



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



ICEJ URGENT APPEAL TO THE CHURCH ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL

...
THE BIBLICAL
SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE NEW MOON

(PAGE 8)

...



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

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our partners and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.



C R E D I T S

ICEJ President Dr. Juergen Buehler

USA Director Susan Michael

VP International Affairs Dr. Mojmir Kallus

VP Finance David van der Walt

VP Operations Barry R. Denison

VP International Spokesman David Parsons

VP AID & Aliyah Nicole Yoder

Managing Editor/Publications Director Laurina Driesse

USA Managing Editor Karen Engle

Staff Writer Anastasiya Gooding

Graphic Design/Illustrators Ryan Tsuen, Peter Ecenroad, Nancy Schimp

Photography Shutterstock, Adobe Stock, AP, AFP, JAFI, Flash90, Haaretz, Reuters, IDF, businessweek.com, Netafim, newatlas, SanDisk, Watergen, Waze, Wikimedia Commons, Levi Dörflinger, John Theodor, ICEJ Staff and Branches

The *New King James Bible* is used for all Bible references unless otherwise noted.

Word From Jerusalem is published by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. *Word From Jerusalem* has no subscription price and is supported through contributions worldwide. The ICEJ USA Branch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with offices in Tennessee, Florida, and Washington, DC. All gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible according to United States law.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA

Support our ministry online at: www.icejusa.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear friends,

Israeli President Isaac Herzog described what happened in southern Israel on October 7, 2023, as the worst day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. This attack is, without a doubt, rooted in the demonic realm as a manifestation of the spirit of Amalek (Exodus 17; 1 Samuel 15; Deuteronomy 25). Brothers and sisters, our professions of love and support alone will not do it anymore—it's time for the church to act. We must ascend to our spiritual vantage point and join in battle—just as Moses prayed while Joshua was fighting Amalek on the ground.

There are three ways you can support all people in Israel impacted by the war.

The first is **prayer**. On page 13 of this issue of *Word From Jerusalem*, you'll find prayer points to help guide your time interceding for Israel, her people, the hostages, and all impacted by the war. You can also join our daily Global Prayer Gatherings at 9:00 a.m. (EST)—a worldwide army of Christian leaders and intercessors—where you'll receive daily updates on the situation here in Israel—at on.icej.org/ICEJGlobalPrayer.

The second is **support**. The ICEJ is on the frontlines caring for evacuees. Among many other urgent needs, we are providing food, clothing, and other supplies to those who lost their homes and were forced to flee their communities. And we are helping Israeli pastors assist the needy in their flocks. Several articles in this issue focus on how we are providing AID to all people impacted by the war—and how you and your church can help.

The third is **solidarity**. The church must take a stand at this hour! Now is the time to show public support for Israel in your communities. You can organize pro-Israel solidarity rallies and marches and urge your parliamentarians and other government officials to affirm their stand with Israel.

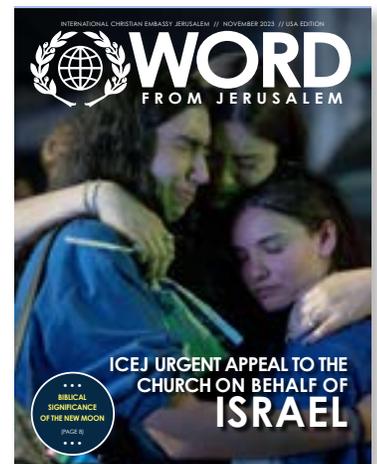
I leave you with this commission from Psalm 122:6, to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”—the only city in the world God specifically calls us to pray for and to where our Lord Jesus Christ will one day return.

In Christ,

Dr. Juergen Buehler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: Jewish women weep in the aftermath of the October 7 atrocities.

FOR MAGAZINE ARCHIVES
visit www.icejusa.org/wfj



CONTENTS

NOVEMBER 2023 USA EDITION



4 ICEJ URGENT APPEAL TO THE CHURCH ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL



5 THE 2023 WAR WITH HAMAS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



FEATURED TEACHING

8 THE BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW MOON



12 CHRISTIAN EMBASSY BLANKETS ISRAEL WITH PRAYER, RELIEF AID



13 HOW YOU CAN PRAY FOR THE 2023 WAR WITH HAMAS



ICEJ URGENT APPEAL TO THE CHURCH ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL

ICEJ USA PRESIDENT DR. JUERGEN BUEHLER

With the current crisis in Israel, the church has arrived at a crossroads when it is not enough anymore to just say, “We stand with Israel” or “We love Israel.” *Real action* is needed!

