

ISRAEL TURNS 70!



Lawrence Hirsch
Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah

Dear friend in the Messiah,

Shalom from Caulfield, in the heart of Jewish Melbourne! We are celebrating Israel's 70th birthday this year, and Louise and I have just returned from a month of ministry in the Land. The State of Israel was founded on May 14, 1948, and Australia was among the first countries to formally recognise the 'new' state, on 27 January 1949. Justifying Australia's position, Foreign Minister Evatt stated:

Australia's decision to give recognition to the Government of

Israel was as inevitable as it was just... Australia's one objective was to reach a fair and just solution, and I believe that objective has now been satisfactorily reached.

I genuinely believe that one of the reasons God has blessed Australia is because of our support for Israel.

This blessing harkens back to the day God called Abram out of the land of the Chaldees. The Lord promised Abram that one day he would be the father of multitudes and that the people God would miraculously create would be granted a land and a mission to bring blessings to the nations of the world.

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

This passage of Scripture is often entitled the Abrahamic Covenant. But, it is also a prophecy, as these verses span the course of human history. It is as if the story of Scripture is embedded in this short passage.

The promise presumes that the world needs blessing, and that God Himself must take the initiative to bring these blessings about. Nine chapters earlier in the book of Genesis, Moses records the fall of humanity, almost immediately after the creation of Adam and Eve. The perfect existence of this first couple was destroyed when they responded in disobedience to God after being tempted by the serpent. God promises in Genesis 3:15 that this serpent would one day be destroyed by the "son of the woman."

The Lord also predicted in this passage that there would be enmity between the seed of the woman - all humanity -

and the serpent. The Hebrew word *evah* (עֵוָה) for enmity, which may also be translated as "hostility," is used to describe the ongoing relationship through the ages between humanity and the "evil one." The hostility would end when the promised descendant of the woman would crush the head of the devil, destroying his power in the one climactic event that took place at the cross.

The Jewish People and the Plan of God

The story of the Jewish people is the story of redemption. God chose Abram and his descendants to one day produce this glorious seed of the woman who would die for the sins of humanity, rise from the dead, and at the same time destroy the works of the devil. The remainder of human history is the unfolding of the results of this one sacrificial act of redeeming love on God's part.

The Jewish people were called by God to play a critical role in the working out of this unfolding story of redemption. God chose the Jewish people to be His bridge of redemption to a dark world broken by sin and death.

Mark Yarbrough, the Dean of Students at Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote a chapter for our new book,

Israel, the Church and the Middle East: A Biblical Response to the Current Conflict. He writes,

The major character in the grand story of Scripture is a people, the nation of Israel. The story of scripture is thoroughly Jewish. To de-emphasize or omit this part of the story is to misunderstand the covenants and the manner in which God blesses all people through his Messiah. He does this by promises to the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. Just think about it. How can the grand story of the Bible be presented without its Jewish context? The entirety of the Old Testament is centered around this unfolding story.

Your Mission to the Jewish People has worked together again with Kregel Publications to produce this new book in honor of Israel's 70th anniversary. This new volume of more than a dozen essays will enrich your faith, teach you more about God's plan for Israel in the Bible, and will equip you to better evaluate current events in the Middle East.

Back to our story! God promised Abram a people, a land, a mission, and the promise of an ongoing relationship with the Creator. Unfortunately, the same devil who tried to ruin what God created has also attempted to prevent this story of redemption from coming to pass. *Jewish history is the story of the devil's efforts to use the Gentile nations to destroy the Jewish people.*

THE MAJOR CHARACTER IN THE GRAND STORY OF SCRIPTURE IS A PEOPLE—THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

Yet, the Lord used the Jewish people to compose and transmit the Scriptures to the world and in the fullness of time to bring the Savior to His creation through a Jewish family. The devil again tried to prevent the birth of the Messiah, as Pharaoh attempted to kill baby Moses. Yet, God protected Moses and his son and, in the same way, has faithfully preserved the Jewish people. Against all odds, the Jewish people have survived crusades, pogroms, the Holocaust, incessant attacks by hostile Middle Eastern neighbours, as well as the rise of modern antisemitism.

Israel: A Modern Miracle

Now we have the privilege of observing a modern miracle and testimony to God's faithfulness: the creation of the modern State of Israel. The Lord has brought back the captives of Zion from the four corners of the earth, overturning all efforts to prevent the Jewish people from returning to the Promised Land.

The Abrahamic Covenant is in fact a prophecy that speaks of God's enduring love for the people He created and called. The Jewish people and the modern State of Israel bear witness to the faithfulness of God. And if this is true today, just think of what is going to happen tomorrow. The Messiah will return in His glory to take back the world He created, and restore the planet and the people He so loved.

