacteria into a patient's bloodstream, killing cancer cells without destroying healthy tissue.

How Prophet Joshua 'Stopped the Sun'



Three researchers from Israel believe they have discovered the scientific explanation behind the miraculous Biblical account of the sun standing still for Joshua during battle. Though their solution may not be miraculous, their approach is a symbiotic marriage of science and the Bible. In the study, they suggest the miracle was actually attributable to natural causes – a solar eclipse. In the Book of Joshua, the Israelites go to war against five kings in order to help the Gibeonites, with whom they had signed a pact. While Israel was prevailing in the battle, God sent down stones from heaven to smite the enemy. Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still in order to have time to complete the victory. God answered his prayer.

Seventy Nations

By Rev. Willem J. J. Glashouwer, President Christians for Israel

The Most High has a very clear opinion about the plans of the UN and of the seventy nations that assembled in Paris on Sunday 15 January 2017 to enforce a two-state solution and to dismantle the Jewish settlements so that Jews from this part of the Promised Land can be swept away.

The prophet Joel says in *Joel 3:1-2*: "In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what they did to My inheritance, My people Israel, because they scattered My people among the nations and divided up My land..."

It will lead to a judgment of God over the nations in an unprecedented scale. Unfulfilled prophecies from the Bible speak of several wars that will come to the Middle East. Like e.g. *Isaiah 17:1-2* that speaks of a total destruction of Damascus, the capital of Syria, that you can see on a clear day from the Golan Heights in Israel. Syria and the present war is daily news. But the total destruction of Damascus never took place in history. But that will happen one day, because the Lord says so.

Or *Isaiah 19:16-17* where Egypt trembles for Israel because of what the Lord's Hand will do against Egypt by the land of Judah (Israel). Or *Psalms 83* with in it a first ring

of nations around Israel: "...Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel's name is remembered no more..."[...] "May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. Let them know that You, whose name is the Lord—that You alone are the Most High over all the earth..."

And *Zechariah 12 and 14* in which finally all nations – one could say today: the United Nations – will try to lift that awkward stone called Jerusalem. And what to think of the prophecy in *Ezekiel 35-36:1-7* about Edom, the present day Jordan, that will be destroyed?

Or *Ezekiel 38 and 39* containing a second, wider ring of countries around Israel who suddenly want to wipe Israel off the map. Gog and Magog. With Turkey, the former Soviet Union and Russia in the background? An Islamic holy war, a jihad, against Israel? But the LORD will step into that situation. *Ezekiel 38:18-23* says: "...This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, My hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign Lord... And so I will show My greatness and My holiness, and I will make Myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

"Gog and Magog" are mentioned here. In *Genesis 10* we read how the 70 nations of the world came from the descendants of

Shem, Ham and Japheth - the sons of Noah. Those who are familiar with the numerical values of letters and words in Hebrew – the Hebrew language does not have numbers, but the letters of the alphabet are used to indicate numbers. Which means that every word has a numerical value. It is surprising to discover that the numeric value of Gog and Magog is 70: 3-6-3 and 6-40-3-6-3, which equals 70. The number 70 appears time and again in the Bible and Jewish writings. In addition to the seventy nations, languages and sacrificed oxen during Sukkot, Jacob went to Egypt with seventy souls, Moses appointed seventy elders, King David lived seventy years, and the Babylonian captivity lasted seventy years. According to the Rabbis, God has seventy names and there are seventy aspects to the Torah. And the numeric value of Gog and Magog also equals seventy! It is probably no coincidence that there were 70 nations meeting together in Paris, and it may have a deeper meaning. Is it the beginning of a disastrous development that will eventually drag along the whole world into conflict?

How all of these political developments in the end will come to pass, one thing is absolutely sure: God's Word will be fulfilled. It will lead to the coming of the Messiah of Israel, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ.

Christians for Israel Organises Ground-breaking Meeting in Turin

By Chiara Canciani, Christians for Israel Italy

Our ministry Cristiani per Israele in Italy is growing steadily, thanks to the amazing effort of Chairwoman Edda Fogarollo and her team. Edda speaks regularly at conferences, and teaches holocaust studies at universities in Naples and Calabria.

“Understanding the past in order to build a better Future” was the theme of a ground-breaking meeting held in the synagogue of Turin, Italy, in the latter part of 2016.

Among the speakers at the event were Eng. Franco Segre (Counselor of the Jewish community), Chief Rabbi Ariel Di Porto, Mr. Tullio Levi, Mr. Dan Haezrachy (Israeli Embassy in Italy), Senator Lucio Malan, Harald Eckert from Christians for Israel Germany/International and Edda Fogarollo from Christians for Israel Italy.

A great number of members of the Jewish community gave a warm welcome to the organizers of Christians for Israel Italy. They thanked them for the significant support and work they are doing in Italy for Israel and the Jewish communities. Almost one hundred guests from the local

Evangelical Christian community with some of the leaders and pastors were there. The historical event took place for the first time on the Italian history of relationship between Christians and Jews.

The meeting was birthed from a desire to start from a past, which unfortunately was tainted by centuries of anti-Semitism and persecution against the Jewish people. Christians must repent, to build a future based not only on encyclicals and unheeded promises, but rather on solid acts which would pave way to a new chapter of Jewish-Christians friendship.

