



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



On the

Front Lines

RESCUING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
FROM THE CLUTCHES OF WAR IN UKRAINE



The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognize in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

- To stand with Israel in support and friendship;
- To equip and teach the worldwide church regarding God's purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East;
- To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs, and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land.

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out into more than 170 countries worldwide, with branch offices in over 90 nations.

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
- To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on earth.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Friends,

The world has changed dramatically in the past few months. As I write these lines, there seems to be no sign that the war will end anytime soon. No doubt, we are in a season that reminds us of Habakkuk's warning that is also quoted in the New Testament: "But now He has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens' [...] in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:26-27).

Most of us were shaken to some degree by events over these past two years, whether by COVID-19, questions surrounding vaccinations, economic challenges, or now by the war in Ukraine. But we must be aware that God is behind all the shakings, and we must renew our focus on that which cannot be shaken—the kingdom of God. Amid all these troubles, God promises us that He is our Rock, our Fortress, and our Deliverer (Psalm 18:2). He promises to be a strong deliverer in our times of need. This is true for the victims of the war in Ukraine and for you and me, who are burdened with our own unique challenges.

Amid the Ukraine crisis, the Lord is opening new doors for us to bless Israel as never before. We are sponsoring a special rescue team that is bravely extracting dozens of Holocaust Survivors from the war zone in Ukraine, and many of them are making their way home to Israel (see p. 10). Our AID teams also are caring for Jewish war refugees who arrive in Israel as new immigrants after fleeing Ukraine for Poland and other neighboring countries (p.9).

In this magazine, you'll also read an excellent article by David Parsons on the Ukrainian crisis and the "War of Gog and Magog" (p. 4).

In addition, you'll see that the ICEJ has remained active in so many other areas of our ministry, both here in Israel and worldwide, thanks to your amazing and generous support.

Finally, I want to invite you to join us for this year's Feast of Tabernacles in October. You might think that this year is not the right year to come. But as confirmed in Susan Michael's article, "Why You Should Go to Israel This Year!" (p. 18), I believe the opposite is true.

I hope to welcome you personally at the Feast this fall.

Until then, I remain yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: Shimon Sabag (right), ICEJ's Israeli partner with the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors, helps Holocaust Survivors being evacuated from Ukraine

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Ukraine and the 'War of Gog and Magog'

BY DAVID R. PARSONS
ICEJ VICE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR SPOKESMAN



Though many world leaders expressed surprise, it should have been easy to predict that Russia was going to invade Ukraine. After all, Western intelligence agencies had been outing the Kremlin's war plans for weeks.

It also was quite predictable that many Christians would instantly start connecting this conflict to the “War of Gog and Magog,” the last days’ global confrontation described in Ezekiel 38–39. As my colleague Malcolm Hedding once observed, the speculation about Gog and Magog seems to ramp up “every time Vladimir Putin sneezes.”

Indeed, I have witnessed endless speculation about the onset of this prophesied battle throughout my entire 50 years of walking with the Lord. To the world—and the Israeli media—the sudden excitement among Christians about Bible prophecy being fulfilled amid an ongoing calamity like Ukraine might appear odd and, even worse, quite scary.

Most of the speculation about Gog and Magog has centered around Russia (the former Soviet Union) and its allies coming against tiny Israel. Some view it as an imminent war that could be triggered any day now. Others conflate the war of Gog and Magog with the Battle of Armageddon, insisting they are the same conflict. Still others place it at the end of the millennium, relying on additional prophetic passages found in the New Testament.

So what exactly is the War of Gog and Magog? And does it really have anything to do with the horrific war now raging in Ukraine?

A BOOK OF MYSTERY AND CLARITY

To begin, we should note that the book of Ezekiel is full of mystery and veiled imagery. Even in the first few verses, the prophet declares: “I saw visions of God” (Ezekiel 1:1 NKJV), and then he sees the “living creatures” and a “wheel in the middle of a wheel” (Ezekiel 1:5–16). Thus, the rabbis have traditionally discouraged their fellow Jews from even reading the book of Ezekiel until they have studied all the other Hebrew Scriptures well.

But toward the end of Ezekiel, the book seems more straightforward and follows a clear chronological order, which takes on added meaning when reading it from our

perspective today. Beginning with chapter 33, the Lord stresses to Ezekiel his role and duty as a “watchman” who must warn the people of Israel and Jerusalem of impending judgment and exile. Then in chapters 36–37, we have incredible prophecies of the great regathering of Israel in the last days, which involves both a physical ingathering back to the Land and then a spiritual ingathering back to God by a dynamic outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In fact, his vision of the “Valley of Dry Bones” in chapter 37 depicts it as if the nation is literally resurrected from the dead—which in many ways aptly describes the miraculous rebirth of Israel as a nation just three years after the nadir of the Holocaust.

Then comes chapters 38–39, which basically mirror each other in foretelling a future battle involving an array of nations that come up against a regathered Israel “dwelling in safety,” but God



A page from an early 13th-century English manuscript of the book of Ezekiel (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

destroys them in a fiery judgment from heaven. This is followed by chapters 40–48, where he sees a magnificent future temple in a glorious and greatly enlarged city of Jerusalem.

Focusing our attention first on Ezekiel 38, the prophet is told to deliver a warning to “Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal”—namely that God is against them and is determined to bring them up against Jerusalem, even against their will (Ezekiel 38:1–4).

Other nations will join them, with the prophet specifically naming Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, and the “house of Togarmah from the far north” (Ezekiel 38:5–6). In the “latter years,” they will come like a storm cloud covering the land and will seek to destroy the people of Israel who have been regathered from all the nations and are “dwelling in safety,” a “peaceful people” living back in their land in “unwalled villages” that have “neither bars nor gates” (Ezekiel 38:8–11). This attack will be launched by “a great company and mighty army,” who “will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you” (Ezekiel 38:14–15). But God will destroy them by “great hailstones, fire and brimstone” so that He might hallow His name before the nations (Ezekiel 38:22).

