

# NEWS FROM ISRAEL

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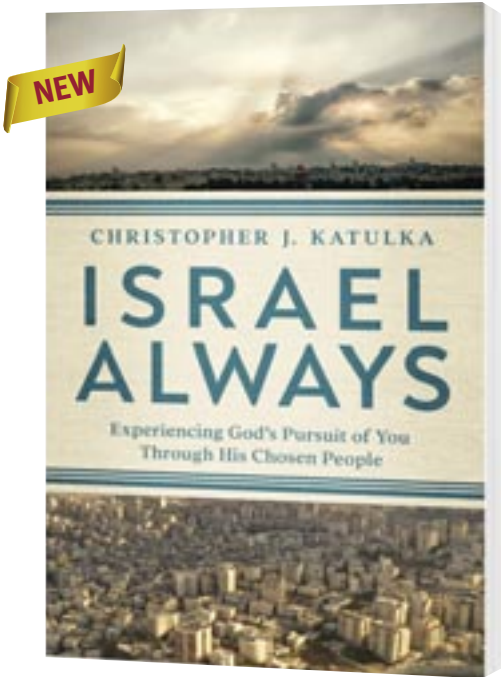
## Does Israel Have a Future?

– Part 9



Tomato-Picking Robots P.14 • Peace Deal with Israel P.16 • Temple Mount Is Jewish P.17

# Experiencing God's Pursuit of You Through His Chosen People



*Israel Always* is a sweeping journey through Israel's prolific history, its modern-day influence, and its promised future, highlighting the continuous throughline of God's provision for His people. Bible scholar and Israel expert Christopher Katulka draws on relevant scriptures, careful research, and firsthand experience to illuminate why

- Israel plays such a central role in the Bible's narrative, as well as in Bible prophecy
  - understanding Jewish culture and tradition enriches our understanding of Christianity
  - the Jewish people continue to be a wrongly yet widely persecuted group
  - lasting peace continues to be a challenge for the Middle East

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## Dear Friends of Israel,

BY FREDI WINKLER

**T**he judicial reforms planned by the new government are stirring up people all over Israel. There is concern and excitement; not only in this country but also even abroad, Jews and friends of Israel are worried.

The country's Supreme Court is of special significance because Israel's parliament is unicameral and there is no separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches. While many agree that some reforms within the judicial system are overdue, these reforms should not be one-sided and politically motivated, but should be decided with the broadest consensus possible.

For many weeks, there have been large demonstrations with thousands of participants. These have been taking place regularly

at the end of the Sabbath in Tel Aviv, and also in other cities of the country. A broad section of the population feels the democratic, liberal and freedom-loving character of the Jewish State is being seriously threatened.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has to perform as though dancing on a tightrope. He cannot take a stand contrary to his coalition partners, because that would endanger his government, which could then collapse. US Secretary of State Blinken's visit to Israel in February was therefore no coincidence. Blinken expressed the serious concern of the American government regarding the proposed judicial reforms. Netanyahu's visit with French President Macron shortly afterward was probably for the same



purpose: Netanyahu wanted to show his coalition partners how the world's great leaders condemn the intended reforms. Thereby he could plausibly explain that not he, but the important allies and friends of Israel are against the proposed reforms.

There is a saying that speaks to a deeper truth also in this case: "The soup is not eaten as hot as it was cooked." Thus, it can be assumed that heated minds will eventually calm down and be able to see reason again.

Opposition leader Jair Lapid and others have already suggested that a bipartisan commission be set up, led by the president, that will draft judicial reforms in such a way that they may receive the widest possible public acceptance. That will probably be the best solution for this deadlocked situation.

For all the spectacle associated with the demonstrations, it is admirable that so many thousands of people would take to the streets week after week, sometimes in cold and rainy weather,

to voice their opinions and resolve. We see how vibrant and engaged Israeli society is, not sparing any effort to clearly state their political and moral views.

Whether the government will give in to the pressure exerted through the weekly demonstrations and hand over the judicial reforms to a specially appointed, independent commission, is still open at the time of this writing. Of course, there is also the danger that the governing coalition will fail at the difficult task and break apart. This in turn would mean new elections, which at this point is unlikely.

When we consider Israel's politics, we must always add another factor: God is in the process of accomplishing His plan for Israel and the world. Looking at it this way, judicial reform is but a small issue.

