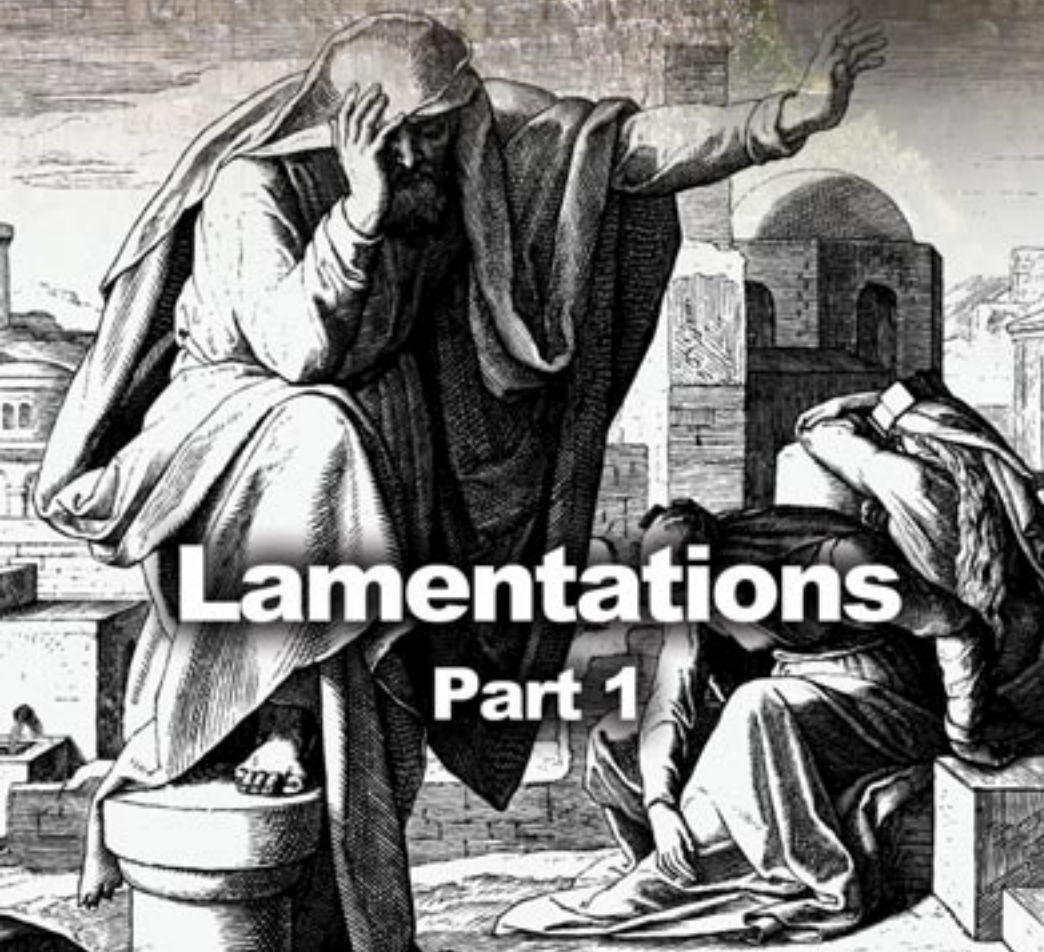


# NEWS FROM ISRAEL

November 2023

\$2.25



## Lamentations

### Part 1

Second Temple Era Aqueduct Uncovered P. 14 • Highest Cost of Living in OECD P. 16

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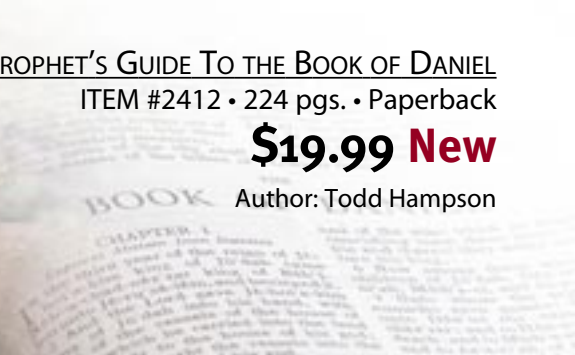
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*By Thomas Lieth*

It's no coincidence that Jeremiah has been dubbed the "weeping prophet," since it literally tore his heart in two to see his beloved people marching straight to their own ruin. God had constantly called for repentance through His prophets, but His messengers reaped nothing but contempt.

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## Dear Friends of Israel,

**BY FREDI WINKLER**

**T**he Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman announced his ambitious plans for his country and the entire Middle East, in a speech lasting just one and a half minutes. He said that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States would be completely changed within the next five years. The next thirty years would be the years of the Middle East. Thus, the region should become the new Europe in the coming years. This is his very personal campaign—he doesn't want to die until he sees all of this 100% fulfilled. US President Biden supports this grandiose plan, and Israel under Prime Minister Netanyahu is also involved.

An alternate transport route to the congested Suez Canal is to be established. To achieve this, a railway is to be built that runs from Haifa on the Mediterranean Sea through the Jezreel Valley, or the Valley of Armageddon, to the Jordan Valley and Jordan. From there, to Saudi Arabia and Dubai on the Persian or Arabian Gulf.

However, this plan—which is promising also for Israel, in that it would mean a “normalization” of relations

with the Arab States—has a drawback. Saudi Arabia, and of course the other Arab States, demands that Israel find a solution to the conflict with the Palestinians.