Chapter 39 continues describing this same battle against Gog, adding that the victory at God’s hand will be so complete that Israel will need seven months to bury the dead and seven years to burn the weapons of warfare. At the same time, Israel and the nations are brought in awe of God’s majestic power and understand better the divine purpose of Israel’s long journey of exile and return.

So does the current Russian invasion of Ukraine portend that the war of “Gog and Magog” is brewing before our very eyes?

REASONS FOR RESTRAINT

First, Bible scholars have varying views on what is meant by “Gog, of the land of Magog.” Some suggest he is a human despot, but I sense that it refers to a demonic ruler or principality that has a stronghold over a certain nation or people—a concept that can be found throughout the Bible.

Regarding “Rosh,” some say this refers to “Rus” or the Russian people, but in Hebrew, the word means “head” or “chief.” Thus, it should be read as “chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.” Nonetheless, Ezekiel does say several times that the main elements of this vast army will come from the “far north”—and Moscow just happens to lie a good distance directly north of Jerusalem.

Other nations join Gog of Magog, and some can be readily identified in our day. For instance, Persia is today’s Iran. Others can be traced back to the 70 “sons of Noah” listed in Genesis 10. Thus, Cush refers to roughly the area of Sudan and perhaps Ethiopia, while Put is Libya.

So just what do the tragic events in Ukraine mean from a prophetic standpoint? Instead of fixating on Ezekiel 38–39, I believe the Hebrew prophets have given our generation a much clearer prophetic picture for discerning our times through their repeated allusions to the Exodus.

Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah were all descendants of Japheth, who settled around Turkey, the Black Sea, the Caucasus Mountains, and Eastern Europe. Much mystery and speculation remain as to exactly who they might refer to today, but the passage certainly portrays a broad array of nations.

Even so, the alignment of nations right now does not seem to fit the “Gog and Magog” scenario. Russia, in fact, is extremely isolated over its invasion of Ukraine. At a rare emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly in March, only four nations (Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, and Syria) joined Russia in voting against a resolution strongly condemning Moscow for its aggression. Even traditional Russian allies like China, Cuba, and Iran abstained in the vote. Meanwhile, Turkey has a historical animosity toward Russia and is currently blocking Russian warships from traversing the narrow straits into the Black Sea. Finally, Israel itself has recently developed a unique relationship with Russia that helps both sides avoid direct confrontation and accommodate each other’s interests.

Looking back, events were much better aligned with Ezekiel 38–39 in Soviet times, when Russia and the Warsaw Pact bloc, along with several African client-states, backed their regional Arab allies in fighting a series of wars against Israel in 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982.

There are other clear reasons to question the immediacy of the “War of Gog and Magog.” Consider that while Israel has indeed been regathered from all the nations, this is not a nation “dwelling in safety . . . having neither bars or gates” (Ezekiel 38:8–11). Rather, Israel maintains the most vigilant state of alert of any nation on earth. War planes are in the air 24/7, guarding its narrow borders with additional

Israeli fighter jets waiting on the runways, engines revving, ever ready to take flight. The nation has multiple layers of advanced anti-missile defenses (Iron Dome, David’s Sling, Arrow III) to protect against the hundreds of thousands of rockets now aimed at its cities—including some that may soon be tipped with nuclear warheads.

REMEMBER REVELATION

In addition, it is hard to avoid the clear reference to “Gog and Magog” in Revelation 20:8, which places this battle at the end of the millennium. In examining this key prophetic passage, it is first worth noting how the book of Revelation resembles the book of Ezekiel in some important ways.

Like Ezekiel, the book of Revelation is full of mystery and veiled imagery. But just as in Ezekiel, toward the end of Revelation, the apostle John begins to set out a clear, chronological order, which largely mirrors the closing chapters of Ezekiel.

In Revelation 16, John describes the Battle of Armageddon as a last days global conflict centered around Israel, which he places just before the return of Christ. Then at the start of chapter 20, he introduces the concept of the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. By this time, the veiled imagery is disappearing. John the Revelator states 6 times that this Messianic Age will last for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:2–7). The “dragon” of earlier chapters is now fully identified and exposed as “that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan,” and he is bound in the bottomless pit for those 1,000 years (Revelation 20:2–3).

Yet at the end of the millennium, Satan is released one last time and allowed to “go out to deceive the nations which are in the four

corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them” (Revelation 20:8–9).

Note how this concise wording encapsulates Ezekiel 38–39, ending with the very same fiery judgment from heaven. This is an unmistakable reference to Ezekiel’s vision, and it presents a major hurdle to those who maintain that the war of Gog and Magog could happen any day now. Some explain away this problem by saying there are two such battles, one before and one after the millennium, based on what they refer to as “progressive prophetic fulfillment”—a principle of biblical interpretation that holds that a prophetic passage can have several partial fulfillments over time leading up to its ultimate completion. There indeed are instances of this in the Bible, such as passages related to the latter-day outpourings of the Holy Spirit. But I am not yet convinced that it applies to the Gog and Magog conflict.

This sense is reinforced by how the chronology found at the end of Revelation continues to parallel the last chapters of Ezekiel. Right after the battle of Gog and Magog, we see the glorious New Jerusalem descending in Revelation 21:9–27, just as the great and magnificent Jerusalem of Ezekiel chapters 40–48 immediately follows the Gog and Magog conflict in chapters 38–39.

A TIME OF INGATHERING

However these important prophetic passages play out, the current Russian invasion of Ukraine has propelled the world into a dangerous moment in human history. The horrific suffering in Ukraine is difficult to watch, and



the war there could ignite a much wider conflict, which already borders on a nuclear standoff. But I believe we are still in the days of Israel's ingathering, as tens of thousands of Jews are now seeking to flee the fighting in Ukraine, and the economic collapse is hitting Russia due to the world's response to their aggression. According to the latest reports, Israel expects to take in as many as 100,000 Ukrainian and Russian Jews over the coming months.

