JERUSALEM’S PROPHETIC CONNECTION

To the Ends of the Earth
Dear Friends,

This year Jerusalem settled into its summer season in fits and starts. Generally, the overall pace slows down as school children go on summer break and a sunny atmosphere envelops the city. But, this summer has in no way been uneventful, neither for the city nor the ICEJ. Jerusalem continues to be a contested city, seen most recently in connection with the Temple Mount. The assassination of two Israeli policemen guarding the entrance to the Temple Mount led to a confrontation that had regional implications and almost spun out of control.

The ICEJ remains involved in prayerful and practical support, which is why we extended financial support to buy protective vests for an elite volunteer police unit who help keep the city calm and safe. Fortunately, such incidents remain the exception. However, as you will read in this edition, the battle for Jerusalem is an ongoing affair.

Ethiopian Aliyah continues and in no small part due to the ICEJ. During a recent visit to the Knesset, our leadership was approached by two different officials who congratulated the ICEJ for successfully lobbying the government to let the flights begin once more.

I continue to be inspired by the ICEJ’s global character. Writing this month’s teaching, I drew from the scriptural and prophetic connections that became clear to me when I visited the remote Pacific Islands of Fiji. It is truly amazing that we can fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ and celebrate Jerusalem in the farthest reaches of our planet.

Thank you for being a part of our global family in America and for keeping God’s prophetic purposes for Jerusalem and Israel in your hearts and prayers.

I hope to see many of you here for the Feast of Tabernacles in the City of God.

Yours in Christ,

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President
This past May, I felt a bit out of place. Jerusalem was about to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the city’s reunification, but I was on my way to Fiji. I was traveling to islands that, in a very literal sense, constitute the ends of the earth. If you pushed a needle from Jerusalem through the centre of a globe, the needle would emerge on the planet’s other side, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean—27°55S/143°26W to be precise. The closest point of civilization are the islands of French Polynesia. Not far from there, in the expanse of endless water, was the place I was heading: Suva, the capital of Fiji.

Prophetic Connection
Fiji is the largest of the South Pacific island chains. No one can travel any further from Jerusalem than these Pacific archipelagos. From Israel’s point of view, it’s the end of the world. I bemoaned my ill-timed planning of travel dates and thought the opportunity to be in Jerusalem for its Jubilee was lost—at least for the next 50 years. Yet, as I was sitting on the plane, I began to realize that, besides being in Jerusalem, being at the ends of the earth was at least the second-best place to be for Jerusalem’s Jubilee. And I am not talking about the beautiful beach resorts. What makes these islands so special is their unique prophetic connection to Jerusalem. I had much time to reflect on this—some 28 hours of travel, which was the fastest connection I could find.

I opened my Bible to Luke 21 to read Jesus’ end-time discourse:

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea
flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter her. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:20–24)

Jerusalem Surrounded
Jesus foresaw the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army, and the following destruction through the commander Vespasian and his son, Titus. Jesus’ command to escape an encircled Jerusalem seems almost out of place. If a city is besieged by armies, then it follows that nobody can enter or leave the city. Yet the historian Josephus Flavius reports that this is exactly what happened. In his final assault to crush the Jewish rebellion, the Roman General Vespasian besieged the Jewish capital, Jerusalem. During that siege, a courier arrived from Rome requiring Vespasian’s immediate return to Rome. Caesar had died, and Vespasian’s presence was therefore needed. Vespasian passed the command of the army to his son, Titus, and told him to wait for further instructions. Following this, there was a period of uncertainty several weeks long. Flavius reports that after Vespasian’s departure, Titus somewhat loosened the siege and allowed limited travel in and out of Jerusalem.

The Narrow Escape
During this period, the disciples and early believers remembered Jesus’ words and used the short time window to escape Jerusalem. The church fathers report that many members of the Jerusalem church escaped to a city called Pella, east of the Jordan River. A few weeks after his departure, Vespasian sent a courier back to his son Titus saying, “I have become the new Caesar. Now finish Jerusalem!” The son followed his father’s orders and destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. Josephus reports it as one of the darkest chapters in Jerusalem’s history. An estimated two-thirds of the Jews in Jerusalem and throughout the Land of Israel died by the sword, famine, or disease during the brutal Roman campaign of those days. According to historical reports, countless crosses were erected along Israel’s main highways.

