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April 2022

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Israel, the Church, and the Nations – Part 4

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NEW



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JOHN ANKERBERG AND
RENALD E. SHOWERS

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THE MOST ASKED PROPHECY QUESTIONS ITEM #2388

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Dear Friends of Israel,



BY FREDI WINKLER

After two years of corona limitations, it now appears as though normalcy is returning worldwide. The Resurrection at Easter, as well as the Passover in Israel, can once again be celebrated, practically without restrictions.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the most important events in the New Testament, and the foundation of the Christian faith. Matthew, Mark and Luke each dedicate three chapters to these events in their Gospels, while John devotes a total of eight chapters. In the additional five chapters, John describes Jesus' last speeches to His disciples, in which He once again really increases the depth, breadth, length, and height of their faith in Him. There we en-

ter into the "Holy of Holies" of the Christian faith.

When Jesus spoke of His death and departure from this world during the Last Supper with them, the disciples' hearts were apparently receptive to spiritual matters. Still, Jesus added: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). Only the resurrection opened their eyes to the true view of those things which transcend the understanding of the natural man.

Where exactly did Jesus speak of these profound truths to His disciples? This question comes up because Jesus said after the Last Supper: "Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31b). Some believe that He spoke about these



things on the road from Mount Zion down into the Kidron Valley. But does that even seem possible, given the narrow streets in this city, and the fact that its religious leaders were hostile toward Jesus and looking to arrest Him? It can be assumed that Jesus and His disciples left the city as quickly and directly as possible.

How can we resolve this question, of minor importance though it may be? It has probably happened to you that you were visiting somewhere and said: “We have to leave now!” And then you stayed anyway because you were involved in a conversation that made you forget the time. Maybe that was the way it was. In any case, it is hard to imagine that Jesus talked about such profound spiritual truths as they walked through the city in the dark of night. Far more reasonable is the idea that all of it took place in the intimate and sheltered atmosphere of the Upper Room. In addition, chapter 17 is an intimate spiritual prayer, in which

Jesus speaks to His Heavenly Father in a moving and very personal way.

The next chapter tells us: “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples” (John 18:1). The “going forth” can refer to the city or the house in which they were. Anyway, these last discourses of Jesus seem to fit best if they were spoken in the Upper Room, where the Passover took place. However, of greatest importance is the spiritual message that the text wants to convey to us, not so much the external circumstances.

Nonetheless, it is of interest to see these places of Biblical events with your own eyes. Now, after two years of restrictions due to Covid, it is again possible to visit the Holy Land, and for that we thank the Lord.

Grateful that the corona crisis is now decreasing, I greet you warmly with Shalom,

Tracy Winkler



Israel, the Church, and the Nations – Part 4

NORBERT LIETH

A redemptive-historical and prophetic interpretation of
Romans 9–11.

Although Israel rejected their Messiah and God (Rom 10), Romans 11 shows us the Lord's "nevertheless."

THE LORD'S "NEVERTHE- LESS

The Apostle Paul writes: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more

grace: otherwise work is no more work" (vv. 1-6).

This passage is reminiscent of a parallel in Hebrews 4:8-9: "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

Over the course of its history, Israel had failed to enter into a time of rest because of its disbelief and disobedience. Nevertheless, a sabbath rest remains for the people, which I believe indicates the messianic kingdom.

Paul gives four arguments on why God has not completely cast out His people.

1. The divine "Certainly not." "God forbid" should truly suffice. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and

The Hebrews who believe in Jesus are therefore the true Israel of our day. They are all saved by grace and not by works.

shall he not make it good?” (Num 23:19). It could well be that Paul is leaning on Psalm 94:14 in his rhetorical question: “For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.”

2. The Apostle Paul’s threefold testimony.

- a. He is an Israelite
- b. descended from Abraham
- c. from the tribe of Benjamin. If God had cast out His people, Paul could not have been saved. His salvation is evidence that there is still a remnant in Israel.

3. God’s faithfulness. “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” In verse 29, Paul reemphasizes that “God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable” (NIV). In His essence, God is unconditionally faithful: “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he

cannot deny himself” (2 Tim 2:13).