So just what do the tragic events in Ukraine mean from a prophetic standpoint? Instead of fixating on Ezekiel 38–39, I believe the Hebrew prophets have given our generation a much clearer prophetic picture for discerning our times through their repeated allusions to the Exodus. Throughout the major and minor prophets, and even into Revelation, many passages refer to the Exodus from Egypt as a model or paradigm for the end of this age (see, for instance: Isaiah 11:16; Jeremiah 16:14; 23:7; Hosea 2:15; Micah 7:15). Jeremiah even

tells us twice that the last days' return of the Jews to their homeland from all the nations where they were scattered will exceed in scope Israel's deliverance from Egypt—which for the Jewish people still stands as the greatest moment in their history.

For over 100 years now, we have been in a season of ingathering and favor on Zion, as the Jewish people have been coming home from all the nations where they were exiled for two long millennia. In the Exodus analogy, Pharaoh has “let My people go,” and they are still coming home from all directions. But then Pharaoh regretted freeing the Hebrew slaves and went after them, and God judged and destroyed the Egyptians at the parting of the Red Sea.

Today, Jews are still being freed to go home to Israel, but one day, the nations will regret letting them come back to the Land and especially to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount,

and they will come lay siege to this city and nation. Yet once again, God will deliver the Jewish people and defeat and humble their enemies by a mighty hand. This confrontation at the end of the age is what we usually refer to as the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16), but it is also described in Joel 3, Zechariah 12 and 14, and many other passages. In due time, this ingathering and deliverance will be greater than the Exodus itself, and it will usher in the time of Messiah's reign for 1,000 years. And I believe only then do we have to worry about the War of Gog and Magog. That conflict appears to be a final confrontation where Satan is allowed to deceive the nations one last time so those born during the millennium have the same chance as you and me to choose between loving and serving God or rebelling against Him.

May we never be distracted from the task now at hand—continuing to regather the Jewish people and help secure their place in the Land of Israel for what lies ahead. 🌍

LESSONS FROM UKRAINE FOR THE IRAN DEAL

BY DR JÜRGEN BÜHLER, ICEJ PRESIDENT

“We all woke up in a different world today!”

So said Annalena Baerbock, the German Foreign Minister, on the morning of February 24th. And yes, everything did change that morning. Russian armored columns began pouring into Ukraine, and European leaders were surprised.

“We never thought he would really do it,” was the common refrain heard in the halls of European parliaments. “He lied to us all!” insisted a frustrated Baerbock—even though American and British intelligence had been warning for weeks that Russian strongman Vladimir Putin was about to invade Ukraine.

And when he did, the old order started to fall apart. Western leaders who believed in the power of economic diplomacy were suddenly emperors without clothes. Thomas Friedman’s “Golden Arches theory”—that no two countries that both have McDonalds have ever gone to war—collapsed overnight.

German politicians were especially convinced that economic engagement was the sure way to tame the Russian bear. They were certain Putin would never dare endanger the multibillion-dollar deal bringing the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline to Germany—that is, until early March!

When Princeton Professor Francis Fukuyama first posited that we had reached the “end of history,” he meant that the collapse of Soviet communism marked the triumph of liberal democracy and free market economies, with no other rivals in sight. He later backed away from that theory somewhat, yet it has still survived in many Western leaders’ minds who simply believe “money talks!” But Putin has now made clear—for some nations and leaders—their political, religious, and/or nationalist aspirations far outweigh any economic considerations.

Consequently, we are currently witnessing the

most radical shift in European and even world history since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. And most surprisingly, Germany’s Green Party (*Die Grünen*) is helping lead the charge. They rose to power with a plan for global disarmament. Taking their slogan from the prophet Isaiah, who envisioned the nations beating their “swords into ploughshares,” the Greens hoped that their pacifist ways could usher in a messianic age of peace and tranquility for all. Together with their coalition partners, this week, they signed off on a 100 billion Euros weapons package for the German army, the largest in recent German history.

In the ensuing months, “history” has returned with full force, and everyone can see that a well-oiled economy is not the ultimate goal for some world despots and their supporters and enablers. This reality can also be seen in today’s Middle East, where geopolitical and religious aspirations can easily dwarf the financial benefits of peace.

We are just weeks, if not days, from signing a new nuclear deal with Iran. The base assumption with Iran is the same as with Russia: if we economically engage them with large and attractive enough deals, their economy will grow, and they will give up their plans to annihilate Israel and America—the “little Satan” and “great Satan.”

As with Putin, the intentions of Iran are well stated. Ayatollah Khomeini openly declared that his revolution aimed to eliminate Israel. Former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadi-nadjad stood before podiums emblazoned with the vision “The World without Zionism.” Former “moderate” President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani once described tiny Israel as a “one-bomb country.” This same basic call to wipe Israel from the map has been echoed by nearly every other Iranian leader since the 1979

Islamic Revolution. And the means for carrying out this genocidal pledge was fully exposed by former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when he revealed the secrets of Iran’s nuclear military program found in that Tehran warehouse leading Western intelligence agencies to already conclude Iran has been lying all along.

The world needs to understand that if the breaking of promises can happen in Europe, it is even more possible with Iran. After all, Iran has clearly shown its intentions by arming to the teeth its proxies Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Both terror militias have impoverished their own people to build arsenals brimming with tens of thousands of rockets pointing at Israel.

I fear that with a renewed Iran deal, the West will once again fall into the same trap as just transpired with Putin. But Israel—and indeed our entire world—cannot afford another moment of watching bewildered Western leaders pleading: “He lied to us,” or “We did not see it coming.”

Today, any economic benefits dangled in front of Iran must be accompanied by a strong, unified stand from the international community denying it any nuclear program whatsoever. The deal now in the making will bring Iran dangerously close to an atomic weapon. Israeli leaders are gravely concerned with the dangerous outcome of the renewed negotiations in Vienna.

