



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



**THE CHURCH
IN A BUBBLE**



**OPERATION
WINGS OF
DAWN**

**A MARCH
NO LONGER
MADE ALONE**



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
- 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 DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

For two and a half years, Israel has been at war with the Iranian giant and its many proxy militias, yet today the Jewish State stands stronger than ever. The economy is seeing surprising growth, the Israeli shekel has reached historic highs, and militarily, Israel remains the undisputed leader in projecting power across the Middle East. Perhaps most importantly, the nation is drawing closer to God. Even David Zini, the secular head of Israel’s domestic security agency, Shin Bet, recently challenged the Chief Rabbinate to establish a national service of thanksgiving. If we knew what he knows, Zini remarked, we would see that Israel has experienced so many miracles that they defy any natural explanation.

Within this atmosphere, we are seeing a new level of openness toward Christians among the Israeli public, community organizations, and government institutions. Doors are opening like never before as Israelis increasingly realize that their most steadfast friends are Bible-believing Christians around the world.

But herein lies the challenge. While Israel is blossoming, the church and Christians who stand with her are facing mounting pressure. In Europe, Latin America, and Africa, believers are in the crosshairs of radical leftist and Islamic groups. Antisemitism has reached an all-time high—even in the West—and many pastors find little guidance from theological institutions on how to navigate these storms. It is imperative that the church does not remain indifferent. In my article, “The Church in a Bubble: Esther, the War with Iran, and Israel Today,” I address the necessity of breaking through this silence.

Amid the darkness, God is clearly on the move. While the world may feel increasingly volatile, we are witnessing the miraculous, evidenced by the historic exodus of Bnei Menashe Jews returning to the promised land from India happening now. In this issue, ICEJ Aliyah Director Howard Flower provides a vital update on this prophetic return. Seeing ancient prophecy fulfilled before our very eyes is more than just a headline; it is the ultimate encouragement that God remains in control.

Blessings from Jerusalem,

Dr. Juergen Buehler
ICEJ President

COVER PHOTO: 2026 Advocacy Day participants

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The CHURCH in a BUBBLE

Esther, the War with Iran & Israel Today

By Dr. Juergen Buehler, ICEJ President



Just days before Jews in Israel were to celebrate the festival of Purim in early March, the current war with the radical Iranian regime ignited. Many Purim celebrations wound up taking place in bomb shelters during the Israel-Iran war, even as Israel hoped that the modern-day Haman—the militant Ayatollahs in Iran—would be brought down.

A MODERN-DAY HAMAN

Purim is described in the book of Esther as one of the greatest times of deliverance in the Bible. Around 470 BC, the entire Jewish population in Persia was doomed to destruction at the instigation of the vicious Haman, the senior figure in the court of emperor Ahasuerus (Xerxes). His new queen, Esther, played a counter-role by exposing the plot to the king, inspired by her cousin Mordechai, who also served as a high-ranking official in his royal court.

To fully appreciate this remarkable story, I encourage you to read the entire book of Esther. It involves a miraculous reversal in which the Jews prevailed, and those who sought their destruction were themselves destroyed.

The fourth chapter in particular recounts how this queen, immersed in the luxury of the royal palace, was transformed into a courageous woman willing to risk everything for the survival of her people.

A QUEEN IN A BUBBLE

Chapter four begins with a chilling account of the desperate situation for the Jews of Persia. “There was great mourning among the Jews” (Esther 4:3), and many of them, including Mordechai, put on sackcloth and ashes as a public expression of their grief. In doing so, he violated every protocol of the royal palace. When Queen Esther heard about it, she immediately sent Mordechai a message.

Surprisingly, she seemed unaware of the plight confronting her Jewish compatriots. Instead, she sent messengers with a new set of clothes for her cousin. Mordechai, a prominent official in the king’s court, was known to be a relative of the queen. At first, Esther appeared embarrassed by his appearance and pressured him to change back into noble attire. Her reputation was at stake—especially since the king had not summoned her for 30 days (Esther 4:11). A cousin drawing negative attention was the last thing she needed. Queen Esther seemed to be living in a social and political bubble within the palace, unaware of the peril to her Jewish people.

Mordechai confronted this with what we would call today an “information campaign,” bringing the queen up to date on what was happening in the kingdom:

Mordechai told him [Esther's attendant] all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordechai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. (Esther 4:7–8 ESV)

Mordechai confronted her with the facts. Translated to our day, he informed her about the vast sums of money sent by the Iranian and Qatari governments to various terror networks, and about the plans of Hezbollah and Hamas to wipe Israel off the map. He also informed her about the rapid growth of antisemitism around the world, and how more and more governments are turning their backs on Israel.

He urged her to use her influence with the king—to bring this information before him and to ask for a change in policy.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Esther then went through a personal risk assessment. She began to grasp the seriousness of the situation. In principle, she likely agreed something had to be done. However, she told Mordechai the risk was too great. One could not simply walk in before the king's throne uninvited. Anyone who broke this royal protocol faced the death penalty—even the queen herself. Moreover, she was unsure of her standing with the king, as she had not been summoned for an entire month.

Her personal assessment concluded that it was too dangerous to approach the king. This message was sent back to Mordechai.

“IF YOU KEEP SILENT ...”

What followed is the most famous passage in the scroll of Esther—Mordechai's final appeal:

Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther 4:13b–14 ESV)

Israel and the Jewish people were not dependent on her support, Mordechai told the queen. If you remain silent, deliverance will arise from another place. In this regard, the Scriptures are clear about Israel's future: “If the fixed order of sun, moon, and stars departs ... then shall Israel cease from being a nation before Me forever” (Jeremiah 31:35–36).

What was truly at stake was not Israel's survival, but Esther's own: “If you keep silent . . . you and your father's house will perish” (Esther 4:14). These words pierced Esther's heart. She responded by calling for a three-day fast and resolved to go before the king, declaring boldly: “If I perish, I perish.”

