

# NEWS FROM ISRAEL

October 2022

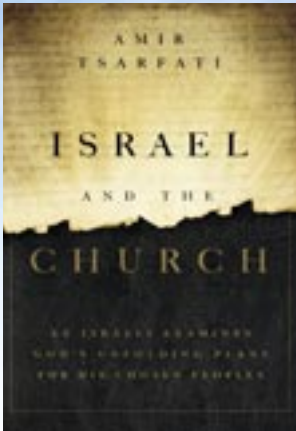
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## Does Israel Have a Future?

— Part 4

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# Dear Friends of Israel,

BY FREDI WINKLER

**A**mid the growing political cooperation between Israel and moderate Arab states, Abraham is often invoked. The agreements reached are therefore called the “Abraham Covenant” or “Abraham Accords.”

It is of interest that Abraham is often mentioned in the Koran and plays a central role. However, Islam regards Ishmael, and not Isaac, as the son whom God demanded Abraham to sacrifice as a test of faith and obedience. The Muslim world commemorates it at the Feast of Sacrifice, one of Islam’s most important holy days. This is extremely problematic.

It seems that this disturbing circumstance does not particularly bother the Jews, even though the Koran thus promotes Muslims as

being heirs of all the promises and blessings that God had given to Isaac, the “Son of Promise”—including the pledge of a specific land. And this is what renders the whole situation so difficult.

Although God blessed Abraham’s other descendants due to his persistent pleas (Genesis 17:25-26), He established His covenant with Isaac (verse 21). From this we see that the conflict with the Palestinians is not merely a territorial dispute, but goes way beyond that. Ultimately, it is a religious conflict that does not just impact the Palestinians, but beyond them, the whole Islamic world. In the deepest sense, it is about the question: which is true, the Koran or the Old Testament?

Abraham, according to Genesis 12, set out to reach the land of



Canaan. He, as well as Isaac and Jacob, would later live there as strangers. After that, the Israelites lived in Egypt for centuries, until they left to take possession of the Promised Land. But possession of the Promised Land is a story of ups and downs and has not been fully fulfilled to this day. Its complete fulfillment is still in the future.

God's demand of Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22 is one of the most incredible and difficult to understand stories in the Old Testament. Probably none of us would have passed the test. But Abraham passed it, because he had learned to trust God completely and not to ask questions when God demanded something of him.

The place where Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac to God, is of extraordinary importance. At that time, Abraham lived in Beersheba. In Genesis 22:4 we read: "On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar." If you walk from Beersheba to Jerusalem, you will arrive there on about the third day. Tradition has it that Abraham built the sacri-

ficial site on the hill of Moriah, the place where Solomon later built the temple. And in verse 2, God tells Abraham to go to the land of Moriah. Therefore, we can say that this place—which later would be of such central importance—was chosen by God Himself. For it was the place where God would give His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Seen in this light, we can also understand God's extraordinary demand of Abraham.

After Abraham had passed the test, God said: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen 22:18). Later, the Apostle Paul explains in Galatians 3:16 that the "seed" does not mean Isaac or the people of Israel, but Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, the greatest Son of Israel, the blessing has come to all nations.

Grateful for Abraham's obedience and the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom God's blessing came to all people, I greet you warmly with Shalom.

*Trevor Winkler*



# Does Israel Have a Future? – Part 4

BY NORBERT LIETH AND JOHANNES PFLAUM

The Apostle to the Gentiles and the “God of Israel”

**I**ronically, it is Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 2:7-8)—also described as a “teacher of the Gentiles” (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11)—who explains Israel’s fundamental position in God’s plan of salvation in his letter to the Romans.

Martin Luther called Romans, “truly the most important piece in the New Testament.” In it, the Apostle proclaims that a righteous God justifies ungodly sinners through the wonderful plan of salvation. The epistle states that man is not justified by works of the law but by Jesus’ sacrifice; and that the work of Jesus Christ brings more glory to God and more blessings to mankind than was ever lost through Adam’s sin. He goes on to show that grace enables a sanctified life that had never been possible under the Law.

The Letter to the Romans is the New Testament foundation of our faith. And it’s precisely in this letter that Paul writes extensively about Israel. In chapters 9—11, he uses a special es-

say to explain God’s dealings with and plans for Israel and the nations. In the midst of his explanation of Israel’s incomplete rejection, the Apostle emphasizes: “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostles of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office” (Rom 11:13).