Instead, America and its Western allies must take a bold move and radically reverse their placid approach to Iran in the same way they have just reversed—for their own safety—their failed policies toward the Kremlin. It is the least we can do to demonstrate to Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East, that they can count on us. 🌐

ICEJ RISING TO CHALLENGE OF URGENT UKRAINIAN ALIYAH

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ VICE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR SPOKESMAN

In late February, the Russian invasion of Ukraine set off the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II, with over 10 million people uprooted from their homes. This has included thousands of Jewish families fleeing cities under intense Russian shelling. In response, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is assisting at all stages of the current mass wave of Aliyah from Ukraine, helping to bring thousands of Jews to safety in Israel.

The ICEJ's involvement in this urgent Ukrainian Aliyah has included:

- Using our call center to field calls on an emergency Aliyah hotline set up for Jews and Holocaust Survivors from Ukraine
- Evacuating Jews, particularly aging Holocaust Survivors, from dangerous areas of Ukraine
- Providing relief aid and temporary housing for Ukrainian Jews who fled to neighboring countries
- Sponsoring Aliyah flights to Israel
- Assisting new immigrants with gift baskets, food vouchers, and household items once in Israel

Many of the ICEJ's efforts are being done through our financial support of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), which is supervising the overall Aliyah operation. The rest of our efforts are being carried out by the ICEJ itself, often in cooperation with other partners on the ground in Ukraine or in nearby countries, as well as in Israel.

Usually, Jewish families have time to consider all the decisions that come with making Aliyah, such as when to sell an apartment and where to settle in Israel. But the fighting in Ukraine has forced thousands of Jews to make hasty life-and-death decisions—often while on the run.

For many of these endangered Jews, reaching safety in Israel begins with a call to an emergency JAFI hotline set up early in the war for Jews in Ukraine and Russia wanting to inquire about making Aliyah. In its first month of operation, the hotline received nearly 30,000 calls.

Due to this sudden surge, the national call centers for Holocaust Survivors, which the ICEJ sponsors in Haifa and Jerusalem, were connected to the JAFI hotline number to help handle the high volume of incoming calls. While many Jewish families knew to call the hotline, others headed for one of the six JAFI stations set up at border crossings into Poland,



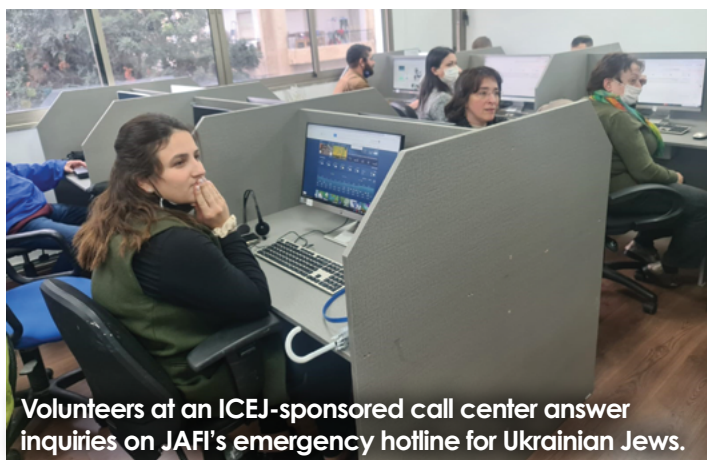
Ukrainian war refugees cross the border into Poland.

Hungary, Romania, and Moldova. Once there, the Jewish war refugees were housed and cared for, vetted for a rapid Aliyah process, and then sent on flights to Israel.

After landing at Ben-Gurion Airport, these new Ukrainian immigrants are placed in hotels or moved in with relatives while local municipalities prepared more permanent housing. Meantime, the ICEJ is busy distributing welcome baskets to hundreds of newly arrived families, with a special effort to deliver toys and games to the very disoriented children.

So far, Israel has welcomed more than 7,000 Ukrainian Jewish immigrants in the six weeks since the Russian invasion began. The ICEJ has sponsored Aliyah flights for 720 newcomers, with more to come. We also have helped evacuate at least 60 Holocaust Survivors from Ukraine (and counting), delivered relief aid to Jewish war refugees in Poland through several of our European branch offices, and handed out welcome baskets to hundreds of Ukrainian Jewish families already here in Israel.

In the next article, you can learn more about what the Christian Embassy is doing to meet the challenges of this most urgent, massive Aliyah wave in decades. We can do all this because of generous Christians who understand the opportunity we have to assist the Jewish people in their hour of need. So please give toward our urgent Ukrainian Aliyah efforts. 🌍



Donate today at:
www.icejusa.org/ukraine

RESCUING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS FROM THE CLUTCHES OF WAR IN UKRAINE

ICEJ-SPONSORED TEAM VENTURES DEEP INTO WAR ZONE TO EXTRACT ELDERLY JEWS

While most Jews fleeing the war in Ukraine have made it out on their own, several Holocaust Survivors have needed help safely reaching neighboring countries on their way to Israel. The Christian Embassy has been especially concerned for these elderly Holocaust Survivors in Ukraine, who have already seen enough horrors and wars in their lives. So we have been working with an Israeli partner on the ground in Ukraine to extract Holocaust Survivors and bring them safely home to Israel.

The evacuation team includes Israeli and local volunteers who have been making long and dangerous journeys across Ukraine to locate and rescue Holocaust Survivors living in cities under constant shelling like Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Dnipro, and Mariupol. Many have been hunkered down in their homes for weeks, hungry and fearing for their lives.

One by one, they are being picked up and brought to safer areas in western Ukraine. Each rescue mission from Lviv takes up to four days of driving round-trip and involves navigating numerous checkpoints, roadside wreckage, and rockets raining from above.

Most of these Holocaust Survivors are now in their 80s and 90s and need wheelchairs or walkers to get around. With ICEJ funding, the rescue teams have hired specially equipped vans, ambulances, and even stretchers to transport these disabled evacuees. Family members are usually there to help them say

goodbye to homes they have lived in their whole lives. Some close family then join them in Israel.

