

JEWES F R JESUS

Remarkably Well Preserved

by David Brickner, Executive Director

This month, Israel celebrates her 61st birthday; some of you are old enough to remember the 1948 declaration as a truly stunning turn of history. A hope was realised as, after nearly 2,000 years of exile, the independent Jewish state was reconstituted in the land of her ancestors. Over the past 61 years, that hope – that reality – has been challenged and tested. Wars and horrible acts of terrorism have been perpetrated against the people of Israel. Violence and uncertainty remain, as Israel's very existence continues to be rejected, denied and threatened by many of her neighbours.

Many Christians have enthusiastically celebrated Israel's rebirth as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Some go far beyond that belief and have even used 1948 as a marker for a countdown to Armageddon. Such preoccupation with end times prophecies and conjectures concerning exactly how those events will burst upon us has fueled an entire industry of conferences, books, tapes and tourism.

Other Christians refer to the above views as "proof-texting" and react to what they believe is bad theology by dismissing the modern state of Israel as a mere historical oddity – spiritually and biblically irrelevant. Yet one does not have to buy into a specific scheme of eschatology to acknowledge God's sovereignty at work in the presence of modern Israel.

Several years ago, a prominent pastor and good friend of Jews for Jesus asked my opinion about an article in which he argued that no particular blessing from God rested on Israel because the Jewish people are back in the land "in unbelief." I could not argue about the unbelief, but I could not agree with his conclusion. (We remain friends despite our disagreement.)

The fact is that Israel is actually much older than 61. We need to understand how God has dealt with the Jewish nation throughout history, including Bible times, if we are to understand how "remarkably well preserved" she truly is.*



After nearly 2,000 years of exile, the independent Jewish state was reconstituted in the land of her ancestors

In the older Testament, we see many times when only a remnant of Jewish people walked with the Lord, while the majority were in unbelief. Read through the history of the Jewish nation recorded in Scripture and you will see that she was more often in a state of unbelief than belief. But this did not automatically incur the removal of God's favour or the exile of the Jewish people from the land.

More often than not, God responded to Israel's unbelief by sending prophets who would call her back to Himself. These prophets proclaimed God's Word and His truth as a demonstration of His mercy and grace, giving Israel an opportunity to respond and repent. Sometimes God allowed a famine or attack from other nations as part of His sovereign plan to turn Israel back to Himself. The prophets pointed to such events as God's merciful attempt to bring Israel back to Him so that they might avoid the removal of His blessing and

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and judgment. God's judgement, or the removal of His blessing, did not come immediately and was often forestalled for centuries. Many times, Israel did repent and receive God's mercy.

King Hezekiah provides a good example of this. The Assyrian King Sennacherib had attacked Israel, destroying many of her cities. He eventually surrounded Jerusalem and threatened to destroy the entire nation. In the British museum, one can still see Sennacherib's boast against Israel as it was recorded on a clay cylinder: "I have Hezekiah trapped like a caged bird in Jerusalem." Things looked bleak for Israel and her King. They no doubt wondered if God had indeed removed His blessing.

Hezekiah was tempted to seek help from Egypt, but the prophet Isaiah encouraged him to trust in the Lord instead. The Psalmist echoed Isaiah's confidence at this time, writing

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, even
though the earth be removed,
and though the mountains be
carried into the midst of the sea;
Be still, and know that I am
God; I will be exalted among
the nations, I will be exalted in
the earth!*

Psalm 46:1, 2, 10

Israel and King Hezekiah needed to understand that because God was her refuge, she need not look elsewhere for help. The command to "be still" was actually an admonition to Israel and her enemies to stop fighting, to surrender to God and believe. That is exactly what happened. Hezekiah listened and the Lord delivered Israel from destruction.

The Scriptures record,

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses – all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.

2 Kings 19:35-36

Did Israel's righteousness cause God to intervene? No, God delivered her because of His sovereign grace. However, God did not always rescue His people from calamity. On many occasions Israel suffered horrible defeat and even exile, but there is not necessarily a correlation between her spiritual state and God's exercise of mercy and grace.