Israel anticipates a great deal from the so-called “Abraham Accords,” the agreements or alliances with Arab States. Already now Saudi Arabia allows Israeli planes to fly over their country, which shortens flights to India and the Far East by a few hours, thus making them less expensive.

Should the port of Haifa and the railway line to the border of Jordan become part of such an important international transport route, this will certainly be of greatest interest to Israel from an economic point of view. And Israel will no doubt be willing to make concessions for this.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, the Bible speaks about the sudden beginning of the end-time, and states it will not take place before there is talk of peace and security. This is one of the very difficult passages in Scripture. What exactly does it tell us? A worldwide peace, or



only a regional peace in the Middle East between the Arabs and Israel? Ten or fifteen years ago, no one would have believed that such a thing was even possible; namely, Israel and Arab States concluding agreements and alliances with one another.

One thing is clear: The Israeli/ Palestinian conflict is by now the longest existing dispute without a solution in sight. Perhaps this very promising project, backed by the Saudi Crown Prince and rich Saudi Arabia, with all its weight and fortune, will influence the Palestinians to give in and come to an agreement with Israel. The Palestinians are really incapable of running a State, financially as well as in many other aspects. They are dependent on constant donations and support from outside—especially from the wealthy Gulf States and, of course Saudi Arabia.

The whole idea of changing the Middle East into a new Europe seems to us like a fantasy. But what did the Lord say about the end times? People will buy and sell ... meaning that world trade must continue.

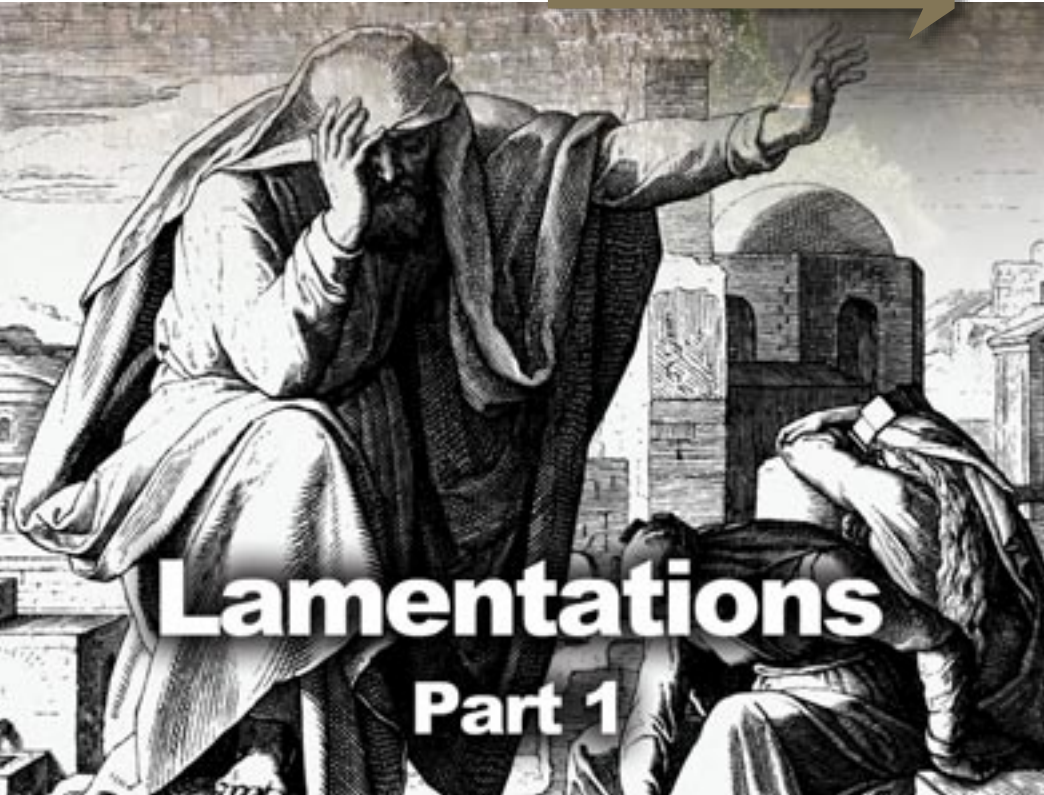
United in paying attention to His Word and in waiting for Him, I greet you warmly with Shalom,

*Tracy Winkler*

**Addendum:** The dramatic events at the border of the Gaza Strip in Southern Israel, which unexpectedly erupted on the Sabbath of October 7th, require an added comment reflecting on the current situation. The fact that Hamas in Gaza succeeded in surprising Israel to an unbelievable degree, shows how absolutely wrong the situation has been evaluated in this country and how inadequate the intelligence service has been.

The events are of such staggering magnitude that it will take time to get an objective picture of the situation. For the first time since the 1973 Yom-Kippur War, Israel has now declared the attacks as war, which means that martial law is in effect. It is hard to assess what the consequences will be. Will the war bring an end to the Hamas regime in Gaza? Will it harden the fronts between the radical and moderate states in the Middle East even more? Will it bring the moderate states that are opposed to Iran closer together? Does the freedom vision of the Saudi Crown Prince still have a chance?

In any case, this event is a big step closer to the end-time events spoken of in the Bible, of which Jesus said: “Take heed ... but do not be afraid! For it will happen, but it is not the end.”



# Lamentations

## Part 1

BY THOMAS LIETH

What the book means for Israel, and for us today.  
An overview.