Eager to see what may yet happen on the way to the end goal, I greet you cordially with Shalom,

*David Winkler*



# Does Israel Have a Future? – Part 9



## The Prophets and Israel's Future Continued

BY NORBERT LIETH AND JOHANNES PFLAUM

God sets a sign in place for these truths; namely, the gathering together and restoration of Israel: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa 11:11-12).

**N**ote that it says, “set his hand again the second time.” For what reason? To gather Israel. Both times, He is bringing home a remnant of the Jewish people from dispersion. So Isaiah is speaking of two future events.

The first time, this occurred by decree of the Persian king Cyrus, who released Israel from Babylonian captivity. This is already historical fact (Ezra 1:1ff.).

The second time Israel is brought back, it will be from a worldwide dispersion because it says, “from the four corners of the earth.” This return of the Jews to their homeland serves as an “ensign” (a sign or banner) for the nations, for very specific purposes:

- It is a sign of the truthfulness of God’s Word, a sign of the end times. So we must not exclude Israel from our proclamation.

- It is a sign of warning to the nations regarding how they deal with Israel, because it is a

powerful reminder of how God does so. The nations must not claim that Israel is no longer of any importance; Israel’s gathering proves otherwise. Anyone opposing Israel is opposing God’s actions. So the nations have no excuse.

- It serves as a prerequisite sign for the execution of the final prophetic events (for example, the events of Revelation).

- It is a threefold sign: for the coming judgment, for Israel’s ultimate spiritual restoration, and for the Messiah’s return and the renewal of Creation. This is the precise reason why little Israel is such a thorn in the side of the big UN. Only 9 million people live in Israel—0.1 percent of the world’s population. And yet Israel always makes the biggest headlines and keeps the UN busy. It kicks up dust and is like a wrench in the gears, because God has made this small people a great sign for the nations. This sign says: The living and almighty God still exists! And that’s why His people still exist.

Only 9 million people live in Israel—0.1 percent of the world’s population. And yet Israel always makes the biggest headlines and keeps the UN busy.

United Nations Headquarters in New York City



### **JEREMIAH 30—31 AND THE NEW COVENANT**

In Jeremiah 31:33-40, the prophet speaks of a New Covenant for Israel, which stands in contrast to the Old Covenant. Advocates for Replacement Theology apply this covenant exclusively to the Church of Jesus as the “Israel of God”; as such, they see no

promise in it for the chosen people of Israel. We’d like to make it clear why this is an impossible application of Scripture, with some reasons resulting from the whole context of chapters 30 and 31.

In the prophecy about Israel’s future salvation and the associated New Covenant, the term “Jacob” is used six times (30:7,



10, 18; 31:7, 11). This, as we have previously explained, refers exclusively to the people of Israel when it doesn't mean the patriarch himself.

Jeremiah 30:7 speaks of "Jacob's trouble" taking place before Israel's salvation, and the New Covenant for God's people that comes with it. Here we have another indication of how this final affliction will bring unsaved Israel (Jacob) to repentance and renewal. In chapter 30:12-16, the prophet speaks of the unsaved people's sinful condition.

This chapter and the next speak of Israel and Judah's inseparable connection several times (Jeremiah 30:3-4; 31:24). The term "Judah" isn't applied to the Church anywhere in the New Testament. It is either used as a name or associated with the tribe of Judah. Remarkably, Jeremiah speaks of the house of Judah in connection with the New Covenant twice (Jer 31:27, 31). The land and cities of Judah are mentioned beforehand

in relation to future promises (Jer 31:23-24), so it can only be referring to Israel.

Chapter 31 speaks of Ephraim (vv. 6, 9, 18, 20). This name is often used by the prophets as a synonym for the northern kingdom of Israel, and thus for all of Israel.

Both chapters 30 and 31 speak of the dispersal of Israel among the nations and their being gathered together (Jer 31:11; 31:2, 8, 10; cf. 23:8; 16:14-16).

The name "Zion" in Jeremiah 30 and 31 can only be applied to the earthly Jerusalem (and not the heavenly one; cf. Heb 12:22). The prophet speaks of former outcasts (Jer 30:17), so he can only be referring to the earthly Jerusalem. He gives geographical information that can also only refer to the earthly Jerusalem (Jer 31:38-40). Additionally, Benedict Peters points out in his exegesis of Jeremiah, that all New Testament mentions of the new Jerusalem contain a qualifier to avoid confu-

sion (Gal 4:26: “Jerusalem which is above”; Heb 12:22: “the heavenly Jerusalem”; Rev 21:2: “new Jerusalem”; Rev 21:9: “the bride, the Lamb’s wife”; Rev 21:10: “holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God”).