The Apostle to the Gentiles uses one fifth of the Letter to the Romans to testify to the Gentiles that Israel has been permanently chosen. No Jewish Apostle (such as Peter) proclaims Israel’s position in God’s plan the way that Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, does. It’s as if he wanted to especially impress this on the Gentiles in his role as Apostle and teacher. Paul never says that the Old Testament promises to Israel were transferred to the Church.

Therefore, it is to our shame that we have lost sight of Paul’s doctrine about Israel over the centuries. We have forgotten that our history didn’t originate with replacement, but with grafting. There are also parallels



Paul is also a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. If Israel had been rejected, then he shouldn't have been able to believe in the Messiah.

with the story of Ruth in the Old Testament.

Ruth was a Moabite, a Gentile. Since the Moabites were proven enemies and deceivers of Israel (Numbers 22–25), a Moabite removed by up to ten generations was forbidden from entering the Lord's temple (Deuteronomy 23:3-6). Yet along came Ruth, a Moabitess, who found refuge among the people of Israel: even becoming a member of David and the Lord Jesus' family tree! In Ruth 2:12, she is admonished never to forget that she has taken refuge under the wings of the God of Israel. Remarkably, it does not just say “of God” or “of the Lord,” but expressly emphasizes who this God is that is giving her refuge as a heathen and a Moabite woman; namely, the God of Israel.

From an Old Testament point of view, access to the living God

is only possible through His covenant people, Israel. Gentiles outside of Israel are considered unclean. Then, in the New Testament, the miracle happens: Christ calls a Church from both Gentiles and Jews that has direct access to the God of Israel. Because of this, the Church of Jesus should never forget that it has found refuge under the wings of the God of Israel. Paul takes up this theme in Romans 9–11.

Paul uses a variety of arguments to prove that God has not forsaken His people, especially in Romans 11. It is striking how much effort the Apostle puts into stressing that Israel is not permanently rejected.

### **FIRST ARGUMENT**

“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..." (Rom 11:1-2a).

That little sentence, "God forbid," in the original Greek expresses horror that such a thought could even be entertained. Paul uses the phrase ten times in Romans regarding completely different topics. For example, Romans 6:15: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

Then Paul presents himself as an argument. He is also a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. If Israel had been rejected, then he shouldn't have been able to believe in the Messiah.

Paul also emphasizes that a number of Israelites were hardened (Rom 11:7) and their branches broken out of the cultivated olive tree (Jer 11:16), because of their unbelief (Rom 11:20). But this also had a purpose for the nations in redemptive history. And, even in "this present time," God has preserved a remnant (Rom 11:5).

Elsewhere, Paul calls this believing remnant "the Israel of God."

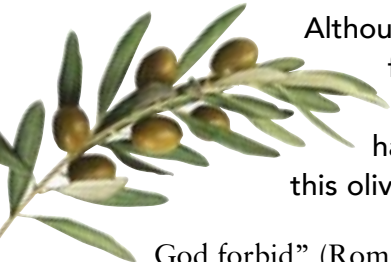
## SECOND ARGUMENT

Paul explains in Romans 11:11 that Israel didn't stumble that it should fall—that is, to stay on the ground, completely disconnected and unable to be restored. "God forbid" to that as well! Rather, the deeper meaning lies in allowing the Gentiles to receive salvation:

"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."

## THIRD ARGUMENT

The Apostle goes on to explain that God hasn't forsaken Israel. As early as Romans 3:3, Paul brought up the superlative fact that Israel's unfaithfulness does not annul God's faithfulness. God does not repay in kind: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"



Although Jewish branches were broken off from the olive tree of Israel due to their unbelief, those from the nations that had become believers were grafted into this olive tree as wild olive branches.

God forbid” (Rom 3:3-4a). And now in Romans 11 he emphasizes:

“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?” (v. 12). The Apostle doubles down in verse 15, saying:

“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?”

- As surely as Israel’s temporary fall came, there will be a restored fullness of Israel.
- As surely as there was a temporary rejection, there will be a re-acceptance.