This decision set in motion a swift process of rescue and deliverance for the Jews of that day. Yet this story also carries a powerful application for our own times.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Much like Queen Esther, many Christians and churches today live in a bubble. In fact, we all do. By default, we tend to focus on our own struggles and church projects, while missing the challenges unfolding around us. Esther's main concern may have been that the king had ignored her for 30 days.

In May 1944, German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote from his Nazi prison cell:

Our church, after fighting solely for its self-preservation during these years, as if that were an end in itself, is incapable of bringing the reconciling and redeeming word to mankind and to the world.

Are we aware that in many European countries, statistics show that Jews face far more hate crimes than any other group—by a significant margin? In orderly places like Denmark and Norway, Jews are the target of hate crimes at a rate 30 times higher than any other group. In many cities across the United Kingdom, activists go door to door conducting so-called “polls,” asking residents whether they would boycott Israel or support a Palestinian state. Responses are recorded along with addresses, leaving Jewish communities feeling deeply intimidated.

Synagogues are once again being attacked in Germany and across Europe, while Jews marking Hanukkah were recently gunned down on a beach in Australia. This is not to mention the constant angry anti-Israel protests taking place worldwide.

THE CHURCH IN A BUBBLE

Jew-hatred has reached levels comparable to the early years of Nazi Germany. Tragically, as in the 1930s, many



www.icejusa.org/christian-declaration-against-antisemitism

churches continue with business as usual. We must ask the Lord to burst the bubble of our lives and churches to awaken us to the urgency of the hour.

We may be tempted to remain indifferent because most Jews are not Christians and thus do not “belong to us.” In his 1933 essay “The Church and the Jewish Question,” Bonhoeffer wrote: “The church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community.”

Mordechai launched an “information campaign” to confront the queen with the threat facing her people. For this reason, the ICEJ is holding the Jerusalem Summit this month, equipping pastors, leaders, theologians, and laypeople with the tools to preach God’s purposes for Israel from the pulpit. Please join us and share this invitation.

RISK ASSESSMENT REVISITED

Initially, Esther was not willing to pay the price. The risk of approaching the king uninvited was simply too great. The question we must ask ourselves is: *Are we willing to pay the price?*

Recently, two churches in Europe were forced to cancel a major ICEJ conference on their premises due to external threats. These churches support Israel but felt the risk was too high to host Israel-related events. Some of our national branches report that pastors still invite them to speak but privately say: “Thank you for coming to my church, because I cannot speak about Israel anymore.” These leaders have succumbed to pressure and chosen silence.

Ultimately, this question goes to the heart of Jesus’ call to discipleship. Jesus warned His disciples to “count the cost” of following Him (Luke 14:25–33). He warned against doublemindedness, saying that those who put their hand to the plough and look back are not fit for the kingdom (Luke 9:62). Even family ties must not stand between us and God’s call on our lives (Luke 14:26). Following Jesus may even require a willingness to lose our lives for His sake (Mark 8:35).

This was precisely Esther’s testimony: “If I perish, I perish.” This was not fatalism, but the ultimate expression of surrender and obedience to God’s calling.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Mordechai’s words to Esther were clear. Israel’s survival was not at stake, but her own. Germany provides a sobering example. Before World War II, Germany was known for its deep Christian heritage—the land of the Reformation and Pietism. Figures such as Luther, Zinzendorf,

Bengel, and others profoundly influenced the world. Yet when Hitler rose to power, most churches remained silent, and many even aligned themselves with the Nazi movement. Today, most churches in Germany are empty and lack spiritual vitality.

The warning “you and your house will perish” may be more real than we realize. How are the churches in our own countries doing? Let us pray for them.

“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

One final thought on Mordechai’s appeal to Esther: “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14)

This phrase recently struck me in a new way. Mordechai did not say, “Thus says the Lord,” but simply, “Who knows?” He was not completely certain of the outcome, yet he urged Esther to act. And Esther went, even though she did not know how it would turn out.

This reminds us of the three men in Babylon who, when threatened with the fiery furnace, declared to King Nebuchadnezzar:

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up. (Daniel 3:17–18 ESV)

Our God can and will deliver—but even if He does not, we will not bow down. We are entering a time in which the church is once again confronted with the Jewish question. *What will we do in the face of evil against them?*

My prayer is that many will find the courage to take a clear stand for our Jewish friends—to stand with them because:

- They are the natural family of Jesus (Matthew 1:1);
- They gave us the Word of God (Romans 3:2);
- Jesus said salvation is from the Jews (John 4:22);
- Paul said they are beloved for the sake of the fathers (Romans 11:28);
- We are debtors to them (Romans 15:27); and
- Simply because we are called to bless them (Genesis 12:3).

Many more reasons could be given, but ultimately it is simply because this is the right thing to do. The declaration “If I perish, I perish” may be a statement of faith from ancient times, but it also has profound relevance for our own day.



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**"I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO
BLESS YOU . . . AND ALL
PEOPLES ON EARTH WILL BE
BLESSED THROUGH YOU."**

—GENESIS 12:3





US-ISRAEL BLOWS LEAVE IRAN BATTERED BUT NOT BROKEN

By David R. Parsons, ICEJ Senior Vice President & Spokesman

In late February, the United States and Israel launched a joint operation against the radical Iranian regime, which quickly succeeded in severely degrading Tehran's military and nuclear capabilities. Iran managed a serious response, attacking nearly every Arab country in the region and shaking global energy markets by closing the Strait of Hormuz. The war has now given way to a shaky ceasefire to give diplomacy a chance. But it remains unclear how long the truce will hold, and whether US President Donald Trump might settle for a stringent nuclear deal with Iran's hard-liners or pursue genuine regime change that would finally end Tehran's decades-long quest to destroy Israel and dominate the Middle East.

FROM FURY TO CEASEFIRE

When Trump launched operation "Epic Fury," he faced immediate pushback in Washington, even from Republicans worried about another "forever war" in the Mideast. But Trump responded that he expected the fighting to only last 4–6 weeks, and sure enough, a ceasefire was announced after 38 days of fighting.