Christians for Israel Italy's President, Edda Fogarollo, and Mrs. Ruth Dabby Fiore, from the Turin Jewish community, sent a new message to the city and the nation, that with mutual respect and unity, it is possible to organize such events. We Christians, should strive to destroy the wrong doctrines which built a wall of hate and anti-Semitism during the past millennia. Edda Fogarollo gave a short but deep lecture on Christian Anti-Semitism and called on the pastors and all Christians in Italy to stand against every kind of anti-Semitism.

At the start of the historic event, there was a greeting note sent by the President of the



Jewish community, who was at the time in Israel accompanying the Italian President Sergio Mattarella. The note conveyed the President's appreciation of Christians for Israel Italy's efforts in trying to curb antisemitism and supporting the nation of Israel.

The Chief Rabbi Ariel Di Porto has emphasized the importance and strong union of the Jewish people with Eretz Yisrael. Ambassador Dan has pointed out the common roots of the Jewish community and Christians. He also said, “We can't understand the recent sad resolution the UNESCO adopted regarding the Temple Mount, because both the Jewish Tanach and the Gospels mention the connection of the Jewish people to it.”

A very important testimony was given by Harald Eckert (Christians for Israel Germany) who shared his personal history as a German regarding the Jewish people. He said that what he's now doing in Germany and other countries, is teaching the churches, praying and asking for forgiveness for the past.

Senator Malan, who has been in the front line defending the rights of the State of Israel, expressed his dismay at witnessing how few European Christians stood against the UNSECO resolution. “If a good number of Christians had shown their stand against this resolution, UNESCO wouldn't have kept on voting in this manner.” he said.

The Pastors denounced the foolish cancellation of the Jewish roots by some

sectors and highlighted the importance of rediscovering them. They also testified how travelling to Israel helps both to rediscover their Jewish roots and strengthen the Jewish-Christian unity.

It was very exciting to see our Isreality Youth group, wearing T-shirts, the colours of the Israeli flag. They were affirming that we Christians need to repent for our dealings with the Jewish people and vowed to stand with the Jewish people and State of Israel sustained by the unfailing grace of God.

It was a very emotional moment when Christians for Israel Italy presented its special gift to the community, a rare and original artwork of Venice glass (Kanukiya), hand-made by Mr. Antonio Moretti Sinigalia, a Jewish artist from Venice.

The Jewish community then presented a gift to Edda Fogarollo, an artwork with the form of the Jewish letter, Tsadik (in order to remember the Righteous among the nations), made by Mr. Gabriele Levy, another Jewish artist.

The closing of the event was graced by a concert where the soprano Reut Ventorero, accompanied by pianist Lucrezia Messa, presented a number of beautiful Jewish songs.

The seed for a better future of Jewish-Christian friendship has been sown and our hope is to nurture this seed writing new pages in the history of the nation of Italy.



EXPERIENCE ISRAEL YOUNG ADULTS TOUR 2017

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info@isreality.org | Registration: www.isreality.org/tour2017

ISREALITY IS THE CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR YOUNG ADULTS (18-35 Y.O.)

Netherlands Distribute Tulips as Encouragement

By Christians for Israel International

Christians for Israel Netherlands organized their annual Tulip Tour, as they have done for almost 20 years.

With five members of the team they travelled through almost the whole of Israel in one week. In each place they visited, they left a few boxes with tulip bulbs, a typical Dutch present, as a token of friendship.

Johan van der Ham, member of the team, shares his experiences:

“During the second half of November 2016 we visited several regions. As usual, our team met up in Jerusalem and then headed north. We visited many places in Upper Galilee, the Golan Heights, Shomron, Ashkelon, the Eshkol region, Gedera, Be’er Sheva, Merchavim regional council, the Dutch ambassador in Ramat Gan, the mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat, and the eternal and undivided capital of Eretz Yisrael.”

Showing Love and Friendship

“Every day there were lots of places to visit. We were welcomed by the local residents, they would show us around and give us coffee. Then we would share the reason of our visit, which is, in a nutshell, to encourage the chosen people of the God of Avraham, Yitschak and Ya’akov. We love and follow the same God, read the same Tenach and therefore want to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and bless His people. It really touches their hearts and we can see they are moved by our love and friendship. It’s so important for them, amidst a world of hatred and lies, with a biased UN and a lot of terror threats, to know that there are thousands of Christians that pray every day for their peace and prosperity. Receiving the typical Dutch present of tulips that will

With Mr. Nir Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem



bloom by the end of January, makes them happy. It keeps us in touch as well, because many of them send pictures of the flowers after they bloom.”

Visiting Special Places

“A special place to visit demographically was our visit to Rag’ar, at the border of Israel, Lebanon and Syria. You can’t even find this place on a map. It’s a former Syrian village. After both Lebanon wars and border conflicts, it was split up in two sections, the community decided to be entirely Israeli. This happened in 2006, after the IDF withdrew from Lebanon. This interesting, very well organized village showed us great hospitality!

From a political point of view, it was special to visit the Ofra outpost, the hilltop community of Amona. There’s not a single day that goes by without some political turmoil about this outpost. During the preliminary reading of a new bill, Netanyahu’s coalition was exposed to stormy weather in the Knesset about the Amona topic that has engaged the country for quite some time now.