Jesus described it as a “great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.” The population would be exiled and scattered around the world, and Jerusalem and its land would become a place of desolation, occupied by gentiles.
When I visited the Colosseum in Rome some years ago, I had a revelation about another example representing the brutality of that era. “The Colosseum,” our tour guide explained, “was erected by 3,000 slaves whom General Titus deported from Jerusalem.” And until this day, the Titus Arch in Rome reminds us of the far-flung dispersion inflicted upon the Jews almost 2,000 years ago.

**Gentile Powers**

Since then, Jerusalem and Israel have been governed by foreign powers. First was Rome, followed by the Byzantine Empire, which then was replaced by Arab Muslim conquerors in the 7th century. The Muslim regime was interrupted by 100 years of crusader rule. The next rulers were the Muslim Mamelukes, and then the Ottoman Empire that lasted until 1917. From 1917 until 1948, the final occupation was under the British Empire. To sum it all up, the city of Jerusalem was under gentile rule for almost 2,000 years. Jesus said, “Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.” He also called the period the “times of the Gentiles.” This would not only describe the status of Jerusalem, but would also signify a new focus of God’s work among the gentiles.

**Restoring the Kingdom**

When Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, he gathered his disciples on the Mount of Olives. The disciples must have felt that this could be their very last chance to put a question to Jesus. We read about this in Acts:

> Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:6–8)

After being with Jesus for three years and hearing His teachings about the kingdom for almost 40 days, the disciples’ big question was, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Their question was not if God still had a plan for Israel’s restoration; rather, it was focused on the timing of the restoration. This indicates Jesus clearly taught them about a time of restoration for Israel, yet that timing was the factor they were unclear about.

In His answer, Jesus never questioned or corrected their expectation. Rather, He readjusted their focus to a new area in which God would now work on the nations. “It is not for you to know times or seasons,” He said, but told them, “you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Jesus knew about the coming desolation of Jerusalem, so He refocused their task regarding the imminent “times of the Gentiles.” The ultimate aim was that “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). In Jesus’s words, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

This means that for Jesus, the restoration of Israel and of Jerusalem was squarely connected with the fulfillment of the great commission of spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth. I was astounded when I learned that in 1867 the first missionary to Fiji, Thomas Baker, was martyred with eight indigenous Melanesians, who were the first disciples on this Island at the end of the earth. Today, almost half of the Melanesian population of the Pacific confess to the evangelical faith.

**New Breakthroughs, New Excitement**

In the same year of 1867, another event happened on the exact opposite side of the planet. In Jerusalem, a young British officer, Sir Charles Warren, dug a shaft which led him to discover, for the first time in almost 2,000 years, a section of the ancient city of David. This triggered a whole new field of research called biblical archaeology. The news of the discovery of the city of David stirred up a new interest in Eretz Israel among the Jewish community in Russia, which paved the way for the very first wave of Aliyah back to Israel only a few years later. Between 1882 and 1903, the first to settle in Palestine were 25,000 Russian Jews.

**Making the Connection**

As I read all these pieces of information, coupled with the biblical passages, I understood there was indeed a prophetic connection between Jerusalem and the ends of the earth. For me, it seems that when the martyrs died in Fiji in 1867, there may have been a ringing sound through heaven declaring, “The gospel of Christ’s kingdom has been proclaimed as a testimony at the ends of the earth!” The English word “testimony” translates into the Greek word martyrion. This martyrdom seemed to release an immediate decree in heaven
to turn the divine focus back to Jerusalem and the Jewish people. The unfolding of a new season and
the time of restoration of all things had begun. Since these major developments took place, the church
in the nations has exponentially grown around the world with major outpourings of God's Spirit. The
prophet Joel foresaw these things, and in parallel, the restoration of Israel took an unstoppable course.