In that time, American and Israeli forces managed to retarget Iran's key nuclear sites initially hit last June, as well as several new ones critical to developing nuclear weapons. Iran lost some 70 percent of its ballistic missiles and launchers, along with its production facilities for missiles and rocket fuel. The United States and Israel also decapitated Iran's senior leadership, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who was quickly replaced by his severely injured son, Mojtaba, in a hasty move dictated by the real rulers in Tehran—the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The regime was weakened and accepted a ceasefire rather than risk true regime change.

For its part, Iran launched hundreds of ballistic missiles at Israel, many tipped with cluster munitions targeting civilians, while also mounting a serious rocket and drone

threat to all its Arab neighbors. This cast a pall of fear across the region, seen in how not a single Arab state decided to launch retaliatory strikes against Iran. In its most impactful move, the IRGC also sent ripples through global markets by closing the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway through which 20 percent of the world's oil and gas supply passes every day.

The standoff over Hormuz eventually forced both the United States and Iran into a ceasefire, with each side quick to claim victory. Trump could indeed say Washington had achieved most of its military objectives within his short timeframe for fighting, but crucial political goals must still await the results of negotiations being mediated by Pakistan.

As these high stakes talks began in Islamabad, only American and Iranian delegations were sitting in the room, showing just how much Israel and its Arab allies are dependent on the United States and especially President Trump right now.

Trump had set a deadline for Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz, or he would target Iran's power plants and bridges, paralyzing the country. But just minutes before the deadline, he announced that a "double ceasefire" was in place, giving the sides two weeks for "intense diplomacy" on a comprehensive deal resolving all issues in dispute. These were dueling ceasefires, with the United States, Israel, and Iran each issuing unilateral declarations of their intent to hold fire, conditioned however on their own separate demands and red lines.

Trump wanted the Strait of Hormuz opened immediately to all shipping, while Tehran insisted any vessels wanting through had to first seek approval from the Iranian army. Reports indicated Iran also was demanding a toll of \$2 million per ship. Meantime, Israel was adamant that the ceasefire did not extend to Lebanon, where its battle with Hezbollah had reignited.

Without Pakistan's frantic last-minute intervention, the truce never would have happened. They seemed desperate not to see an important fellow Muslim country being battered so badly. China also quietly pressured Iran to open Hormuz out of its own thirst for Mideast oil. Trump's veiled threat against an "entire civilization" and the IAF's expanding strikes on Iranian bridges and petrochemical plants also played crucial roles in persuading the IRGC to come to the negotiating table.

CONFLICTING WISH LISTS

The talks between Iran and the United have not gone smoothly, but Trump keeps expressing optimism that Tehran is coming around to his positions. The negotiations needed to reconcile Trump's 15-point peace plan with Iran's 10-point plan, both issued days before the ceasefire took effect.

Trump's plan covered four main areas:

1. Iran must dismantle its nuclear sites, forswear nuclear weapons, halt all enrichment activities, and hand over its stockpile of some 450 kilos of highly enriched uranium.
2. Iran must stop supporting regional proxy militias and limit the number and range of its ballistic missiles.
3. The United States would lift all sanctions on Iran, rescind any snapback provisions, and offer Tehran help with a civilian nuclear program.
4. Iran must ensure free, unhindered access through the Strait of Hormuz.

Among Iran's 10 demands were:

- The US and its allies must sign a non-aggression pledge.
- Control of the Strait of Hormuz, including the \$2 million transit fee per ship.
- Recognition of Iran's right to enrich uranium.
- The lifting of all sanctions on Iran, both direct and third party.
- Washington must evacuate all US military bases in the region.
- End attacks on Iranian-aligned militias in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestinian areas; war reparations and the release of all frozen assets.
- Rescind all UN Security Council and IAEA resolutions against Iran.
- A new UNSC resolution making the deal binding on all nations.

Trump has repeatedly insisted the "new" Iranian regime leaders he is dealing with (President Masoud Pezeshkian and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Ghalibaf) have already agreed to most of his demands. Latest reports claim the main sticking points are no pathway to a nuclear weapon, reopening Hormuz, and war compensation.

Changing of the Guard

One main lesson for Israel and the Arab Gulf states is that alternate routes are urgently needed to funnel oil to the rest of the world, to reduce dependency on the volatile Strait of Hormuz. Another is that Israel is America's most trustworthy and effective ally in the region against the Iranian threat, a fact not lost on the Arab Gulf rulers. Together, these two factors may give fresh momentum to the Abraham Accords and the makings of a new US-backed Arab Israeli strategic alliance to bring stability to the region.

However, there still seems to be a gap between American and Israeli interests when it comes to the end game with Iran. President Trump has mid-term elections coming up in November that will determine whether his last two years in the White House will be stymied by Democratic control over one or both Houses of Congress. His approval ratings are dropping, partly due to the war with Iran, so he has a strong incentive to get a deal done quickly with Iran. His priorities are an airtight non-nuclear accord and reopening the Strait.

Israel, on the other hand, is worried the hardline regime in Tehran will survive to fight another day once Trump leaves office. This could seriously jeopardize all the hard-won progress and sacrifices Israelis have made in 30 months of combat to weaken Iran and its ring of proxy militias, especially Hamas and Hezbollah. Thus, Jerusalem is much more keen on real regime change in Iran, something the Iranian people may find the courage to rise and seek themselves no matter what deal Trump makes with the surviving guardians of the Islamic Revolution. With Iran's economy collapsing under the weight of the joint US-Israeli assault, that day may be closer than we think.

CONCLUSION

Trump's tightening of the US naval blockade on Iran is costing Tehran \$500 million per day, while extending his unilateral ceasefire without giving a deadline is in hopes of pressuring the fractured Iranian regime into a unified decision to give up its nuclear ambitions. This also keeps the fighting in Lebanon on hold indefinitely, although the risk of a flare-up there is much higher. The multifront war ignited by Hamas on October 7 still has no end in sight.



Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, proclaims the declaration of independence, May 14, 1948.
(Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

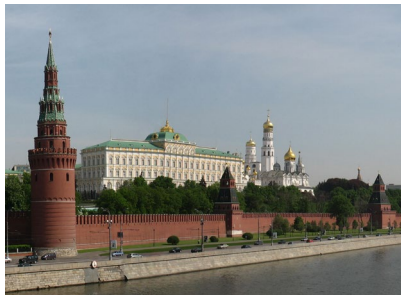
ISRAEL AT 78

Is the Jewish State a “Western Colonial Implant”?

By David R. Parsons, ICEJ Senior Vice President & Spokesman

The uneasy ceasefires with Iran and Hezbollah allowed Israelis to relax a bit in late April to mark 78 years since their national rebirth in 1948. Looking back at those momentous days nearly eight decades ago, it is strange

how many still believe the lie that Israel is a “Western colonialist implant” in the Middle East. This is a total fabrication made up after-the-fact by the Kremlin’s propaganda machine, when in truth, the Soviet Union was doing more than any Western country back then to assist with the birth of a Jewish State in hopes it would fall into Moscow’s orbit. Instead, the newborn Jewish State consciously decided to become a Western-style democracy, and the Russians have been trying to punish Israel for it ever since.



The Kremlin in Moscow (*Wikipedia*)

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JEW AS FOREIGNERS AND LAND THIEVES

Israel is facing many vicious false accusations today—committing genocide, targeting children, murdering Charlie Kirk. One of the oldest, most persistent lies is the charge that the West deliberately inserted Israel into the midst of the Arab/Muslim world to divide and conquer it.

Thus, the Jews are portrayed as foreigners, rather than indigenous to the region. Some claim most Jews today are descended from Khazars—a Turkish people who converted to Judaism centuries ago. Or they say the West shipped Jews to Palestine out of guilt over the Holocaust. A more contemporary version of this falsehood derives from Wokeism, which maintains that Jews are really privileged white supremacists who were sent to oppress the brown peoples of the Middle East. All these distorted views end up charging the Jews with stealing the Land from the Palestinian Arabs and insisting they must go back to Europe. Indeed, they see Zionism as racism, an evil plot to rob others and control the world.

The truth, however, is that most of these pernicious lies

were dreamed up in the Kremlin in revenge for the new State of Israel looking westward for inspiration on how to model its governance and culture.

THE REAL IMPERIALISTS

Now, it is true that some Western European powers, namely Great Britain and Germany, did consider sponsoring a Jewish state in the Middle East while the world was still in the colonial era. But after World War I, at the San Remo conference in April 1920, the Western powers set up the mandate system to serve as a self-imposed end to the colonial era. Rather than continue to oppress foreign peoples and exploit their resources, they decided to establish trusteeships to help these people groups achieve self-determination and develop until they could stand on their own as independent states.

Thus, Britain was granted mandates over Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq, while France oversaw Lebanon and Syria until they could rule their own affairs. And in this new season of nationalism and self-determination, why should the Jews have been treated any different? They, too, were granted the chance by the League of Nations to develop a Jewish state in their ancestral homeland under the British Mandate in Palestine.

Yet over time, Britain betrayed the Balfour Declaration and its trusteeship over Palestine. Actually, it was Christian antisemites within the British administration in Jerusalem who worked to undermine the Mandate by helping to create a rival movement of Palestinian nationalism, including the appointment of Hajj Amin al-Husseini as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem—a repugnant figure who later became Hitler’s mufti.

By 1939, the British White Paper had imposed strict quotas on the number of Jews who could enter the land of Palestine, just as the German Nazi menace was rising. Issued just months after the mass pogrom on Kristallnacht, the White Paper also severely limited Jewish land purchases in Palestine. Thus, Britain did all it could to stymie the emergence of a Jewish state. Even after the enormity of the Holocaust was uncovered, the British imposed a blockade to prevent desperate Jewish survivors languishing in displacement camps across Europe from reaching the shores of their ancient homeland.

Then, in its War of Independence in 1948, the nascent Jewish State faced arms embargoes imposed by all the Western powers, including America, while the British armed, trained, and even commanded invading Arab forces. The only nation to supply the besieged Jews with weapons was

the small nation of Czechoslovakia, with Soviet approval!

Let that sink in! It was the Soviet bloc, not the West, that supplied the embattled defenders of Israel with the few heavy weapons and aircraft they could secure to repel the Arab onslaught.

THE TURNING POINT

Meanwhile, as US President Harry Truman wrestled with the decision of whether to recognize the new Jewish State, his Secretary of Defense James Forrestal vigorously opposed it, warning that the Arabs would carry out their threats to drive the Jews into the sea. His Secretary of State, George Marshall, also strongly advised against it, contending that the Jewish leaders in Palestine were “Bolsheviks” who would quickly turn Israel into a Soviet satellite.

Now, the Holocaust did open a brief window of sympathy for the Jewish State and people, as both the United States and Soviet Union recognized the new nation of Israel in May 1948. The following year, the USSR also supported Israel’s admission as a member state of the United Nations, still hoping it would join the Soviet camp. But Moscow would soon turn on Israel when it consciously chose to become a Western democracy, based on the British parliamentary system. From that moment onward, the Kremlin’s propaganda machine began churning out one outlandish lie after another against Israel. The Russian/Soviet empire—perhaps the most imperial power player of modern times—dared to accuse the democratic West of planting a foreign imposter in the heart of the oil-rich Middle East.

In retrospect, the whole history of Western engagement with Israel and the Middle East at that time was one of doing everything they could to appease the Arabs to gain access to their oil! And as for the Soviet Union, one could argue they did as much if not more than any other nation to bring about the creation of the Jewish State.

The truth is that Israel’s rebirth in 1948 was against the tide of history, and against the national self-interests of both the Western powers and the Soviets. Ultimately, Israel secured its independence not by human scheming but by divine miracle.

As the prophet Jeremiah declared long ago, the return of the Jews to their promised land would be by God’s hand, not man’s: “Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock’” (Jeremiah 31:10).