4. History. Even Elijah thought that the entire people of his time had fallen away. But God responds that He had kept 7,000 men who had remained faithful. Likewise, the believing portion of Israel from the Apostle’s time to the present day, is a remnant that God has preserved for Himself. The Hebrews who believe in Jesus are therefore the true Israel of our day. They are all saved by grace and not by works. These are the ones of whom Paul says: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16).

Although the Church is one body, that body is made up of Jews and nations. The believing Jews within this body are the Israel of God. According to Scofield, there is a sevenfold

At the time of Jesus' incarnation, the remnant was made up of John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and "all them that looked for redemption" (Luke 2:38).

"remnant" in Israel's history. God has shown them His loyalty throughout the ages.

1. In the days of Elijah, there were 7,000 (1 Kings 19:18).

2. In Isaiah's time, it was the "very small remnant" for whose sake God spared the nation (Isa 1:9).

3. During the Babylonian captivity, there were individual Jews such as Esther, Mordecai, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

4. At the end of the Babylonian captivity, a remnant returned to the land under Ezra and Nehemiah.

5. At the time of Jesus' incarnation, the remnant was made up of John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and "all them that looked for redemption" (Luke 2:38).

6. During the Church Age, the remnant is made up of

Jews who believe in Jesus (Rom 11:4-5).

7. In the future, during the Great Tribulation, a remnant from all over Israel will convert to their Messiah (for example, the 144,000 sealed as firstfruits, followed by others). Revelation is, among other things, the book of Israel's restoration and the conclusion of all the prophetic promises. Paul later refers to this final remnant of Israel in Romans 11:25-26.

THE ELECTION

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith,

Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away. I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (Rom 11:7-12).

This passage makes three fundamental assertions:

1. Almost doesn't count. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." The people of Israel sought salvation in the wrong place; namely, in obedience to the Law instead of obedience to Jesus through faith (Rom 9:31; 10:3). What's worse, they haven't been convicted to a better path, but their behavior

has hardened them. Paul uses harsh words to describe their position: hardened, dazed, blind, deaf, recompense, snare, trap, stumblingblock, darkened, bowed.

In the parable of the four soils, the Lord Jesus was speaking of just this circumstance: "And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth ... Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see

with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt 13:4-5, 13-15).

This shows us what can be missed by not believing in Jesus.

2. Bullseye. At the same time, however, the present segment of believing Jews in the Church is a remnant by choice. “But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded” (Rom 11:7b). “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (v. 5). The disciples were already part of this believing remnant of Israel. That’s why, in the parable of the four soils, Jesus said of them, “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt 13:16).

There is a great mystery in all of this: the unbelieving part of Israel was responsible for

their own stubbornness, even though it was foretold, “their eyes they have closed” (Matt 13:15). But the believing part chose Jesus and belonged to the elect. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29).

3. The further goal beyond it. God achieved a further goal with this event in Israel: “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?” (Rom 11:11-12). Israel wasn’t destined to fall, and yet it had to happen. This isn’t a contradiction in divine omniscience and planning; God used Israel’s fall to reach the nations with

the Gospel and make one body of Jews and Gentiles. But if their fall has already meant wealth to the nations, how much more then their restoration in the messianic kingdom! “Fullness,” therefore, refers to all of Israel, which will be saved in the end (v. 26). And when all of Israel is saved, an unimagined stream of blessings will flow through the world of nations.

THE PINNACLE OF SERVICE

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” (Rom 11:13-15).

“Their eyes they have closed”
(Matt 13:15).

The Apostle explains three facts:

1. The high purpose of his ministry.

Various translations express it as follows: “I magnify mine office.” “I magnify my ministry.” “I take pride in my ministry.” The Apostle to the Nations honored his ministry by placing Jews and Gentiles on the same plane, thereby inciting jealousy among his fellow kinsmen (v. 14). The aim wasn’t to vex them, but to save some through it: “through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy” (v. 11). He hoped that the conversion of the Gentiles would cause



many of his fellow Jews to open their eyes to their own lost state.

