



## Who Can You Trust?

By Daniel Gwertzman

*"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." (Exodus 1:8)*

Are there such things as ironclad guarantees, or are they subject to rust and forgetfulness? They can even turn into aluminum foil. Who in fact can you trust? The problem is that people forget the past and those that do are doomed to repeat it. We have a television program TV 7 Israel News which begins by reminding its viewers that the war began on October 7, with an attack on Israel by Hamas in which 1200 were murdered, 250 were taken captive to Gaza, and roughly 4800 were wounded. The world has lost of sight who are the victims and who was committing genocide. We can learn lessons from World War II.

Before World War II, there was a back bencher in Parliament who was considered a war monger and a lunatic in his party and his country. His name was Winston Churchill. He warned against the danger posed by Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler. His country and his Tory Party believed in a diplomatic solution, and the policy of Appeasement. It was thought that to give into Hitler and his legitimate demands, would remove any cause for war. The leader of his party brought back an agreement from Munich which he claimed would provide peace in our time. Instead, it led to World War II. His party then turned to Churchill and appointed him Prime Minister. Today he is regarded as one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century.

So who am I advising you to follow? I say look to our Biblical roots for an answer.

*"Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about." (Psalms 17:7-9)*

In the current situation in Israel, shouldn't we be legitimately concerned about our future and our isolation in the world? Since the attack on October 7, 2023, there are already 230 women, 550 children, and 29 unborn babies left behind by Israel's fallen soldiers. The IDF Widows and Orphans Organization looks after their needs. It provides communal and emotional support as well as scholarships for students, medical grants for elderly widows, wedding grants for orphans starting their families, and various forms of aid. Their Otzma Program serves orphans aged 6-18. Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, the number of orphans requiring support has surged by over 130%.

Despite all the difficulties facing Israel on the world stage, we can see some positive changes taking place in the world. Christians from all over the world are coming here on Solidarity Missions to show their support. Israel's entry in the Eurovision Song Contest in Malmö, Sweden, Eden Golan singing the song "Hurricane" came in 5<sup>th</sup> place. This was in spite of a demonstration by 10,000 Pro-Palestinian supporters in central Malmö, waving Palestinian flags and shouting, "Boycott Israel".



Tel Aviv

No national jury was willing to grant Israel the top score of 12 points. However, Israel amassed a top score of 323 points from televoters and that is why it came in fifth place out of 25 finalists. Israel received 12 points (the maximum) from televoters in Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Israel also received 10 points from televoters in Albania, Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Moldova, and Slovenia.

We celebrated our 76<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on May 14, 2024. There are at this time, 100,000 people still displaced from our northern border as well as from the 22 communities that were attacked along our southern border. Thousands more are still unable to go home. We have continuing fighting taking place



on our northern and southern borders. The daily toll of those killed and injured is continuing to rise. Global anti-Semitism and demonization of Israel is taking place on a daily basis. We even have a small minority in Israel demanding "No Celebrations!" To put it simply, most of the people celebrated. Why is that, given the current situation? Life in Israel is full of meaning marked by sacrifice, commitment, and joy. That is what makes life for Jews satisfying and exciting. Especially, since we have waited and prayed for it for 2000 years, until 76 years ago. We have "The Hope", which is the title of our National Anthem. Last year in 2023, according to the Global Happiness Study of the U.N., we were ranked number 4. This year, despite all the challenges we faced in 2024, we are number 5.



Jerusalem

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Population of Israel is nearing 10 million, of which 7.247 million are Jews. They make up 73.2% of the population, while Arabs stand at 2.089 million making up 21.1 % of the population. There are 565,000 people, who do not fall into either sector, making up 5.7% of the population. This shows Israel's population has grown by 189,000 people (1.9 %) since last year. Over the course of the year, 196,000 babies were born and 37,000 people made Aliyah, while 60,000 died. If we compare this to the population 76 years ago, when Israel declared its Independence, which was 806,000 people, the current population is 12 times the size it was when Israel became a state. That my friends is a real miracle! Our population is young with 28% under 15, and 12%, 65 or over.

In Genesis, God observed mankind's descent into dishonesty and immorality.

*"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Genesis 6:6)*

Nahum, who is linked to the Month of Nissan when the Exodus took place, was sent by God to prophesy not only about Israel, but also about the nations of the World. He highlighted the wickedness of the nations to demonstrate that Israel is not on such a low level, relative to the depravity of these nations of the world whose spiritual level was much worse.

From the second night of Passover, we count 49 days and on the 50<sup>th</sup> day we celebrate Shavuot (Pentecost). This marks the Giving of the Law. This was when Israel became a nation. It marks the Giving of the Offering of the First Fruits, which took place on the sixth of the Hebrew month of Sivan. There is also a tradition that Noah's Ark came to rest on the Mountain of Ararat, and the rains stopped on the seventh of Sivan. At this time we are at the ninth month since the October 7<sup>th</sup> attack. A new situation is emerging, a spiritual change is coming upon our world. We can see on the news that in South Africa which brought charges of genocide against Israel, the African National Congress has lost its Parliamentary majority. In the elections in the European Union, the Parliament has moved to the right. The high representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josef Borrell, of the E.U. who has been a strong critic of Israel, is due to be replaced. In the U.S. a Harvard CAPS/Harris poll indicates that while two-thirds of American voters support a Gaza Ceasefire, this is only if all hostages are released, and Hamas is removed from power. Over all support for Israel over Hamas is at 79%. Simply put the world is changing. It is time to put your trust in the Lord.