Israel is at war! As I write this, Israel has lost more than 1,200 people, most of them civilians. Over 3,000 rockets have come down in Israel so far. The border fence at Gaza was breached multiple times, and over 20 communities in the south came under fire—some even under the control of Hamas terrorists.

In some communities the battle raged for three days until the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) regained control. Hamas massacred entire communities and abducted over 230 people as hostages to Gaza, raping and torturing the captives. Most of these were women, children, and elderly people, but several IDF soldiers were also taken. Sadly, scores of infants were murdered and even decapitated.

Israel’s President Herzog said, “This was the worst day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. It reminds us of the events of (the) Yom Kippur War in 1973, especially as this attack happened on the day of the 50th anniversary of Yom Kippur War.”

Israel quickly mobilized *all* its reservists and placed them on the skirts of Gaza, as well as on the northern border with Lebanon as the situation with Hezbollah has started to escalate. Most of the young men and women between 18 and 40 in congregations across Israel have been called up for army duty, in-

cluding two of my own sons. Currently, well above 500 messianic believers are serving in the IDF, including in frontline commando units.

As I write this, many lives have already been lost on the battlefield, with the names of fallen soldiers published daily in the news. As of late October, five were believing soldiers.

This attack is without a doubt rooted in the demonic realm as a manifestation of the spirit of Amalek (see Exodus 17:8ff; Deuteronomy 25:17; 1 Samuel 30:3; Esther 3:1, 8). Now is the time for the church to ascend to our spiritual vantage point and join in battle, just as Moses prayed while Joshua was fighting Amalek on the ground! This is even the time to call for an Esther fast to approach the throne of God on behalf of His beloved people.

It’s Time to Stand with Israel

Brothers and sisters, it is imperative for the global body of Christ to stand with Israel and its people. Our professions of love and support alone will not do it anymore! It is the time for action! Here are three ways you can support Israel today:

1. Prayer

Join our daily Global Prayer Gatherings at 9:00 a.m. (ET). You will join a worldwide army of Christian leaders and intercessors and receive daily updates on the critical situation on the ground here in Israel. The sessions have translations in different languages. If you need the meeting translated into your own language, we can facilitate that. Also consider holding special prayer meetings in your churches, communities, networks, etc.

2. Support

Dedicate your next Sunday offering to Israel and mobilize your network. If you are a denominational leader, pastor, or ministry leader, now is the time to act. Time is essential!

We ask for your assistance to help us meet the following urgent needs:

- Assist in the evacuation of entire communities around the Gaza Strip.
- Establish temporary refugee centers around Jerusalem to care for evacuees.
- Provide food, clothing, and other supplies to those who lost their homes and were forced to flee their communities.
- Come alongside Israeli pastors to assist the needy in their flocks.
- Provide food, clothing, and even protective vests to IDF reservists called to the battlefield.

3. Solidarity

Urge your government officials to affirm their stand with Israel. Organize pro-Israel solidarity rallies and marches in your hometowns and capitals. These demonstrations are already taking place around the world, but in many cases, few Christians are attending. Enthusiasm also can wane quickly.

Again, the church needs to take a stand at this hour! Please help Israel by showing public support for her within your own communities and nations. 🌍

THE 2023 WAR WITH HAMAS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

ICEJ STAFF

On October 7, 2023, on the Jewish holy day of Simchat Torah, Hamas launched a massive terror attack on Israel, firing thousands of rockets from Gaza into Israel, while 2,000 Hamas militiamen broke through the Gaza border fence and laid siege to 25 Israeli communities and an outdoor music festival. In the ensuing carnage, more than 1,200 innocent men, women, and children were murdered in cold blood, scores more were wounded, and more than 230 others were taken hostage to Gaza. Dozens of foreign nationals from over 40 countries were among those who fell prey to the Hamas onslaught. This brutal pogrom was the single worst day of murder and mayhem against the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Hezbollah in Lebanon is now threatening to open a new front on Israel's northern border.

Here are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the war and Israel's right to respond with force.

Who is Hamas?