God alone determines what His response will be to Israel's spiritual state. True, the Jewish people are back in the land in unbelief today. Should God's blessing be any less on Israel because of her unbelief than it is on America, where the majority is likewise in unbelief? The Lord was willing, by Abraham's entreaty, to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of ten righteous men within their gates. Nevertheless, a growing minority of Israelis are believers in Jesus; these are what the apostle Paul called "*a remnant according to God's gracious choice*" (Romans 11:5). And God continues to send His messengers to call Israel to repentance even as He did in Bible times.

This May, as Israel commemorates the 61st year of the modern state, our Jews for Jesus staff and volunteers are on the streets handing out tracts and proclaiming the good news of the gospel, saying to the cities of Judah, "**Behold Your God!**" Would you please stop right now and pray for God's blessing and protection on our BYG campaigners? And pray for much fruit for their labours. Of course, we are not the only ones bringing this

life-giving message to Israel today. A vibrant and growing remnant in Israel is evidence of God's continued blessing on the Land of Israel, even though the majority is still in unbelief.

No doubt, modern day Israel faces dire problems, any one of which could prove fatal, whether it be the public call for her destruction by Ahmadinejad of Iran or the violent threats from terrorist groups like Hamas or Hezbollah. Can Christians who read their Bibles and trust in the sovereign One of history really believe that God has absented Himself from the course of history in the Middle East, or that He has in fact rejected His people whom He foreknew? "*May it never be,*" was Paul's reply in Romans 11:1-2, and it is mine. Israel most of all needs to "*be still and know*" that Jesus is Lord.

I want to celebrate something much greater than Israel's 61st birthday. I believe the fact that Israel is so remarkably well-preserved is a tribute to God's faithfulness to His people for these thousands of years, regardless of what is deserved or merited. I hope you will want to celebrate that faithfulness with me because you and I, like Israel, are also remarkably well-preserved by God. It is not our own righteousness that determines His mercy and grace. Let's pray together that God empowers today's messengers of that mercy and grace to boldly proclaim the good news of the gospel, so that modern-day Israelis will in fact turn from their unbelief, be still and know that Jesus is Lord.

**Note: I recognise that Jews for Jesus has good friends on both sides of the "in-house debate" among Christians regarding the place of the modern state of Israel in God's plan. I write as one convinced that God is still dealing with Israel according to His promise to Abraham that his seed would inherit the Land. However, I am grateful to the many friends of Jews for Jesus who may not share this conviction and yet do share my desire to see Jewish people come to faith in Christ.]☆[*

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**WE EXIST TO MAKE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS AN UNAVOIDABLE
ISSUE TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WORLDWIDE**



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TEL: +27 11 880 7956; ALSO WORKING IN: AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL, CANADA, FRANCE, GERMANY, ISRAEL, RUSSIA, USA, UKRAINE and THE UNITED KINGDOM
EDITOR: LAURA BARRON; DESIGN: BASIE GEERDTS; BANKING DETAILS: STANDARD BANK JAN SMUTS AVE; BRANCH CODE: 004205; ACC NO: 001 904 892



Lifting Up Y'shua (Jesus) in

ISRAEL

Our work in Israel began with a family of four in 1994 and has grown to be the largest branch of Jews for Jesus!

Our branch leader, **Dan**, is married to **Dinah** and they have three children, Yael, Eitan and Yoav. We asked Dan to introduce this feature, and here is what he wants you to know about the work in Israel:

"Our Jews for Jesus Israel work is blessed with great staff. All of us are Israeli citizens who, more than anything, want to bring to our nation the message of Jesus. As we stand for the Lord in the Land, we face many challenges. Many oppose the gospel and would love for us to disappear. Yet at this time we are choosing to launch BYG Israel and to be more available, audible and visible than ever before. Why? Because the people of Israel need to hear the gospel!

"Most of the nation is still unreached with the message of Y'shua, the message of salvation. Our people do not know and, most tragically, they do not even have the opportunity to know. Let me give you an example.