But we did even more... We got in touch with mayors, kindergartens, kibbutzim, moshavim, regional councils of

Merchavim, as well as regional councils of the Jordan Valley. We got insight into security issues around the Gaza strip, where the daily threat of Hamas terror causes a lot of tension and psychological damage. They have built a resilience centre in the Eshkol region in order to prepare the locals for a terror attack, and to enable them to deal with the ongoing psychological pressure of tunnel attacks.”

Israel and the Jewish People are in our Prayers

“Before leaving the promised land, we saw the large fires. It was horrendous to hear that it was partially the work of arsonists. Due to a drought and a strong easterly wind, the fires were very hard to fight. Thank God, they succeeded.

Although we left the country physically, Israel is in our hearts and minds, and we pray for Israel daily. Above all, the God of Israel never left His country and His people!”

Up until now, the Annual Tulip Tours were led by Henriette Heuvelman. From now on, Johan van der Ham will lead them.

Growing Partnership with Jewish Community in Australia

By Christians for Israel International

Under the inspired leadership of Ian Worby, Christians for Israel Australia is steadily growing.

One of the special aspects of this work is our deepening friendship with the Australian Jewish community. Jacqui Bakker is Christians for Israel Australia’s Public Relations Advocate in Sydney, where the largest Jewish community lives (Australia has one of the largest communities of holocaust survivors in the world outside Israel). Jacqui has thrown herself into the task of nurturing

friendships with the Sydney Jewish community, and building bridges between Jews and Christians in Australia.

Andrew Tucker, Jacqui and Isreality Australia leader Matt Thorn were invited to speak at the annual Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) annual conference in Melbourne before Christmas. “This was an enlightening & invigorating experience for us. We felt truly honoured to be included and have grown from the whole experience. We are very aware that - as unique as this has been for us - so too has it been for the Jewish community to have

Christian organisations, such as Christians for Israel, to be included standing in solidarity with the State of Israel. We are so keen for this support to continue and for other Christian organisations to do the same, though we know it all takes time to network to find like-minded people and to further educate and encourage them for this to occur. In the meantime we would like to find ways we can partner together to strengthen the state of Israel by supporting and encouraging the greater Jewish community in Australia,” said Jacqui.

Short News

Jewish Agency Retrains Immigrants for Careers as Hotel Chefs



Thirty recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union will take part in an eight-month program that includes a completely subsidized culinary training course at Tadmor. Upon completion of the course, all the participants will be placed at jobs within the Fattal hotel chain in Israel.

The program, for immigrants who range in age from 25 to their 40s, embodies the integration and cultural wealth that is so crucial to Israeli society. What makes this program unique is that the participants have a guaranteed job before they arrive in Israel. The program is one of the many under the umbrella of “Project Aliya 2000,” which aims to aid job placement for immigrants to Israel from around the world.

Israel Delivers Emergency Aid to Refugees on Frozen Greek Island

Jewish and Israeli organizations have shipped 1.5 tons of winter supplies to refugees suffering in unexpected snow and sub-zero temperatures on the island of Lesbos, Greece.

Team leader for the relief effort Rabbi Shu Eliovson said Israeli volunteers collected critically needed winter clothing items such as coats, rain jackets, sweaters, trousers, boots, socks, sleeping bags and blankets, all from Israelis, in just five days.

Indigenous Tribe Returns to Israel After 27 Centuries



God said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers, to your native land, and I will be with you.” *Genesis 31:3*

The Zionist miracle is the return of millions of Jews after thousands of years of exile. An amazing part of this miracle is the aliyah of the Bnei Menashe (Children of Manasseh) one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel who were sent into exile by the Assyrian Empire more than 27 centuries ago.

They have lived in northeastern India, along the border with Burma. Throughout their sojourn in exile, the Bnei Menashe continued to practice Judaism and continued to nourish the dream of one day returning to the land of their ancestors, the Land of Israel.

Righteousness by Faith

By Graeme Lee, Christians for Israel NZ

The Apostle Paul was outspoken about Israel. He said in *Romans 9:3*, "Though I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers; those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons, theirs the divine glory; the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all forever praised."

What a list - adoption of sons, divine glory, covenants and even the promises! What a declaration of Israel. He says unequivocally God's relationship with Israel is the root and we are only the grafted branches. We have a Jewish Messiah, Jewish disciples and the Holy Bible - 40 authors over 1500 years.

But some people don't agree. Those who support the replacement or supersessionist theology claim Israel is the modern day church and all the promises and provisions of God are for the church. Israel is the church.

The New Covenant, it was held, belonged to the Church and the Old Covenant, which was seen as having been abolished, belonged to Israel. The Church had

effectively replaced the nation of Israel as far as God's promises were concerned. It was taught (and still is by some) that where the Old Testament speaks of the promises and blessings of God for Israel, 'Israel' should be taken to mean 'the Church'; and where it speaks of judgement and curses, then 'Israel' should be taken to mean 'Israel' - hardly a consistent method of scriptural exegesis! This is what we often hear referred to as 'Replacement Theology'.

Not only is this theological position contrary to the teaching of the Tanakh, but it is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament as well. In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul says the Gentile followers of Yeshua have become 'fellow-citizens' with Israel as far as the covenants are concerned (*Ephesians 3:6*).

But we read in *Genesis 12:1* that God gave Abraham a land which he described and promised He would make a great nation for him. God even struck a special covenant with him.

We read in *Genesis 15:17* the moment when God in the form of a blazing torch, passed between pieces of sacrificial animals and birds. There are many other places in the bible where covenants are detailed.