As I landed in Fiji, I understood that it was not a coincidence that for Jerusalem's Jubilee, we held our
first ever Oceania conference in Fiji with some 10 Pacific nations represented. The gospel reaching to
the ends of the earth is as strong a sign of the times as a united Jerusalem.

The end of gentile rule
In the period after 1867, General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from Muslim oppression in 1917, the
state of Israel was born in 1948, and Jerusalem was reunited in 1967. During that time, churches grew
all over the world with great revivals. These revivals were not only happening in Asia, Africa, or Latin
America, but even in unexpected places like Iran and other Muslim nations.

At this year’s Feast of Tabernacles, a record crowd of Pacific islanders will come to Jerusalem to celebrate
Jerusalem’s Jubilee. These are exciting times, indeed!

This has consequences for all of us:

1. These are historic times to be alive! In these last days of restoration, heaven is calling us to fully dedicate our lives to the purposes of God. Whether we work in the nations or in Israel, our generation has the privilege to write salvation history unlike any other generation. It is a time to stop being lukewarm, and rather rededicate our lives to God's purposes in the area to which He has called us. Make it a point today and say, “Lord these are historic times to be alive, so please use me in these exciting times! Here I am send me!”

2. The main areas of God's work remain in the nations and increasingly in Israel. God is bringing these two areas closer together; therefore, our vision needs to be for both. If your calling is toward Israel, then don't ignore the nations. These are the most dynamic times for the church, and if you are called to the nations, then you can't ignore Israel any longer. God’s focus is shifting back to the Jewish people, and so we should do the same.

3. Think about what you can do practically to be involved in both Israel and the nations. Maybe you are called to pray, teach, administrate, help with finances, or be an ambassador in your work place. Whatever it is, do it wholeheartedly for God.

4. Pray for Jerusalem, because it is a biblical command. In this year of Jubilee, pray that God will restore to Jerusalem what belongs to her (Leviticus 25:8ff), whether it be in the physical or spiritual realm. 🙏
“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 
May they prosper who love you.”
—Psalm 122:6

Israel’s liberation of eastern Jerusalem in June 1967 was a pivotal moment in the nation’s modern history, forever captured in the iconic image of IDF troops gazing in awe at the Western Wall.

The Enduring Struggle
When Jerusalem was reunited fifty years ago, the heaviest fighting occurred not inside the Old City but several blocks north, at Ammunition Hill. It was one of the most intense clashes of the Six-Day War, with Israeli and Jordanian soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat for control of a key arms depot and artillery position guarded by a dense network of trenches and bunkers. Once they gained control of this strategic fortress, the troops of the 55th Paratroopers Brigade circled around to the top of the Mount of Olives which had such a commanding view of the Old City that its fall was inevitable.

We see the consequences to this very day, as the Temple Mount remains a point of heated contention between Israel and the Palestinians, who constantly exploit the site to stir Muslims to hatred and violence against the Jewish state. Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be trampled down by the gentiles until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:24). The Six-Day War certainly liberated Jerusalem from direct gentile rule, but as long as the most important part of the city is still trodden underfoot by Muslim gentiles, the city is not entirely free and in Jewish hands.

The new CBN docudrama, In Our Hands, tells this story with gripping detail by using archival footage, first-hand testimonies, and captivating reenactments. The film allows soldiers who fought in the battle for Jerusalem to speak with candor about what they were fighting for. Some felt it was not just a victory over the Jordanians, but also over the Romans who had destroyed Jerusalem and exiled the Jews almost 2,000 years ago. Other IDF troops said the focus of the victory celebrations should not have been around the Western Wall but on the Temple Mount, which was not fully possessed by Israel largely due to fears it would rile the entire Islamic world.
The Spiritual Battleground
No doubt, the battle for Jerusalem is not over. It has been the most contested city in world history, and the struggle over its future will continue. The real battle over Jerusalem is not in the physical realm, however. Rather, it is a spiritual battle waged against principalities and powers who do not want the promised Messiah, Jesus, to take up the throne of David in Jerusalem. Ultimately, this battle will draw all nations up against the city, where God will humble them and bring them all under subjection to the righteous reign of His Messiah (Psalm 2; Isaiah 2:1–4, Joel 3; Zechariah 12 and 14).