In the original Hebrew, the book of Lamentations is called *Ekaḥ* for the first word in the book. It is less formally referred to as *Qinot* due to its content—a word meaning “dirges” or “laments.”

The dismay of lamentation is often expressed in our translations as “woe” or “alas,” but the beginning of chapters 1, 2, and 4 shows despair at the state of Jerusalem by expressing the extent of its ruin.

The book has only five chapters, and its structure and writing style alone are worth exploring in detail. But I'm going to limit myself to the content and historical setting of this extraordinary book. Although the author is unnamed, a great deal of evidence suggests that the prophet Jeremiah was inspired and charged by God to write Lamentations.

No other prophet felt and experienced his people's suffering as intensely as Jeremiah. He was an eyewitness to the consequences Jerusalem was reaping for its godlessness. He witnessed its siege and simultaneous famine. He saw the holy city being taken, possessed, and destroyed by the Babylonians. And he saw God's dwelling place, the temple, burned and laid waste. Jeremiah pleaded with the people to repent for fifty years but was met with rejection, culminating with an attempt to assassinate him.

It's no coincidence that Jeremiah has been dubbed the "weeping prophet," since it literally tore his heart in two to see his

beloved people marching straight to their own ruin. God had constantly called for repentance through His prophets, but His messengers reaped nothing but contempt. And whoever despises a messenger despises the one who sent him. Consequently, the people weren't rebelling against Jeremiah or any of the other prophets; they were rebelling against God Himself. As Jeremiah 22:21 says, "I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, 'I will not listen.' This has been your way from your youth, that you have not obeyed my voice." And now, when it was almost entirely too late and judgment had fallen on this unrepentant people, Jeremiah called Israel's guilt worse than the sins of Sodom (Lam 4:6).

Yes, God's judgment was long overdue. Israel had broken God's covenant and trampled on it. The prophet Moses had already prophesied on God's behalf, "But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God ... then all these curses shall come upon you

Jeremiah must have seen the inhabitants of Jerusalem starve during the siege.



and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field” (Deut 28:15-16).

If we read further in Moses’ prophecy, we see how this curse was to be wholly fulfilled. God is not mocked. Although He allows time and space for repentance, due to His long-suffering, kindness, and mercy, there comes a point where He stands by His Word—both His promises and His judgment, both blessing and curse.

God doesn’t forget the ones who serve Him and who have done good, yet He also doesn’t forget those who disrespect and dishonor Him. More than a hun-

dred years after the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom had been wiped out by the Assyrians, the Babylonians were now moving into Jerusalem. This book of *qinot* is primarily a lament describing the burial of the once exceptional city.

“All who pass along the way clap their hands at you; they hiss and wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem: ‘Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?’” (Lam 2:15).

Jerusalem’s fall was an incomprehensible shock for the Jews, who had believed that God would never permit this city—the heart of the entire nation and joy of the whole earth—to fall into the hands of Gentiles. Micah 3:11b says, “Is not the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us.” What a deceptive assumption: “The crown has fallen from our head; woe to us, for we have sinned!” (Lam 5:16).



## CHAPTER 1: THE LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

The first song begins with an expression of outright dismay: “How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave.”

What a vibrant and impressive city Jerusalem had been! And what’s more, it housed the greatest sanctuary, God’s dwelling place among His beloved people. Jerusalem wasn’t just any city; it was called the City of God, and rightly so, since God Himself had chosen Jerusalem and had the temple, His earthly house, built there.

God, who alone is immortal—who dwells in impenetrable light and whom no man has seen nor can see (1 Tim 6:16)—wanted to be close to His people in that city and in that temple. It was in the form of the *shekinah*, the glory of God, which once preceded the Israelites in the pillar of cloud and fire during their wanderings in the

desert. It then settled in the tabernacle, and later in the temple. Even if Jerusalem wasn’t necessarily of preeminent importance to the nations, the city was and is—to the present day—constantly fiercely contested. Few places have seen more people come and go than this mysterious Middle Eastern city. Friend and foe alike came and went, and still come and go. Millions of people made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, especially on the high holy days such as Passover. But God put an abrupt end to that affair, which had once begun in great fear of God but ended in spiritual adultery: “The roads to Zion mourn, for none come to the festival; all her gates are desolate; her priests groan; her virgins have been afflicted, and she herself suffers bitterly” (Lam 1:4).

Because of Jerusalem’s status, the people had the misconception that this city, God’s city, was unassailable for the Gentiles. But God would rather have His sanctuary trampled underfoot by the heathen, than have His holy

Being far from God brings sorrow, and true consolation only comes from the Almighty. As Isaiah 51:12 says, “I, I am he who comforts you.”

name dishonored by the spiritual adultery of His people, priests, and kings. So God’s wrath was discharged against His people and His city. The reason for this terrible judgment is promptly supplied:

“Jerusalem sinned grievously; therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns her face away. Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her future; therefore her fall is terrible; she has no comforter” (vv. 8-9a).

Jerusalem has reaped what it has sown. God hasn’t turned away from His people, but His people turned away from God. Isn’t the same thing happening today? Just as Jerusalem in its boundless pride had completely misjudged the consequences of ignoring God’s Word and consciously living in sin, so people

today also misunderstand that sin leads to destruction, disaster, and strife, and will ultimately lead to both spiritual and physical death. “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23a). When we read on to Lamentations 1:16, we can see how Jeremiah identified himself with his people and city: “For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed.”