So to say that God has revoked the covenants and promises and transferred the blessings to the church is wrong. No He hasn't. God is not a liar. God chose Israel to be His people. Because of this He also chose their culture and language.

The Apostle Paul said of himself he was an Israelite, that God has not rejected his people or stumbled to fall beyond recovery - a resounding no!

God's faithfulness towards Israel is the root, and we are wild olive trees, grafted in, for we do not support the root but the root supports us!

So the Apostle Paul in discussing righteousness referred to Moses in *Romans 10:5* as living by faith. He says in the same chapter that the word is near you, it is in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith that we are proclaiming; that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.

So we by faith are saved. But you ask about the purposes of the law - is it opposed? Paul says it was added because of our transgressions. The seed which is Christ had come. "Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God?"

Absolutely not! For if the law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would have come by the law. But the scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe." Paul continues, so the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. In the same way, "Abraham believed God, so God declared him righteous because of his faith." The real children of Abraham, then, are all those who put their faith in God. (*Galatians 3 v.6, 21,22, 24.*)

The church has received grace from God. He requires us to share the same grace - the same mercy to the Jewish people. Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders by birth. You were called the uncircumcised ones by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from God's people. Israel and you did not know the promises that God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you belong to Christ Jesus." *Ephesians 2:12, 13.*

The Children You Do Not See

By Marijke Terlouw, Christians for Israel Netherlands



It's almost dark when I visit Aleh in Jerusalem. On the street it is chaotic with cars, all on their way home. Inside of Aleh, it is also busy, with parents collecting their children.

We take the stairs and get to the floor where the classrooms are located. Every floor has its own purpose: living space, hospital and education. Some of the classes are finished and in the hallways there's a hustle and bustle of people.

I walk into a classroom. The children here do not sit on chairs behind desks, that is impossible. They are in special needs wheelchairs adapted for each person. They can't say 'hello' when you come in, but they definitely notice you.

Apart from the children, there are teachers, parents and volunteers. There are a lot of people, but not too many. They are all needed to give these children the care they need.

All the children at Aleh are severely disabled. The person showing me around tells me, "Most of the children are born like this, but unfortunately there are also accidents that lead to severe disabilities. Intensive care is needed for both groups.

The type of care that these children need is often too much for the parents to do all by themselves. Some of the children come only during the day, but we also have eighty children who live here at Aleh permanently."

While she is telling me this, I realise that these children don't go to the playground, they don't play in the streets, they don't play sports or go to school like every other child. They can't even live at home. You will never run into them. These are the children you do not see.

Children here need constant help with basic things like eating, washing, sitting up and personal hygiene. The challenges that these children face are enormous, like epilepsy, breathing difficulties and severe physical disabilities. Some need an advanced wheelchair; others can only eat through a feeding tube.

Here at Aleh, they look beyond the disability to the child within. By nurturing development and enriching their quality of life, they enable each child to reach their potential.



A SPECIAL GIFT FOR JERUSALEM CELEBRATING REUNIFICATION

On 24 May 2017, Jerusalem celebrates being reunified to one city 50 years ago. It is a jubilee. When there is a jubilee, you give a gift. Together with you, we want to give Jerusalem a gift with value for the future.

We want to help where it is needed most: care for the less fortunate, the vulnerable, the children who are completely dependent on others. Will you help provide children and young adults with multiple disabilities a warm and caring home? For these children, Aleh is building two extra floors on the existing building in Jerusalem. With your help they can look towards a hopeful future and move into their new home on Jerusalem Day on 24 May 2017.

The Zionist Bible

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church



Few would deny that in the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible), the land of Israel plays a central, pivotal role. The history of Israel in the Old Testament takes its starting point in the land promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The formation of Israel as a nation is directed towards settling in the land of Israel. God calls the Israelites out of Egypt, to bring them first to the desert to make a covenant, and finally to the land of Israel, where they will live as His people, and He will be their God. The whole journey through the desert and the giving of the Torah, are a preparation for living in the Land of Promise. And then, when Israel in the Land of Promise does not live up to the standards God had set, He expels the Israelites from the land, first the ten northern tribes of Israel, and then the two southern tribes of Judah. Not that all the Israelites are taken away into exile. There always remains a remnant in the land, waiting for the exiles to return, as they long to return from the exile, too. The message of the prophets and the message of the book of Deuteronomy is that God will return the captives of Israel and settle them again in the promised land.

This holds true for the Old Testament, but what about the New Testament? Many theologians want us to believe, that Christ put an end to all national aspirations of the Jewish people, starting with His own disciples. In His ministry on earth, and finally in His death and resurrection, He broke the national boundaries of Israel. Now, the gentiles are no longer excluded. Salvation goes to the gentiles, the land is expanded to be the earth, and the exclusive nation of Israel is expanded to become the universal church.

Apart from the fact that the Old Testament also has a vision for the

salvation of the nations of the earth and for a universal kingdom of God on earth, is it true that the New Testament does not have any concern for the Jews as Jews anymore, other than that there is no longer a difference between Jew and gentile?