Through Israel’s fall, Paul experienced fruit among the Gentiles like no one else. He also prophetically foresaw the bless-

ings that Israel’s spiritual restoration will bring to the Gentiles in God’s future millennial kingdom on earth.

### **FOURTH ARGUMENT**

Paul doesn’t end his argument there, but continues by declaring:

“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches” (Rom 11:16).

The firstfruits are to be understood as the Israel of its first days—the time of the Patriarchs—as well as the Israel that arose in Egypt, which God chose and set apart for Himself, saying: “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex 19:6). This means that if Israel was holy (set apart for God) in the past, it will also be holy in the future.

Likewise, the comparison of the root and the branches expresses that there was—and will be—a blessed beginning for Israel, ending in holiness.

Zechariah speaks about the future Israel in the messianic kingdom of God on earth: “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness Unto The Lord” (Zech 14:20a).

#### FIFTH ARGUMENT

Then Paul offers the example of the olive tree. In it, although Jewish branches were broken off from the olive tree of Israel due to their unbelief, those from the nations that had become believers were grafted into it as wild olive branches. This doesn't mean that the nations have become Israel, but that they now share the promises with Israel (cf. Eph 2:19; 3:6). In addition, Paul announces that God can very well graft the Israelites who later believed back in as natural branches (Rom 11:17-24).

The olive tree also refers to the Fathers of Israel (the Patri-

archs), from whom the Jewish nation later sprouted like branches. If we as the nations were grafted into the olive tree (that is, the faith of Abraham), then we are actually related to Israel (v. 19). In Romans 4:16, Paul says that Abraham “is the father of us all.”

The Church in Rome also consisted of Jewish and Gentile Christians, with the Gentile Christians elevated over the Jews. So Paul exhorts them:

- “Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee” (v. 18b). In Romans 15:12, Paul makes it clear that Christ is the root. He is the root of both Israel and the believers from among the Gentiles who were grafted into the olive tree (Jesus is also the Shepherd and the Stone of Israel—Genesis 49:24—and the Rock upon which Israel lived in the desert season—1 Corinthians 10:4). For this reason, the Lord will accomplish His purpose with Israel as well as with His Church. Any rejection of Israel having a future is thus invalid.

Christ Himself pointed out that salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22b). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the origin of the Gentiles' blessings.

- “Be not highminded, but fear” (v. 20b).
- “Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (v. 22b).

But over the centuries, these warnings were ignored. Instead of heeding them, Replacement Theology was instituted, and Israel was rejected by Christians.

Therefore, at the end of time, nominal (institutional) Christianity will be rejected and perish in the anti-Christian kingdom. But the true Church will be raptured beforehand, and then all of Israel will be saved and thus grafted in again. Thus, Paul's statement is also a prophetic warning (v. 21).

### SIXTH ARGUMENT

Later, the Apostle emphasizes that Israel remains “beloved” with respect to election for the

sake of the Fathers, because God's gifts and callings are irrevocable (Rom 11:28-29). With these words, Paul refers to the one-sided, indissoluble covenant with Abraham, which we will cover later.

### SEVENTH ARGUMENT

Finally, Paul reveals a mystery (Rom 11:25-27); namely, that Israel is suffering a partial hardening until the full number of the Gentiles has entered the spiritual body of Christ. After that, all Israel shall be saved—no longer just a part, as in the present time (v. 5). Thus, Israel's rejection is temporary and never permanent.

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written [Isa 59:20-21], There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away un-

godliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom 11:25-29).

"Zion" isn't a place that can be in any other part of the world but Israel alone. When the full number of the Gentiles has entered the body of the Church, it will be caught up from the earth. After that the Lord will return to Zion, save Israel, establish the New Covenant with them, and remove their sins. Since this hasn't yet occurred, we await the prompt fulfillment of these statements in living hope.

If God's covenant with Abraham cannot be invalidated (cf. Gal 3:17), this also means that it is still yet to be fulfilled in the future. However, since God's covenant with Abraham refers to the earthly people of the

land of Israel (Gen 15; 17), it will inevitably be fulfilled there as well.

The prophetic book of Revelation also draws attention to the fact that the Lord will return to Zion: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev 14:1).