Jerusalem’s suffering is Jeremiah’s lament: “My eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me.” Being far from God brings sorrow, and true consolation only comes from the Almighty. As Isaiah 51:12 says, “I, I am he who comforts you.” This Comforter is the exact same one that the people have rejected. People who increasingly distance themselves from the only true Creator God, are sawing at the branch they’re sitting on. We

want to save the world, until we realize we're actually running toward ruin and need to be saved ourselves.

## **CHAPTER 2: JEREMIAH'S LAMENT AND GOD'S WRATH**

The second lament begins like the first, showing awe and dismay: "How the Lord in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger" (Lam 2:1).

The fate that has befallen the entire people is no accident, but springs from God's holy wrath. It's the result of ongoing spiritual adultery by the chosen people. In the first verses of this second chapter, we are confronted with the wrath that Judah, and particularly Jerusalem, will feel.

"The Lord has swallowed up without mercy all the habitations of Jacob; in his wrath he has broken down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he has brought down to the ground in dishonor

the kingdom and its rulers. He has cut down in fierce anger all the might of Israel; he has withdrawn from them his right hand in the face of the enemy; he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob, consuming all around" (vv. 2-3).

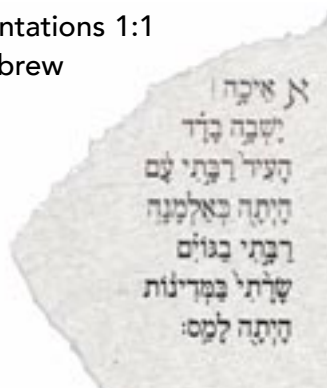
When we continue reading from verse 6, we see that God's wrath isn't just directed against the land, city, and people, but also against the kingship, priesthood, and sanctuary—and thus against God's house, the temple. What had formerly been the Lord's glory—this pillar of cloud that had settled in the temple—now became a cloud of wrath that poured over Jerusalem like a relentless storm. God's glory had long since departed His sanctuary. The prophet Ezekiel describes this dramatically: "Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house" (Ezek 10:18a). Further into the text, you can even read about God's glory leaving the city, literally paving the way for the Babylonians' unrestrained appearance.

Returning to Lamentations: “He has laid waste his booth like a garden, laid in ruins his meeting place; the Lord has made Zion forget festival and Sabbath, and in his fierce indignation has spurned king and priest. The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they raised a clamor in the house of the LORD as on the day of festival” (2:6-7).

All was lost: the city, the rulers, the kings, the priests, the law, the altar, the sanctuary, dignity and prestige, sheer existence, hope, joy, festivals—nothing was the same, but the worst thing was that they had lost God. If the people had become godless over the years, they were now rid of Him entirely.

“My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my peo-

### Lamentations 1:1 in Hebrew



ple, because infants and babies faint in the streets of the city. They cry to their mothers, ‘Where is bread and wine?’ as they faint like a wounded man in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out on their mothers’ bosom” (Lam 2:11-12).

This chapter is Jeremiah’s dismay at seeing no one spared from God’s wrath: not children, not the elderly, not infants, not nursing mothers. Let’s not forget that Jeremiah saw the inhabitants of Jerusalem starve during the siege. According to historical accounts, the events that occurred in the city must have been heartbreaking. It states in Lamentations

It is the human being who has distanced himself from God and has to live with the consequences, and this principle hasn't changed.

4:10, "The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food during the destruction of the daughter of my people."

What more is there to say? Haven't we also reached our limit? Aren't these the very kinds of events that make people doubt God, which lead people to accuse Him and ask, "Why are you allowing this misery? Where is God?" But God was no longer there. He had long since departed both His house and His city. All hell had broken out on earth, since God had long since withdrawn. But, apart from that, aren't the ones who reproachfully cry out to God in these situations, the very same ones who threw God out of His house, His temple, His city, and their hearts? Isn't it the ones who claim not to need God who want to reap the harvest without Him? Isn't it the ones who say, "We can save ourselves! We can do it!" who treat God's

Word with contempt? Aren't those the ones who aren't willing to repent and heed God's Word? Aren't they the same ones who think they can rule without regard for God? The ones who give themselves over to their lusts without restraint, disregarding everything that is holy to Him? Isn't it those who think themselves wise who have become fools (Rom 1:22)?

Shouldn't it instead be God who asks, "Where are you, man? Why are you allowing this misery?" Just as He once asked Adam and Eve after the Fall, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9). It is the human being who has distanced himself from God and has to live with the consequences, and this principle hasn't changed. I'm convinced that the more people—and in turn political and religious leaders—distance themselves from God, the more bewildered, confused, and helpless society becomes.

(NAI0822/1270)



# On the Horizon

NEWS IN  
**BRIEF**



**ISRAEL**

## Second Temple Era Aqueduct Uncovered

The stretch of the ancient aqueduct, which measures some 300 meters (roughly 1,000 feet) in length, was discovered during archaeological excavations of the area prior to the planned development of the settlement by the Municipality of Jerusalem. The municipality plans on building schools.



**Aerial view of the excavation of the Upper Aqueduct at Givat Hamatos.** (photo credit: Emil Aljam, Antiquities Authority)



Antiquities Authority excavation directors Dr. Ofer Shyam and Ruth Cohen note that the Jerusalem aqueduct was built to meet the ancient city's growing water demands.