In addition to mentioning the land, the mountains of Ephraim are also mentioned (Jer 31:6). There is also talk of animals and vineyards (Jer 31:5, 27).

In chapter 31:1, Jeremiah establishes the connection to what he has previously said: “At the same time...” (that is, in the “latter days”; cf. Jer 30:24). In this context, he then comes to speak of the New Covenant from verse 31 onward. As Jeremiah 31:1 continues, it becomes clear that it can only be speaking of the people of Israel:

“At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.”

The word used for families here means the various families

as a sub-group of a tribe. In the same way, Moses heard the families weep, each at the entrance of their tent (Num 11:10).

So, this term means the clans within the tribes of Israel, which is why a spiritual application to the Church of Jesus makes no sense at all. The context of the passage, as well as the information contained within it, makes it clear that Jeremiah 31’s promise of the New Covenant cannot be separated from Israel’s future and transferred to the Church.

Thus, according to Jeremiah 31:7a, Israel will become the head of the nations (which has never been the case in history) and, according to verse 7b, the believing remnant will be saved, which agrees with the New Testament (Rom 9:27; 11:5). Thus, at the end of days, a remnant of the ethnic people of Israel will see the fulfillment of the New Covenant, be converted, and lead the nations in the Millennium of Peace when Christ reigns from Jerusalem.

Benedict Peters shows through his exegesis of Zechariah, that even interpreters who reject a future for Israel are equating Jerusalem with the earthly Jerusalem in nearly every instance in Zechariah 1—11.



## **ZECHARIAH AND LITERAL INTERPRETATION**

The prophet Zechariah speaks of both Jesus' first and second comings. In the overall context of his book, it becomes clear that both the Messiah's first and second comings are inextricably linked to the people and land of Israel. Everything that Zechariah prophesied

about Jesus' first coming was fulfilled literally, not spiritually. Another thing is the figurative language the prophet uses to describe his visions. Benedict Peters shows through his exegesis of Zechariah, that even interpreters who reject a future for Israel are equating Jerusalem with the earthly Jerusalem in nearly every instance in Zechari-

The literally fulfilled prophecy about Jesus' first coming in the book of Zechariah, allows for no other conclusion than that the statements about His return will be fulfilled just as literally.



ah 1—11. The rift in the interpretation occurs when the book reaches the return of Jesus. Then people begin to spiritualize geographical details with no justification. Some examples of literal fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecies about the Messiah's first coming include:

- Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9).

- Jesus was abandoned by His disciples when He was taken prisoner (Zech 13:7).

- Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12).

- Judas threw the 30 pieces of silver into the temple. The potter's field was then bought with the money (Zech 11:13).

- Jesus' side was pierced with a spear (Zech 12:10).

- Zechariah speaks of both Jesus' first and second comings at various points, within a narrow textual context. Thus, there is no reason to interpret the passages about Jesus' second coming any other way than literally:

- The nations will gather against Jerusalem (Zech 12:1-3).

- The house of David will recognize their Lord and God in the returning Christ and will experience an outpouring of the Spirit (Zech 12:10).

- The families that repent, in connection with Israel's lamentation over the Messiah's violent death, are named separately (Zech 12:10-14). In his vision of the messianic kingdom, Ezekiel also lists the tribes of Israel by name and gives precise geographical information about their respective tribal areas. This can only be related to the land of Israel (Ezek 48:22-29).

- The Mount of Olives will split when Jesus returns (Zech 14:4).

- Precise information is given about Israeli geography and names in connection to Christ's return. Zechariah also tells what Egypt and all other nations can expect to happen, if they do not go to Jerusalem to worship the King (Zech 14:10-11, 18). Like Ezekiel (47:8), Zechariah speaks of the plain at the Dead Sea, which is also called Arabah.

In the book of the prophet Zechariah, the predictions of Jesus' first and second comings are so clear (and in some places so closely intertwined) that it's impossible to apply different criteria for interpretation (literal vs. spiritual), without fracturing the principles of textual understanding. The literally fulfilled prophecy about Jesus' first coming in the book of Zechariah, allows for no other conclusion than that the statements about His return will be fulfilled just as literally.

(NAI0722/1271)



# On the Horizon

NEWS IN  
**BRIEF**



**ISRAEL**

## Tomato-Picking Robots

Growing up in a kibbutz and working in agriculture from a young age, Adi Nir, founder of Israeli startup MetoMotion, left the fields, as many others did, to make a living in the tech industry.