It's evident that this statement doesn't mean a heavenly Zion but an earthly one, due to John emphasizing that he heard a voice from heaven twice in this chapter. When John hears a voice from heaven, it means that he is not in heaven but on earth. Accordingly, he sees Jesus' return on the earthly Mount Zion. Later, beginning with verse 14, John describes seeing the Lord coming on a cloud to judge the earth. This also makes it clear that the Lord means earthly Zion is where He is returning (cf. Zech 14:4).

"And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the king-

In the end, God will extend His mercy to the Jews as He did to Gentile Christians.



dom shall be the Lord's" (Obad 21).

Thus, in Romans 11:26-27, the Apostle Paul (quoting Isaiah 59:20-21) confirms that the Lord will return to Zion in glory to save all Israel (Rev 14:1; Isa 59:20; Ezek 36:33; Ps 14:7).

In the end, God will extend His mercy to the Jews as He did to Gentile Christians.

- We once did not believe, yet experienced mercy.
- They currently do not believe, in order to experience mercy in the future. God used every-

thing together to have mercy on all (Rom 11:30-32).

Paul can only worship at this revelation, at this wisdom of God concerning Israel and the nations.

The fact that God uses all of Israel's failures in such a way that only blessing arises in the end—and all of this about Jesus Christ—causes the Apostle to worship. And worship is how he concludes this section (Rom 11:33-36).

(NAI0322/1227)



# On the Horizon



## ISRAEL

### Aquaculture Can Relieve Global Food Crisis

It might not sound very tasty, but researchers at Tel Aviv University and Haifa's Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research Institute (IOLR) have developed an innovative method for growing an unlimited amount of seaweed boosted with vitamins, minerals, healthful carbohydrates, proteins and dietary fiber for both human and animal needs.



**Layout of the land-based, outdoor aquaculture system as was stationed at the IOLR Institute.**

(photo credit: DORON ASHKENAZI)



The research was led by doctoral student Doron Ashkenazi, under the guidance of Prof. Avigdor Abelson from Tel Aviv University's School of Zoology and George Wise Faculty of Life Sciences, with Prof. Alvaro Israel of IOLR. The article was published under the title "Enrichment of nutritional compounds in seaweeds via abiotic stressors in integrated aquaculture" in the scientific journal *Innovative Food Science & Emerging Technologies*.

## NEWS IN

## BRIEF



### OFF-GRID CLEAN ENERGY

**G**lobal telecommunications giant Vodafone has deployed an Israeli-developed zero-emission fuel cell technology in Romania as part of a pilot project aimed at powering remote cell towers.

The British-based firm operating in 21 countries partnered with GenCell, an Israeli company, as well as Romanian solar tech pioneer Simtel. Together, they successfully tested an off-grid power solution at a rural mobile site in Romania.

Known as the GenCell FOX alkaline fuel cell, the innovative technology generates electricity using liquid ammonia, an energy-dense and carbon-free hydrogen carrier. The only byproducts of power generation are water, nitrogen and heat.

-[themedialine.org](http://themedialine.org)  
31 August 2022





Seaweed is a rich food source that meets all human nutritional needs, the team noted. In that way, it is reminiscent of the biblical manna that fed the ancient Israelites in the desert. It will also be possible to use the enriched seaweed for other health industries, for example as nutritional supplements, as medicine and in the cosmetics industry.

“Seaweed can be regarded as a natural superfood, more abundant in the necessary components of the human diet than other food sources,” Ashkenazi added.

“Technologies of this type are undoubtedly a model for a better future for humanity, a future in which humans live happily and peacefully and in good health in their environment.”

-[www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com), 1 September 2022

**Commentary:** Research originating from the land of Israel is not surprising at all. They have, they are, and they will lead when it comes to identifying food production possibilities.

Which country eats the most seaweed? The Republic of Korea is the largest consumer of seaweed foods. Koreans provide the basis for an industry that harvests 6 million tons worldwide annually, at a value for more than \$5 billion.

Here we are reminded of Exodus 16:14-15: “And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.” This speaks of supernatural intervention by God on behalf of His people, Israel. Now, Israel is showing

the world the nutritional value of something that is available in abundance: seaweed.

7838

(See *Israel's Threefold Exodus*, Item #1088, \$14.50.)



## SOUTH KOREA

### Samsung Buys Israeli Auto Tech

A Samsung subsidiary has acquired an Israeli tech startup that developed a radar-based monitoring system to track the health and vital signs of vehicle occupants.