"In the late days of the Second Temple, the city of Jerusalem grew significantly. The Temple had been rebuilt and the water that flowed in conduits and cisterns was no longer sufficient for the thousands of pilgrims and residents," they explain. "Water needed to be brought to the city from a distance."

So, in order to meet Jerusalem's growing need for water,

## UNESCO CLAIMS JERICO IN 'PALESTINE'

The United Nations World Heritage Committee voted to list the Tell es-Sultan archaeological site in Jericho as a "World Heritage Site in Palestine."

The newly designated site, located in Jericho in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, contains ruins dating back to the ninth millennium BCE. Jericho itself is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world.

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its disapproval of the decision, saying it saw the action as "another sign of Palestinians' cynical use of UNESCO and politicization of the organization."

Located in the Jordan Valley, Jericho is situated between the Jordan River to the east and Jerusalem to the west.

-cnn.com

18 September 2023

the Hasmoneans, and then King Herod, built two aqueducts to Jerusalem. One of the aqueducts, “the Upper Aqueduct” channeled water to the upper city, what is presently the Jewish and Armenian Quarters of the Old City. The other, “the Lower Aqueduct,” brought water to the Temple.

The aqueducts were remarkable feats of engineering, each traversing the roughly ten kilometers from Bethlehem Springs where the water originated to Jerusalem.

-*www.jpost.com*, 28 August 2023

**Commentary:** Whenever anything is connected to the second, or sometimes even the first temple, archaeologists in Israel proclaim it in large headlines. In olden times, the main water supply came from Bethlehem some 10 kilometers away. It is noteworthy that this is the birthplace of Jesus, the source of the water of life, who proclaims in the last book of the Bible: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

Today, the city on the hill is thirsty, and water is limited.

GlobalWaterIntel.com reports that Israel’s national water company had officially inaugurated a new municipal water system. This system

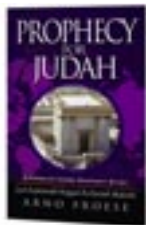
was launched in 1994. It is the fifth water transmission system, costing 2.5 billion shekels. It is estimated that sufficient water will be available for Jerusalem and communities until 2060. The new system—a pipe approximately 3 meters in diameter—will transport desalinated seawater to the capital and nearby communities. It is estimated that the project will be completed by 2026. CGEI adds: “In an era of a climate crisis that plagues the countries of the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, Israel has overcome the obstacles.”

Quite logically, this will become a model for the rest of the world. Water is a precious commodity, and countries located in hot climate zones will be at Israel’s doorstep asking for advice. Here we are reminded of Zechariah 8:23: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the

skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” 8095

(See *Prophecy for Judah*, Item

#1084, \$17.50.)





## NEWS IN BRIEF



## ISRAEL

### Highest Cost of Living in OECD

Prices in the Jewish state were 38% higher than the OECD average, according to the report released by the Paris-based group.



**Shopping at the Rami Levy supermarket in Modi'in, between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem** Photo by Yossi Aloni/Flash90

### SACRIFICE ATTEMPTED AT TEMPLE MOUNT

An Israeli citizen was arrested near Jerusalem's Old City after attempting to bring a sheep to the Temple Mount as a sacrifice.

The suspect is a religious activist of the Chozrim L'Har movement, which advocates against the "abandonment of the Temple Mount into foreign hands."

The man was detained by law enforcement officials after being located en route to the Mount.

Following the suspect's arrest, the Chozrim L'Har movement warned that "there is no more room for Muslim rule on the Temple Mount."

The organization vowed that sacrifices would resume soon and the Third Temple would be built on the Temple Mount.

*-jpost.com*  
1 October 2023



However, the monthly data for June of this year showed Israel falling to fourth in the cost of living rankings, with Switzerland at No. 1 followed by Iceland and Ireland.

Do Israelis make enough money on average to comfortably afford living in the country? The answer more often than not is, no.

This problem always becomes more apparent in the summer months, when many Israelis vacation abroad, and find, often to their chagrin, that prices in "expensive" European countries or in North America are lower than in the Jewish state. What makes this particularly problematic is that Israelis on average earn less than half of what Western Europeans or Americans earn for doing similar jobs.

This writer has Israeli colleagues and personal acquaintances who, fresh from returning from vacations in Western Europe and the United States, are seriously thinking of going to live there for a while.



And this is relatively easy for many Israelis to do, as a large percentage of the population holds dual citizenship, and those who don't are often able to find employment in understaffed fields.

-[www.israeltoday.co.il](http://www.israeltoday.co.il), 28 August 2023

**Commentary:** BuyItInIsrael.com writes: "...one of the few neighborhoods in the city where there is still a solid secular majority. In this neighborhood, the average cost of a 4-room apartment is NIS 4.06 million. The Old Katamon neighborhood, considered the stronghold of the national-religious elite, ranks third with an average price of NIS 3.93 million." In plain words, more than a million dollars. Explanation: a four-room apartment means between 2 and 2.5 bedrooms plus a living room. Apartments range from roughly 850-1,200 square feet.

We think there is another reason for Israel's high prices and their ability to travel the world; namely, Deuteronomy 15:6: "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."

8094

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



## SAUDI ARABIA

### Israeli Delegates Hold Prayer Service

Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi participated in a morning prayer service in Saudi Arabia, complete with a Torah scroll dedicated to the ruler of the kingdom as it strides toward normalization with the Jewish state.



**A member of Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi's delegation holds up a Torah scroll during a morning prayer service in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.**

(Spokesman's Office, Communications Ministry)



They also read from a small Torah scroll, provided by a "local Jew," according to Karhi's spokesman.