Israel still has a role to play in preparing the way for the second coming of Jesus. The Apostle Paul promises that the Lord will one day turn His chosen people to Himself:

Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery - so that you will not be wise in your own estimation - that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, HE will remove ungodliness from Jacob."
(Romans 11:12,15, 25-26)

These words of Paul should not surprise us, as Ezekiel predicted these events hundreds of year before.

For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My

statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:24-27)

The prophet adds what has become one of my favorite promises of Scripture,

"They will say, This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited." (Ezekiel 36:35)

Until Then?

We know what is ahead because God always keeps His promises. Therefore, how should we approach our relationships to our Jewish friends and family? The Apostle

Paul again provides us with divine wisdom and charts a path for every believer worldwide to focus upon until we see Him face to face. We are to preach the gospel - to the Jew first and also to the Gentile! The conclusion to the story is yet ahead, but we too have a role to play. As Paul writes,

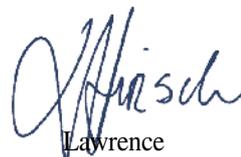
How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom

they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!" (Romans 10:14-15)

Our piece of the puzzle is to tell this glorious story of redemption to all, especially to the Jewish people who play such a critical role in the story. Would you join us in proclaiming the Good News to the Jewish people? There is a lot more in the newsletter about what God is doing, especially among young Israelis in Israel and as they travel abroad to beautiful New Zealand, Germany, and Australia. I know you will enjoy this issue!

Thanks for joining me in thanking God for His faithfulness to His promises in wishing Israel a Happy 70th!

Your brother in the Messiah,



Lawrence

P.S. You can order the new book, *Israel, the Church and the Middle East: A Biblical Response to the Current Conflict*, by filling out the enclosed card, or by ordering online at our Celebrate Messiah bookstore (celebratemessiah.com.au/store). We will provide free **shipping and handling as a thank you for your gift this month of any amount**. We deeply appreciate your faithful prayers and support.

¹ Mark M. Yarbrough, "Israel and the Story of the Bible," *Israel, the Church and the Middle East* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), p.54

Israelis on the

Israelis are some of the most traveled young people in the world. Every Israeli citizen is required to do two to three years of army service after they turn eighteen. After this time, many take an extended holiday for six months to one year to travel around the world before starting university or settling into a career. Meeting Israelis while traveling is a perfect way to connect with them, as they are often already thinking about the deeper meaning of life and are temporarily free from their normal, everyday responsibilities. Celebrate Messiah has a thriving backpacker ministry in New Zealand, led by Scott and Margie B. Staff members Robin from Israel and Shmuley from the United States usually travel to New Zealand during the high tourist season so they can reach more people. Celebrate Messiah Australia executive director Lawrence Hirsch is on the board of Celebrate Messiah New Zealand.

TALI

Divine encounters like this are so common that Noam, a director of a cutting-edge discipleship ministry in Israel, announced that he was going to New Zealand to see firsthand if these things were true. By the time Scott connected with him, Noam had spent four days at the Zula Lodge. Here is Noam's report:

To be perfectly honest, I was skeptical; I was pretty sure the reports were exaggerated. Everybody told me, "You've got to see it to believe it... it's indescribable!" And now I see what they mean. What's happening here is entirely unique. I've worked with young Israelis for decades, and I've never seen this degree of openness and receptivity. And it's not just because they're away from home. It's because your staff has created an environment where these guys feel safe and loved, and it's cracking open their hearts.

That very day, Noam struck up a gospel-focused conversation with one of the guests, Tali,* a post-military Israeli woman, and one hour later they were both in tears as she bounded toward the Kingdom of God. "I don't remember the last time I had a conversation like that in Israel," he said, barely able to contain his excitement. "What's going on here?"



ORI

Ori* was an Israeli guest at our Zula Lodge in New Zealand, one of our three facilities that host Israeli travelers for free. Like thousands before him, he attended one of our weekly evangelistic Sabbath celebrations, enjoyed a "Hummus Night" at the Zula, and connected relationally with our staff and volunteers. However, Ori was especially responsive to one of our Israeli volunteers, Yonatan, and a friendship began. Ori and Yonatan have continued to stay in touch and Ori has had many questions, moving past curiosity into sincere examination. In the midst of these digital conversations with Yonatan, Ori's father passed away. Often we find that crises distract the seeker from his quest, but not so with Ori! Praise God that Ori has now yielded his life to Jesus and is firmly planted in the kingdom! Ori is currently meeting regularly for discipleship with an Israeli believer who formerly volunteered at the Zula, and he is growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

ELA

Another such incredible story comes from Shmuley during his time in New Zealand, where he met Ela,* an Israeli girl who grew up in a religious family. After her army service, Ela no longer considered herself to be religious. She does, however, believe that there is a God even though she is unsure of who He is. During her time with Shmuley and the team members, they talked about faith and what it means for a Jewish person to believe in Jesus. She was so intrigued by the belief in Messiah that she decided to lengthen her stay!