"In Israel, one cannot go to a bookstore and purchase a Hebrew copy of the New Testament. Israelis do not even know that Y'shua is the true Hebrew name of Jesus. A big part of our campaign will revolve around His name, which speaks of the salvation He brings. Even if most will reject Him, by the grace of God, over the next few years, we hope most Israelis will at least know enough to truly consider Him. We know that He will draw some of them to Himself. We hope that you will partner

with us to bring the gospel to the nation of Israel. That is the most important blessing that Israel truly needs."

Dan and the rest of our Israel missionaries and outreach workers have been introduced in previous newsletters, which are archived on our website. You can go to www.jewsforjesus.org and type in any of their names under "search." Meanwhile, here is a brief description of the rest of the team:

Efraim, who with his wife **Jeannie** pioneered our Israel work, now serves as associate director for training and development in Israel. Jeannie works with children and youth. Both their sons, **Daniel** and **Gabi**, are grown and both worked as interns with Jews for Jesus around the world following their army service.

Shlomy and **Miriam**, as mentioned in January, have expanded our work into Rishon L'Tzion. (More about the new work there follows.)

Yoel is married to **Adel** and they have three children, **Noa**, **Boaz** and **Natanel**. Prior to becoming believers in Jesus they lived for a time within a very Orthodox Jewish community, and Yoel was part of our ultra-Orthodox outreach during Behold Your God in New York.

Ze'ev is married to **Rachel**; they have two children, **Leyah** and **Amelia**. Ze'ev did some professional writing prior to coming on staff, and his skills in producing gospel literature in Hebrew will be a great contribution for Behold Your God Israel.

Ofer is married to **Sarah**, and they have two children, **Ely** and **Matthew**. Ofer is a gifted musician and his talents with guitar and harmonica enable him to draw crowds of people on the streets and beaches.

Peter and **Yarden** are the newest members of our Israel staff, still trainees, and recently returned to Israel from New York. They have a powerful testimony as an Arab and a Jew united, not only in marriage, but also in Christ.

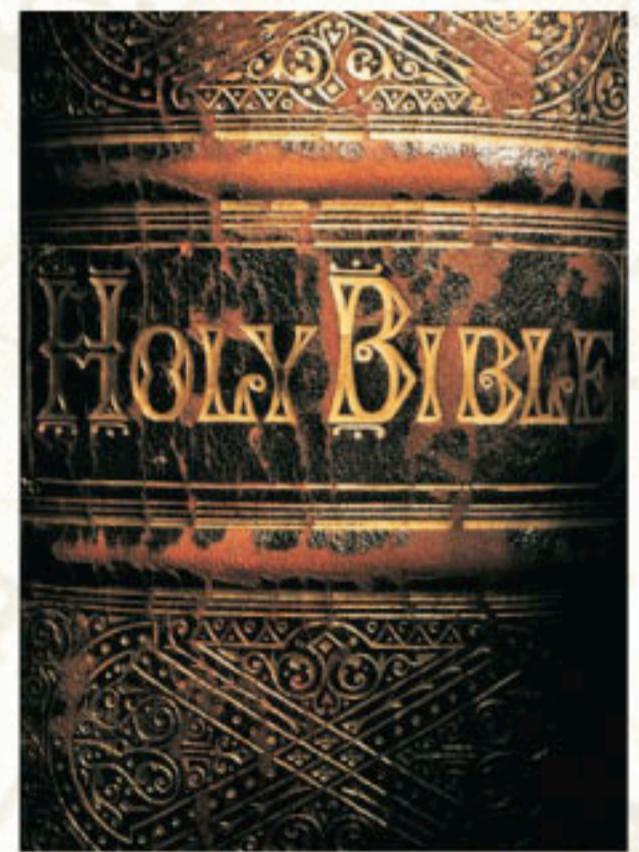
Dalia helps keep the administrative details of the branch running smoothly. We hope you will keep this vibrant branch of Jews for Jesus in your prayers.