By Shelley Neese, American Christian Leaders for Israel Coordinator

In October 1943, nearly 500 rabbis arrived at Union Station and marched toward Capitol Hill and the White House. Their goal was to compel the United States government to intervene and save European Jews from Nazi death camps. Known as the “Rabbis’ March,” only a few Christian clergy joined their ranks. President Franklin D. Roosevelt disgracefully avoided the group, leaving through a rear exit of the White House to avoid a meeting. At that time, much of America viewed the Holocaust as a “Jewish problem.” The rabbis returned home feeling they had failed in their mission.

Fast forward to May 4, 2026, where 500 faith leaders, including rabbis and pastors, gathered in the nation’s capital for Israel Advocacy Day to send the same message they have been delivering annually since the attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023. The safety and security of Israel and the Jewish people is not a “Jewish problem” but an American priority. As Dr. Susan Michael, president of the ICEJ USA and director of ACLI, announced, “We demonstrate that support for Israel is not just a Jewish issue—it is important to Christians and to tens of millions of Americans.”

A GROWING MOVEMENT

Since its inception following the tragic events of October 7, 2023, the advocacy day has doubled in size annually. It started as a spontaneous call out to faith leaders to do something together in the wake of the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. On that occasion, 70 rabbis, pastors, and religious leaders visited Capitol Hill and met with 32 lawmakers. In 2025, the event grew to include 300 Jewish and Christian leaders meeting with 100 lawmakers. In 2026, the number swelled again to over 400 pastors, rabbis, and faith leaders meeting with 120 House and Senate offices.

In 2024, much of the focus was on bringing hostages home safely while standing against Hamas. By the following year, the spotlight shifted to the broader regional threats facing Israel, including the growing influence of the Iranian axis and the persistent plight of hostages in Gaza. While our conversations

on Capitol Hill centered more broadly on ensuring Israel’s long-term security and stability, another urgent concern has emerged closer to home: the troubling rise of antisemitism in America and the increasing risks facing houses of worship amid escalating political violence.

The three-day, three-location event kicked off with a gala at the Reagan Building. Jordanna McMillan, US Director of the Israel Allies Foundation, cast the vision for the coming days, saying, “As we prepare to celebrate America’s 250th anniversary this July, this moment is about defining what the next chapter of this nation will look like.” As a rallying call for the next day’s advocacy meetings, Bishop Robert Stearns, president of Eagles’ Wings, said, “This moment calls on faith leaders and elected officials to transform words into meaningful action.” On the last morning of the advocacy event, participants gathered at the Watergate Hotel for a substantive workshop covering everything from the history of Christian Zionism to just war theory.

STRENGTH IN UNITY

On Tuesday, May 6, regional delegations of eight to ten members—a deliberate mix of rabbis and pastors—met with congressional representatives. This year, 100 members of ACLI joined the advocacy day efforts, and ICEJ USA sponsored 10 pastors from across the country to participate. For many of these pastors, advocating for Israel was a new experience. While their support often stems from reading the Bible, trips to the Holy Land, and personal convictions from the Holy Spirit, for some, articulating the strategic importance of the US-Israel relationship to congressional representatives was outside of their comfort zone.

While getting the chance to exercise their advocacy muscles for the first time is important, even more important are the relationships formed behind the scenes. Over the last three years, Israel Advocacy Day has sparked local Jewish-Christian initiatives across the United States. Between the advocacy meetings on Capitol Hill, they have plenty of time to connect over coffee in the Senate cafeteria and learn from one another

how best to facilitate conversations with representatives. Stories have emerged from previous advocacy events in which rabbis and pastors swapped book recommendations for their Saturday and Sunday sermons. Pastors and rabbis created joint social media content for their local communities. And many pastors received their first invitations to Shabbat dinners at Jewish homes.

ICEJ USA Church Relations Coordinator and Pastor John Vedder described the experience as a turning point in the history of Jewish-Christian relations. For Vedder, the greatest takeaway was the “holy relationship building between pastors and rabbis.” First-time participant Pastor Shane Beeson echoed the sentiment. Beeson said, “I had more meaningful conversations with Jewish leaders between Monday and Wednesday than I’ve had in my entire life.” Dr. Tyson Lambertson, Director of Outreach for ICEJ USA, felt the experience of walking around Capitol Hill with pastors and rabbis and hearing them share their hearts strengthened his resolve “to keep pressing forward in standing with and comforting the Jewish people.”



HOLY GROUND IN THE HALLS OF POWER

By Dr. Tyson Lambertson, ICEJ USA Director of Outreach

What struck me as we walked the halls of the House of Representatives during this year’s Israel Advocacy Day was the weight of the moment. The echoes in those corridors carried a sobering reality. I was standing in the very place where decisions are made that shape our nation. We passed office after office of names constantly in the headlines, alongside others I had never heard of before. Upon entering one congresswoman’s office, I remember thinking, “I have never heard of her.” However, there was a significant change in the atmosphere crossing the threshold of her door. Come to find out, she is not only a significant leader and influencer, but also a committed disciple of Jesus.

Ironically, we never even met the congresswoman, only one of her staffers. Yet what unfolded in that office was nothing short of divine.

We began sharing with the young staffer about the three talking points we had come to discuss about the Jewish people and Israel. Each member of our group briefly shared who they were and why they cared so deeply about Israel. As is often the case, it can be difficult to discern where people truly stand on the issue of Israel, so there is always a certain carefulness in the conversation.

After we finished walking through our points, I asked a question I have asked representatives and senators many times before:

The last three years have witnessed a staggering moral inversion on the global stage. It seems the world has turned upside down as public discourse increasingly frames Israel—the only democracy in the Middle East—as the primary evil force, while depicting Hamas and Iran as the victims. This cultural shift is the modern embodiment of the warning issued by the prophet Isaiah: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” (5:20).

Supporting Israel means refusing to confuse light with darkness. In 1943, rabbis marched alone, their urgent pleas ignored by the White House. Since October 7, the landscape has fundamentally shifted. What was treated as a isolated Jewish issue in the 1940s is now recognized as a collective moral obligation. This duty falls on all American citizens committed to protecting our Judeo-Christian heritage, and on everyone who serves the one true God.