The scroll was wrapped in a felt cover, with stitching in English, Hebrew and Arabic reading "The Jewish Congregation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

"Just as the windows in the house of Daniel were opened facing Jerusalem, so too in Riyadh we were able to pray with windows open facing Jerusalem," said Karhi in a statement, referring to the biblical character exiled to Babylon.



Karhi also received an invitation to visit the Sikkah of Mohammed Saud, a prominent Israel supporter in Riyadh, Karhi's office said.

Saudi Arabia has no official local Jewish community, though the kingdom is thought to host a number of Jewish businesspeople.

Earlier, an Israeli delegation of nine staffers flew to Saudi Arabia as observers for the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting. The delegation was led by the head of Israel's Antiquities Authority and included diplomats, according to an Israeli official.

*-www.timesofisrael.com, 3 October 2023*

**Commentary:** From a geopolitical perspective, it is an achievement. A collaboration between super-rich Saudi Arabia and super-successful, high-tech Israel cannot do other than bear fruit. We must add, however, that it is only temporary.

Daniel is mentioned. Who was Daniel? For one thing, we read in chapter 1, verse 8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." As prisoner in Babylon, Daniel vowed not to allow anything to come between him and his God. When his enemies,

filled with wrath and jealousy, observed Daniel carefully, they came to the conclusion: "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Daniel 6:5b). Daniel remained unconditionally faithful to the God of Israel.

The enemies convinced the king of Babylon to establish a decree, "that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions" (Daniel 6:7b). How did Daniel react? "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (v. 10).

When Daniel speaks of the last Gentile global empire, he writes: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Daniel 7:7).



Often, the question is asked, what and who are the “ten horns”? Obviously, ten power structures—an imitation of God’s Ten Commandments. We remember also the ten plagues upon Egypt. And Abraham prayed for ten righteous people in Sodom.

The late Dr. Ed Vallowe in his book *Biblical Mathematics* (now out of print) states: “A ten kingdom confederation is the last phase of human sovereignty upon this earth. This will take place during the tribulation period. (Daniel 2 and 7; and Revelation 13 and 17).”

8097

(See *Daniel's Prophecies Made Easy*, Item #1057, \$12.)



## ISRAEL

### Fifth Solar Plant in Negev

Israel is advancing plans to build a fifth solar energy plant at Ashalim in the Negev desert as the government set itself a goal to generate 30 percent of electricity from renewable energy by the end of the decade.



The tender comes after Israel’s fourth solar energy farm at Ashalim, a photovoltaic facility with a power capacity of 40 MW, started operating in July. Another two thermo-solar power fields at Ashalim generate 120 MW per year each and a photovoltaic one supplies 30 MW yearly. Together, the four stations in Ashalim—two thermo-solar power plants and two photovoltaic power plants—supply electricity totaling more than 300 MW yearly, which is less than 2 percent of the annual demand of the Israeli economy for electricity.

-[www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 14 September 2023

**Commentary:** While the solar energy production is sig-

### ADVANCED SATELLITES TO AZERBAIJAN

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel’s world-leading aerospace and defense company announced a cooperation agreement for the sale of two cutting-edge satellites to Azercosmos, a pioneering force of Azerbaijan’s space industry.

The satellites are uniquely advanced, having better than 0.5-meter native resolution and a long life span with high imaging performance.

Under the terms of the agreement, IAI will provide Azercosmos with two satellites within the Azersky-2 program, as well as technology and knowledge for the construction and operation of the satellites.

As part of the agreement, the two companies will also establish a number of other projects including the building of new centers for innovation and development as well as academic and learning programs.

-[jpost.com](http://jpost.com)  
3 October 2023



**Ashalim solar power station in the Negev desert.** (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

nificant, we note in the last sentence that the combined solar energy “is less than 2 percent of the annual demand of the Israeli economy for electricity.”

With the virtual overabundance of Israel’s natural gas reserves, renewable energy takes a back seat. Interestingly, the top ten countries in the world that produce the largest percentage of renewable energy are located in Africa, according to times ofisrael.com:

1. DR Congo - 96.24%
2. Somalia - 95.03%
3. Central African Republic - 91.26%
4. Uganda - 90.22%
5. Gabon - 89.88%
6. Ethiopia - 88.92%
7. Liberia - 87.24%
8. Guinea-Bissau - 86.24%
9. Tanzania - 85.22%
10. Burundi - 84.77%

It is important to emphasize that these countries are not well-functioning; extreme poverty is the trade-

mark. The Democratic Republic of Congo, with over 111 million in population, has a life expectancy of only 62.2 years. Its per capita GDP is \$1,100, and religion listed as 93% Christian.

Somalia’s 12 million population is virtually 100% Muslim. Life expectancy stands at 53.1 years, and per capita GDP also \$1,100.

Central African Republic: 550 million population, 89% Christian, life expectancy 55.9 years, with only \$800 per capita GDP.

As for Israel, it has a population of 9+ million, with 75% Jewish, 18% Muslim, and 1.9% Christian. Life expectancy is 83.5 years, and per capita GDP \$42,100 (2021).

If no drastic change happens, the stark difference between Israel and the ten African countries listed will only increase in Israel’s favor. As far as Israel’s future is concerned, the prophet Isaiah proclaims: “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” (Isaiah 11:12). 8098

(See *Israel Matters*, Item #2328, \$17.99.)