Hamas is a radical Sunni Islamist terrorist organization that has been the *de facto* ruler of the Gaza Strip since 2007. Considered the Palestinian chapter of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas was founded in late 1987 as a political rival to the Fatah-led PLO, and its charter commits the group to the destruction of Israel and creating an Islamic state under

sharia law in Palestine. The Hamas charter promotes a dark Islamic eschatology that calls for perpetual *jihad* (holy war) against the Jewish State and people as a first step to regaining Jerusalem and then taking on the "Crusader West" to secure world domination for Islam. Hamas has its main presence in Gaza and broad support in the West Bank, but its senior leadership has been harbored in Qatar for the past decade.

After Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in the 2005 Disengagement, Hamas liquidated the local Fatah leaders and security forces in a bloody coup in 2007. Today, it governs over 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, imposing a strict brand of fundamentalist Islam. Hamas totally rejects any peace negotiations or agreements with Israel, including the Oslo Accords, as well as a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although Hamas presents itself as a Muslim welfare society, the group commits most of its budget to its military buildup, including rockets, weapons, and terror tunnels. The militia group is also known for its many suicide bombings and other terror attacks inside Israel.

Who is Hezbollah?

Hezbollah is a Shi'ite terror militia based in Lebanon and backed by Iran and Syria that has been committed to the destruction of Israel since its founding in 1982. Calling Is-

rael a "cancerous tumor," Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah once claimed that Allah has regathered the Jewish people from around the world into one place to make it easier to destroy them. The clerical Shi'ite regime in Iran funds Hezbollah with over \$700 million per year. Hezbollah's original manifesto from 1985 called for establishing an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, while adding, "Our struggle will end only when this entity [the State of Israel] is obliterated." Today, Hezbollah has managed to build a large army of nearly 100,000 militiamen and accumulated over 250,000 missiles and rockets now capable of reaching all of Israel. Its military capabilities have allowed Hezbollah to gain a stranglehold over the Lebanese government. Many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Arab League, and Israel, have declared Hezbollah to be a global terrorist organization, while the European Union designates only its military wing as a terrorist entity.

What is jihad?

The Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic defines *jihad* as a fight, battle, or holy war against infidels, which many Islamic teachers insist is a religious duty of all Muslims until the entire world comes under the rule of Islam. On Friday, October 13, 2023, one week after the brutal Hamas massacre of Israelis on Simchat Torah, Hamas called



Israeli first responders tend to victims of Hamas terror

for a “global day of jihad” to demonstrate solidarity with Palestine, Jerusalem, and Al-Aqsa (the Temple Mount), to include attacks and “lynchings” on Jews and their supporters worldwide. Some Muslim scholars have sought to define jihad as an inner struggle against sinful behavior; however, it has been widely understood for centuries to also mean waging holy war on non-Muslims.

What is International Humanitarian Law (IHL)?

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is a set of rules that seeks, for humanitarian reasons, “to limit the effects of armed conflict.” Also called “the law of warfare” or “the law of armed conflict,” IHL dictates the rules combatants should follow—with a central tenet to not target civilians. IHL includes the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 protocols. All parties fighting in a conflict are obliged to respect IHL.

What is International Criminal Law (ICL)?

International Criminal Law (ICL) falls within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. The ICC has jurisdiction over individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and to a limited extent, the crime of aggression (waging an illegal war). Israel has joined the United States, Russia, and many other states in not yet becoming a signatory to the treaty creating the ICC, while “Palestine” was allowed to join in 2015. The ICC describes war crimes as “grave breaches of the Geneva conventions” as well as “other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict.” This encompasses breaches of International Humanitarian Law.

What is the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)?

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is the State of Israel’s primary military corps. Notice it

is called the “Defense” forces. The IDF’s activities are subject to the authority of Israel’s democratically elected civil government. The IDF’s purpose is to preserve the State of Israel, protect its independence, and foil attempts by its enemies to disrupt normal life within it.

Who started the war?

Hamas started the war against Israel with the worst massacre of innocent civilians in modern Israel’s history, according to Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari. Israel declared war on Hamas after Hamas and Islamic Jihad militiamen broke International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Criminal Law (ICL) by firing thousands of rockets toward Israel on the morning of October 7, 2023, before breaching the heavily fortified border fence with Israel. They then sent some 2,000 heavily-armed militiamen deep into Israeli territory by foot, paragliders, and vehicles, where they massacred and wounded thousands of people—innocent men, women, children, babies, and the elderly, as well as many police officers and soldiers. The list of heinous war crimes includes raping women, beheading children, burning entire families alive in their homes, and taking over 230 people as hostages back into Gaza. Israeli forces entered the infiltrated areas on Israel’s side of the border to rescue civilians and fight off the terrorists. The IDF then began launching airstrikes in Gaza.