Here are just a few examples to show the opposite. I have taken them from the book *The New Christian Zionism* (Gerald R. McDermott) and added one or two myself. When Jesus quotes Isaiah's prediction that the temple would become "a house of prayer for all nations" (*Mark 11:17*), he seems to concur with Isaiah's vision of an eschatologically restored Jerusalem where foreigners would come to God's holy mountain to join the "outcasts of Israel" whom God has "gathered" (*Isaiah 56:7-8*). Even though in the gospel of John, Jesus' body is seen as the new temple (*John 2:21*), this does not deny the literal sense of Israel's scriptures that the temple was God's house. Rather, it completes it by connecting Jesus to the temple, showing that He is God's presence. Therefore, the apostles continued to worship in the temple.

Jesus tells his disciples that "in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (*Matthew 19:28*). In other words, these and other references to the twelve tribes imply the restoration of all of Israel, especially in Jerusalem.

We encounter a descendant of the ten tribes in *Luke 2:38*. It is the old prophetess Anna, who speaks about Jesus "to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem". Just before, we meet Simeon, who is characterized as 'waiting for the consolation of Israel', which should be understood here as synonymous with redemption. His words are no less remarkable than those of Mary and

Zechariah: in Jesus he sees the salvation God has prepared for the eyes of all the people, "a light for revelation of the Gentiles, and glory of your people Israel" (translated literally). In other words, Jesus' ministry is twofold: revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for Israel.

It is in Jerusalem that Jesus will return (*Luke 21:24-28*) and will be welcomed by Israel: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord" (*Luke 13:34-35; Mt 23:37-39*). Until then, they will not see Him.

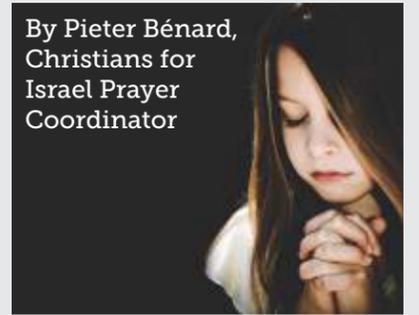
Jesus does not rebuke the question of the disciples just before His ascension, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (*Acts 1:6*). He simply says that the Father had set the date, and they do not need to know yet. There are so many indications like these, that the NT scholar Marcus Bockmuehl wrote that "the early Jesus movement evidently continued to focus upon the restoration of Israel's twelve tribes in a new messianic kingdom."

Similar expectations are found throughout the New Testament. Paul expects a coming of the Messiah to Jerusalem in the final course of history. He adapts Isaiah's prophecy of restoration (*Isaiah 59*) to his own use in *Romans 11:26*: "the deliverer will come from Zion; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob." An interesting vocabulary is used by Peter (*Acts 3:21*). He speaks of "the times of restoration of all things which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient time". The Greek word *apokatastasis*, translated to "restoration", is the same word the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament of the early church) uses for God's future return of Jews from all over the world to Israel, for example in *Jeremiah 16:15*: "I will bring them back [apokatasteso] to their own land that I gave to their fathers." In the final stage of history, the new earth is centered in Jerusalem. The city has twelve gates, on which are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (*Revelation 21:2*).

In short, Jesus comes as the fulfilment of the hope of Israel. His life and ministry are shaped by the history of Israel. In a sense, he is re-enacting the history of Israel. The first aim of His ministry is the restoration of Israel. This, again, has a multi-fold meaning. By his death and resurrection for the sins of the many (*Mt. 10:45*), He restores Israel to its covenantal purpose of being a priest to the nations. In His elevation to heaven He is receiving divine authority. And finally, his coming in glory will fully reveal Him as the promised Messianic king of Israel, as announced before his birth by the angel Gabriel.

Prayer Points

By Pieter Bénard,
Christians for
Israel Prayer
Coordinator



ISRAEL

- Pray for the former Prime Minister of Portugal, Antonio Guterres, who is succeeding Ban Ki-moon as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Pray that he will be able to change votes regarding Israel within the UN and within organisations connected to the UN.
- Due to the influence of Iran on various terrorist movements (with logistics, weapons and money), this country is at every border of Israel. Instead of attacking themselves, they are threatening Israel in this way. Pray that these forces of evil will be broken.

INTERCESSION

- The spiritual armour of *Ephesians 6* is often used in prayer. Use this armour in prayer for Israel as well, to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
- Pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle-East who suffer under the yoke of Islam. After all, we are all one body. (*1 Corinthians 12:12,13*)
- Given the increasing turmoil in the world, we may pray: Lord come quickly, we long for You. We long for peace. Peace for Your people Israel.

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL

- Pray for the pastors and teachers of Christians for Israel around the world, who frequently speak about the restoration of Israel, the signs of the times and the longing for the return of Jesus.
- Please pray for the 154 young people who were brought to Israel from Ukraine this past September with a special flight organised by Christians for Israel. It is a privilege to be part of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: "Nations will take them and bring them to their own place." (*Isaiah 14:1,2*)
- Give thanks for the many speaking engagements that Rev. Willem Glashouwer and Andrew Tucker were able to have this past year on behalf of 'Christians for Israel International' in dozens of countries all over the world. Pray for the upcoming trips this year.

ISREALITY

- Pray for the Isreality teams operating in various counties. Pray that many young people will be reached.
- Pray for the Isreality trip which will take place in July 2017.

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

Leadership Forum & Tour of Israel 2017

In March 2017, the Christians for Israel Leadership Forum is being held in Jerusalem, comprising of the International Executive meeting followed by the

Leadership Forum. Then, a number of Christians from USA, Australia, Africa and New Zealand will be embarking on a 15 day tour of Israel. In the April issue of

'Israel & Christians Today', we will have reports from the Leadership Forum and Tour groups from various countries. Because of the time factor the reports will be made directly from Israel.