The prophet Isaiah assures us that one day Jerusalem’s warfare will be over (Isaiah 40:1–2). Until then, we can expect more birth pangs of the Messianic kingdom centered around God’s prophetic purposes for this city. Jerusalem has a unique destiny as the throne of the Lord and a “house of prayer” for all peoples (Isaiah 56:7).

Jerusalem also stands out as the only city in the entire world that the Bible explicitly directs us to pray for. The city’s role and calling in God’s redemptive plan is simply too central and important to leave to chance. So, we are to pray for her peace, and for her righteousness to go forth as brightness (Psalm 122:6, Isaiah 62:1).

Prophetic Destiny
Right now our prayers are needed more than ever, as the spiritual battle over Jerusalem is intensifying. The battle is always there, but those of us here in the city can sense we are at a critical juncture concerning its future. Yet, we also have a great expectancy that a momentous victory is coming in this Jubilee year for a reunited Jerusalem. Thus, we are believing for the city to be released even more into its prophetic destiny in God this very year.

For more than 50 years now, the international community has been intimidated into denying the Jewish people their rightful place in Jerusalem. To this day, no nation has their embassy in Jerusalem, or recognizes Israeli sovereignty over eastern Jerusalem. Although other excuses are often put forward, the main reason for these diplomatic snubs is simply fear of a violent Islamic response.

Heroes of Old
There were other times in Israel’s history when the enemy tried to make the Jewish people afraid to fully possess their inheritance in Jerusalem. For instance, when King David and his forces drew near, the Jebusites taunted him from the walls of their fortified city. But he did not cave in to the fears and instead challenged his loyal troops to forge ahead, and they easily conquered the city (2 Samuel 5:6–9).

In a similar fashion, Ezra and Nehemiah encountered much opposition and intimidation from local tribal leaders when they were rebuilding the temple and the walls of Jerusalem, but they pressed on with their work nonetheless. When Sanballat and Tobias sought to trick Nehemiah into stopping construction on Jerusalem, he realized “they all were trying to make us afraid.” He then prayed: “Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands” (Nehemiah 6:9).

Today, we need to pray that Israel will not be cowered by Islamic threats into ceasing to possess and build Jerusalem, and that the nations also will not cave in to the fears which Israel’s adversaries are trying to cast over the holy city. We also need to pray for world leaders to become like Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes—each of whom saw through the lies and tricks of the enemy and were used by God to empower the Jews to build again the city of Jerusalem. Finally, we need to pray for the peace, or shalom, of Jerusalem, which in Hebrew also means “wholeness” or “completeness.” That is, we must pray for the continued unity of Jerusalem in Jewish hands. 🕌
ALIYAH AFTER ARRIVAL

BY DAN HERRON

From takeoff in Addis Ababa to touchdown on Ben Gurion’s tarmac, the flight time is roughly five hours. Truly arriving in the Promised Land, however, is a much longer endeavor. Aliyah is both an event and a process, especially if you are an Ethiopian immigrant to Israel.

A basic metric such as everyday cost of living skyrockets when moving from Ethiopia to Israel. At the same time, earning power as a new immigrant from a developing county is likely to plummet from the challenges of participating in a modern economy, regardless of the immigrant’s willingness to work. Despite these hurdles, Ethiopian Aliyah to Israel is a special type of investment that offers great returns. Therefore, the ICEJ is privileged to invest in the long-term trajectory of an Ethiopian immigrant’s integration into the Land of Israel.

One journey began in 2014 with a large family who arrived from Ethiopia to settle in Israel’s desert capital, Beersheba. One of the family’s teenage daughters was pregnant and the father of the child chose to settle in a different town creating additional hardship for the family.