## IRAN UNVEILS UNDERGROUND AIR FORCE BASE

Iran unveiled its first underground air force base, called "Eagle 44," according to the official IRNA news agency.

"It is one of the army's most important air force bases, with fighters equipped with long-range cruise missiles and built in the depths of the Earth," IRNA added.

The Iranian news outlet also said that this is one of several underground air force bases to have been built in recent years throughout the country.

In addition, the air force base will allow the Iranian military to carry out surprise airborne operations far from the expectations of the country's enemies, according to Tasnim News.

*-jpost.com*  
7 February 2023



**Israeli startup MetoMotion's greenhouse robotic worker picks and packs tomatoes.**  
(Courtesy)



Israeli farmers are also struggling with labor costs. Since few Israelis work in agriculture, growers need to bring foreign workers to Israel to do the tough manual work, but are limited by how many permits the government allocates, driving up salaries.

Realizing that the shortage of manpower in the farming workforce and the related costs were unsustainable, and drawing from his tech experience in the aerospace industry, Nir founded the Yokne'am-based startup MetoMotion in 2017 to develop a robot that can do labor-intensive fruit-picking quickly and efficiently.

"Unlike other robotic or industrial applications, which are characterized by more repetitive tasks, in agriculture every plant is a little bit different. So we came up with a solution based on AI capabilities to look at the plants, understand the structure, environment, how to measure the ripeness, and how to decide



if it's ready," Nir said.

"More than 30% of the crops grown in greenhouses are tomatoes because we need them for a lot of things, for our salad, pizza, and ketchup," said Nir. "Our robots are able to reduce the labor needs of harvesting by about 90% and cut production costs by about 50% by saving on manpower costs."

-[www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 2 February 2023

**Commentary:** To import farm workers depends on the government issuing permits; that seems to be the case in most of the progressive, industrialized countries. Thus, to build robots that will reduce labor costs by about 90% is but natural.

What does this tell us, biblically speaking? We only need look at the first pages in our Bible. After Adam and Eve had transgressed God's command, He told Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19a). That has been the case for almost 6,000 years, until technology raised its head. The bulk of agricultural produce is seeded, tended, harvested, and prepared for consumption by machines. This has caused an overabundance of food available to most of the world, where industry and technology rules.



The days of, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" are over. This is another step toward mankind's independence from God. Such progress is expected to continue until the final days of the apocalypse. 7940

(See *The Genesis Factor*, Item #2239, \$13.99.)

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### RARE GOLD BEAD DISCOVERED

A unique bead made from pure gold was uncovered during a sifting project at the Archaeological Experience in the Emek Tzurim National Park, the Antiquities Authority announced. It was dated to at least 1,600 years ago, which was the end of the Roman era in Israel.

The use of a unique production technique from outside of Israel, coupled with the use of gold in creating this bead, speaks to the wealth of its owner. It is possible that the bead was created in a different area and made its way to the City of David due to the extensive trade relations between Jerusalem and other regions at that time.

According to Shlomo Greenberg and Ari Levy, excavation directors on behalf of the authority, "The bead originated in a grandiose structure which is at least 25 meters long. The structure was built on the Pilgrimage Road in the City of David, in a building style that characterizes upscale buildings."

-[jpost.com](http://jpost.com)  
8 February 2023



## SUDAN

### Peace Deal with Israel

Israel and Sudan committed to completing a normalization agreement in the near future following what Foreign Minister Eli Cohen described as his “historic diplomatic visit” to the Sudanese capital Khartoum.



“The peace agreement between Israel and Sudan will promote regional stability and contribute to the national security of the State of Israel,” Cohen said.

“Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, is remembered in Israel as the city where the Arab countries decided on the historic ‘Three Nos’: No peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no recognition of Israel,” recalled Cohen.

Sudan’s agreement to normalize relations with Israel upended a longstanding policy after the 1967 Six Day War that saw Israel conquer swathes of territory, including the West Bank from Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria.

Arab leaders gathered in Khartoum after the defeat, and signed a resolution that became known as the “three nos.”

Egypt and Jordan would later recognize Israel through peace treaties signed in 1979 and 1994 respectively, followed

decades later by the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco as part of the Abraham Accords.