STORIES OF SURVIVAL

Russian troops outside Kyiv forced Lilya Vladirovna, nearly 80, to finally leave the home where she was born during World War II. The elderly Jewish woman had been locked up in her house alone for over two weeks as the capital city was slowly besieged. She was almost out of food and, due to difficulty walking, had trouble reaching a safer place in her apartment building every time the sirens wailed—which was many times a day.

“From the moment the fighting started, I did not leave the house because that is what we were ordered to do,” Lilya told the Israeli news site *Ynet*. “Every time I heard the alarms, I ran to the stairwell and heard the sound of explosions.”

Her son was looking for a way to get her out to safety and learned of the ICEJ-sponsored rescue team. They picked her up and took her to Lviv, where she was grateful to be safe finally, and headed for Israel.

“I was born in Kyiv when the city was constantly bombed by the Germans,” she added. “In my life, I never thought the Russian people would attack Ukraine. Now I feel like history repeats itself and even worse.”

The team also managed to extricate Holocaust Survivors Samuel (94) and Mila Chiporniak (93) from Mariupol, where thousands of civilians

have reportedly died in the incessant Russian bombing of the city. After reaching Lviv, Mila choked back tears when she spoke to an Israeli reporter with *Maariv* about her ordeal.

“I have no words to express my gratitude. I do not know how these angels from heaven suddenly came to us; I do not know them at all. It is obvious how they risked themselves under heavy fire,” she said. “I thank God for sending me these rescuers.”

FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS

For over a decade now, the ICEJ has worked with our Israeli partner Shimon Sabag to care for needy Holocaust Survivors in Israel. In the weeks before the war, Shimon was also in Ukraine preparing to help aging Holocaust Survivors there. So he quickly shifted to rescuing Survivors from the worst-hit areas—and the ICEJ stepped in to sponsor the effort.

“You do not see it fully on television, but some of these cities are completely leveled,” Shimon told a recent ICEJ webinar audience. “When we got to Mariupol, there was no water, no electricity, no heat. It was -4 degrees, and we saw crowds of people shivering in the cold. But when we extracted the Holocaust Survivors, it was an incredible feeling. I have worked with the Christian Embassy for 13 years now, and you guys do a great job. And make no mistake, together we rescued these people from certain death.”

“Many times, we have been under fire,” he added. “Some rockets have hit within 200 meters of us. Yet despite our fears, we did not flinch and felt God protecting us.”



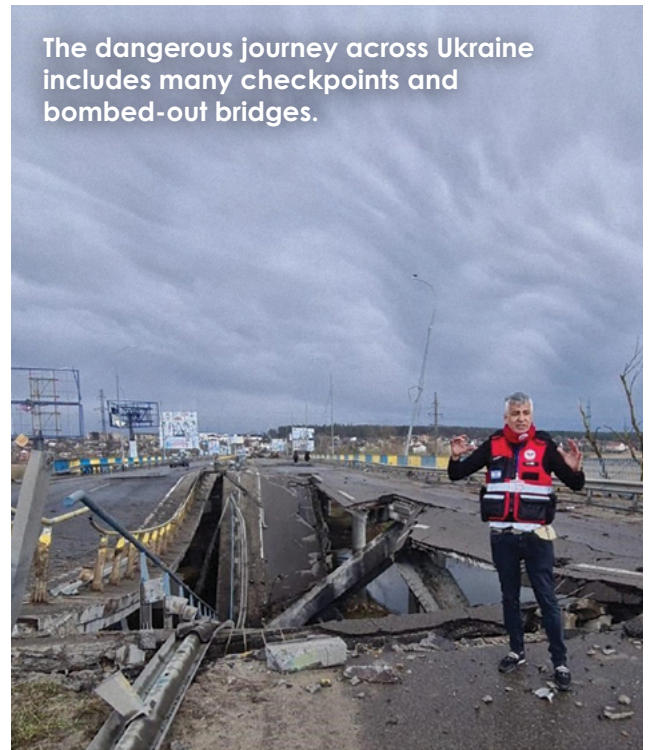
Members of the rescue team in Ukraine sponsored by the Christian Embassy



A disabled Holocaust Survivor strapped into an ambulance for the long ride out of Ukraine



Shimon Sabag rescues a Holocaust Survivor from her damaged home near Donetsk.



The dangerous journey across Ukraine includes many checkpoints and bombed-out bridges.

On one rescue mission, the team went into the southern port city of Kherson and brought out several Holocaust Survivors just three hours before Russian forces captured the bridge they crossed to enter the city.

They also went to Kyiv to bring out a 91-year-old Holocaust Survivor with a serious heart condition and took her to the Israeli field hospital set up near Lviv, where they could diagnose her condition and save her life.

Sabag added that his rescue team is now known across Ukraine. Their daring efforts have even caught the attention of the Israeli and foreign press, with *Reuters*, *BBC*, *NBC*, *Yediot Ahronot*, *Maariv*, *Israel Hayom*, and Israeli TV Channels 12 and 13 filing stories on their exploits. Israeli officials also have taken notice.

"I want to thank all our friends at the Christian Embassy for your support, prayers, and donations, [and] for helping us bring more Jews from Ukraine to Israel," said Ambassador Danny Danon, Israel's former representative to the United Nations, in a special video message.

So far, our joint rescue efforts have extracted at least 60 Holocaust Survivors—and counting—from dangerous locations all over Ukraine and brought them to Israel. Next comes the important task of settling them in homes and care facilities where their special needs can be met. No doubt, several will be received into the ICEJ's unique Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa.

Please join us in rescuing more Holocaust Survivors and other Jews from the clutches of this brutal war in Ukraine. They urgently need our help, so give your best gift today! 🇺🇸

Donate today at:
icejusa.org/ukraine



SCAN ME



The same Holocaust Survivor on an Aliyah flight to Israel



NBC News reports on Natalia, an 86-year-old Holocaust Survivor from Kyiv, who lived through the Babyn Yar massacre during WWII and was recently evacuated from danger by our rescue team.
(NBC News screen capture)

A LISTENING EAR HELPS ISRAELIS FIND WORK AND DIRECTION

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

When life knocks you down and leaves you hopeless, sometimes all it takes is a listening ear and an encouraging word to restore your hope again.