2. Paul clearly sees Israel's rejection in the current age of salvation. Israel has actually been placed to the side right now. This people is no longer God's instrument of salvation. That function belongs to a new people: the Church, consisting of Jews and the nations. The Apostle explains elsewhere that this was a great mystery that had been previously unknown (Eph 3:3; Rom 11:25). Paul himself goes so far as to say that he now regards everything that had been of value to him in Judaism as loss: his circumcision, his lineage, his observance of the Law, his Jewish zeal (Phil 3:2-9).

3. Paul can also see the people's future re-adoption as a nation, and the blessings this brings to the whole world. Israel's rejection is only temporary, and pertains to the present time. It will later be abolished (v. 25ff.). He com-

pares what happens then to resurrection from the dead.

Paul is an example for us in these three issues:

1. In our ministry, we should also remember the spiritual situation of the Jewish people. This burden should be included in our prayers and in our message. It's a tragedy when the Old Covenant is imposed and made binding in churches.

2. We must soberly recognize Israel's condition. We must not abandon the Israel of the present, but we must also not fanatically extol it. Israel must not become our idol. There's no need for us to believe that Jewish rituals are of spiritual help to us. Paul attacked Judaizers very harshly (Phil 3:2), and even called them "evil workers."

3. But we must not lose sight of Israel's future either, and should refer to it again and again.

(NA11021/1196)



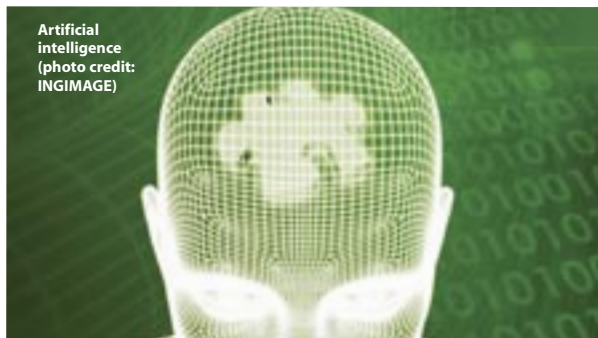
On the Horizon



ISRAEL

Global Future of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is one of the foremost fields of technology currently being explored, and while there is no doubt its advancement will greatly benefit humanity, the rampant innovation taking place comes with a host of ethical, humanitarian and legal concerns.



AI is going through its Wild West era, and Israeli regulators are working to promote the fledgling technology's development while creating sensible safeguards to protect citizens from the potential misuse of its enormous power.

Cedric Sabbah, the director for emerging technologies at the Office of the Deputy Attorney-General for International Law and a main contributor to the task force's operations, said the international conversation on AI regulation was set off a few years ago upon the release of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's AI Principles, which provided an intergovernmental standard for AI policies.

NEWS IN
BRIEF



TURKEY/ISRAEL MEETING CONDEMNED

The Hamas terror group condemned Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's meeting with President Isaac Herzog, but avoided calling out its longtime patron by name.

Ankara has long supported Hamas, playing host to officials in the terror group and even reportedly granting them citizenship.

Herzog's trip to Turkey was the highest-level visit by an Israeli official since former prime minister Ehud Olmert went to the country in 2008. In the intervening years, tensions between Israel and Turkey rose substantially, especially after the 2010 Gaza flotilla incident.

But the two sides have subsequently begun a rapprochement, as Turkey, beset by economic troubles, has sought to end its international isolation by normalizing ties with several countries in the Mideast region.

-timesofisrael.com
10 March 2022



Since the OECD sparked the global AI conversation, Israel has joined several international initiatives created to develop standardized AI regulation, including the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) and the Ad-hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI), which is run by the Council of Europe. Israel joined the CAHAI as an observer state.

Despite Israel's position in these international forums, it still has a vested interest in ensuring that the global standards being developed don't unduly hamper innovation, which is a key facet of the country's DNA.

"We need to think about what it actually means if we create an international law obligation to have explainability, because a broad explainability obligation might be difficult to translate in practical and certain terms," Sabbah said.

"Right now we have an opportunity to voice an opinion and to try and collaborate and join voices with other states who have other interests," said Tal Werner-Kling, senior director of the international technology law division at the Office of the Deputy Attorney-General for International Law.

-www.jpost.com, 7 March 2022

Commentary: To establish international rules and regulations relating to AI is a must. How to implement such laws and regulations is being fervently discussed among the elite

in the field of AI.