The name Hamas chose for their attack on Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup> was the Al Achsa Flood. This was not just an attack on Israel; it is a war against God and the People of Israel. The end of the flood in the Bible symbolized the difference between the corrupt world, that existed in the past before the Flood, and the future world that would be rebuilt after the Flood, without prior corruption. It is derived from studying and learning the lessons of past failures, and returning to our spiritual roots. It means revival and being born again. (See Luke 17:26-30)

*"Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame." (Zephaniah 3:19)*





### Solidarity trip to Israel.

By Cathy Faes

On October 7, 2023, the terrorist organization Hamas carried out a horrific massacre on defenseless civilians celebrating the holy day of Judaism, *Simchat Torah*, or the Festival of the Torah. Almost 1,200 people were killed and maimed, close to 3,000 injured, and 239 people were taken captive into Gaza. At that point, we knew we were called upon to provide visible support. The promises in the Word of the Day sustained us, and we flew to Israel on February 11, 2024, to stay for two weeks, despite our uncertainties and fears. We felt the prayer support from our Christian friends at home. In Jerusalem, we listened to our friends. They were suffering from shock and dejection on one hand, and full of anger at the government on the other.

We are so grateful that we were able to make our planned trips to our friends in Tel-Aviv, Ashkelon, and Haifa without any danger. With a single rechargeable public transportation card, you can travel easily and cheaply. A special moment for me, was the opportunity to hand over the preprint book which I had translated from French into German to the author, Haïm Ouizemann, in Ashkelon. The title of the book is "The Weekly Readings of the Torah". The fact that a book about the weekly readings will be published in German was a very moving experience for him.



The sharp turnaround in world public opinion towards Israel, and the biased reporting in news and social media after the IDF invasion of Gaza to free the hostages, was often a topic of conversation. Even the Israeli army was surprised by the extent of the 720 km network of tunnels, with around 5,700 separate shafts. Every day, our friends read which young soldiers had died. The visit to Tel Aviv to the "Hostages Square" in front of the Art

Museum, moved us to tears. Here, as well as throughout Israel, pictures of the hostages are displayed. We could feel the bitterness, cries for help, and helplessness caused by the terrible tragedy.

The shared conversations, combined with delicious Israeli food, invigorated us all. An invitation from our long-standing friends to come to Haifa was overwhelming. The three-day hike in the magnificent spring nature, surpassed everything. Such a splendor of flowers was unique and incredibly beautiful.



We also enjoyed a half-day excursion into the Judean desert, where the hills were covered with a green carpet after all the winter rains.

We felt very strongly the truth of the current Israeli saying: "Together we will win!" - "Be-yachad nenazeach!" This trip has once again given us new impetus. Back in peaceful Switzerland, we are all the more aware of how much Israel needs our solidarity. One thing we know and are convinced of: Israel will blossom again, the south will be rebuilt and become stronger.



Isaiah prophesied:



*"The LORD waits to be gracious to you and rises to have mercy on you, for the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!" (Isaiah 30:18).*

This is our confidence.



The following piece originally appeared in German in Israelnetz Magazine 3/24

*Nicolas Dreyer, a long-time friend of the AMI Jerusalem Center, volunteered in Israel's harvest. He had already often visited the land, but helping in the agriculture deepened his understanding of the Bible.*



## Too Few Harvest Laborers

By Dr. Nicolas Dreyer

In February, I flew to Israel to serve for ten days as a volunteer. On each day early in the morning, my fellow volunteers and I drove to “our place of work” in Geva Karmel. There we worked in the tomato or pepper plantations. The farmer Yossi and our group leader would explain to us the details of the jobs we had to do. We did the physically, often tiring, work until the early afternoon.

We cleaned the tomato vines from unwanted leaves, shoots, and fruits, treating them with a fungicide. In between, we collected the foliage from the bottom of the vines and removed it from the greenhouse. Yossi and other Israelis working with the farmer, such as biologists advising the farmer on managing fungal diseases, ever so often they expressed great gratitude for our volunteer service. They asked us about our motivation to spend our holiday coming to Israel at such a time, and volunteering.

So, we were given the chance to talk about the connection that we as Christians feel with this land, and the Jewish people, through the Holy Scriptures. The secular farmer could accept this. He shared with us that his motivation for farming derives from this land having been promised to Abraham, who farmed this land and raised livestock in it.

### Connection between the people, the land, and Scripture

Working in the soccer field-sized greenhouse, helped us to acquaint ourselves, mostly with no prior agricultural experience, with just a wee bit of vegetable farming in



Israel. In our conversations, our appreciation for the connection between the people, the land of Israel, as well as the lands connected with biblical and Israel's history and its Holy Scriptures, became very important to us. I understood with new clarity that the land as a regional geographical factor and trades associated with it, predominantly agriculture but also forestry, figure prominently in the Bible.

### Too few laborers in the harvest

Likewise, the harvest is a popular motif in Jesus's parables. Matthew 9:37-38 employs the motif of a lack of harvesters in a spiritual sense. Jesus's contemporary listeners and the early readers of the Gospel of Matthew or Luke (10:2-7), would have been well acquainted with the economic reality and consequences of a lack of farm workers in a semi-arid and arid strip of land repeatedly hit by famines.

Certainly, such motifs in theological teaching were well-known to his contemporaries from parts of the Hebrew Bible. In particular, the Prophets (e.g. Haggai 1:6) contain harvesting motifs.

Jesus's words concerning a lack of laborers in the harvest very much fit in with the current real-life situation of this branch of Israel's economy. If there are not enough hands in the harvest, some of it spoils, and the needed food supplies for the population might not be fully taken care of. At the moment, the harvest is an important part of the defensive effort, and many Israelis volunteer in their spare time.

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