A few years later, the now 18-year-old mother, having difficulty managing her finances and finding employment, was referred to a mentoring program for new immigrants sponsored by the ICEJ. Challenges in mastering Hebrew, shyness, and lack of confidence were exacerbating the situation, causing her to remain on the side line, unable to realize her potential. However, her situation could be turned around with guidance, understanding, and someone to help her tackle the challenges before her.

Revital, the mentor who came alongside this young girl, reports, “The work with her was very slow and full of challenges.”
Each new immigrant faces their own unique challenges on the path to integration into Israeli society. God’s people are returning home and the ICEJ is helping to give them a soft landing by easing the stresses of adjustment.

Yet the young mother also displayed an admirable attitude and put in her full effort to amend and improve her situation. Gradually, she gained a better understanding of her own capabilities and competencies, grew in independence, learned how to organize her financial life, and took practical matters into her own hands.

The process has not been without curveballs, though, and a baby daughter of a different father was born during this period. Today, this young mother is slowly finding her place in that she is now able to work almost full-time at a center for the mentally ill. She is advancing in her language capabilities and has grown in confidence, so much so that Revital has moved on to help others.

Having a mentor aided with two crucial elements of the integration process—one of a practical dimension, and the other personal. Revital helped the young mother navigate her rights as a new citizen and unlock government assistance in the form of food security and social pension programs, a complicated two-year-long process usually not granted to teenagers. The personal aspect focused on drawing out the true personality hidden inside this shy girl who didn’t believe in herself. Having a mentor to encourage and show her that she had skills to develop and competencies to nurture was crucial to her growth. ICEJ AID assisted in the mentoring process which helped this young mother become successfully replanted in her ancient homeland.
Lavishing Them With Love

The ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors is more like a small village than a “home.” The survivors live in the lower floors of several different apartment buildings, yet share a community building where the dining hall, recreational room, and a museum are enjoyed by all.

The community-style living is beautiful, and the residents’ smiles and warm-hearted hugs express their gratitude for the love and care they are receiving there. They are provided secure and comfortable housing, food, exercise classes, activities, community, care, and great love.

A resident named Miriam put it this way: “I love living here because everything is taken care of, and I don’t have to worry about anything. I love everything about this place!”

In the beginning of their lives, these survivors endured deep tragedy and suffering. Yet, in their latter days, we can be a part of lavishing them with love and care!

“This Home literally saved my life.”

Edmond, who was a sports instructor for many years, lived an active life. However, as he aged, he developed serious heart problems. He found himself in a situation where he could not walk up the many stairs to his rented apartment anymore and could barely pay the rent. Edmond resorted to living in the neighborhood synagogue where some good-hearted people gave him food from time to time. His physical and mental situation took him into depression and deep despair.

On referral from Social Welfare, Edmond came to live in the Haifa Home. Now his daily needs are met and he has a loving community of staff and residents who surround and help him. Despite the many health challenges he is facing, he is so grateful to have found such a wonderful place. “This Home literally saved my life,” Edmond said.
It was with tremendous sadness that we received the news that Bertold died at the beautiful age of 95.

His life was not easy. He grew up with two brothers in Romania but lost both of them during the War. Bertold had to work hard, suffering from both hunger and cold, but he survived and came to Israel in 1959. He was married and widowed twice before meeting his last wife, Sofia, about 23 years ago. They were an extremely happy couple and loved each other very much.

In 2015, Bertold and Sofia moved to the Haifa Home. On June 3, 2017, Bertold passed away. Although Sofia knew this could happen, his passing was still unexpected.

When ICEJ AID met with Sofia, she shared with us, “I have no words to express how much the staff has been looking after me. They come and check on me daily, bring me food, and comfort me. Also, many residents have shown their respect. This has been such a comfort to me. This is a real home, my family. I don’t want to leave here.” 😘

Let’s Help While We Still Can!