The other reason is fulfillment of Bible prophecy, which is decisive. When reading Revelation 17, we notice in verse 12 the mentioning of "ten kings." These are the diabolical entities in charge of planet earth. Verse 13 emphasizes, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." World unity is required for the final fulfillment; namely, the manifestation of Antichrist.

While there is much speculation regarding the geopolitical identity of the ten kings, we know they are non-earthly entities, because verse 14a reads, "These shall make war with the Lamb." There is no power on earth that can make war with the Lamb. Nuclear bombs, missiles, fighter planes, tanks, cannons, and guns are totally useless.

The late Dr. Ed Vallowe wrote the following in his book, *Biblical Mathematics* (now out of print), about the number ten: "This is a number of testimony." He adds: "God gave the Ten Commandments to man for him to bear testimony before God and man." Then he shows examples: "There were ten plagues upon Egypt... Abraham prayed for ten righteous people..."



Having said this, we must reiterate that this development in and of itself is not evil; actually, very beneficial for humanity. But as believers, we know that in the end, it will serve to unite humanity



under the leadership of Antichrist, who will proclaim himself to be God. 7708

(See *How Democracy Will Elect the Antichrist*, Item #1064, \$17.95.)

 **UKRAINE**

Israel Provides Virtual Hospital for Refugees

Israel’s Sheba Medical Center is spearheading a groundbreaking medical mission that is bringing telemedicine technologies to the aid of refugees.



Sarit Lerner, chief technology officer of Sheba Beyond, the virtual hospital of Israel’s Sheba Medical Center, flew to Moldova with an initial delegation of 15 physicians, medics and paramedics from Israeli voluntary emergency response organization United Hatzalah.

United Hatzalah has sent many emergency teams to disaster sites abroad, including in Surfside, Florida, last June.

Israeli technologies, including the TytoCare remote exam kit, allow Sheba’s physicians to lend their expertise in the field without leaving the medical center in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan.

“This is the first time I know of that a humanitarian mission is adding extraordinary value to the first responders there,” says Dr. Galia Barkai, director general of Sheba Beyond.

“Sarit took with her the technology that brings all of Sheba’s excellent clinicians and specialists to the war zone.”

“The world has changed to be more open to using telemedicine technologies,” Barkai tells ISRAEL21c.

“I see the trip as a true representation of us all,” Lerner said. “We have a responsibility to utilize the information and capabilities that we possess in order to help others in need and provide humanitarian assistance to our fellow people anywhere in the world.”

-www.israel21c.org, 28 February 2022

Commentary: How true! The world has changed, continues to change, and will do so until total cooperation is established. Israel’s medical science sector is one of the leaders in the world. When it comes to high technology, Israel is definitely climbing the ladder toward global domination.

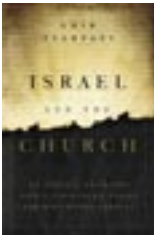


Sarit Lerner, CTO of Sheba Beyond, on her way to help Ukrainian refugees. Photo courtesy of Sheba Medical Center

Here again, we see the Jews are different. They can go back to Father Abraham, of which is written in Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." We know, of course, that this blessing refers to the coming of God the Son, who proclaimed, "I will build my church."

Why medical aid to Ukrainian refugees? "We have a responsibility to...provide humanitarian assistance to our fellow people anywhere in the world."

Regarding foreign aid provided by Israel, Wikipedia says: "Since the inception of its foreign aid programs, the Israel Foreign Ministry reports that as of 2020, Israel has provided international humanitarian aid to over 140 countries or territories, including states with no diplomatic relations with Israel." 7711



(See *Israel and the Church*, Item #2376, \$16.99.)

NEWS IN BRIEF



\$1 BILLION FOR ISRAEL'S IRON DOME

After months of delay due to internal political disputes, the US House of Representatives approved an additional \$1 billion in funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system.

The money will fund interceptor missiles for the system, many of which were used to defend the country during last year's conflict with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian terror group fired over 4,300 rockets at Israel in the space of 11 days, and Iron Dome reportedly intercepted 90 percent of those heading to populated areas. It was also used in previous rounds of fighting with Gaza.