Harman, Samsung’s audio electronics company, said in an



announcement that it bought Netanya-based startup Caaresys to expand its automotive product offerings and “offer new levels of in-vehicle safety, comfort, and well-being in its growing product line.”

The Israeli company says it has already partnered with leading automakers to integrate the sending device into the manufacturing process.

Harman, originally an American company bought by Samsung Electronics in 2016 for some \$8 billion, develops connected products and services for automakers, consumers, and enterprises.

Harman previously acquired three Israeli startups in the past 10 years: Ramat Gan-based iOnRoad, which develops augmented reality (AR) for cars; Hod Hasharon-based Red Bend Software, which enables cars to be connected to the cloud; and Kfar Saba-based TowerSec Automotive Cybersecurity.

-[www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 6 September 2022

**Commentary:** South Korea’s Samsung is among the world’s largest producers of electronic devices. One would think that the latest electronic technology would come from that country. Not so; Samsung’s Harman continues to acquire Israeli startups. Quite naturally, Israel will continue to produce startups that attract the world’s attention, with no end in sight.

“Why Israel?” many ask. Here Proverbs 9:9 is fitting: “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.” 7832

(See *The Remarkable Wisdom of Solomon*, Item #2223, \$12.99.)



## NEWS IN BRIEF



### SWISS MILITARY USING ISRAELI DRONES

The Swiss Air Force is looking toward future threats with its new fleet of Hermes Starliner unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) manufactured by Israel’s Elbit Systems.

The six UAVs will be based out of Emmen Air Base near the city of Lucerne and the fleet will be fully operational by the end of 2023.

Switzerland bought the six UAVs, known in Switzerland as ADS-15, in a deal worth some \$290 million in 2015 to replace the Ranger ADS-95 that were decommissioned after 20 years of service.

The drones were purchased not only for future conflicts, but also for reconnaissance missions that would support ground forces and border forces including dealing with illegal infiltrations into the country.

-[jpost.com](http://jpost.com)  
8 September 2022



## ISRAEL

### Rare First Temple Ivories Unearthed

A team of Israeli archaeologists has unearthed an extraordinary collection of ivory plaques from the First Temple Period—the first of their kind to be found in Jerusalem, the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA) announced.



According to Prof. Yuval Gadot, who heads Tel Aviv University's Archaeology Department and was one of the excavation directors, the findings are "remarkably significant" and likely belonged to a very well-connected person.

"Ivories are really the elite art of the ancient world," Gadot told *The Media Line*. "We knew of ivories in other capitals at the time, like Samaria or earlier in Megiddo, but we never found anything like this in Jerusalem [before]."

Following the death of King Solomon circa 930 BCE, the Israelites were split between two kingdoms: the Kingdom of Israel in the north and the Kingdom of Judah in the south.

Dr. Yiftah Shalev, an archaeologist at the IAA and one of the excavation's directors, told *The Media Line* that the ivories showcase the prestigious status of Jerusalem during that period and "put the capital of the Judean Kingdom more or



**Some of the ivories discovered in the assemblage, which contains no fewer than 1,500 fragments.**

(Eliyahu Yanai, City of David)

less at the same rank as the capital [of the Kingdom] of Israel."

The findings further show that the palatial structure where they were uncovered was one of the main administrative quarters of Jerusalem during the First Temple period. It is located very close to the Temple Mount itself and as such might have housed priests or ministers.

In addition to the ivory plaques, archaeologists found jars with vanilla-spiced wine and decorated stones and wooden objects, and a seal impression carrying the name "Natan-Melech servant of the king," a tantalizing find suggesting that it could belong to the same Natan-Melech who is mentioned in the Bible (2 Kings 23:11) as an officer of King Josiah.

*-themedialine.org, 5 September 2022*



## NEWS IN BRIEF



### AI-POWERED VIRTUAL LIFEGUARD

**C**oral Smart Pool was founded in 2015 by entrepreneurs Eyal Golan and Dr. Tamar Avraham, and is named after Coral Sheri, an 11-year-old Israeli girl who fatally drowned with her friend Or Koren in the private swimming pool of her Sayon home in 2014.