What did Hamas hope to accomplish with the events of October 7?

A senior Hamas official based in Lebanon said the October 7 attack was in response to “Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people in Jerusalem and the West Bank” and to “break the blockade on the Gaza Strip.” They also labeled the mass terror operation the “Al-Aqsa Storm,” launched in defense of the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, which was in no danger from Israel at the time.

Does Israel have the legal right to respond?

Yes. The acts against Israeli citizens on October 7 make Hamas and Islamic Jihad criminally liable for war crimes. Multiple acts violated the “rule of distinction” in International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which requires combatants to limit attacks to legitimate military targets. According to IHL, what follows are “inexcusable and flagrant violations of humanitarian norms and international law and odious insults to humanity that constitute war crimes”:

- The willful, deliberate, and hysterical massacre of civilians, including young people attending an open-air music event and the indiscriminate entry into, destruction, and pillaging of private civilian homes in Israel’s towns and villages, and indiscriminate murder of civilians living in those homes
- The taking of multiple civilian hostages, including entire families, the elderly, women, and infants, and their cruel and violent kidnapping and transfer to the Gaza Strip
- The horrific exhibition of dead and mutilated bodies in the streets of Gaza
- The deliberate and cynical use by Hamas and Islamic Jihad of their own civilian population in Gaza as human shields, as well as their use of Gaza’s many mosques, hospitals, schools, and private houses as weapons storage facilities and firing platforms
- The creation and use of tactical tunnels beneath urban civilian areas, hospitals, public facilities, and urban roads

The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA) says that advocating a religious holy war aimed at creating a regional Islamic entity encompassing the whole of the territory of Israel “contravenes the provisions of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention of Genocide.”

Is Israel permitted to cut off the electricity to the Gaza Strip?

Israel agreed to provide electricity to the Gaza Strip as part of the Oslo Accords in 1993. However, no provision in IHL (International Humanitarian Law) *requires* Israel to provide free electricity to the Gaza Strip. Electricity enables Hamas to operate military command centers and charge batteries for lethal UAVs and drones used to attack Israeli citizens, hence the reason for cutting off its feed into Gaza’s power grid. Gaza does have its own



Fires in southern Israel, the result of the October 7 Hamas attack on civilians

electrical power plant, but it needs fuel to run; since Israel has blocked its regular fuel shipments into Gaza as well, the power plant will soon shut down. The massacre and kidnapping of hundreds of Israeli citizens breaches the Oslo Accords. Hamas authorities and terrorists in Gaza deny Israel's right to exist, invade Israel, and massacre Israelis, and this releases Israel from responsibility to its commitments under the Oslo Accords to supply power. Limiting the flow of electricity into Gaza from Israel will impair the enemy's military capabilities, while continuing to provide electricity would enhance Hamas' ability to strike Israel and murder more Israelis.

Are Gazan children's deaths that result from Israel's retaliation considered war crimes?

According to the IHL incidental death of a child during legitimate fighting does not constitute a crime of any nature. The assumption that every death of a Palestinian child is tantamount to a war crime ignores the documented history of the Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza intentionally using Palestinian children as human shields. Importantly, many are joining Hamas in trying to deflect blame for its flagrant war crimes onto Israel. One blatant example is the Hamas claim that Israel is endangering the civilian population of Gaza, whereas Israel is urging them to move to safety while Hamas is forcing them to stay, to be used as human shields. Hamas also accuses Israel of deliberately targeting women and children, whereas even official Palestinian figures clearly indicate Israeli forces are meticulously seeking to avoid harm to women and children even as Hamas intentionally shells Israeli towns and cities and its militiamen have just murdered hundreds of women, children, and the elderly at point-blank range.

Is Israel working on rescuing the hostages?

Yes. However, how Israel's leaders will do this is unclear.