The supplemental Iron Dome funding was folded into the \$1.5 trillion omnibus spending package needed to keep the government running for the full fiscal year. Also included in the bill is the \$3.8 billion in defense aid for Israel in line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed by former president Barack Obama in 2015.

-timesofisrael.com
10 March 2022



EUROPE

Israeli Gas Pipeline Talks Revive

Europe’s natural gas shortage, which has pushed prices to multi-year highs, has revived talk of the EastMed pipeline—a Mediterranean Sea pipeline that could carry gas from Israel to European customers, Chevron Chief Executive Michael Wirth said at the CER-AWeek energy conference.

Israel. The European Union committed €657 million (\$716 m.) to connect the electricity networks of Cyprus and Greece in January, which was panned as the first step in forming the EuroAsia interconnector—which will eventually link the power grids of Israel, Cyprus, Greece and Europe. Further, the Karish gas field will connect to the Israel National Gas Line, the CEO announced in March.

-*www.jpost.com*, 8 March 2022




The Leviathan gas platform pictured in the Mediterranean Sea.
(photo credit: ALBATROSS)

Commentary: Europe’s energy shortage presents an excellent opportunity for Israel to make up for at least some.

Energy prices have risen quickly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and subsequent sanctions by world powers. A Google search reveals that Russia has the world’s largest natural gas reserves, with 24.3% of the world’s share, followed by Iran at 17.3%, Qatar 12.3%, and the USA 5.3%.

We are reminded of the prophecy in Isaiah 60:5: “Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” 7710

(See *The Coming Oil Storm*, Item #2248, \$13.99.)

 The EastMed pipeline, meant to transfer natural gas from Israeli waters to Europe via Greece and Cyprus, was announced in 2016, and several agreements have been signed between the three countries on the subject. They aim to complete the €6 billion (\$6.54 b.) project by 2025, but no financing has been secured for it as of yet.

The EastMed pipeline is not the only new energy initiative being developed in



BAHRAIN

Agreement with Israel in Health Sector

Israel and Bahrain signed a program for cooperation in the health sector during Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz's visit to Manama.



Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz at the signing of a cooperation agreement with Bahrain (photo credit: HEALTH MINISTRY)



The program deals in cooperation in the field of coping with pandemics and medical emergencies, research and development in health, information sharing, digital health, medical innovation and genetic research.

"We have so much to learn from one another and the cooperation we agreed to today is for the benefit of all citizens from both nations," Horowitz stated.

"This shows the significance and the sheer strength of international peace and cooperation," he added.

The cooperation deal between Israel and Bahrain comes hours after Emirati Ambassador to Israel Mohamed Al Khaja announced a free-trade agreement between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Jewish State is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

-www.jpost.com, 9 March 2022

NEWS IN BRIEF



FIRST POLIO CASE SINCE 1989

Raising fears of a possible outbreak, a four-year-old Israeli child from Jerusalem tested positive for polio after it was revealed he was not vaccinated against the life-threatening disease, the Health Ministry said.

Head of Public Health Services Dr. Sharon Elroy-Preis held a special press conference where she stressed the importance of parents continuing to follow normal vaccination programs in order to safeguard their children from the disease.

Polio is a highly infectious disease that invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis within hours. While there is no cure, it can be prevented by vaccine, the World Health Organization has said. The Israeli toddler may remain paralyzed in half of his body as a result, N12 reported.

-jpost.com
6 March 2022



Commentary: Cooperation between Bahrain and Israel is beneficial for both nations, and indeed a contributor toward “strength of international peace.”

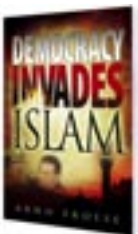
This island country located in the Persian Gulf, has a population of over 1.5 million, of which almost half are immigrants. Religiously, 73.7% are Muslim, with 9.3% Christian. Life expectancy is 79.7 years, which is quite remarkable.

For Israel, this is significant because across the water from Bahrain lies Iran, Israel’s declared enemy. But it is equally beneficial to Bahrain because of Israel’s high-tech know-how, particularly in the medical innovation and genetic research fields.

The *CIA Factbook* lists Bahrain’s arable land as only 2.1% of the country. Needless to say, Israel’s highly sophisticated agricultural technology — getting the most produce out of the least water — is extremely beneficial.