“Have you ever been to Israel?” The moment I asked it, tears immediately welled up in her eyes. She began sharing how she had been raised in a Christian home and taught from a young age to love Israel because it is central to her faith. As she spoke, the tears continued to stream down her face. She shared openly about her walk with God and what the Lord was doing in her life in this season. In response, our team began speaking words of encouragement, purpose, and life over her.

Still emotional, she looked at us and said, “This is exactly what I needed. God has been asking me to be bold.” You could sense something shifting in her spirit. She was ready to step forward in courage and conviction.

Before we left, I asked the rabbi in our group if he would pray for her. He smiled and quietly responded, “I only do recited prayers.” But when he began to pray, it felt like anything but recited.

The room became holy ground.

Suddenly, tears filled my eyes. Others in the room were crying. Even the rabbi himself became so choked up with emotion that he struggled to finish the prayer. In that moment, it felt as though heaven had stepped into that congressional office. Perhaps what happened that day was not only life-changing for a young staffer. Perhaps it was also a glimpse of something deeper—a picture of what Jewish and Christian relationships can truly look like when centered on the purposes and presence of God.



PRAYER DURING THE ADVOCACY DAY

As rabbis and pastors gathered for this historic event in Washington, DC, ICEJ USA and partnering intercessors provided 24/7 spiritual covering through a Continuous Wall of Prayer. Hundreds of believers across the nation and internationally united in round-the-clock prayer, lifting up prayers for protection, peace, wisdom for leaders, and a spiritual awakening in America and Israel.

The ICEJ's Global Prayer Gathering joined this effort by mobilizing hundreds of intercessors worldwide who gathered live each day to pray over the event and the nation. This unprecedented prayer effort reflected the growing movement of Christians standing together in faith to seek God's guidance and blessing over the gathering and the nation.

Photo: ICEJ Prayer Coordinator Monica Stenberg (center front) with other delegates in front of the White House during Israel Advocacy Day 2026

GET TO KNOW YOUR ICEJ USA TEAM

McKENNA ESPY, ICEJ USA Communications Coordinator



McKenna Espy is our Communications Coordinator, bringing clarity, creativity, and organization to the Communications team. With a knack for streamlining processes and keeping projects moving forward, she helps plan and execute communication strategies that advance ICEJ USA's mission and meaningfully engage faith-based audiences. She is deeply mission-driven and is always seeking to serve the audience, the Communications team, and the broader ICEJ mission—and this is reflected in everything she does.

She began her career as a classically trained pianist, earning a full scholarship to Union University and teaching piano for seven years. "However, following my undergraduate studies, I felt a call to transition into nonprofit communications through Christian Radio, where I developed a strong foundation in donor relations, market research, and strategic communication." The role allowed her to thoughtfully integrate her background in music with her growing passion for communications.

Israel held a special place in her heart for many years, but her perspective deepened during a 2021 study-abroad trip for a New Testament survey course. "While I was already supportive of Israel, seeing the land and the people firsthand strengthened my commitment." Now, at ICEJ USA, she applies her professional experience in support of mission-driven work connected to Israel.

McKenna's favorite part of working at the ICEJ USA is the people she works alongside. "Being part of a strong, collaborative team not only enables me to do my best work but also inspires excellence in all that we do. At ICEJ USA, the mission is always at the center—and everyone's dedication and support help ensure that it guides every initiative and decision."

Mark 10:45 is her favorite Scripture: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." For McKenna, it's a constant reminder that humbling ourselves and serving others is never beneath us "because our perfect Savior demonstrated it first."

ICEJ ASSISTS ISRAELI SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN IMPACTED BY WAR

By Nativa Buehler
ICEJ AID Administrator



Last June, an Iranian missile struck a school in Bnei Brak, Israel, adjacent to ALEH's center for disabled children. The blast wave tore through surrounding buildings, blowing out windows and buckling walls. Inside the ALEH center, the force caused widespread destruction, including to specialized medical equipment used to care for some of Israel's most severely handicapped youngsters.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) has assisted the ALEH center for years, including the donation of a customized ambulance for medical check-ups. At the time of the strike, only seven weeks remained in the school year. For the 300 children in the center and 100 residents in adjoining facilities, there was nowhere else to go. These vulnerable children live with complex disabilities and depend on around-the-clock medical care.

Within days, staff relocated operations into underground protected areas before the 12-day war ended. By July and August, despite temporary settings, the children were once again receiving therapy. This resilience reflects a larger reality: nearly 18 percent of Israel's population lives with a disability. In times of war, their vulnerability is compounded by the limited availability of accessible shelters and adapted equipment.

Thanks to government assistance and faithful partners like the ICEJ, restoration moved at remarkable speed. By September, children were returning to classrooms. Today, the school is 90 percent rebuilt, and the halls are bright

again. For the recent Purim festival, children decorated the restored building based on beloved storybooks.

Approximately 20 percent of the rebuilding investment went toward replacing critical therapeutic equipment. Through ICEJ's support, ALEH received:

- 11 hospital beds
- 5 therapeutic bathing beds
- A patient lift system

These items transform daily lives. "The new bathing beds make life so much easier," said one caregiver. For children requiring full assistance, such equipment ensures dignity and safety. Patient lifts allow children to move securely between their beds and therapy—simple acts that require specialized tools.

Most of ALEH's staff have served for decades. Their dedication carried the children through the chaotic days after the blast. While the center is alive and operational, the work is not finished. The remaining needs include:

- 8 therapeutic bathing beds
- 8 ceiling-mounted patient lifts
- 6 eye-gaze communication systems
- 15 therapeutic iPads with specialized software

"Through friends like you, what was shattered has been restored," assured our ALEH contact. "And what was shaken now stands stronger than before."



Watch this video about the Iranian missile that struck the new ALEH center for children with severe disabilities.