-[www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 2 February 2023

**Commentary:** What was unthinkable just a decade ago, now becomes par for the course. In spite of the “three nos” (no peace, no negotiation, no recognition of Israel), time changes political realities. Wikipedia identifies Sudan as follows: “Cush is traditionally considered the ancestor of the ‘land of Cush,’ an ancient territory believed to have been located near the Red Sea. Cush is identified in the Bible with the Kingdom of Kush or ancient Sudan. The Cushitic languages are named after Cush.”

### South Sudan

South Sudan became independent on 9 July 2011. Wikipedia notes that 60% of the population are followers of the Christian religion. Life expectancy is extremely low at 58.6 years, and per capita GDP poor: \$1,600 (2017).

In the Bible, Sudan is often called Ethiopia, but quite apparently, it’s distinctly different. The NIV reads: “Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush” (Isaiah





18:1), and concludes with verse 7: “At that time gifts will be brought to the Lord Almighty from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers—the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place of the Name of the Lord Almighty.” This indicates that in this case, riches will be brought to Zion. Isaiah 60:11 adds: “Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that people may bring you the wealth of the nations—their kings led in triumphal procession.”

7938

(See *What Should We Think About Israel?* Item #2358, \$17.99.)



## ISRAEL

### Temple Mount Is Jewish

“There are three places about which the nations of the world cannot deceive Israel and say we have stolen them out of their hands, and they are the Cave of the Patriarchs, the Temple and the Tomb of Joseph.” All three sites were purchased by our forefathers, Abraham, Jacob, and King David, at a fair price.



**PRESIDENT ISAAC HERZOG shakes hands with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Amman, last year.** (photo credit: HAIM ZACH/GPO)

## BARCELONA MAYOR SEVERS TIES

**B**arcelona Mayor Ada Colau has announced that the city is no longer twinned with Tel Aviv, citing claims that Israel is guilty of “apartheid,” as well as “flagrant and systematic violation of human rights.”

Barcelona and Tel Aviv entered the relationship in 1998—when both cities jointly signed a “twin city” agreement with Gaza City.

In her letter to Netanyahu, Colau wrote that the petition from her constituents requested that her office “condemn the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people, support Palestinian and Israeli organizations working for peace and break off the twinning agreement between Barcelona and Tel Aviv.”

-jta.org  
8 February 2023



The First Temple stood proudly on the Temple Mount, 1,500 years before the Prophet Muhammad was even born.

We Jews are not guests on the Temple Mount; we are its original owners. No other nation shares this history, no other nation has had the same capital for 3,000 years and has never had another one, and Jerusalem was never the capital of any other nation.

The primary responsibilities of the new government, the goals by which it will be judged, are to restore personal safety throughout Israel, to enforce the law universally and reinstate the governance that has been lost in too many parts of the country. There is no reason that Jews, including members of Knesset and government ministers, should not enter the Temple Mount, but that is no substitute for the serious work that has to be done.

If the government does its job, life in Israel will be much better and much safer—that is, normal. And then a visit to the Temple Mount won't be the main headline on the evening news. Why should it be news at all? In a free country, anyone can go wherever they want.

*-www.jpost.com, 9 January 2023*

**Commentary:** The article, authored by Gilad Sharon (son of the former late prime minister Ariel Sharon), reveals indisputable facts about Jerusalem's

Temple Mount. Presently, the area is occupied by Islam's religious shrine, the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque. It is not our calling to reveal opinions about the present situation on the Temple Mount. For that matter, it is not the Church's calling to be partial in any of the religious or geopolitical developments on planet earth; rather, it is our task and duty to proclaim the truth as revealed in Holy Scripture. How the present controversy will end, no one dares to volunteer a definite answer. What does the Bible say? Here we must look at the finality, not temporary events moved and guided by geopolitical popularity.

Speaking of Jerusalem, we read in Revelation 11 that God will intervene supernaturally on behalf of that city. The two witnesses will appear there and proclaim truth, but then the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall cause them to be killed. Yet after three and a half days, they will be resurrected. Verse 11 reads: "And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them." Following this miracle, something special happens: "and



the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven” (v. 13b). Interestingly, it is a different reaction than that of previous supernatural judgments on earth; for example, in Revelation 16:21. Similar actions are recorded in Revelation 6:15 and 9:21.



7925

(See *The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Book of Revelation*, Item #2361, \$16.99.)

## MIDDLE EAST

### Arab World Not Monolithic

Residents of the Middle East, referred to as the Arab world by the West, often hear about various envoys and advisers from the United States and Europe who are involved in the region’s affairs. However, many individuals in the Middle East question the relevance of these broad and inclusive definitions, such as the term “Arab world,” to their own experiences and identities.