Besides, with Israel’s friendship, Iran has an additional enemy — for whoever is friends with Israel is their enemy. 7709

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



3 Jailed for Spreading ‘Zionist Christianity’

Three Christian converts from the northern city of Rasht in Iran have been summoned to begin prison sentences for “spreading Zionist Christianity,” according to a recent report by Article 18, a London-based non-profit organization that describes itself as dedicated to the protection and promotion of religious freedom in Iran and advocating on behalf of its persecuted Christians.

 The three converts received between two and five year sentences for “acting against national security” and attending a house-church, according to the report.

The Christians are all members of the non-Trinitarian “Church of Iran.” They were first arrested in February 2020 and released on bail. Over the past year there have been several court cases and, in September 2020, their appeals were rejected.

According to a separate report by Israel Today, “the Islamic authorities in Tehran closely link faith in Jesus as the Messiah with the Jewish hope of national restoration” and therefore has started to crack down on Christian converts.

Iran, however, has the fastest growing Christian communities in the world. According to a report by Operation World,



Assyrian Church in Tehran (photo credit: WIKIMEDIA)

Evangelical Christianity is growing at a rate of nearly 20% a year in the country.

-www.jpost.com, 10 March 2022

Commentary: Attending a house-church is considered “acting against national security” by Iranian officials, the article states. This is primarily due to Christian support for “the Jewish hope of national restoration.”

One cautious thing to note is these Christians being part of the “non-Trinitarian Church of Iran.” The website for the UN Refugee Agency states:

Sources indicate that some non-ethnic Iranian Christians do not believe in the Trinity (*Senior Researcher* 21 Feb. 2014; Denmark and Norway Feb. 2013, 18). According to the President of Iranian Christians International (ICI), there are some groups who present Christianity through an Islamic lens, such as the “Jesus-only group,” who does not believe in the Trinity (26 Feb. 2014). The Danish and Norwegian fact-finding mis-

NEWS IN BRIEF



NY HATE CRIMES UP 400%

Antisemitic hate crimes were up 400% in February, according to new data released by the New York Police Department.

According to the NYPD, there were 56 hate crimes against Jews in February 2022, compared with 11 in February 2021.

Many of these incidents targeted Orthodox people dressed in distinctive clothing, like the Jewish man who was punched in Bed-Stuy on February 7 while walking on Shabbat. A 15-year-old was charged with assault and committing a hate crime in that attack.

In another incident in February, Bronx resident Frank Abrokwa, 37, was accused of spitting on a Jewish man’s face, calling him an “f—ing Jew” and threatening to kill him.

-jpost.com
9 March 2022



sion similarly states that “many of the house churches in Iran are non-Trinitarian which means that they believe in ‘Jesus only’” making them “quite different from established Protestantism” (Feb.2013, 15, 18).

-www.refworld.org

While we abhor the persecution of Christians and those of other minority religions in such places as Iran, one positive thing is, “Evangelical Christianity is growing at a rate of nearly 20% a year in the country.” The Church of Jesus is growing mightily in areas where it seems the most bleak, proving that suffering often contributes to stronger faith, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:5).

May the Lord strengthen the believers and the Word continue to spread despite these hardships.



7714

(By K. Farmer)

(See *ISIS, Iran, Israel and the*

End of Days, Item #2283,

\$15.99.)



ISRAEL

How Many Jews Believe in Jesus?

There are nearly 300 Messianic fellowships in Israel, according to a book published by the Caspari Center of Jerusalem.



A picture of a menorah intended to explain the object’s symbolism is actually a Messianic image in which the menorah’s branches were described as symbolizing the “cross” and “resurrection.”

(photo credit: Screenshot from Facebook/JTA)



The book took three years to produce, from 2018 to 2021, according to an interview the authors conducted with the website Israel Today. The book updates a previous survey, “Facts and Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel,” which was published in 1999.

Israel Today defines itself as a “Jerusalem-based Zionist news agency founded in 1978 to bring a biblical dimension to journalism on Israel.”

Israel Today presented the high-level data that can be found in the work, including that there are 280 confirmed fellowships in the



country. Of the 273 fellowship the authors managed to reach, there were 15,323 people who worshiped there, including 8,125 adults over the age of 18 who believe in Jesus.