We also wanted to encourage you with some of the great things God has been doing in and through the Israel branch, so following are some "*Bits from the Israel Branch.*"

Miriam reports, "While on a sortie, I met a young Ethiopian Jew named Zahaveet. I was able to explain the gospel to her as she waited for her bus. She listened intently as I shared her need for salvation, explained the gospel and extended the invitation for her to be saved. She prayed to receive Y'shua just before the bus came. I am hoping Zahaveet will meet with me for discipleship and will attend a local congregation soon. I am also looking forward to discipleship with Galeet, who I met at a mall. She was curious about my Jews for Jesus T-shirt and believed the Scriptures I shared with her about salvation in Y'shua. I invited her to receive Messiah just outside the mall. She agreed and bowed her head

as we led her in the sinner's prayer. Please pray for her and all these precious ones in Rishon L'Tzion who are hearing and receiving faith in Messiah. Pray our work grows strong here and that we can get a Bible study going."

Ofer reports: "After witnessing to a taxi driver in Jerusalem, I set up a visit to speak to him again about Y'shua. We studied together as he drove and some of the passengers that came into his car wanted also to hear our discussion. I showed him (and the passengers) the connection between Genesis chapter 3 and the prophecy of the Messiah's coming in Isaiah 53. It was very encouraging because I was able to witness to an Orthodox lady whom we drove to the Wailing Wall.



"Another time I was handing out tracts and witnessing in Nahalat Binyamin. As I began to street preach and recite the Scripture a young Jewish man, obviously Orthodox, approached me

and wondered how a believer in Jesus could know the Scripture so well. He asked me to meet with him to explain why I believe that Jesus is the Messiah. I agreed and he gave me his contact information. I agreed to meet him in his *yeshiva* (rabbinical seminary). When I arrived, I laid the Scripture on the table and a man approached both of us saying it was time for afternoon prayers. I joined them in prayer (about five minutes) and then proceeded to visit with the young man. We sat for about 1 1/2 hours and discussed many subjects, including the coming of Messiah before the destruction of the second temple, as prophesied in Daniel 9. We shall be meeting again soon – please pray for his salvation."

Ze'ev reports: "We went on a sortie (tract-passing expedition) in an area we don't normally go to in south Tel Aviv. Within the first two minutes, God had already sent three people my way who gave their contact details so I can send them a New Testament and keep in touch. By the time we finished the sortie I had in my pocket not less than eight Jewish contacts who wanted to hear more about Jesus! Praise God!! I had never experienced this kind of response to the gospel on one sortie!

"One of the people I met that day was Shaul. He appeared to be religious because he wore a *kippah* (skullcap). When I told him the gospel he was very interested. I promised to send him a New Testament and then call him so we could meet and continue our conversation. And so I did. Shaul was very happy to hear from me and very thankful for the book. A few days later we met and I had the opportunity to

get to know him. He is not religious, but had been wearing a *kippah* out of respect for his father, who had recently died. Shaul was quite honest about his life and immediately told me that he had been incarcerated three times, and that he had been addicted to drugs for many years. However, he has been out of prison and off drugs for five years now.

"I invited Shaul to come with me to congregation the following day and he did. At the end of the meeting the speaker gave an altar call and Shaul stood up and prayed to receive the Lord! Hallelujah!! Please pray that Shaul will follow Jesus faithfully and walk in victory.

"On that same fruitful sortie, I met Menasher; a few weeks later, I was sitting with him in his backyard. When I opened the Bible, he decided to call his grandson, who was inside the house. So now I was preaching to two souls! After a few more minutes, another grandson (wearing a *kippah*) came to visit. Menasher told him to come and listen, too. So now I was preaching to three souls! The second grandson, Ronen, was really interested. When I left the house, he followed and kept asking me questions. However, he is only 14 1/2 years old, so I had to tell him that I could not discuss this further with him unless he talked to his parents and got their approval. Since his family is religious, the chances of that are slim. I asked Ronen the date of his birthday, and promised to call him on his 18th birthday so we could talk freely. Ronen's eyes shone as he asked, 'Will you really do it?' 'Of course,' I said. And I surely will!!" ✨



TOUR 2009

This March and April was a busy season for our missionaries (both local and overseas staff) who were doing their annual 'Christ in the Passover' tours. Teresa, Jason and Michael mostly traveled in the Western Cape. This was a very encouraging time as new friends were introduced to Jews for Jesus and we had opportunities to meet unsaved Jewish people as God organised some divine appointments!