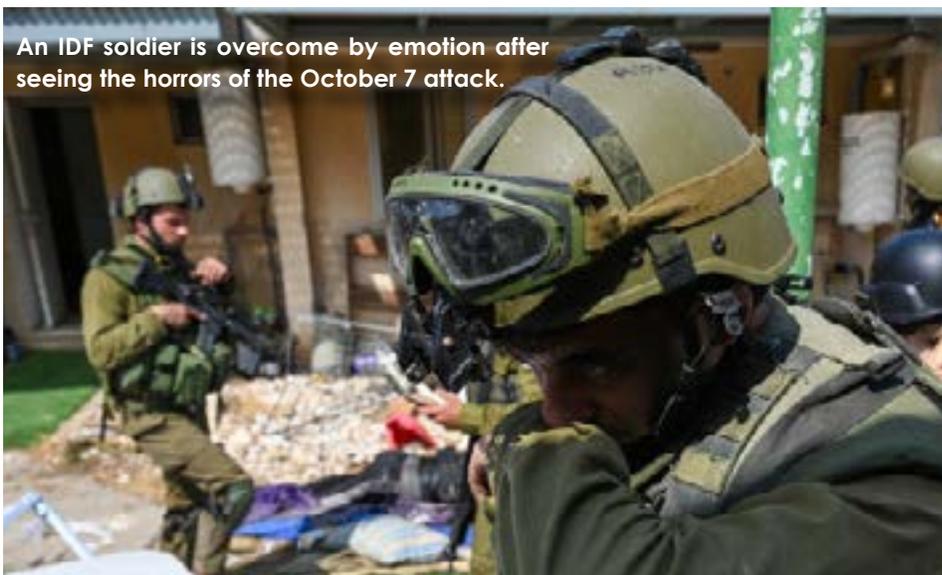
How many hostages are currently in Gaza?

As of October 30, it is estimated there are over 230 hostages still being held captive in Gaza. These include men, women, children, babies, the elderly, and soldiers—including foreign nationals from the United States and some 30 other countries.

What countries are currently helping Israel?

The United States has committed its full support to Israel and has sent the USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier to the eastern Mediter-

An IDF soldier is overcome by emotion after seeing the horrors of the October 7 attack.



anean to assist Israel if needed. The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier is en route to the Mediterranean as well. The United States has said it plans to provide military aid to Israel and help with hostage-release efforts. Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy also issued a joint statement pledging "to ensure Israel is able to defend itself."

How can I support Israel relief efforts?

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is a respected charitable organization that has been based in Jerusalem for over 40 years, providing comfort and humanitarian aid to the Israeli people. Your funds help all Israeli citizens with such things as: evacuations, food and basic necessities, safety equipment for first-responders, local security services and others in uniform, trauma-related needs, ambulances in the North and South, renovating underground and communal bomb shelters across the country, helping families rebuild their homes, and providing helmets and bullet-proof vests to civilians.

Learn about the ICEJ and its USA branch here: <https://icejusa.org/icejs-calling/>

Learn more about the emergency assistance ICEJ is providing for Israel and her people here: <https://icejusa.org/2023/10/10/icej-reaching-out-with-emergency-assistance/>

Sources: Appendix I of Annex III of the Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement; Israel Defense Forces; Jerusalem Council of Public Affairs (JCPA); International Committee of the Red Cross

The ICEJ is currently engaged in the following war relief efforts:

JOINING urgent food distribution efforts for the elderly, new immigrants, and needy families nationwide

ASSISTING thousands of evacuated Israeli families with housing, food, clothing, and emergency aid, plus toys and activities for the children

SUPPLYING vital emergency equipment, including helmets and protective vests, for first responders

PLACING rush orders for 8 more portable bomb shelters and renovating 20 existing shelters in vulnerable Israeli communities

RAISING funds for at least two new ambulances and other emergency medical equipment

PROVIDING clothes, tents, sleeping bags, and other outdoor equipment for those on the frontlines

FUNDING trauma counseling for Israeli families severely shaken by this conflict

Israel is in a desperate place and needs our assistance. Please give your best gift today at:

www.icejusa.org/crisis

Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. —Genesis 1:14–18

Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the Lord your God. —Numbers 10:10

AT THE
Beginning
OF YOUR MONTHS

The Biblical Significance of the New Moon

KAREN ENGLE, ICEJ MANAGING EDITOR

Most months, as the moon begins to change from its proud, full circle in the night sky to a waning crescent, I start looking for the New Moon on the western horizon, which appears at sunset just a few days later. Sometimes I forget to watch and happen upon it while driving or sitting in my backyard. Many months, I miss it altogether. But when I do see it, it always makes me pause.