Commemoration to the Victims of the Holocaust

Speech by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

On 27 January 2017, the official International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the newly-elected Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres delivered the following speech. Because of its outstanding nature, we are printing it here in full.

“Today is a day to remember, reflect and look forward. We are here to honour the victims of the Holocaust, an unparalleled crime against humanity. We are together to mourn the loss of so many and of so much.

The world has a duty to remember that the Holocaust was a systematic attempt to eliminate the Jewish people and so many others. I am humbled by the presence here today of Holocaust survivors. Thank you for bearing witness across seven decades so that others may live in dignity. There is no better education for the future than the guarantee that we will always be able to remember the past and to honour the victims of the tragedies of that past.

I would like to pay tribute to one survivor in particular, Elie Wiesel, who passed away last year. He became one of the world’s most passionate voices for mutual respect and acceptance, and the United Nations was proud to have him as one of our Messengers of Peace.

It would be a dangerous error to think of the Holocaust as simply the result of the insanity of a group of criminal Nazis. On the contrary, the Holocaust was the culmination of millennia of hatred and discrimination targeting the Jews – what we now call anti-Semitism.

Imperial Rome not only destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, but also made Jews pariahs in many ways. The attacks and abuse grew worse through the triumph of Christianity and the propagation of the idea that the Jewish community should be punished for the death of Jesus – an absurdity that helped to trigger massacres and other tremendous crimes against Jews around the world for centuries to come.

The same happened in my own country, Portugal, reaching its height with the order by King Manuel in the 16th century expelling all Jews who refused to convert.

This was a hideous crime and an act of enormous stupidity. It caused tremendous suffering to the Jewish community – and deprived Portugal of much of the country’s dynamism. Before long, the country entered a prolonged cycle of impoverishment.

Many Portuguese Jews eventually settled in the Netherlands. Lisbon’s loss was Amsterdam’s gain, as the Portuguese Jewish community played a key role in transforming the Netherlands into the global economic powerhouse of the 17th century.

The Portuguese example also demonstrates that anti-Semitism, more than a question of religion, is essentially an expression of racism. The proof is that the converted Jews, the so-called “new Christians”, faced discrimination by the old Christians, and suffered continued persecution by the Portuguese Inquisition.

When I became Prime Minister in 1995, I felt it was absolutely necessary, even if only with a symbolic gesture, to demonstrate my country’s rejection and repentance of Portugal’s merciless attacks against the Jewish community. In 1996, Parliament revoked the letter of expulsion. I then had the honour of visiting the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam to formally present a copy of that decree and apologize on behalf of my country. Tragically, that beautiful synagogue was almost empty, because the community Portugal had expelled was almost completely destroyed by the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism always tends to come back. Portugal recently adopted a law allowing the descendants of those expelled in the 16th century to regain Portuguese nationality. Last year, more than 400 took advantage of this offer. I am also very proud to note that just a few weeks ago, my wife signed, on behalf of the Lisbon Municipality, an agreement with the Israeli Community of Lisbon to establish the Lisbon Jewish Museum. This will be a way to pay tribute to the memory of those my country mistreated so badly.

History keeps moving forward, but anti-Semitism keeps coming back. The renowned scholar Simon Schama has noted that in the 19th century, Jews were even blamed for modernity, including for disasters of international finance in which they themselves were among the first victims. Schama also noted that Jews

often faced a lose-lose situation. When they successfully integrated and came to “look like” anyone else, they became subjects of suspicion. Others who



looked different were blamed for that, too. Both groups came together in the Nazi crematoria.

After the Holocaust, the world seemed eager to find a more cooperative path. The founding of the United Nations was one expression of that moment. The UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention enshrined a commitment to equality and human rights. Humankind dared to believe that tribal identities would diminish in importance. We were wrong. Those like me who grew up in the post-war era never imagined we would again face rising attacks on Jews in my own part of the world – in Europe. Anti-Semitism is alive and kicking. Irrationality and intolerance are back.

But we still see Holocaust denial, despite the facts. There is also a new trend of Holocaust revisionism, with the rewriting of history and even the honouring of disgraced officials from those days. Hate speech and anti-Semitic imagery are proliferating across the Internet and social media. Violent extremist groups use anti-Semitic appeals to rouse their forces and recruit new followers.

All this is in complete contrast to tolerance, the primacy of reason and universal values. Moreover, as the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Lord Jonathan Sacks, said last year, “The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews”.

Today, we see anti-Semitism, along with racism, xenophobia, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance, triggered by populism. I am extremely concerned at the discrimination faced by minorities, refugees and migrants across the world.

I find the stereotyping of Muslims deeply troubling. A “new normal” of public discourse is taking hold, in which prejudice is given a free pass and the door is opened to even more extreme hatred.

Steps from this chamber, you will find a powerful exhibition on Nazi propaganda. It is called “State of deception” and is the product of our fruitful partnership with the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum. As this exhibition details, propaganda helped erode the bonds of humanity. The word “Jewish” was used constantly in association with society’s ills. Hardship and instability created fertile ground for scapegoating. It is true that many citizens disapproved of discrimination. But a majority accepted such sentiments, even if only passively. Ultimately, indifference prevailed, dehumanization took hold, and the descent into barbarity was quick.