Coral uses sensors and above-pool and underwater cameras to continuously monitor people in the pool and detect signs and movements of drowning using artificial intelligence (AI) and computer vision. It comes with a separate home unit that can receive alerts and an accompanying app that can view inside the pool.

Coral is launching its newest device, Mylo, touted as a “virtual lifeguard” for residential swimming pools. Mylo can detect two types of drownings, said CEO Shadie Bisharat. “One where people sink to the bottom—like young children—and one where they show signs of distress, or pre-drowning.”

-timesofisrael.com  
1 September 2022

**Commentary:** The word “ivory” appears 13 times in our Bible, the first time in 1 Kings 10:18: “Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.” The last time ivory is mentioned is when the Bible pronounces judgment upon “that great city Babylon,” which we understand to be Jerusalem. That will be the end of the world’s economy: “And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men” (Revelation 18:11-13).

While these archaeological findings are significant, we notice how little is left that can be identified as the Jerusalem of old. This reminds us of Jesus’ words about the temple compound: “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:2b).

While there remains an abundance of archaeological evidence—even great walls, amphitheaters, roads, and aqueducts—to be found all over Europe, there is virtually little to nothing left of the glorious temple that once stood on Mount Moriah. 7835

(See *What About the Third Temple?* Item #1091, \$4.50.)





## ISRAEL

### Tourism Back to Pre-Pandemic High

As summer gradually draws to a close, a report from the Tourism Ministry shows that Israel’s hot (and lately rocket-heavy) weather this year hasn’t put a damper on incoming tourism. In fact, the tourism industry is on its way to record highs, currently falling only 22% shy of 2019’s record numbers.



The sharp dip from July 2019’s recent record of 322,800 was a clear casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a devastating effect on tourism around the world—a phenomenon from which Israel was not exempt.

“Everyone in the tourism industry was hanging by a thread,” said Mark Feldman, CEO of Ziontours. “We let go of 95% of our staff, similar to many other places. A few hotels kept a skeleton staff running, just because it would have cost them more to fire them.”

Regardless, after an arduous period, the tourists are finally coming back, and based on the pace of entries so far, the ministry estimates that the anticipated annual total for incoming tourism in 2022 will range between 2.2 to 2.5 million people—again about half of 2019’s 4.4 million.

*-www.jpost.com, 9 August 2022*

**Commentary:** Not all are happy. Mark Feldman, CEO of Ziontours, states: “The Israeli government said ‘close the skies down,’ and that lockdown resulted in the Omicron variant coming to Israel much later than the rest of the world, which pushed us back even further.” Yet, Israel’s quick and strict enforcement—closing down the country by air, sea, and land—paid off. Statistica reports corona-related deaths per one million population, with Peru being the worst at 6,481 deaths, USA 3,099, and Israel only 1,204.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2019. Post-pandemic estimates have seen rapid growth. That means significantly more international tourists will spend their money in other countries. For 2019, the global tourism industry was listed as an \$8.9 trillion business, with the top five destinations being: 1) France: 90 million; 2) Spain: 83.7 million; 3) USA: 79.3 million; 4) China: 65.7 million; and 5) Italy: 64.5 million.

Those who have traveled often to Israel find it rather difficult to imagine that in 2019, 4.4 million



**JEWS PRAY at the Western Wall on Jerusalem Day. The Kotel is the most visited site in Israel, according to the Tourism Ministry.**  
(photo credit: YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90)

people visited Israel. How this country can handle such a volume of tourists is nothing short of amazing. According to [cia.gov](http://cia.gov), Israel, with a population of about 9 million, has at its disposal barely 22,000 square kilometers. France, with a population of 68.3 million, has an area covering over 643,000 sq. km.

What we know from Scripture is that after the Great Tribulation – which will reduce the world population dramatically – the remnant of the nations is ordered, under the threat of no rain, to pilgrimage to Jerusalem: “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zechariah 14:16-17). 7829

(See *Experiencing Israel*, Item #2367, \$29.99.)

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### FIRST AUTONOMOUS GROCERY STORE

For the first time ever in Israel, supermarket shoppers will now be able to pick their groceries off the shelves and walk out without having to stand in line to pay, thanks to Shufersal’s new autonomous grocery store.