Scan the QR code to help provide the remaining needs for the ALEH center
or go to: give.icejusa.org/donate/israel-in-crisis-fund →





OPERATION WINGS OF DAWN

By Howard Flower, ICEJ Aliyah Director

The Aliyah of the Bnei Menashe continues this spring as a third charter flight from India is expected to arrive in Israel in coming days, bringing a total of 600 new immigrants in this first phase of “Operation Wings of Dawn.” Thanks to your generous donation, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is a significant partner with the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) in this amazing exodus.

The name “Operation Wings of Dawn” is found in Psalm 139:9 and reminds us of the divine presence that reaches even to the uttermost parts of the East, where the dawn begins. For the passengers—the members of the Bnei Menashe community from northeastern India—these urgent charter flights are the latest chapter in an odyssey stretching back 2,700 years, an exile that is finally coming to an end, fulfilling the promise of Isaiah 43:5, where God says He will bring His children “from the east.”

The Bnei Menashe trace their ancestry back to the tribe of Manasseh, one of the 10 northern tribes of Israel deported by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC. According to their oral history, the tribe wandered eastward along the ancient Silk Road through Persia and Afghanistan, eventually settling

in China, where legend says an emperor confiscated their Torah scrolls. Facing persecution, some fled south into the northeast corner of India. When British missionaries arrived in the late nineteenth century with Bibles, many were drawn to Christianity. However, a determined minority preserved their Hebraic traditions in secret: circumcision on the eighth day, dietary laws resembling *kashrut* (kosher), a rest day akin to the Sabbath—even a harvest song called the *Sikpui Hla* that recounts a sea parting, a pillar of cloud and fire, and water from the rock.

This remarkable human story carries profound biblical resonance. The Bible records two distinct captivities: Israel exiled to Assyria and Judah to Babylon. Yet the prophets foretold a future, unified return of all 12 tribes. Isaiah 11:11–12 declares that the Lord will “extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant ... and will assemble the banished of Israel and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” The phrase “a second time” points beyond the historical return from Babylon. Ezekiel 37 vividly describes two sticks—one for Judah, one for Joseph/Ephraim—being joined into one, a prophecy of reunited nationhood that found only

partial fulfilment in the ancient restoration and awaits the future completion that has begun before our eyes.

For centuries, the literal return of the 10 lost tribes seemed impossible. Today, the ingathering of Judah—the modern Jewish people—is a defining miracle of our era. The simultaneous reappearance and Aliyah of descendants like the Bnei Menashe add a compelling layer. Biblical prophecy presents this reunification as a signpost heralding the Messianic age: a divine gathering that precedes the Davidic king, a spiritual renewal that will follow the physical return, and a healed unity necessary for final redemption. As the name “Wings of Dawn” suggests, these returning Bnei Menashe have traveled from the ends of the earth. Their homecoming is not merely a humanitarian triumph; it is, for many, a tangible unfolding of promises made millennia ago, and the final chapter is now being written.

This Aliyah is also an Aliyah of rescue. Ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups in Manipur has devastated the Bnei Menashe, who are ethnically Kuki. Synagogues and homes have been burned and over 2,000 displaced. Targeted with antisemitic chants, the community’s crisis accelerated Israel’s “Operation Wings

of Dawn,” aiming to bring the remaining 5,000 members by 2030. ICEJ is committed to assisting this rescue.

The 2020s brought new urgency. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted emergency airlifts, and in 2023, ethnic violence in Manipur killed a community member and destroyed a synagogue. After the October 7 Hamas massacre, more than 200 recent immigrants were called up for combat within weeks, rising to around 300 by late 2024, many serving in elite units. The cost was heartbreaking as two Staff Sergeants fell fighting for Israel. Their sacrifices underscored the community’s deep integration into Israeli society.

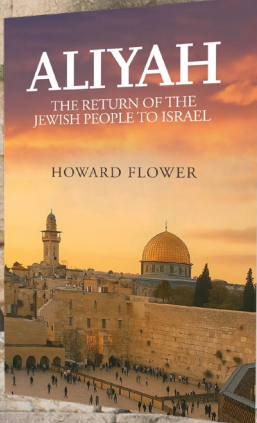
In November 2025, the Israeli government responded with “Operation Wings of Dawn,” a historic decision to bring the remaining community—approximately 5,800 individuals—home to Israel by 2030, with the JAFI managing the process. The initial 2026 flights have turned an ancient oral promise into a modern reality.

The name “Wings of the Dawn” is so fitting because it transforms the idea of fleeing danger into a spiritual and hopeful exodus, representing a swift rescue from a place of violence and persecution to a place of destiny and refuge.

Be part of this historic exodus to Israel—scan the QR code or give today at: give.icejusa.org/donate/icej-aliyah-fund



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CHRISTIAN ZIONISM: PART 5

Theological Challenges & Considerations of Christian Zionism

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA President

The heart of the divide in the Christian world toward Israel usually comes down to a person's view of the Jewish people's calling and destiny. It may masquerade as a concern for the Palestinian people, or purport to be about political issues, but often the real issue lies in whether they believe in a form of Replacement Theology or not.

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

Replacement Theology, or supersessionism, is a centuries-old teaching that the Jewish people have been cursed and rejected by God because they rejected Jesus' messianic credentials. As a result, they have been replaced by the church; the church is therefore the new Israel of God. While God's curses may be upon the Jews, His blessings all reside on the church!

This theology provided fertile ground for centuries of antisemitic teachings in the church and sowed the seeds for the persecution of the Jewish people throughout Europe. Many scholars agree that the Holocaust could never have happened had it not been for the centuries of Christian antisemitism that were rooted in this theology.

Replacement Theology, in all its variations, implies that God's Plan A failed, so He went to Plan B with a new people: the Christian Church. However, Ephesians 1:4-5 says that Plan A existed before the foundations of the world were laid and always included

the death of Christ Jesus because that is how Gentile believers are adopted as sons (v. 5). Paul in Romans 11 affirms that the calling of the Jewish people is irrevocable (Romans 11:29). *Plan A did not fail and was not annulled.*

The danger is that if someone believes the Jewish people were so wicked that they lost their covenant with God, that person becomes susceptible to antisemitic lies, which can quickly take root. Proof of this connection is that often, accusations against Israel then morph into derogatory comments about Jews in general, and all is justified by repeating a Replacement Theology position. Replacement Theology opens the door to and provides fertile ground for antisemitism.