The minority (42%) are Hebrew speakers. The rest (58%) speak either Russian, Amharic [spoken by Ethiopians], English, Spanish or Romanian.

However, the majority (55%) of members in these fellowships are Jewish or at least one grandparent is Jewish, the book showed.

-www.jpost.com, 19 February 2022

Commentary: Precise numbers are virtually impossible to determine, since many who believe practice “Nicodemusism”: they will not publicly confess belief in Jesus, but privately do. That many Israeli Jews believe in Jesus is not a surprise but relatively well-known. Some do not wish to be identified as Christians, due to the negative experience with the historic church and its documented persecution of Jews.

The fact that a number cannot be established is prophetic, because numbers for the true Church—the body of Christ, born-again believers—cannot be confirmed either. There is no organization, no movement, and no reliable data about Christians, but we do know they are global and can be found in every country on planet earth. Christians do not have a government or headquarters. Actually, we don’t even have a permanent earthly address.

Our permanent one is the heavenly one. True believers have become citizens of heaven, and thus regard their present nationality and address as temporary. 7704

(See *The Sure Foundation of the Church*, Item #1066, \$18.50.)



NEWS IN BRIEF



PLANT-BASED SALMON FILET

The world’s first fully plant-based whole-cut salmon fillet could be on your fork in 2024.

This bold move from Israeli foodtech startup Plantish comes at a time when concerns about overfishing, antibiotics, hormones, mercury and microplastics are driving a worldwide wave of interest in plant-based and cultured alternatives to conventional fish.

The Rehovot-based startup is developing a proprietary additive manufacturing technology to 3D-print a lookalike, taste-alike salmon fillet analog at low cost and high scale.

This fillet is designed to contain the same protein, B vitamins and omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids as real salmon but without toxins (or bones!).

-israel21c.org
1 March 2022



Passover



“Then He said to them, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer’” (Luke 22:15).

By David Phillips *COO (Chief Operating Officer)*

Passover is one of the most important Jewish holidays of the year, and it is no different in the Ebenezer Home; our dear residents await this day. It’s a time to remember what God has done in liberating the people of Israel, consecrating and preserving them as His own. It’s a time for retelling the actual Passover story and how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt.

For Jewish believers, it is also a special time to remember Messiah Yeshua’s death and resurrection on this holy day.

Identifying and understanding the symbolism and ways in which Passover points to Yeshua, will infuse your Passover with rich

meaning—whether you are Jew or Gentile.

At the Ebenezer Home, just as with many families, we will eat a special ceremonial meal known as the **Seder**, which commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. We use a book called the Haggadah (literally meaning “narration”), which relates the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

On the Seder table is a special plate containing certain symbolic foods:

- A roasted egg—symbolizing the special sacrifices that were brought into the temple.
- A roasted shank bone—recalling the special Passover lamb offered and eaten in temple times.



- A mixture of chopped apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon known as charoset—symbolizing the mortar that the Hebrew slaves in Egypt used to make bricks.

- Sprigs of parsley and lettuce—symbolizing spring.

- Bitter herbs—symbolizing the bitterness of slavery.

- And salt water—recalling the tears shed by the Hebrew slaves in Egypt.

Three sheets of matzah are placed on the table, traditionally marking the division of the Jewish people into priests, Levites, and the general population.

For believers, it also symbolizes God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The middle matzah (“the Son”) is broken in half and hidden for the children to search for (a Pesach game). This is very symbolic, as the Son’s body was broken on the cross for our sins. Most of the children of Israel are still searching for this missing “piece...”

The Passover Seder continues with a child asking (or with the Ebenezer family, our youngest resident Ron, 73, asking this question): “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

An elder replies: “Tonight is different because we remember that our people were slaves in Egypt under Pharaoh, and our God brought us out with strength and the might of His hand.” He continues, “If God had not brought us out, we would still be slaves.”

As believers, we can also add: “This night is different because our Master and Savior Yeshua died for us, paid the price and shed HIS blood for atonement once and for all, the most significant sin offering throughout history.”

This night is different because He wanted so much to celebrate with His disciples, and He wants to celebrate with His redeemed (those who have accepted Yeshua’s gift of salvation) in His coming kingdom!