Located near the Tel Aviv beachfront, the new 1,080 square-foot Shufersal store is powered by Israeli startup Trigo, which also works to operate autonomous grocery stores in the UK, Germany and the US.

Using AI-powered computer vision and off-the-shelf hardware, Trigo transforms existing supermarkets into fully autonomous and digital frictionless stores. The company then applies its proprietary algorithms to ceiling-mounted cameras which automatically learn and upload anonymized shoppers’ movements and product choices.

*-jpost.com*  
8 September 2022





## Part 2: The Testimony of Rivka (Rebekah) Lazarocici

\*I wrote this testimony in Rivka's words: please understand that her native language is not English.

**By David Phillips** *COO (Chief Operating Officer)*

### **God Answers Prayer in Mysterious Ways**

Later, I received a great blessing when the Lord worked in a miraculous way through the government demolishing our house (as we didn't own it, it was the property of the state). They gave us another house to live in ... and guess what? The very family I had been searching for lived right next to our new place! The Lord moved us right next door to them!

Meanwhile, after I returned from Bucharest, my parents noticed that something had changed within me. I didn't have a Bible, but I had the brochures the believers in Bucharest had



given me with the Gospel of John. So, I read those and memorized about 10 chapters, because that's all I had. Anyway, my parents soon caught me with the brochures and threw them away; they now understood that something was indeed "wrong" with me. When I had first come home from Bucharest, I explained to them that this family were





believers, but they didn't do anything. It wasn't until they saw I had changed that they started to check on me and the trouble began. They would examine the letters that I wrote to the believing girl in Bucharest, Adriana, and things became very bad for me.

### **Persecution from My Family Begins**

On Sundays when I didn't have studies, I would attend the meetings when my mother wasn't home. One Sunday, I went to this family to read a little from the Bible. As they were preparing to go to the meeting, they asked me to come with them. I wanted to go, but I was afraid, so I went back home. When I came home, my mother knew where I had been, so she started beating me. This is only a small example of what believing Jews have to go through, when their family doesn't understand them accepting Yeshua the Messiah ... yet it's quite normal that they don't understand.

It's a long story and I won't go into all the details, but it was very difficult for me, as I no longer had the possibility to go to the meetings.

### **Making Aliyah (Immigrating) to Israel**

One day, my parents decided to immigrate to Israel, so they fulfilled all the requirements and completed all the forms. We had to wait 6 years before we received approval to go to Israel. My parents thought, "Finally, all this rubbish will disappear; she will be in Israel, and everyone there is Jewish." "Nobody there," they thought, "believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, so it was going to be alright with me."

But, as we know so well, the Lord is everywhere—especially in Israel—and He had a special gift waiting for me when I arrived. He performed many, many miracles to preserve me along the way; one being that I had to attend a school in Haifa



to study Hebrew, which meant that I had to leave my parents' home.

When I left Romania, I had memorized the address of one couple: Jewish believers who came from Romania and were now living in Israel. After arriving in Haifa, I wrote to this couple and explained that I was living near Haifa. I was looking for other believers to fellowship with, so they asked some Jewish believers in Haifa to come visit me. This couple took me to the assembly in Haifa, and on August 29, 1964, I was baptized.

### **Jewish Believers in Israel**

In Israel, our assembly meets on Shabbat (Saturday), and I was baptized in the Sea of Galilee in Tiberias. Because this was a public beach, many people were there to swim, including a journalist. He was a very serious journalist in Israel, and wrote an article about my baptism that Shab-

bat. To this day, I still have a copy of this article from 1964. In the article, he shared that the Messianic Jews living in Israel were about 250 total. Thank God, now in 2022, we estimate that the Messianic Jews number about 35,000-40,000 people. I say this is the estimation, because often when a Jew accepts Yeshua, they are completely excommunicated from their family, so some keep their faith a secret. But these secret believers are estimated to be in the thousands. This is why it's really hard to know just how many Jews have accepted Yeshua here in Israel.

Toda LaEl (thank God) I no longer know all the believers in Israel: I'm very glad about that, because in 1964, I knew nearly all the believers ... This is the best proof of multiplication.

I thank the Lord that He was and is very, very faithful. I wasn't so faithful, but He held my hand through it all. I am priv-



ileged to belong to a Bible-believing assembly and to be able to live here in the Ebenezer Home. I am looking forward to and awaiting His soon coming!