Move!



SHIRA

In Israel, not only do Chosen People Ministries' staff have reunions for travelers we meet abroad, but we also hold coffee and music nights, as well as holiday programming and a Shabbat dinner for young adults that is open to believers and seekers. Our missionaries are also able to connect with individuals and families. Recently, a staff member, Rachel, was talking with Shira,* another young mother. Shira had lived in New York City for an extensive amount of time and as the women were sharing memories, Shira brought up spiritual questions. Rachel was pleasantly surprised with the switch in conversation and was able to share the gospel with her. Rachel has a feeling the news will spread about her belief in Yeshua, as she is on the parents' committee at school—but she welcomes it! Please pray for more opportunities for Rachel to share with other parents at her son's school.

MAYA

Robin, one of our staff members in Israel, also had incredible experiences to share about her time in New Zealand. Maya* sat next to Robin during a Shabbat dinner in New Zealand. Before they all began to eat, one of the young Israeli believers on the outreach team stood up and spoke about Jesus. Another Israeli guest at the table whispered a question and Maya answered him explaining about Jesus and the gospel. Afterwards, Robin found out that she had spent a couple of days with others on the outreach team and had heard these things from them.

Then Maya asked Robin how she had come to believe in Jesus. Robin said, "This is the amazing thing about

backpacker outreach: Because we are spending time traveling together and building relationships, someone like Maya gets to meet several believers...they have time to think, and ask deeper spiritual questions." Maya is looking forward to a New Zealand reunion when she gets back to Israel.

RAMAT GAN CENTER

Another staff member, Jason, also shared about the ministry at the Ramat Gan Center, near Tel Aviv:

"We held a community meal for young adults that was extremely successful. Friday nights are typically a time for Shabbat family meals in Israel, but not everyone can get home to their family. So, in partnership with a local congregation, we invited some young adults to have a meal with us. We know that young adults need fellowship with other believers but they often don't have that opportunity. About forty people registered for the meal, although we think more than eighty came! Praise the Lord that we had enough food to feed them all. It reminded us of the loaves and fishes! We encouraged people to invite their non-believing friends, and several came. We hope to make this a monthly event, so we need your prayers."

Chosen People Ministries, with whom Celebrate Messiah partners in Israel, is seeking more staff to be part of the local team as opportunities to share the gospel in Israel are growing. It's exciting to think of all the potential ahead as we work together to develop and grow programs at our centers to reach more people with God's love. We truly believe that the next revival of Jewish people coming to the Lord will begin in Israel, among Israelis. We are so excited to see this come to pass and look forward to what is ahead!

OUR MINISTRY PROJECTS IN ISRAEL

Here are some of the ongoing projects that Celebrate Messiah partners in with Chosen People Ministries:



FOOD DISTRIBUTION

We have food distribution centers in Sderot, Ashdod and Jerusalem. Once a month, we receive a delivery of pallets of food to unpack and sort into parcels. Each food parcel contains around 10 basic items that are a huge help to those in need (flour, canned goods, coffee, oil etc). The recipients have been pre-approved by social workers that they are, indeed, in need and it is our pleasure to bless them with these practical items. They know we are believers and after getting to know us week after week, they trust us, share their stories and often ask for prayer or ask about what it is we believe. Through the years we have seen some accept the Lord and start attending Bible studies or congregation.

SINGLE MOTHERS

In Jerusalem, there is a network of single mothers, some believers and some not, who ask for help occasionally with repair projects in their home. As much as we can, we try to help. As well, we host special parties or field trips for the mums and their kids, especially during Jewish holidays.



CHILDREN'S CAMPS

During school holidays we host children's camps, where children from all over the country come and make new friends and learn the Bible together. Most are the only believers at their school, so these camps forge life-long encouraging friendships. Many of the counsellors and volunteers were once campers. They know the importance of instilling the foundations of faith in Yeshua at a young age – having experienced it themselves. Children must have permission from their parents/guardians to attend these camps.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The numbers are becoming fewer and fewer so the time is urgent. We love spending time with these precious people through home visits to sit and encourage them, and taking a few moments to help repair and clean their homes (if needed). We also go on special field trips that they would not be able to do on their own (transportation and the knowledge of where to go), through special professional music performances and banquets for Jewish holidays. The Holocaust Survivors we have special relationships with are in Sderot, Ashdod and Jerusalem and we see such joy in their faces when we can get together. Many are not-yet believers and know that we are! We have seen many along their spiritual journey come to an understanding of how much God loves them and the need for salvation found in Yeshua!