These are lessons for our time, too. We need to be vigilant. We need to invest in education and youth. We need to strengthen social cohesion so that people feel that diversity is a plus, not a threat.

The United Nations itself must do more to strengthen its human rights machinery, and to push for justice for the perpetrators of grave crimes. Our “Together” campaign is focusing on countries hosting refugees and migrants. Our Holocaust Outreach Programme is active on all continents.

The Holocaust also saw great acts of heroism, from ordinary people who protected others to diplomats who, at grave risk to themselves, defied the Nazis to enable thousands of people to escape certain death. Some of these are well known – Sweden’s Raoul Wallenberg and Japan’s Chiune Sugihara. Some are less so – Iran’s Abdol Hossein Sardari and, I am proud to say, Portugal’s Consul in Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes.

Today, we can be inspired by many cooperative efforts to bring diverse groups together. We need to deepen this solidarity. After the horrors of the 20th century, there should be no room for intolerance in the 21st. I guarantee you that as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I will be in the frontline of the battle against anti-Semitism and all other forms of hatred. That is the best way to build a future of dignity and equality for all – and the best way to honour the victims of the Holocaust we will never allow to be forgotten.

Thank you very much.”



Letters of the Aleph-beit: Chet ח

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

Chet is the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and therefore has the numerical value of eight. The chet represents a typically Semitic sound: a deep guttural h, like you hear in Arabic. In modern Hebrew, this sound has almost disappeared, and the chet is pronounced like ch in Bach. Sometimes, it is transliterated as h. That is why you see words like Hanukah. It is the first letter of the word chai (chet-jod), which means 'alive'. You will probably know

the symbol as a pendant on a necklace. It is also the first letter of chayim, which means life. Chet is therefore the letter that stands for life.

In the classical way of writing a Torah scroll, the sign chet is a combination of two previous letters: waw and the zayin, which are connected through a thin line like a bridge. This way of writing, says Isaac Luria, symbolizes the way in which at the beginning of creation the Spirit is hovering over the waters (hovering in

Hebrew is merachèphèt, with a chet in the middle). The secret of hovering is, that it is touching and not touching at the same time, like the Biblical image of the eagle hovering over her nest to feed her chicks. So God maintains His creation. Jewish tradition teaches that the Spirit of God here in fact is the soul of the Messiah. For when you rearrange the letters of Mashiach (mem-shin-jod-chet), you will get 'Shem Chai' (shin-mem chet-jod), the 'Living Name'.

The Talmud says that the chet in the sequence zayin, chet, tet, jod, kaph, lamed, stands for the grace (Hebrew: chen) that God bestows upon him, who observes His commandments.

Finally, the number eight is also full of meaning, of course. The eighth day is the day of the circumcision of a male baby in Judaism, the sign of the covenant.

Aliyah from Paris

By Rachel Poot, Ebenezer Operation Exodus Volunteer

I can imagine you might think: the French Jews don't need our help, do they? Aren't they just like us and living in a wealthy, free country?

I must admit, you're not completely wrong. They do live in a wealthy country. Aside from a few families who struggle financially, most families we visit are families with an average income. The challenge for the French Aliyah however, is exactly that. The fact that they are living in a wealthy country.

I'll take you to a hypothetical family somewhere in the outskirts of Paris, to illustrate what a visit to a family looks like. We exchange the busy, 19th-century Parisian city centre for the quiet Parisian country side, where monotonous houses and apartment buildings rise up not long after leaving the city centre. It looks a bit gloomy. The houses are square, made of concrete and have grey colours. Not exactly the image you imagine of French homes like you might see in a special edition of 'Country Living'.

We ring the doorbell at the apartment building where we need to be. After a friendly welcome through the intercom, we find the apartment and the door is opened by a woman. She smiles and asks if we would like a cup of coffee. We nod and ask if she's started packing up for her departure and if the rest of her family is looking forward to leaving.

"Yes", she says, "There are mixed feelings. On the one side we are so excited to go,

now that it's becoming increasingly difficult for us to live here. We are looking forward to going to Israel and to be truly Jewish and to celebrate our feasts. At the same time, this is the country where we grew up. We are intertwined with the French culture. My husband has a job here and our kids go to school here. It's hard to leave that behind."

We ask to describe her family situation. She tells us that she has a husband and three children. Her husband works in IT. She has been unemployed for a few months now, and so they can barely make ends meet. He makes €1200, she receives unemployment benefit of €800 a month. In addition, they receive child support for their three children which totals to €450 per month. All together they have an income of about €2500. The rent of the apartment is €1500 and the cost of their children's school is €600 per month. This mean they have a little under €400 per month left to live on. They don't really have money to put into savings. Especially if unexpected costs come into play. Have you approached a moving company? "Yes", she answers, "We did. Shipping our belongings will cost about €3450." The big question is where they'll find the money to pay for this. They might not be able to take everything and have to leave things behind, because they can't afford it. Maybe it's cheaper to leave things behind and replace them in Israel.

The problem however is that the same things in Israel are much more expensive. Life in Israel generally is more expensive. There you earn less and rent is higher. To



French Jews arriving at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel

make ends meet, it's necessary for both to work. We also ask if the necessary paperwork is in order. This means: are all the steps with the Jewish Agency walked through? Have they looked at medical insurance in Israel and were their medical files passed on? Are there no loose ends in terms of administration, so that there won't be any problems upon departure? "Yes", she answers, "In that respect we are ready to go."