Rivka is considered a Holocaust survivor by the German government (even though she was born 6 months before the end of the war). Her father was the only one in her family required to work in the camps, and survived. She went on to share much more.

I would like to close with Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Our sister Rivka has given us permission to ask you all to uphold her in prayer, as she is facing some very challenging health issues and must decide soon which treatment options, if any, she will accept. So, please keep her in your prayers, especially during these coming days, weeks, and months.



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“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11).

## BY ARNO FROESE

When reading the 12 Minor Prophets, we notice the repeated threat of judgment upon Israel due to their idolatry. Amos exposes Israel as a sinful kingdom, in danger of being destroyed from the face of the earth. But that’s not the end. The last 12 words of verse 8 declare, “I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord.”

Restoration is the key, based on God’s mercy, long-suffering, patience, and kindness. It arises from His deep love for His people, so that in the last verse we read: “And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them,

saith the Lord thy God” (verse 15).

An interesting headline in a past issue of *Foreign Policy* caught our attention: “The Million Missing Israelis.” Here is how the article begins: “Over more than six decades of statehood, successive Israeli governments have repeatedly stressed the centrality of Jewish immigration and the Law of Return of all Jews to Israel for the well-being, security, and survival of the nation. Yet while much is published on Jewish immigration to Israel, considerably less information is available about Jewish emigration from Israel” (foreign-policy.com, 5 July 2011).

Of all the reasons for Israelis to emigrate, there is one that

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stands out: opportunity. Having a European passport, for example, literally opens the world to you. With a US passport, Israelis can mingle with almost as many Jews in the US as in Israel.

The article continues: “One survey found close to 60 percent of Israelis had approached or were intending to approach a foreign embassy to ask for citizenship and a passport. An estimated 100,000 Israelis have German passports, while more are applying for passports based on their German ancestry. And a large number of Israelis have dual nationality, including an estimated 500,000 Israelis holding U.S. passports (with close to a quarter-million pending applications).”

The other, more important reason is Israel’s calling. Deuteronomy 7:6 reads: “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself,

above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” Note the words, “above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” That puts the Israelis in the leading position on planet earth.

Deuteronomy 15:6 adds: “For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.” The desire of many Israelis to go overseas, quite naturally prepares them to deal with those nations in the future. They will actually “lend unto many nations.” That’s when the world economy will not be dominated by China or the USA, but Israel.

This gives us a wonderful picture of the Church of Jesus Christ, which is commanded by the Lord to go out to foreign lands: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19). The purpose? To preach the Jewish gospel, thereby preparing a people as willing ambassadors for Jesus—all in order to build a new nation on planet earth: the Church of the living Christ. Note, however, we are not above the nations. We are in this world, but we are not of this world.

The Israelis, however, are testing the ground, so to speak. They will one day have to deal with the nations. Thus, this is part of the preparation: Israeli Jews literally going into all the world.

Israelis are truly an international people. They have been gathered from all five continents—from virtually all the nations of the world—to the land of Israel. But there is an unspoken problem: once an immigrant arrives in the new country, they are often deeply disappointed, because they miss the “flesh pots of Egypt.” They are

quick to focus on the negative aspects of the new country, thinking that things were better in their country of origin. This natural tendency can only be fully comprehended by those who have experienced leaving behind one’s country, family, relatives, and friends—often businesses and property as well. In olden days, however, there was no alternative; once you left your country for overseas, you rarely if ever had a chance to return.

In Europe after the Second World War, millions upon millions of foreign workers landed in Germany, making money helping to rebuild the country. But, according to research, the overwhelming majority returned to their home country. In most cases, it was a matter of simply driving or buying a train ticket.

Back to Israel: the most obvious reason for the return to the country of origin or to a third country can be sum-

marized with the words, “opportunity beckons.” However, in the end, it is the Spirit of God who draws His people to Israel. It is that same Spirit who sends Israelis all over the world in preparation for what is to come.

In conclusion, Revelation 7 speaks of the sealing of twelve tribes of Israel, numbering a total of 144,000. That’s the time when they will recognize the Messiah. Being sealed, they are untouchable for the enemy. It is of interest

that after Benjamin was sealed, a great global revival takes place: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (verses 9-10). (NFI)



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