Time is running out. There are many survivors waiting to find such a loving home and community like Edmond and Bertold did. With no government funding, the Home is completely dependent upon donors such as you. With the growing needs of an increasingly older resident population, here is what your donation can provide:

1. Daily resident needs, such as food and medicine
2. Additional staff, such as a nurse and assistant cook
3. Renovation of residences
4. Upkeep of community facilities and kitchen

Show your love today by supporting the ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors

Send your gift to help: www.icejusa.org/haifa
The city of Caesarea is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament. It is the setting of several critical events recorded in the book of Acts including the Roman Centurion Cornelius’ receiving of the Holy Spirit. This watershed moment in the history of Christianity took place not in the holy city of Jerusalem but in the pagan city of Caesarea.

Setting in a Pagan City
Known as Caesarea Maritima, or “Caesarea on the Sea”—to differentiate it from Caesarea Philippi in the northern part of Israel and also mentioned in Acts—this expansive port city on the Mediterranean Sea was built by King Herod. Named in honor of Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus, Caesarea Maritima contained a prominent temple to the emperor that stood some 100 feet high.

King Herod was known as Herod the Great due to his large and ambitious building projects such as Masada, the Herodium, and the temple in Jerusalem—a portion of which remains today as the Western Wall. He made Caesarea one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire, and the provincial capital for some 500 years.

He also constructed a theater with a seating capacity of 3,500. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, this was where Herod’s grandson, King Herod Agrippa I, died. As recounted in Acts 12, Agrippa was sitting on his throne and addressing the people when they

LESSONS FROM THE LAND

Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Caesarea

BY SUSAN MICHAEL, USA DIRECTOR
proclaimed him to be a god. Because he did not rebuke them and direct their praise to God, he was struck down by an angel and died.

Visitors to Caesarea today can sit amongst the ruins of these magnificent structures and imagine the lifestyle of the Roman people in Herod's day. We can also review the biblical story of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius.

In this opulent city of extravagance and excesses, rife with pagan worship of emperors and mythical gods, lived a Roman Centurion named Cornelius. He was a “devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always” (Acts 10:2). Hence, he had a “good reputation among all the nation of the Jews” (10:22).

This Roman Centurion, a gentile of the Italian Regiment, feared and prayed to the God of the Jews and gave alms according to the Jewish practice. Cornelius, therefore, was held in good standing with the Jewish people. It was this particular man God chose to be the first gentile blessed with salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This choice was explained by an angel who appeared to Cornelius and said his prayers and alms had come before God. Cornelius’ prayers to the God of Israel and his generosity toward the Jewish people had captured God’s attention, and he was top of the list when the God of Israel was ready to reach the gentile world.

The lesson here is a simple one: when God established His covenant with the Jewish people through Abraham, He promised to bless those who blessed them. Cornelius was doing just that and in return, he was blessed. His entire family received the Lord and was baptized that day, and he has gone down in history as the first gentile to receive the Holy Spirit.

**The Beginning of Our Story**

Up until this time, the gospel of Christ’s death for the remission of sins had only been preached amongst His Jewish brethren. While the Hebrew prophets foretold of a day when the gentiles would worship the God of Israel, these first-century Jewish believers in Jesus were not expecting it to begin in their lifetime.

Peter immediately went to Jerusalem where he had to convince church leaders that the Holy Spirit was falling on people outside of the nation of Israel and outside of the Jewish faith. From the pagan city of Caesarea word came to the apostles and believers in Jesus that God had “also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (Acts 11:18).

Gentiles were “strangers and aliens” from the “covenants of promise,” but had been “brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:12–13). The price was paid for all people on the cross, but when it was time for the Holy Spirit to break into the gentile world, it began in the pagan city of Caesarea, in the home of a Roman Centurion who prayed to the God of the Jews.
“ISRAEL IS COMING BACK TO AFRICA

BY APOSTLE J. AARON WRIGHT, SNR

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, visits Liberia for the ECOWAS Summit

The 51st Ordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was attended by 15 West African States and the Prime Minister of Israel. This event was remarkable for two reasons: it was the first economic summit to be held in Liberia, and the first to be guested by a non-African leader.