**Saudi Arabia Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman is received by Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on the sidelines of the World Cup in Doha, Qatar**  
(photo credit: VIA REUTERS)

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### FIRST FULLY COMPOSTABLE FOOTWEAR

Conventional shoes contain plastic, glue and other materials that can take up to 1,000 years to fully biodegrade, often emitting toxins as they break down.

Balena’s slides, which are a little like flipflops, are made of BioCir elastomer, a proprietary biodegradable combination of natural materials bound by polymers and modifiers. And yes, they can get wet.

The slides get their speckles of color (and scrumptious scent) from cinnamon, one of many botanicals Balena tested—using leftovers from an Israeli tea manufacturer—until finding one that looked, smelled and felt right.

BioCir-based products can be manufactured using existing processes including injection molding, extrusion and 3D printing.

-israel21c.org  
19 January 2023



For the benefit of Western experts, presidents, and heads of state, it is important to note that the Middle East and North Africa are geographical regions with a rich history dating back to ancient times. These areas have seen the rise and fall of various empires and civilizations over the course of history. It is essential to consider this context when engaging with and attempting to understand the region and its people.

Western research institutes and think tanks in the United States and Europe have historically made the mistake of defining the Arab world as a monolithic entity and attempting to treat all individuals within the region as having uniform aspirations.

There is no such thing as an Arab world, but rather a collection of distinct Arab countries.

Although the Arabic language spoken in the Quran unites all Arabic speakers and all non-Arab Muslims in the world, it does not necessarily create a single Arab nation or a united Arab world.

The West does not have a superior advantage over this region in terms of governance methods, cultural practices, or historical achievements, and it is not qualified to dictate to the people of the Middle East and North Africa how they should live, rule or manage their cultural and political lives.

The key to successful interactions with

the region is for the West to understand the history and cultures of the Middle East and North Africa, and to approach these interactions with respect and without condescension, rather than treating all Arab countries as a monolithic entity.

*-themedialine.org, 5 January 2023*

**Commentary:** This fascinating article by Majdi Halabi exposes the generalization by Western countries in placing all Arab nations under the same umbrella. While a fitting analysis, it is also true in the opposite direction; namely, the definition “the West.” Analyzing the various countries considered “the West,” we are faced with extreme diversity.

Example: Japan is considered to belong to the category of the West, and so is Australia. Looking at Europe, there is extreme diversity. The European Union (EU), formerly known as the European Community (EC), consists of 27 sovereign nations, divided by 24 languages, with a population of over 447 million and a combined GDP of over \$24 trillion. Additionally, eight more countries are waiting to join the Union: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.



## NEWS IN BRIEF



### ‘UNCHEATABLE’ BLOCKCHAIN TECH

With the collapse of bankrupt crypto exchange FTX still sending shivers through the industry and fueling consumer mistrust, an Israeli multi-billion-dollar startup is making its “uncheatable” blockchain transaction technology available for mass adoption in hopes of preventing the next fraud scandal.

Netanya-based StarkWare, which is valued at \$8 billion, is the developer of a technology that compresses and speeds up blockchain transactions. Israeli computer scientist Prof. Eli Ben-Sasson is the mathematical brain behind the Stark technology, which is a proof system based on cryptography and modern algebra powering its two networks, StarkEx and the “blockchain internet” called StarkNet, used for blockchain applications and processing transactions.

“Now, our technology uses the blockchain to enforce self-custodial trading, meaning that the customers working over our technology always are in control of their funds so it is impossible to misappropriate funds,” Ben-Sasson explained.

-timesofisrael.com  
8 February 2023

Europe can be considered the most diverse of the world’s five continents. Although immense difficulties stand in the way, one thing becomes clear: Europe has developed into an economic powerhouse.

The Arab League presently has 22 member states, with a combined population of over 444 million (2021). The League was formed in Cairo, Egypt on 22 March 1945.

According to Wikipedia, the Arab League countries’ GDP stands at approximately \$7.1 trillion – the richest being Qatar, with \$113,674 GDP per capita, followed by the United Arab Emirates at \$77,272, and Bahrain in third place at \$57,921.

What is the future? While the Arab nations are particularly divided in their relationship with Israel, changes are underway. Based on various media resources, Saudi Arabia stands next in line to develop friendship with Israel.