The cleaning, the preparations, and the cooking bring us into a fes-

EBENEZER HOME



tive atmosphere, and we all can't wait to be together and celebrate.

Yes, this night will differ from other nights. We will have to be more careful because of Covid, but we at the Ebenezer Home understand we are one year closer to being able to celebrate together with our Master Yeshua, in His kingdom!

This month's donations will go toward the building and renovation project, to enable us to keep a place for our senior brothers and sisters—until the glorious day when we will all be celebrating in heaven with Yeshua.

As we say here, may we celebrate together next year in the Heavenly Jerusalem—together with all of you who pray for and love us!



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“And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days” (1 Kings 3:14).

BY ARNO FROESE

God revealed Himself in Solomon’s dream. The next verse starts, “And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream.” Yet, it wasn’t a dream we normally have, but verse 5 clearly states, “In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night.”

It is of interest that the most glorious king with unsurpassed wisdom did not follow the instructions God had given him. Based on Wikipedia, Solomon died at the age of 58-59, not even 60 years old. His father David did not reach an advanced age either; he died when only 70.

This is the first expiration date, even for modern man today. It is confirmed in the prayer of Moses: “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psalm 90:10). That is 70-80 years.

Today, according to Worldometers.info, global life expectancy stands at 73.2 years.

Do we have evidence that those who keep themselves to the Word of God live longer? The answer is no. The countries with the longest life expectancy are of different religions:

1. Hong Kong	85.3 years	57% non-religious, only 4.5% Protestant
2. Japan	85.0 years	69.2% Shinto, 66.8% Buddhist, 1.5% Christian
3. Macau	84.7 years	62% traditional Chinese religions,

		2.2%
		Protestant
4. Switzerland	84.3 years	41.8%
		Catholic,
		33%
		Protestant
5. Singapore	84.1 years	40%
		Buddhist,
		7.1%
		Catholic,
		3.9%
		Protestant

An article published in the *Jerusalem Post*, in collaboration with the Samson Assuta Ashdod University Hospital, was headlined: “Israel’s life expectancy is higher than average, international data shows.” The report comes from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), headquartered in Paris, France, with an Australian Secretary-General, Mathias Cormann. Below are excerpts from the article:

For the past two years we’ve complained about our healthcare system, fearing that it would collapse under the demands of the pandemic, so the following figures may surprise you.

According to [a] report, the average life expectancy of an Israeli man has

increased in recent years and is almost three years longer than the average among men in OECD countries (81 in Israel compared to an average of 78.3).

The report shows a few more important things about the Israeli lifestyle. For example, the rate of alcohol consumption here is significantly lower than the average of the organization’s countries, standing at 3.1 liters per year, just over a third of the 8.8-liter average among the other countries of the organization, making it one of the lowest in the OECD.

Another measure in which Israel excels is the suicide rate. This alarming number did increase in 2019, standing at 6 per 100,000 people. However, this rate is only about half of the OECD average, which stands at 11.6.

The rate of doctors active per thousand people is about 9% lower than the average in OECD countries and stands at about 3.3 doctors per thousand people. The rate of nurses per thousand people is one of the lowest in the OECD with five nurses per thousand.

The rate of beds for general hospitalization in Israel is also relatively low compared to other countries that are members of the organization (fourth from the bottom of the list), standing at about 2.2 beds per thousand people, compared to an average of 3.5 in the OECD.

"OECD data faithfully reflect the state of the health system in Israel, which shows excellent results, but with relatively low resources," said Health Ministry Director-General Prof. Nachman Ash.

-*www.jpost.com*, 3 February 2022

This is most unusual, considering that Israel is surrounded by hostile countries—expecting war to break out at any moment. The major threat comes from Hezbollah in the north, and in the south, Hamas. Yet, the report card by the prestigious OECD shows Israel to be well off: secure, enjoying peace and pros-

perity, and quite amazingly, reaching the average of 83.5 years, according to Worldometers.info (US 79.10).

But, that's not the end; we read the following in Isaiah 65:19-20: "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." That is Israel's real future, yet to come. (NF)



"I will bless them that bless thee..." (Genesis 12:3).

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