Through ICEJ AID we seek to help Israelis suffering setbacks in life, ensuring they have a place to turn. One way we are offering them renewed hope is by supporting an employment call center, which reaches out to those in desperate need of advice and direction.

As Israel endured several long coronavirus lockdowns over recent years, many small businesses had to let go of staff, and thousands of Israelis suddenly found themselves jobless or on extended furlough with little compensation.

The ensuing crisis meant the employment call center went from 1,500 calls annually pre-pandemic to 8,700 calls for help last year alone. As a result, the call center urgently needed to expand its technology equipment, volunteer base, and staff training to handle the sheer volume of desperate callers.

“Knowing we could offer hope and practical help to a lot of people in crisis, we did not hesitate to come alongside the call center to allow them to make the necessary upgrades to their system,” remarked Nicole Yoder, ICEJ’s Vice President for AID and Aliyah.

With help from 40 trained volunteers, 45 percent of the callers received advice and referrals to other job placement programs, vocational training, aid assistance, and information about their employment rights. Another 25 percent of the callers received personalized advice and assistance to face specific employment hardships. An additional 9 percent received several weeks of coaching aimed at bringing about a meaningful employment change, while 21 percent of callers participated in live Zoom sessions for guidance on employment-related topics, like job market trends and job-hunting tools.

Yael Biton* was one of these desperate callers. She contacted the call center in April 2021 after being fired from her company because of the pandemic. Living in a small town in northern Israel, she found few openings in her area, so she reached out to the center in desperation. Zehava, a newly trained volunteer, became Yael’s listening ear, and the two quickly formed a bond. Zehava helped Yael rethink her career path,

identify her strengths and weaknesses, re-write her CV, and prepare for job interviews. Yael decided to switch job sectors during this process and began a focused search. She soon found work as a coordinator at an overnight camp for sick and special needs children.

“Zehava’s help was invaluable and contributed greatly to my success in finding this job,” said Yael. “She helped me through a difficult period, boosted my morale, and strengthened me in all aspects of the job-hunting process.”

More positive testimonies from Israelis with renewed hope continue to flood the call center.

“I wasn’t alone in the job-hunting process,” said one caller. “The mentoring I received from my volunteer coach boosted my morale and helped me feel [like] I could move forward. My mentor gave me tips, shared his rich professional experience, and helped me pinpoint my search.”

“Just the fact that I had someone to talk to helped a lot,” stated another caller. “It helped me get my thoughts straight, focus, and motivate myself to action.”

Based on a recent call center survey, we can report that:

- 90 percent of callers became more focused in their search due to the coaching they received.
- 89 percent reported coping better emotionally with the job-hunting process.
- 88 percent gained relevant knowledge about the job market.
- 81 percent said they gained job-hunting skills.
- 19 percent reported finding work after receiving help from their assigned volunteer.

Your donations allow the ICEJ to continue meeting urgent needs here in the Land of Israel. Thank you for making it possible to help give a future and a hope to many struggling Israeli families. 🌍

*Name changed to protect privacy.

To support this and similar projects, please give at:
www.icejusa.org/aid

HELPING THOSE IN NEED

Transforming Homes and Lives

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

It is wonderful to know you have made a difference in someone's life. You can impact many lives here in Israel by donating to ICEJ AID.

The Christian Embassy is reaching out to many Israelis in desperate need due to unemployment, financial hardship, depression, or aging. One project we support repairs homes for Israeli families living in poverty.

When 91-year-old Holocaust Survivor Yaacov, reached out to an Israeli social welfare worker, his living conditions were utterly inhumane. The skilled renovation team was not prepared for what they saw: the walls were coated with dirt, there was no shower, the doors and windows were broken, and there were cobwebs everywhere.

Yaacov lost his entire family in Auschwitz, and he has lived alone his whole life. As he grew older, it became harder to care for himself, but he didn't know help was available and continued living in dreadful conditions.

The renovation team began scrubbing and gutting Yaacov's apartment. The repairs took a full month and included a new kitchen, bathroom and shower, water heater, flooring, and windows and doors, plus fresh paint on the walls. Not only did Yaacov receive a new home, his hope and dignity were restored.

"It is heartbreaking to see the extent of repairs needed in some of the homes," noted Nicole Yoder, ICEJ Vice President for AID and Aliyah. "The renovation team is amazing, though! They work with such kindness, in coordination with the social workers, to get the renovations done as quickly as possible."

The renovation team repaired another home for a family of six living in severe poverty in a tiny two-room Jerusalem apartment. The parents had enclosed a small balcony to create a bedroom for their four children. But the room was stifling hot in summer and freezing cold in winter, the walls became moldy, and the children soon became ill. Because of the poor living conditions, the children could not invite friends over.

The team stripped the moldy walls, then sanitized the apartment and built a new dividing wall in the living room to create a proper bedroom for the children. As a result, the family now enjoys a clean living space, and the children have a safe place to sleep and can now invite friends over after school.

The renovation team entered another apartment of an elderly couple in Jerusalem. The wife uses a wheelchair, and the husband suffers from a heart condition. They were physically unable to fix their home, which was poorly lit and had



Workers before and after repairs on a bedroom for children

become dilapidated and hazardous—broken and missing floor tiles increased the risk of falling and injury. The renovation team started by painting the walls, which instantly brightened the apartment. They also replaced light fixtures and retiled the floors. Next, the team affixed grab bars and railings to the walls. The overjoyed couple now feels safe in their home and promptly wrote a letter of thanks stating: "You made our home into a palace."