Emigrating to Israel is not just about leaving France. It's just as much, if not more, about a good integration there. And that's something the families realise all too well. The families are aware that the first few months after arrival will be filled with challenges. Yes, it's Israel. Yes, they are with their own people. But, how will it be to learn Hebrew? Will they find jobs? Will they speak enough Hebrew to get a job? Will they find a good apartment? Will they be able to pay for rent? And will it

really be better in Israel than it is in France right now?

Those questions make this step a hard one. People really want to leave for Israel, but at the same time it means a complete change of life. Part of our job is to support the families in this. It is important to comfort them and to let them know that they are not alone, especially in a time of growing anti-Semitism. It's important to assure them they've made the right decision, so that they can be at ease with leaving France to start a new life in Israel. After all, the Eternal One takes care of His people.

Rachel Poot studied French and is currently writing her Cultural History Master's thesis, researching anti-Semitism in France in the 19th century. On behalf of Christians for Israel she travelled to Paris for six weeks to assist Christians for Israel's partner organisation Ebenezer Operation Exodus and the Aliyah work in France.

Why Israel is the World's Startup Nation

Courtesy of Israel Today

More than 300 multinational companies including Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Intel have hired engineering teams in Israel to find ways of improving their products. At a conference in Tel Aviv, the major players in the world of high-tech revealed why Israel has become the world's "Startup Nation."

"My job at Google is to travel all over the world and talk to developers and startups and investors," said Google developer Don Dodge. "I've been to every corner of the earth. There is no other country on earth that thinks the same way that we [at Google] do like Israel does. Israel truly is the 'Startup Nation.'"

You think like us. You break things, you make things, you're creative. It's special." Google, whose headquarters are in California, first opened an office in Israel in 2006. The search giant now employs more than 600 engineers who work on some of Google's core products such as Search, Maps and Live Results.



The face of Facebook Israel, Adi Sofer Teeni

They Will Come Weeping

By Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel Aliyah Fieldworker

We look back at our aliyah work of this past year with gratitude!

More than 5,500 Jews made aliyah from Ukraine thanks to additional programmes that the Jewish Agency made available. After following one of these programmes, the chance of finding work is almost 100%. Christians for Israel has cooperated closely with the Jewish Agency for many years now and together we bring Jews back home to Israel. Many people in Ukraine do not have financial means to make aliyah, for some they have physical disabilities. With your help, we assist people with their paperwork, provide transportation to the embassy for their interviews and take them to the airport for their trip to Israel.

Unanswered Questions

The consul days organized by the Christian Aliyah Alliance, who we are a part of, also helped, as many have unanswered questions. During these days, the Israeli head consul explains the process of making aliyah and personally answers questions. There were two aliyah fairs last year, which were visited by 6,000 people interested in making aliyah. We were at those fairs with a booth and were able to hand out brochures about the work of Christians for Israel. Our table was constantly busy!

The Goldman Family

Last year's final drive took place 25, 27 and 29 December! On 27 December, the Goldman family left and this was

an answer to our prayers! This family, with two young children, lived in Donetsk in the East of Ukraine, where the controlled war between the separatist and the Ukrainian army is still in full swing. The Goldman family fled to Russia when the bombings became too severe.

After two years of wandering around, they were desperate and asked the Jewish Agency if they could make aliyah from Russia. Unfortunately, this was not possible because they are from Ukraine. The Jewish Agency advised them to return to Ukraine and start the process of making aliyah there. However, they had no place to stay. We were called and asked if there was room in our shelter in Kiev, which there was. Through an expedited process, the Goldman family was finally able to leave for Israel.

Through the integration programme 'First Home in the Homeland', this family is now in the south of Israel, where the parents will learn Hebrew for the first five months, while the children will go to school at the Kibbutz.

'They will come weeping'

In the past two and a half years, more than 3,000 Jews stayed at our shelter in Kiev on the way to their homeland. Several families told heart-rending stories and it reminded me of the scripture from *Jeremiah 31:9* where it says, "They will come weeping".

BRING THE JEWS HOME



News from

FIRST HOME IN THE HOMELAND

Long and Thorny Path Home

By Orly Wolstein, First Home in the Homeland Project Manager

The Goldman family arrived at Elifaz, a kibbutz in the Arava-desert near Eilat on 30 December 2016. The children, Oleg and Ksenia have already started their school classes. Oleg said it didn't matter what language the boys speak, what matters is that they invited him to join their football game. Vladimir and Ilana went to ulpan (Hebrew class) on 9 January. Meanwhile they had time to adjust to the new climate, from -20 in Novgorod to +16 in Elifaz! Before their arrival, their coordinator, Peter Young (also an oleh hadash over 20 years ago) collected warm blankets, pillows, pans, cutlery and other things that the family didn't possess after their escape from Donetsk.

They are now at home among other olim and kibbutz members. In their Hebrew class there are families from Russia, Ukraine, Hungary and Italy. In total, ten families arrived at the First Home in the Homeland in December 2016. And with the help from Christians for Israel, the Goldman family had the opportunity to be one of them!

Aliyah for this family is an example of the cooperation between Christians for Israel and the Jewish Agency.

With your help, we can continue to help Jews make Aliyah from the land of the North and from the rest of the world, remembering words of *Jeremiah 16:15*.



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