Yes, it's just the moon—but its cycles are more than an astronomical phenomenon. The One who created the moon, sun, and stars did so for a special purpose beyond providing us something beautiful to look at. As I have come to a fuller understanding of God's feasts—His "appointments" He set with the children of Israel to meet with Him throughout the year—I've also come to understand the significance of the moon in Scripture and how profound God's establishment of its phases are. Each New Moon indicated the start of a new month, but it was also a holy day set apart to mark God's feasts or "appointed times" and worship Him. Scripture even indicates they have something to do with what's to come.

The New Moon in the Bible

Our modern calendaring system depends on mathematical calculations and arrangements based on a solar-lunar system. But the biblical system God laid out in the Old Testament was different—and this impacted the timing of the entire Jewish calendar and holiday cycle. It was set from month to month according to the physical appearance of the first sliver of the New Moon. After the children of Israel had entered the promised land, the New Moon was affirmed by two witnesses who began watching for it at the end of each month. Once sighted, the new month was announced in Jerusalem with a long trumpet blast (Psalm 81:1–3) and an official message sent out by signal fires. Villages far from Jerusalem would see the fires and light their own, until all the Jewish communities in the region knew a new month had begun.

The entire Hebrew calendar depended on these declarations, for without them (considering there was no internet or television), no one would know when a new month had begun. It impacted the start of every month and, thus, the start of a new biblical year, which, according

to God's calendar, begins in the spring: "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you" (Exodus 12:1). Later in that same chapter of Exodus, we learn this "first month" would be the month of Passover.

Though modern-day Jewish people celebrate the beginning of the civil new year in the fall with Rosh Hashanah, the biblical start to the new year on God's calendar, based on the sighting of the moon, was in the spring.

A Holy, Set-Apart Day

The New Moon celebrations were special days called *Rosh Chodesh*. The Hebrew word *rosh* means "head" or "beginning." *Chodesh* derives from the root Hebrew word *chadesh*, which means "new," "to make new," or "to renew." Thus, Rosh Chodesh in Hebrew means "head of the month"—or the first day of a new month on the Hebrew calendar.

Once the New Moon was confirmed, celebration followed with singing and dancing, for the first day of every new month was a holy day set apart for sacrifice, worship, and offerings to God:

Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months (*rosh chodesh*) you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the Lord your God. (Numbers 10:10)

On every Rosh Chodesh prior to Israel's exile to Babylon, labor also ceased as an act of trusting God for provision. Back then, New Moon celebrations were superior even to Sabbath days: they were meant to refocus God's people on Him and His desire for relationship with them and remind them of His faithful character and authority.

Sadly, over time, man's rules, regulations, and traditions for keeping God's New Moon celebrations (as well as His feasts and Sabbaths) overshadowed their true meaning. Outwardly the children of Israel honored the first day of each new month and gave their animals for sacrifice, but their hearts had turned cold toward

God. Notice the pronoun shift in Isaiah 1:13–14:

Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. *Your* New Moons and *your* appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. (See also Psalm 51:6, 16–17; Hosea 6:6)

Instead of God referring to these special days as *His* New Moons, Sabbaths, and feasts, He referred to them as *your* New Moons, Sabbaths, and feasts. For this reason, God said His soul hated what they had become. Indeed, with the destruction of the temple in AD 70, and in alignment with Hosea's prophecy in 2:11, God stopped not only Israel's appointed feasts and Sabbaths but "*her* New Moons" too.

Evidence of the true condition of the children of Israel's hearts shows in Amos 8:5, where Israel found the New Moon requirements an inconvenience and could not wait for the celebration of the new month to be over so they could return to being their own masters—working to make money and pursuing selfish gain.

Signs and Seasons

The heart condition of the children of Israel toward New Moon celebrations is saddening considering why God created the moon and its cycles to begin with.

Within the story of creation in Genesis 1:14–16 is God's establishment of the sun, moon, and stars in the sky. And though we enjoy the beauty of that creation as day turns to night, stars begin to poke through the vast, dark sky, and the moon appears, God created these astronomical miracles for more than astronomy or simply giving us light. He created them for *timekeeping*.

Genesis 1:14 tells us they were to serve as "signs and for seasons, and for days and years" (ESV). At first read, these reasons seem simple enough, but there's something profound about two words in that verse that reveals a deeper purpose. So let's unpack them.