NEWS BRIEFS

BACKPACKERS TRAIL INTO AUSTRALIA

There are two formal networks that operate in Australia to match Israeli backpackers with host families. HIT (Hosting Israeli Travellers) has been in New Zealand since 2000, and has created a network where Israeli travellers can stay up to 90% of the time of their travels in New Zealand in HIT homes. HIT arranges discounts in many adventure activities that New Zealand has to offer. And now HIT is branching into other countries, including Australia, launching HIT international.

Chiburim, a Hebrew word meaning connections, helps Christian and Messianic believers bless the nation and people of Israel by connecting Israeli world travellers to their network of international hosts, who offer a warm welcome and hospitality as they host Israelis in their own homes, as a way to demonstrate their love and support for the Israeli/Jewish people.

DIVINE APPOINTMENT AT THE COFFEE SHOP

Every Monday, Anna and Vladimir, staff members in Toronto, meet with two friends at a local coffee shop to spend a couple of hours in prayer, Bible reading, and ministry planning. As the four of them sat sipping coffee and strategizing, suddenly Anna said: "I feel that there is a person in this coffee shop who is waiting for us to share Jesus. Let us pray that the Lord shows us this person." In a few minutes Kari*, the barista who had made them coffee, came to check on them. Not knowing how or where to start, suddenly Anna asked, "Are you a believer in Jesus?" Kari answered, "I am Jewish! I only read the Old Testament." Anna shared prophecies with her, especially from the Book of Isaiah. Kari was touched and said: "Oh, you know the Scriptures!" Anna and the group shared how they love the Scriptures, love the Jewish people, and pray for peace in Jerusalem. They also gave her a salvation tract which she promised to read! Pray for Kari to find her Jewish Messiah!

STAYING FAITHFUL TO JESUS IN RUSSIA

Mira, our staff worker in Russia, vividly remembers the repentance of a Jewish woman on the

streets of Dnipropetrovsk. Anti-missionaries tried to prevent Mira from talking to Bella* and threatened her by saying that she would be deprived of any help from the synagogue if she believed in Jesus. Bella turned her back to them and prayed the sinner's prayer, calling Jesus her Messiah! When Mira told this story to her "dear children" (her group of elderly Jewish believers), she asked: "If renouncing Jesus means losing the help of the synagogue, would you do it?" All of them said without hesitation that they would stay faithful to Jesus!

WOMEN'S HOME GROUP BEGINS IN ISRAEL

Sergey and Rita, staff members in Israel, are starting a new home group just for women. They wrote: "There is a need to develop a separate ministry for women since some of the women in our congregation have unbelieving husbands, in addition to having specific needs that are better addressed solely among other women. Likewise, there is a tendency that unbelieving women are more likely to join women's groups." Rita will lead this group. Please pray for God's blessing on this ministry!





MESSIANIC CONFERENCE

Fri 30 Nov to Sun 2 Dec 2018
Phillip Island Adventure Resort

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS:
WHAT GOD IS DOING
IN ISRAEL TODAY



Our special guest speaker will be Wayne Hilsden, co-founder of King of Kings Community Jerusalem, and FIRM, Fellowship of Israel Related Ministries, and his wife, Ann, who is a pioneer in messianic music and creative arts in Israel. Also presenting will be Celebrate Messiah executive director Lawrence Hirsch and board member Dr Ashley Crane. Worship by the Beit HaMashiach Band with guest Ann Hildsen.

Bookings online at celebratemessiah.com.au/events
Inquiries to events@celebratemessiah.com.au or phone 03 9563 5544



**NEW ZEALAND
SIMCHA**
Auckland:
23 November
Palmerston North:
24 November
Christchurch:
25 November
Inquires? Visit
celebratemessiah.co.nz

MESSIANIC RESOURCES



Israel: The Land and the People is a wonderful book with some of the best photos of Israel anywhere! Through 70 spectacular photos by Lawrence Hirsch, Director of Celebrate Messiah (Chosen People Ministries' partner in Australia), this coffee table book presents the beauty, history, culture and variety of the land from snow-topped Mt. Hermon to the fortress of Masada, ancient Jerusalem, modern Tel Aviv, Jaffa and much, much more. A must before you visit Israel, a reminder afterward, and a perfect gift for anyone who wants to feel as if they've been there.

Israel: The Land and the People..... \$19^{AUS}

Israel, the Church, and the Middle East challenges the supersessionist drift of the modern Church, showing that God retains a plan and purpose for the Jewish people. Edited by Mitch Glaser and Darrell Bock, this volume addresses popular criticisms of Israel held by contemporary authors, as well as those who affirm Israel's right to the land. This book will help anyone—student, lay person, or pastor—understand Israel's place based upon a sound exegesis of the biblical texts, the legal arguments for Israel's right to the land, new information on the Palestinians and Israeli Church, and much more. A must read!

Israel, the Church, and the Middle East..... \$28^{AUS}

Purchase on enclosed response form or online at celebratemessiah.com.au/store



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