The two-day Summit began on Saturday, June 4, 2017 in Harbel, Margibi County, Liberia. All ECOWAS delegates were present except the king of Morocco who canceled his trip due to tensions between Israel and his country.

Prime Minister Netanyahu was nonetheless welcomed and received by Liberian President and outgoing Chairperson Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), Liberia’s secretary, and Margibi county membership. Netanyahu later spoke to the ECOWAS delegates at the summit on the theme, “Israel is Coming Back to Africa.”

ICEJ Liberia, headed by Apostle J. Aaron Wright, Sr., welcomed the prime minister with a host of ICEJ churches from all over the county. Due to the intense security measures, a grand march showing welcoming banners was conducted through the main street, followed by an indoor program in honor of the prime minister of Israel with more than 500 in attendance. The program was mainly focused on the development of the churches in Liberia, and Liberia’s relationship with Israel. Representative Apostle J. Aaron Wright was the keynote speaker and focused on the theme, “Liberia-Israeli Relationship, Past, and Present.” The program was a huge success!

On June 8, 2017, the ICEJ Philippines Branch celebrated the Jerusalem Jubilee with other Christian churches and organizations, commemorating the 50 years since the reunification of Jerusalem, the city of our God. Proclaiming this prophetic event moves us in anticipation toward the day of the Lord’s coming. The celebration in the Philippines was one of great joy and excitement. The event was enriched by guest speakers, Ambassador of Israel to the Philippines Efi Ben Matityau, and President of the Israeli Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines Itamar Gero.

JERUSALEM JUBILEE CELEBRATED IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY SALLY MADDATU
ICEJ REPRESENTATIVE - PHILIPPINES

ICEJ LIBERIA

ICEJ PHILIPPINES
THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYER!

“Certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.” (Psalm 66:19)

BY DAVID PARSONS

We are tremendously grateful for everyone who has taken part in our Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign over the past six years. Today, thousands of believers, prayer groups, and entire churches from dozens of nations are joining with us every Wednesday to pray for Israel, the region, and the ICEJ. It has turned into more than just a prayer initiative and is now a global prayer movement with great power and potential to impact heaven, and thereby the earth.

The ICEJ recently had a clear answer to one of our prayer concerns, which we are eager to share with you. Last year, we urged everyone to pray that the Israeli government would allow the final remnant of Ethiopian Jewry to come home to Israel. The cabinet then made a historic decision to allow the last 9,000 Jews in Gondar and Addis Ababa to make Aliyah. The first two flights of the renewed Ethiopian Aliyah landed last fall, which was sponsored by the ICEJ. Yet, new obstacles arose, both in Israel and in Ethiopia. It seemed like the Ethiopian Aliyah would again be delayed for years. Even still, we pressed on in prayer calling on the Lord God to open wide the door for the last of this ancient Jewish community to return to their people and nation. He has answered our cry!

In late May, the Israeli government decided once again to resume the Ethiopian Aliyah; three more flights sponsored by the ICEJ have already arrived at Ben Gurion Airport. During a recent visit to the Knesset, our leadership was approached by two different officials who congratulated the ICEJ for successfully lobbying the government to let the flights begin once more. They insisted it was our pressure which had finally swung the door wide open for the Ethiopian Aliyah. Yet, the only real lobbying we have been doing is calling out to God to make it happen. God has done this, and we praise Him alone for the victory!

So, please be encouraged that our prayers are being heard. God has attended to our voice! ☺

ISAIAH 62 TESTIMONY

BY PASTOR BARRY ROOKS

The Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign strives to encourage a corporate lifestyle of prayer by calling out to our great God and strengthening the body of Messiah. This is why we are greatly encouraged when we see and hear reports about God’s answers to prayer. This year, Pastor Barry Rooks came to the ICEJ’s Envision Conference, and since then, the impact of his time in Israel has been taking root and bearing much fruit for God’s kingdom. Here is his testimony:

Root and Fruit

This year, I was blessed to be sponsored by the ICEJ UK to attend the annual pastors’ and leaders’ conference in Jerusalem. We visited the site where the ark rested in Shiloh, and while I was praying, I looked down and saw a root on the ground. Picking up the root, I felt God tell me to take it back home. Before going to Israel, my hope and prayer was that I would be a blessing to Israel but also to bring something of a powerful spiritual nature back to the UK—and the Lord answered.