Jason met an Israeli man named Ofer while he was in Tableview. Ofer had been living in South Africa for the past five years and he was interested in hearing more about Jews for Jesus. He was surprised to learn that we have a branch in Israel. He told Jason that he sometimes comes to Johannesburg for business and that he would love to meet up with Jason again.



Michael met an unbeliever who had converted to Judaism 15 years ago. She was encouraged by her friend to attend one of his meetings in Paarl. Michael noticed Denise easily following along with the service and he had an opportunity to speak with her after the presentation. Michael answered some of her questions about Jesus and what it means to believe in Him. Teresa also

had an opportunity to interact and share the gospel with a young Jewish woman named Natasha in Plettenberg Bay, whose friend had brought her to the 'Christ in the Passover' presentation.



In Johannesburg, we held a Passover banquet for 250 people. One woman who attended was also from Israel and wanted to know more about Y'shua. I thank God for so many amazing opportunities to connect with people and share the Good News of Messiah with unbelievers. Please continue to pray, especially for Natasha, Ofer, Denise and the Israeli woman who came to our banquet, that they would find peace in Jesus too! Thank you for your support of our ministry.



ISRAEL PRAYER PROMPTERS

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- ...the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6)
- ...many Christians to show their love for Israel by helping to give the life-giving gospel to both Arabs and Jews in the Land
- ...Behold Your God Israel and the ongoing work of our Israel branch
- ...and for special wisdom, especially in dealing with various challenges we face during BYG Israel (opposition on the streets, legal issues, etc.)
- ...Dan that he and his team will have godly wisdom, strength and courage
- ...all the campaigners and stewards who will be serving during the campaigns to have strength and courage to stand firm in the Lord
- ...the follow-up on campaign contacts to be fruitful and focused
- ...our staff to be able to continue in their regular witnessing and visits with the additional activity Behold Your God Israel will generate
- ...God's protection, physically and spiritually, over all our staff, their families, and our volunteers

FINDING TRUE SHALOM

Almost daily, we are bombarded with graphic portrayals and images of violence from Israel. Yet, beyond the bloodshed and despite decades of hostility, Israelis and Palestinians are joining hands and forging a peace agreement. These people have found true peace, not in a political plan, but in a person...ONE PERSON!

Israel's new disciples

Why are so many Jews turning to Jesus?

Julia Fisher

"Balanced, informed, powerful and inspiring"
- David Brickner, international director, Jews for Jesus

FORBIDDEN PEACE

THE STORY BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Ten years ago there were only a few hundred Jewish Christians in Israel. Today that figure is over 10,000!

Some leading Messianic believers are turning their attention to passages in the Bible that talk about the role of Israel being a light to the world.

Julia Fisher looks at how Israel's new disciples are going about their mission, and why they are so passionate about sharing their faith in the God of Israel with the Arab world around them!



Forbidden Peace offers a powerful, poignant and positive perspective you are unlikely to find anywhere else...straight from the hearts of Israelis and Palestinians who have put their trust in Jesus and found true shalom. You are invited to join them as they share how, despite fierce opposition, they have chosen to follow Jesus and how He has brought about reconciliation in every sense of the word.

Should you wish to purchase the DVD or book on offer, simply fill out the form below, cut it out and return to: Jews for Jesus, Suite 296, Private Bag X11, CRAIGHALL, 2024

YES I would like to purchase:
 "Israel's New Disciples" by Julia Fisher and/or "Forbidden Peace" The Story Behind The Headlines.
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