Your donations allow the ICEJ to extend compassion and aid to many Israeli families like these living below the poverty line. 🌍



Before and after photos of repairs to the kitchen of 91-year-old Auschwitz Survivor Yaacov, made possible through the generous support of ICEJ donors

Please give today at:
www.icejusa.org/aid



CELEBRATING DELIVERANCE

ICEJ USA brings the Passover Seder to the Christian community

Last month, Jewish families worldwide gathered around their tables to observe a special Passover meal—the Seder—an annual tradition for close to 3,500 years. During this special time of Passover, they remember God's great deliverance and their journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the land of promise.

The Passover meal is historically part of the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread and consists of wine, matza (unleavened bread), bitter herbs, and lamb. The gospels describe Jesus' last supper with His disciples as a Passover meal when He used the unleavened bread and wine to describe His approaching death on the cross.

Many Christians have never participated in a Seder and experienced the rich tradition that makes for not just a fun evening but one full of instruction, prayer, and celebration. This year, ICEJ USA staff held a series of Seder dinners, teaching times, and other Passover-related events to introduce this meaningful tradition to Christians around the country—from Florida to California, New Jersey to Texas, and many locations in between.

One of these Passover celebrations, led by Rev. Malcolm Hedding and hosted by ICEJ USA's Bram and Liesl Maas, drew more than 150 people to World Outreach Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (1). Attendees celebrated the events that took place in Egypt and then later in Jerusalem as Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples before dying on the cross. The presence of God was tangible, made evident by the joy that filled the meeting, and the blessing even the children experienced. At the end of the evening, participants expressed gratitude and blessed our hardworking ICEJ staff who made the night a success, along with all our servers, catering team, and volunteers. It was a night to remember.

In Florida, Linda Giljam hosted a Seder for 20 women in partnership with a women's ministry called Epic Beauty (2). As ICEJ USA Director Susan Michael led the Seder, the ladies relived the deliverance of the ancient Israelites from bondage and then recounted ways that they had each experienced deliverance in their own lives. Going forth from this seder experience, attendees then went out to minister to women caught up in the night life in their county. It was a truly unique and powerful evening of preparation for ministering the message of freedom and deliverance to those who needed it most.

ICEJ USA Local Liaisons Bill and Sandra Callahan hosted a Seder dinner in their home in West Palm Beach, FL, with about 40 attendees (3). The presence of about 15 teenagers—some about to graduate and start college—made this a unique evening. Susan Michael's teaching captivated them and brought greater understanding of the Jewish roots of their own faith and the biblical significance of Israel.

Pleasant Valley Church in Niles, Ohio, hosted a Seder meal for 120 guests from the church and community, led by ICEJ USA Deputy Director Daryl Hedding and USA Development Director Bram Maas (4). Most of the guests had never experienced a Passover meal before, and many remarked that they were surprised by the meaningful explanations of the different elements, the deeper understanding gained in the connection to Jesus' last Passover with His disciples, and the centrality of Christ throughout the celebration.

We invite you and your family to make the Passover Seder (and every feast of the Lord) part of your annual celebration of Jesus' finished work on the cross. 🇺🇸

For more information on hosting your own Seder in 2023, go to: www.icejusa.org/seder



5. Julaine Stark, ICEJ USA Content Marketing Manager, leading staff and guests of Restoration Ranch through the Passover Seder meal—the first official event at their new ministry center for those seeking freedom from alcohol and drug addictions in Branchville, Virginia. 6. Liesl Maas, ICEJ USA Tours Co-Director, leading the second-grade class of PCA private school through a Seder. 7. Susan Michael teaching the elements of the Passover Seder virtually to 614Tribe, a ministry of Monica Stenberg and Kim Esslinger (both in leadership at The Rock church in Anaheim, California). 8. In Texas, Thea Butler, ICEJ Chief Technology Officer, hosting a seder with her husband Daren for eleven of their missional community. Thea also shared a Passover teaching with her Tuesday women's Bible study. 9. Nearly 50 people attending the Seder in Egg Harbor Township, NJ, at Praise Tabernacle! The evening, complete with festive Jewish dancing, was led by Teresa Carney, ICEJ USA Communications Assistant, who also led a virtual Seder for a Russian Bible Study group. 10. Newport Life-Group in Pennsylvania met to celebrate a Passover meal. It was a new and meaningful experience for the group of 14 who shared the Seder. 11. A small group from North County Christ the King Church in Lynden, WA, celebrates Passover—many for the first time.



THE BIBLE'S PRESCRIPTION FOR ANXIETY

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL

Many of us have suffered from grief, isolation, or some level of loss due to the COVID pandemic. We've also suffered fear, not knowing who to believe or what to do. As a result, anxiety is becoming an epidemic in our nation. A recent survey of adults in the United States revealed that over 30 percent have suffered from some level of anxiety due to COVID—and those are just the ones who admitted it.

Life is full of concerns and troubles. Whether health issues, financial pressures, relationship problems, or all three, we all have them—concerns are just a part of life. Jesus understood this and told His followers not to be anxious about their daily cares or the future:

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (Matthew 6:25–27 ESV)

Therefore do not be *anxious* about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be *anxious* for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:34 ESV, emphasis added)

The apostle Paul went further in Philippians 4:6 and said not to be anxious about *anything*.

The Bible is clear that we should not have anxiety yet increasing numbers of people—including Christians—are experiencing it.

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

The Greek word for “anxiety” in the Bible is the same word as “concern,” but “anxiety” means “to be unduly concerned or overly concerned.” What is the difference in being rightly concerned and in being anxious?

To be concerned is more of an intellectual acknowledgment of an issue and perhaps an ongoing analysis of how to handle it. Anxiety is an emotional reaction brought on by fears, worry, and past hurts triggered by the situation. Therefore, anxiety and fear look a lot alike.

The Bible is clear God doesn't want His children to live in a state of anxiety or fear. Here are four steps you can take to alleviate both.

1. Schedule regular times of rest and reflection.

In a perfect world, we would do this every day, but let's be honest: life often gets in the way. Therefore, a weekly routine is necessary. Find what schedule works for you. The important thing is that you must make time each week to rest, perhaps read your Bible, and pray. Think of it as your own Sabbath rest and time to focus on your spiritual growth and fellowship with the Lord.