THE CALLING OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Christian Zionism, however, is a protective wall against antisemitism because it produces gratitude and respect for the Jewish people. The land of Canaan was bequeathed to them as an everlasting possession for the purposes of becoming a great nation and blessing all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). They would do this by bringing to a fallen world the redemptive gifts through which man can be saved. The apostle Paul listed those redemptive gifts in Romans 3:2 and Romans 9:4-5: the Word of God, the covenants, the law, the service of God, the promises, and Christ Jesus. The Jewish people's work is not yet complete, and God

has brought them back to the land for what may now be the final chapter of history, which is a glorious one, when the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth and nations will learn war no more (Isaiah 2, 11).

Acknowledging this special calling on the Jewish people entails a responsibility to appreciate, bless, and honor them. However, this does not mean that God loves them above all the other peoples of the world. John 3:16 declares God's love extends to the whole world: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God's love for the world is why He brought into existence the nation of Israel through whom He would bring about His great plan of redemption. Their role in His plan would afford them a place of preservation and promised blessing. Unfortunately, their calling would also place them directly in the line of fire, and consequently, there would be much suffering throughout the centuries because of it. The story of the Jewish people is filled with exiles, persecutions, pogroms, expulsions, and threats of annihilation. There is no explanation for this history other than the biblical role bequeathed to them by God Himself and the evil battle against it.

Psalms 83:1-4 explains that they are in the line of fire in a war against God Himself: "O God . . . those who hate you . . . have

said ‘Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.’” God knew that the people of Israel would pay a price and their history would be full of suffering. This could explain why He promised blessings on any who would bless and help them.

TESTING THE NATIONS

George Gilder, a venture-capitalist, proposes in his book *The Israel Test* that Israel presents a moral and ethical challenge to the world and therefore has become the ultimate fault line. At the root of the Israel test for the world today is the knowledge that Israel is contributing more to humanity through its scientific, technological, and economic achievements than nearly any other country in the world.

According to Gilder, Israel presents the following test to the world: *What is your attitude toward people who surpass you in creating wealth or in other accomplishments? Do you aspire to their excellence, or do you seethe at it? Do you admire and celebrate exceptional achievement, or do you impugn it and seek to tear it down?*

God is using Israel to test the hearts of the nations. Their future will be determined by how they respond.

In Isaiah 11, the return of the Jewish people to their homeland is described as God’s banner to the nations. God is declaring a message to the world in this miraculous return—that God’s word is true, and He is faithful to fulfill it. This is a message that Christians should rejoice in and rally behind. But the flip side of that message is a clear warning that judgment is coming, and it will be based on their failure of the “Israel test.” His word says those who oppose His people and seek to destroy them will be destroyed. It is a clear word of warning (see Jeremiah 30:11; Joel 3:1–3; Zephaniah 3:19; Zechariah 12:9).

TESTING THE CHURCH

The same test is being presented to the church. In Romans 11, the apostle Paul addresses the attitude of the Roman church toward the Jewish people. He warns believers to make sure that their attitude is humble and honors the Jewish people. He even cautions them about possible judgment by God if their attitude is not right: “Do not be

haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either” (Romans 11:20–21).

This is the test that Israel presents to the church: *Are we arrogant toward the Jews? Do we seek to replace them in advancing God’s will—or do we rejoice in the faithfulness of God to them and that He is fulfilling the promises He made to their fathers? Do we despise their return to their homeland because it does not fit into our Replacement Theology—or do we break into praise of God’s mighty ways as did the apostle Paul when he completed his teaching about God’s enduring plans for Israel in Romans 9–11?*

A church that honors its Hebraic roots, as wild branches that are grafted into the natural olive tree (Romans 11:17), receives great strength and nourishment. Separating ourselves from the very root that supports our Christian faith brings spiritual decline and even death. Christianity has no meaning when separated from its Jewish context. This may explain the decline in certain denominations that belittle the biblical and Hebraic foundation of our faith.

May we all pass this test and approach the issue of Israel and the Jewish people with humility and honor for the spiritual root that supports the Christian faith.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

The great scandal of Replacement Theology is its assault on the character of God and His faithfulness. The idea that God rejected the Jewish people and took away their promises, giving them to another people—the church—cannot be reconciled with Scripture. If God’s plan A failed and He had to come up with a new people to execute plan B, it brings into question His sovereignty and wisdom. *What kind of God has a plan that fails?*

Instead, the reading of Scripture is clear that God’s promises to Abraham were not conditional on actions by Abraham or any of his descendants. Genesis 15 reveals that the covenant was not even made with Abraham—it was as though God was making the covenant with Himself. He was the responsible party to fulfill the covenant. So to say that it failed means He failed and brings God’s character into question.

Scripture is also clear that God is a faithful God: “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” (Numbers 23:19 ESV).

A powerful declaration of God’s commitment to His promises is found in Psalm 89:34: “My covenant I will not break.” And in the New Testament Timothy says: “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself” (2 Timothy 2:13).

God is faithful and is fulfilling the promises He made 4,000 years ago to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That realization should bring great encouragement to all Christians that He will also fulfill His promises made to us.

CONCLUSION

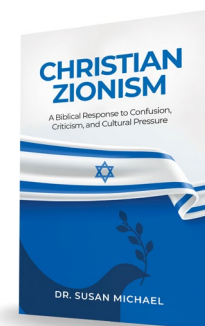
So if ever you are in a time of discouragement or doubt, remember the return of the Jewish people to the land God promised to Abraham, exactly as foretold by the Hebrew prophets thousands of years ago. We can find hope in this amazing demonstration of the faithfulness of God.

CONFUSED ABOUT CHRISTIAN ZIONISM?

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