## LIBYA

### Another Catastrophe After Gaddafi

It started with a bang at 3 a.m. as the residents of Derna were sleeping. One dam burst, then a second, sending a huge wave of water gushing down through the mountains towards the coastal Libyan city, killing thousands as entire neighborhoods were swept into the sea.



**A satellite image shows the town of Derna in the aftermath of the floods in eastern Libya** (Maxar Technologies/Reuters)



Buildings, homes and infrastructure were “wiped out” when a 7-meter (23-foot) wave hit the city, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which said that dead bodies were now washing back up on shore.

After sweeping Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria, with severe flooding that killed more than 20 people, it formed into a “medicane” over the Mediterranean—a relatively rare type of storm with similar characteristics to hurricanes and typhoons.

The medicane strengthened as it crossed the unusually warm waters of the Mediterranean before dumping torrential rain on Libya.

The two dams that burst were built around half a century ago, between 1973 and 1977, by a Yugoslav construction company. The Derna dam is 75 meters (246 feet) high with a storage capacity of 18 million cubic meters (4.76 billion gallons). The second dam, Mansour, is 45 meters (148 feet) high with a

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### JAPAN TAPS ISRAELI TELEHEALTH

Japan's commercial insurance provider, Sampo, has teamed up with TytoCare to deploy the Israeli telehealth startup's artificial intelligence-based remote medical device for nursing care services of the elderly.

Founded in 2012, the Netanya, Israel-based startup co-founded by CEO Dedi Gilad and COO Ofer Tzadik, has developed an FDA-cleared handheld remote medical examination device which it says can replicate the doctor's office in the home. TytoCare's home smart clinic device has attachments that can examine heart, lungs, skin, ears, throat and abdomen, as well as measure body temperature, allowing users to perform comprehensive physical exams.

*-timesofisrael.com*  
12 September 2023



capacity of 1.5 million cubic meters (396 million gallons).

Those dams haven't undergone maintenance since 2002, the city's deputy mayor Ahmed Madroud told Al Jazeera.

The risk climate-fueled extreme weather poses to infrastructure—not just dams, but everything from buildings to water supplies—is a global one. “We’re not ready for the extreme events coming towards us,” said Hannah Cloke, professor of hydrology at the University of Reading in the UK.

-[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), 16 September 2023

**Commentary:** It was on 24 December 1951 when the country formed the United Kingdom of Libya under its only king, Idris. A Google search reveals: “Libya appears in Egyptian sources as tA-TmHw ‘land of Tjemehu.’ The inhabitants (or another people in the area?) were called Tehenu (THnw). Libya has its place in the ancient Egyptian worldview as the representation of the West (South—Nubia; North—Asia).” Regarding its biblical origin: “The name Put (or Phut) is used in the Bible for Ancient Libya, but a few scholars proposed the Land of Punt known from Ancient Egyptian annals.”

While under the dictatorship of Muammar Gaddafi, the country became the fifth-richest African nation.

However, the blatant mistakes of the leader and the government drove Libya into isolation and finally civil war, which ended in significant destruction of the country.

More catastrophe resulting from Storm Daniel: “...also known as Cyclone Daniel, was the deadliest and costliest Mediterranean tropical-like cyclone ever recorded in history. It was also the deadliest weather event of 2023 to date.” We note the words, “deadliest weather event of 2023.” Libya has often experienced natural disasters threatening its population.

While Jewish communities called Libya home for thousands of years, YadVashem.org reports, “not a single Jew remains in Libya today.”

Our concern, based on a Christian worldview, is the Church of Jesus Christ, which is present among the 7.2 million citizens of the country. While Google reports that 96.2% of the population is Muslim, there is always the unacknowledged, hidden group of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are fulfilling the words Jesus spoke—without referring to borders, nations, continents, cultures, or languages—“I will build my church.” Pray for Libya. 8086

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



# A Surrendered Life: Faithfully Serving the Lord to the Very End: Part 1

In Memory of Annie, An Ebenezer Home Resident

By David Phillips (*Ebenezer's CEO*)

Annie, along with her twin sister Minnie, was born in 1932 in the Dutch East Indies, where their parents were missionaries.



## **Serving As Missionaries in the Dutch East Indies**

Father van de Weg went to Bible training at St. Chrischona Bible School in South Germany. On the day of graduation, Mother van de Weg walked through the door. Annie's father said that when he first saw her, the Lord said to him, "There is your wife walking through the door." They got married and went to Indonesia as missionaries, where they served for many years. Minnie shared how their father traveled through Java, Bali, and Sumatra.

Annie's parents had their first child, Alie, during their furlough in Holland in 1930. Then they had Annie and her twin sister Minnie, in the Dutch East Indies in 1932.

However, in a dramatic turn of events, the van de Wegs' lives would be changed forever.

## **World War II & the Concentration Camps**

Hitler invaded Holland on May 10, 1940, and the Netherlands declared martial law on the Dutch East Indies. Two years later, the Japanese invaded Indonesia (pre-



viously known as the Dutch East Indies). Annie was 8 years old.

When the Japanese invaded Java, Mother van de Weg and the girls fled quickly to a mountain village. Minnie shares how the Japanese were flying in a V formation and bombs were falling all around them. Everything burned. They ended up fleeing back to Java. In the days that followed, Mother van de Weg suddenly had a heart attack and died.

The Japanese were waiting for them as they returned from their mother's funeral, arresting Father van de Weg and sending him to a work camp. Minnie shares how the girls begged him, "Father, don't go!" But of course he had to go.