2. Bring your concerns to Him.

During that weekly time, make a list of your cares and concerns and bring them to Him, petitioning Him with your requests. This was Paul's advice: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6 NIV).

3. Leave your concerns with Him.

Cast your concerns upon Him—and then leave them with Him! Do not pick them up and put them back on your shoulders. Leave them on His. First Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (NIV).

How do you know that you have cast your fears and anxieties on Him? When you are no longer carrying them around. Either your concern is on your shoulders, or it is on His! If you are still anxious after praying, you have not yet cast your concerns onto His shoulders.

Your heavenly Father loves you and cares about everything in your life. He wants to carry the fears and concerns that are making you anxious.

4. Receive His peace.

Finally, after you have done all that, receive the peace of the Holy Spirit that will guard your heart and mind against fears and anxieties. To experience true peace, we need to spend more time in the Lord's presence, opening our hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit.

This is the Bible's prescription for anxiety:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–7) 🌿

GO TO: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/SHABBAT-SHALOM



Episode 93:
Don't Be Anxious



Episode 95:
Cast Your Anxieties



Episode 97:
Jesus' Advice about Anxiety

Dr. Susan Michael is USA Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and host of the *Out of Zion* podcast. Text “zion” to 72572 to receive an alert each Friday for her Shabbat Shalom devotional and end your week with a little inspiration and peace.

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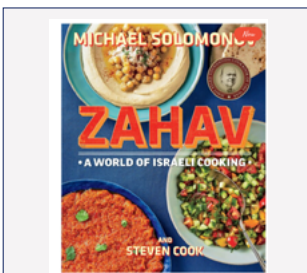
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Why You Should Go to Israel This Year!

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL, ICEJ USA DIRECTOR



Every year is the right year for a trip to Israel, whether it is your first trip or 100th! Many Christian tourists would love to return year after year. If you have never been on a tour to Israel, then this really is the time you must go. The experience is life-changing, and it is a shame to delay it further. Now is the time to plan your pilgrimage to the land of the Bible!

SEE A MODERN MIRACLE

The story of the modern-day return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland—the land of Canaan promised to Abraham 4,000 years ago—finds no parallel in human history. Born out of the ashes of the Holocaust and the dust of the desert, the Jewish State—in just over 70 years—is thriving and leading the world in innovation, technology, science, medicine, security, agriculture, and water conservation. This little country of some 8 million people has survived war, terror, and antisemitism for decades while blessing the world in the process. What a miracle!

SURROUNDED BY PROPHECY FULFILLED

While traveling in Israel you will be surrounded by fulfilled prophecy and the faithfulness of God to His Word. You will see that the Jewish people have been gathered from the north, south, east, and west, from every nation to which they had

been dispersed. Their waste places have been rebuilt and gentiles are assisting them. And the desert is blooming—just as the Bible foretold. God is fulfilling His promises made to the Jewish people. He is a faithful God, and His Word is true!

YOUR BIBLE WILL COME ALIVE

New Christians struggling to study their Bible are often taught to read passages in Scripture as if they were written personally to them, even reciting Scripture using their own name in place of the verse's subject. While it is important to apply Scripture to our own lives, it is equally important to pay attention to the original context and recipient of the promises in those verses. The Bible is, in fact, a Jewish book written by, about, and largely for, Jews. Reading the Bible in the very places where the stories took place, surrounded by the Hebraic culture and faith of the people, makes the Bible come alive.

ENCOUNTER GOD IN A NEW WAY

God is not limited to any one location, and therefore, we can pray and experience His presence in our lives anywhere in the world. But there is something to be said for taking a spiritual pilgrimage to the Land He called His own and the city He chose to place His name—Jerusalem. A trip to Israel is the perfect getaway to seek the Lord. Walking where Jesus walked, hearing His words anew, and seeing the illustrations that He used from everyday life will help you grasp His teachings on a whole new level.

EXPERIENCE JERUSALEM

God did not just choose Jerusalem as the capital of David's kingdom or the place where Solomon would build the temple—Jerusalem would be where His presence would dwell and from where the people of Israel could entreat Him. Walking through the streets of this ancient city, you can sense the 3,000 years of history that took place there and the spiritual tension over the city's future. Only in the unique and awe-filled city of Jerusalem can you see archaeological remains going all the way back to the time of King David and sit on the Mount of Olives—the place to which Jesus will return (Zech. 14:4).

YOUR LIFE WILL BE CHANGED . . . FOREVER!

Your trip to Israel will ignite your faith like no other trip can. As you are surrounded by fulfilled prophecy and see the modern miracle of Israel, you will be struck by the accuracy of the Bible and the magnificent God we serve who is faithful to His people. You will be greatly encouraged in your personal walk with the Lord and in His calling and purpose for your life. Please do not delay any further. This is the year for you to go to Israel, so book your tour today! 🌍

GO TO:
WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/TOURS



Let us help you EXPERIENCE ISRAEL

The US Branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is here to help you experience Israel through an array of tour offerings for churches, young adults, pastors/leaders, and the annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration. As a Christian ministry headquartered in Jerusalem for over 40 years, we have expertise in Israel—both biblical and modern—that will greatly enhance your experience.

We also help pastors and Christian leaders take their members on tours to Israel:

- From our USA office we will organize and lead a tour for you that includes biblical site teachings augmented with information on what God is doing in Israel today.
- You will be given the opportunity to engage with and bless the people of Israel in real and practical ways.
- Training is available so pastors can learn to lead their own tours with little or no assistance.

We want your members' Bible's to come to life—for their faith to be renewed and their lives to be changed forever.

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TODAY.**

*"Many peoples will
come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple
of the God of Jacob. He will teach us
His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.'" (Isaiah 2:3)*



For more information on our tours, please go to www.icejusa.org/tours, call (866) 393-5890, or email us at tours@icejusa.org

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