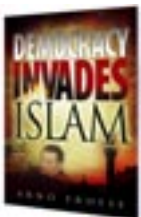
From Genesis 25, we know that to Abraham’s wife Keturah, six sons were born. That did not include Ishmael, the son of Hagar, or the son of promise – Isaac.

While the Arab world may not be monolithic, their origin goes back to Abraham and the promise to Hagar: “And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall

not be numbered for multitude” (Genesis 16:10). That prophecy has been fulfilled and will continue in that vein.

7924

(See *Democracy Invades Islam*, Item #1072, \$12.95.)





## ISRAEL

### Jew Refuses to Share Hospital Room with Arab

A Jewish woman refused to share a maternity room with an Arab woman at a northern hospital, resulting in her roommate moving to another room in the hospital.



The Jewish woman, who had just given birth, was sharing a room at HaEmek Medical Center in Afula with an Arab woman who was accompanied by her partner Dr. Wasim Rock, a doctor in the northern city of Nazareth where the couple resides.

Despite the Jewish woman’s protests, hospital staff refused to give in to the women’s request to move the Arab couple elsewhere, telling her they “don’t separate new mothers,” Channel 13 said.

However, as a result of the bitter atmosphere and tension, the Arab couple agreed to move.

“We felt shocked,” Rock said. “I think there are certain people who have an unjustified fear to be with people that are different, and I have only sympathy for these kinds of people.”

Both the Jewish and Arab women at the Afula hospital were treated by staff comprising both Jewish and Arab doctors, nurses and midwives.

-*www.timesofisrael.com*, 1 February 2023



**Front view of the HaEmek Medical Center Campus** (Almog [Own work], via Wikimedia Commons)

**Commentary:** It is our duty as Christians to be unbiased when examining news events involving a particular group we feel inclined to support; in this case, Jews. Racism can emerge from all races, and is often the result of an “unjustified fear to be with people that are different,” as the Arab doctor states.

In another part of the article, he says: “We are all citizens of the same country. We need to live together in peace because we don’t have any other country or place to live in.” This can also be ascribed to our status as born again believers from every nation, yet of one heavenly citizenship: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

7937

-By K. Farmer

(See *10 Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell, and the Afterlife*, Item #2350, \$13.99.)



## INDIA

### Persecuting Muslims

In the northern Indian city of Haldwani, about 4,000 families faced homelessness in December after the High Court of the state, Uttarakhand, ordered their eviction from land claimed by the Indian Railways.



The incident in Haldwani, 296km (184 miles) from national capital New Delhi, captures a broader pattern of injustice masquerading as law and order that's playing out across India under the majoritarian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which rules federally and in most states.

Thousands of Muslim families have been forcibly evicted since 2021 from land they had been residing on for decades. Since 2016, police have shot at and killed protesters in at least two instances.

The community is often targeted, especially by the Hindu right, as "illegal immigrants" and the word "Miya" is frequently used as a pejorative.

The idea behind the inhuman and violent evictions is to keep Muslims landless and impoverished: Muslims have a higher poverty rate and lower literacy rate than the national average. Research has shown that Indian Muslims have lower upward mobility than people from even those Hindu castes and tribes that have traditionally been discriminated against.

-[www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com), 2 February 2023

**Commentary:** We read in Hebrews 13:3, "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Our thoughts and prayers are with those who suffer persecution.

We publish excerpts of this article to show that when religion usurps political power, they often become the oppressors, the persecutors. History documents how the Vatican severely persecuted those who dared to oppose their teaching.

There are many other religious movements that have usurped political power, and woe to anyone that opposes. This is self-evident in Iran, an "Islamic Republic." In China, it's the communist religion; namely, the government persecuting Muslims as well as Christians.

These few examples should cause us to be careful in our political involvement as Christians. We follow our Lord Jesus Christ, who never lifted a finger against the oppressive Roman occupational force, nor did the apostles. It was the apostle Paul who used the example of an idol dedicated "to the unknown god" to preach the Gospel. We should do likewise.

7942

(See *Freedom in Christ*, Item #2400, \$10.95.)



## Project: Bringing Back a Beloved Place for Our Residents

Earlier this year, with the coronavirus period mostly behind us, we were able to empty our front entrance balcony of the tent we had set up for family visits outside the facility.

By David Phillips (CEO)



Within a short time of taking this tent down, to our great delight, our residents soon found a place they greatly enjoyed sitting outside in. It brings such a smile to my face as I see the residents gathered

together, singing, playing games, or just enjoying one another's company in the outdoors, instead of "coronavirus limitations on life."