Returning home to my congregation, I shared about the root in a sermon, saying, “I believe God has sent me back with something, and I will pray for anyone that wants prayer to receive what God has for them.” Most of the congregation came forward. Nearly the entire youth group came forward for prayer. They prayed for each other, and some even started speaking in tongues for the first time. After praying for everyone, the young people then prayed for me.

When I talk about what the root symbolizes, I remind people who are born again that they are now grafted into a different family tree. The roots of their family line are now found in Israel and go back to Jesus, David, and Abraham. What a family we belong to and what a heritage! I encourage people to boast about our “great uncle” Paul, and our “great-great-great-grandfather” Moses. With that heritage behind us, how can we fail? ☺

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American troops may be expected to enter a war if these nations are threatened. In contrast, Israel does not ask for or want American soldiers to fight their battles. While the United States and Israel closely cooperate on multiple levels, the only US service personnel on the ground in Israel are a few dozen stationed at an Israeli facility housing a US military radar installation.

Approximately 75% of Israel's $3.1 billion annual foreign aid never leaves American bank accounts because funds are used for weapons manufactured right here at home in defense industry plants throughout the country. Thus, US foreign aid to Israel is essentially a way of subsidizing the American defense industry while strengthening the military capabilities of its strategic ally.

Among many other benefits, Israelis also improve our weaponry. For example, they invented a Bradley tank under-carriage reactive armor that blows explosions from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) outward, thus saving more than 1,000 American soldiers serving in Iraq.

Both Democrats and Republicans in the US Congress agree that Israel's value to US security is incalculable. Congress demonstrated this by renewing a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that increased foreign aid to Israel to $3.8 billion annually beginning in 2018.

Compared to the costs the United States would incur if Israel did not have our backs in the Middle East, this is a small price to pay. Without Israel the United States would be forced to maintain American military bases throughout the region with protective air and sea patrols. This would cost many times over what we pay now in foreign aid to Israel.

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Your Israel Answer:

Does Israel Receive the Most US Foreign Aid?

By Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

Israel's detractors and even uninformed friends often complain that Israel receives more US foreign aid than other nations. Let's clear away the debris of misinformation to look at the facts.

The Big Picture: US Foreign Aid Budget
First, take a moment to ask yourself: What percentage of the US budget goes toward foreign aid? Your answer might be 10% or even 25%. It's much less. Foreign aid is only 1% of our annual budget and includes both economic aid and security assistance.

Comparing defense spending in several countries as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the US allocates 4.35% for its defense, the United Kingdom 2.49%, and China 1.99%. Tiny Israel spends more than 5.8% of its GDP, the highest in the industrialized world. Surrounded by a sea of terrorist threats, they are forced to allocate a higher percentage of their GDP on their military budget—around $55 billion in 2016.

Countries Costing the United States More
Nevertheless, Israel is not the largest recipient of US foreign aid. Afghanistan costs American tax payers $4.7 billion per year from both the economic and security assistance budgets.

The $3.1 billion in security assistance to Israel is far less than what the United States spends on other countries if you also take into account the larger Department of Defense budget for things like overseas military bases. There are 48,828 American soldiers stationed on Japanese soil costing the American tax payer $27 billion per year. US troops are also stationed in Germany costing $21 billion and in South Korea $15 billion. Moreover, these American troops may be expected to enter a war if these nations are threatened.

In contrast, Israel does not ask for or want American soldiers to fight their battles. While the United States and Israel closely cooperate on multiple levels, the only US service personnel on the ground in Israel are a few dozen stationed at an Israeli facility housing a US military radar installation.

Most Aid to Israel Stays in the United States
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