The three girls (along with a young lady who was with them) also ended up being sent to a concentration camp for 1.5 years. It was a terrible time for all of them, but with God's help, they survived.

Miraculously, their father also survived the work camps and came back after the war, just skin and bones. Minnie later learned that he only survived because they forced

him to take some medicine. "One for Alie, one for Minnie..." they said. He swallowed it for his daughters.

After their release, Annie prayed to the Lord that He would erase the horrible memories of the war, and she could honestly say God had really done that for her. She shared how it pained her to see some of the other residents at Ebenezer still suffering from the traumatic memories of the war.

### **Recovering from the War**

After they released Father van de Weg and the three girls in 1945, they all went back to Holland. Later, the girls joined Corrie ten Boom's Bible studies for young women who had survived the war. Minnie shares that some of the greatest lessons they learned from Corrie were to be full of the Lord, or the love of the Lord. To keep calm, be patient, and be yourself. She shared how Corrie was "at home" with everyone. Whether they were old or young, hippies, intellectuals, or simple-minded, it didn't matter because she radiated





HIS love. This made Corrie a great blessing to many.

**Serving the Lord**

Corrie’s godly example clearly influenced Annie and her sisters, and they accomplished many things for the kingdom of God. Minnie worked as a nurse/midwife in the UAE and helped to build the first clinic, where she served for over 45 years (and still lives there). Her sister Alie became a doctor in Holland. Annie studied to be a nurse and then a midwife in Holland, before feeling called by God to go serve in Israel.

Annie shared that after her training, she worked as a midwife at the midwifery training school in Amsterdam, where she soon became head of the labor ward.

“I loved my job,” explained Annie, “and I didn’t want to leave it. I really battled with the Lord when He called me to come to Israel in 1973. I joined Near East Ministries in 1975, and replaced another Dutch midwife who left the Poriya hospital in the north of Israel. I worked in Poriya as a midwife for 23 years, and also helped women who wanted to have home births.” *(Continued next month.)*



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“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Isaiah 40:1).

BY ARNO FROESE

After reading chapter 39, we notice that Isaiah 40 begins quite differently. It appears suddenly, and has caused many commentators to shine the light on the Church and not Israel. Actually, the commentary of the *Geneva Study Bible* says, “This is a consolation for the church.”

One thing we know for sure: while we may spiritually apply it to the Church, when we continue to read, it becomes self-evident that this speaks of the people of Israel. Here is the proof: “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of

the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (verse 2). A geographic location is given, which does not apply to the Church. The Church of the living God does not have an earthly inheritance. We do not have a headquarters, nor do we have one language. We who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, are present globally—all continents, all countries.

There is another noticeable statement: “her warfare is accomplished.” Obviously, not so at this time. Jerusalem is a controversy to the whole world, a stumbling stone for all nations. But note, “her iniquity is pardoned.” We know again that this is future. The prophet Zechariah speaks

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When it says, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” this is speaking to the Gentiles. We are called to comfort Israel. That is why we stand behind this nation unconditionally. It matters not what they do or don’t do; it’s not our task to issue opinions or judgments. We comfort Israel out of respect for God’s chosen.

of it: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10a).

There is more: “for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” This is not applicable to the Church but concerns the Jewish people. When reading Jewish history, it’s simply mind-boggling that these people did not cease to exist. The horrible atrocities they went through, the persecution they endured, and the slaughter by the millions is unparalleled. Think of the Holocaust during Germany’s Nazi reign: six million

Jews were systematically murdered for no other reason than being Jewish. It is this writer’s opinion that this qualifies as “double for all her sins.”

From Biblical history, we learn that after Solomon’s temple was destroyed and the Hebrews were led captive to Babylon, the prophet Ezra confesses: “And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this” (Ezra 9:13). The punishment the Jews received at the hands of the Babylonians was “less than our iniquities deserve.”

When it says, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” this is speaking to the Gentiles. We are called to comfort Israel. That is why we stand behind this nation unconditionally. It matters not what they do or don’t do; it’s not our task to issue opinions or judgments. We comfort Israel out of respect for God’s chosen.

In reading Genesis 12, we note that the “I will” of God is repeated: “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (verses 2-3). Abraham and his descendants were not required to earn the fulfillment of the promise: it is unconditional.

A striking example is recorded in Numbers 23. Balaam, the Gentile prophet, was requested by King Balak to curse Israel. But

what does Balaam do? “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them ... Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!” (Numbers 23:21, 23). Is this prophet telling lies? He says he has “not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.” That is quite contrary to the report we have in Exodus; Israel was exposed as a stiff-necked people who continually rebelled against the Lord.

That is true, but we must understand that Balaam was a Gentile prophet who had no business looking into the affairs of the family of Israel. He was not shown the iniquity and per-

verseness of Israel; it was simply not his business. Nor is it our business today to condemn or judge the Jewish nation: it's in God's camp. In Romans 3, the apostle Paul asked the question: "What advantage then hath the Jew?" He answers: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

During the many years, even decades of support for Israel, we have often been called var-

ious names, one being "Israel fanatics." That, unfortunately, is true for some of us. But we at Midnight Call Ministries observe Israel realistically, with the full conviction that God has given them an unconditional covenant. The Lord Jesus Himself stated, "Salvation is of the Jews." May these truths sink deep into our hearts, so we are enabled to truly, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." (NF)

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