But with the change of weather, a place they had come to so thoroughly enjoy, became a place they





couldn't enjoy very much due to the cold, rainy, and windy weather, and even in summer, the strong winds we have here. We gathered together to figure out a way we could bring this beloved place back for their enjoyment.

After discussing how to make this place adequate for them to enjoy throughout the year, it was decided that the best way is to enclose it with windows that could be opened in the heat and

closed during the stormy and cold weather. Adding windows and a nice seating area for them to be able to enjoy sitting out there, will cost us roughly \$16,000. This price includes sets of comfortable chairs and a coffee table for their convenience. With your help, we plan to use the donations raised this month to make this a reality.

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“And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel” (Ezekiel 47:22).

**BY ARNO FROESE**

**T**his prophecy is quite exciting to read, for it give the answer to Israel’s conflict with the Arab Palestinians. These words of the prophet Ezekiel, written over 2,600 years ago, nullify the attempt to divide the Promised Land into two different identities: one Jewish and one Arab. Based on our understanding of this Scripture, it’s not going to happen. The “strangers” will receive an inheritance within the land of Israel.

When dealing with this subject, it is important for us to rely on Scripture. God is not dependent on, hindered, or incapacitated by what politicians do or don’t do. The counsel of the eternal One totally ignores geopolitical realities. The much-praised “Two State Solution” is simply voided by the Word of God: “...born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.”

### **Moderate Imam Speaks**

In an article by TheMediaLine.org on 2 January 2023, Imam Hassen Chalghoumi, a Tunisian-born French citizen, notes

---

“the silent majority” of Muslims stand in “opposition to Islamist tenets [but are] drowned out by the howls of extremists.” Furthermore, he states:

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians [...] must end in talks and treaties. “They have to negotiate in order to live together because it’s a fact and it’s not too late.”

Message for the Palestinians: “For your stability, you need accords” with Israel. “We Muslims, we have the right to have peace and accords with Israel [...] and we need peace with Israel.”

“Al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] is for all Muslims and not only for Palestinians. I don’t need the authorization of the Palestinian Authority to pray in Al-Aqsa Mosque.”

The Iman concludes:

“We are not active enough on social media. We have to denounce every bad action and be present on social media.

“With the economic crisis, someone has to be held responsible and that is the minorities, and so antisemitism and racism will grow in Europe. It is not very positive in Europe but that means there is a lot of work to do.”

Recently, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, Netherlands released their opinion on “Israel’s ‘annexation’ of territories and the ‘legal status’ of the occupation”:

The ICJ has the authority to interpret and apply international treaties and conventions, and its decisions are considered to be authoritative interpretations of international law. As such, ICJ rulings are primary sources of international law and are

often used to support the development and evolution of international legal principles.

The resolution passed with 87 votes in favor to 26 against, with 53 abstentions. All the Arab states, including those that recently have normalized relations with Israel, voted in favor.

-*themedialine.org*, 1 January 2023

Of the 166 voting members of the United Nations, 87 agreed that Israel's "annexation" is illegal. If one would take the time to view the borders of these 87 countries historically, some of them would hardly be recognized on a modern map. What kind of international law determined the borders, not only of these 87 countries, but also the rest of the world? The answer is one word: war. The winner determined the loser's boundaries.

Another article from *The Times of Israel* on 3 January 2023 is headlined, "UN condemned Israel more than all other countries combined in 2022." When we ask why, the simple answer is that in the end, all nations of the world will be condemned by their own resolutions. Here an excerpt:

Russia was the focus of six resolutions condemning its invasion of Ukraine. North Korea, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Iran and the US were hit with one resolution each.

Since 2015, the General Assembly has adopted 140 resolutions criticizing Israel, mainly over its treatment of the Palestinians, its relationships with neighboring countries and other alleged wrongdoings. Over the same period, it has passed 68 resolutions against all other countries, UN Watch said.

In summary, Israel is being falsely accused. Not once, but over and over again. For believers who read their Bible, this is not to be understood as a negative development but rather a positive one, confirming Israel's uniqueness among the nations of the world. Rightly, the Gentile prophet Balaam proclaimed almost 3,500 years ago: "the people [Israel] shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9b).

We know that David was unjustly persecuted. He cried out to God: "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty..." (Psalm 69:4). Later in the New Testament, Jesus confirms: "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25). (NFH)

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