The word "seasons" in English is the Hebrew

Throughout the Bible, the New Moon was connected with the prophets, who waited upon God to discern His purposes and often received prophetic revelation on the first of the month to communicate to the people. For example, it was on the first day of the month that the Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel that many nations would one day come against Tyre for its wicked attitude toward Jerusalem and Judah (26:1). It was also on the first day of the month that God, through the prophet Haggai, reprimanded the people for not rebuilding the temple (1:1).

City neighborhood in Beer Sheba at evening with new moon(photo Shutterstock)

word *mo'ed*, which means “appointment”—the very word God chose to describe His feasts or special times throughout the year He required His people to meet with Him. The English Standard Version says God set the sun, moon, and stars apart to “mark the seasons” or to “mark” God’s appointed times. His requirements for how to keep His feasts are orderly and precise (see Leviticus 23). However, the exact *date* they were to be celebrated wasn’t always predictable because each feast date depended on the start of a new month—and thus, when the New Moon was sighted.

The New Moon and God’s establishment of its cycles cannot be underestimated; consider that after Babylonian exile, without knowing the start of a month according to God’s calculations, Israelites still living outside of Jerusalem would not have known when to journey to the temple to appropriately keep the feasts.

A Shadow of What Is to Come

Paul tells us in Colossians 1:16–17 that God’s New Moon celebrations are a shadow of what is to come—they were a practice for future things.

Consider that through the prophet Isaiah, God says: “It shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to

another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me” (66:23). Here Isaiah connects the New Moon with future worship.

Ezekiel in his vision about the millennial kingdom connects the East Gate—which Christians know to be the gate Jesus entered at his first coming on Palm Sunday and will enter again at His return—with the New Moon:

Thus says the Lord God: “The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened. ... Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the Lord on the Sabbaths and the New Moons.” (1, 3)

According to Ezekiel, the New Moon festival will be observed during the millennial kingdom, and the inner eastern gate of the temple will play a role in worship on this set-apart day, opening every Sabbath day and every day of the New Moon. On those days, Jews and gentiles alike will gather to worship God.

Finally, Leviticus 23 and Numbers 29 discuss a special New Moon day connected with the only

feast that falls on the first day of the month: *Yom Teruah* (the Day of Trumpet Blowing). This feast carries a bit of mystery with it: in biblical times, since no one knew exactly when the New Moon would be visible, it was impossible to know the exact date *Yom Teruah* would start. Thus, many associate this feast with two things: the trumpet of God that will accompany Jesus at His return and Jesus’ reminder that “of that day and hour no one knows” (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:36).

Conclusion

What does all this mean? Some things that God established we won’t completely understand this side of heaven, and God’s full intention for the New Moon celebrations are among them. However, knowing the New Moon is connected with the sound of the trumpet, praise, temple offerings, rest, and worship of the King of kings in Jerusalem lets us know that timekeeping associated with the New Moon in the Bible is somehow connected with God’s kingdom in Israel to come.

For now, enjoy looking for the first visible crescent of the moon each month when it appears in the night sky, and be reminded that God is faithful—and He knows exactly what time it is. 🌙

New Moon *Scriptures in the Bible*

Though not exhaustive, the following is a list of passages in the Bible that mention the New Moon.

NUMBERS 10:10

In the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the *beginning of your months*, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the Lord your God.

ISAIAH 1:13–14

Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

PSALM 81:3–4

Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day. For this is a statute for Israel, law of the God of Jacob.

2 CHRONICLES 2:4

Behold, I [Solomon] am building a temple for the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to Him, to burn before Him sweet incense, for the continual showbread, for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the set feasts of the Lord our God. This is an ordinance forever to Israel.

NEHEMIAH 10:32–33

Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: for the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts; for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God.

EZEKIEL 46:1, 3

Thus says the Lord God: "The gateway of the

inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened. ... The people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the Lord on the Sabbaths and the New Moons."

HOSEA 2:11

I will also cause all her mirth to cease, Her feast days, Her New Moons, Her Sabbaths—all her appointed feasts.

AMOS 8:5

When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat?

COLOSSIANS 2:16–17

Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.



רוש חודש

ROSH CHODESH

P R A Y E R C H A I N

JOIN US ON
NOVEMBER 15, 2023 AT 3 PM TO 4 PM
(EASTERN TIME)

ROSH CHODESH HEBREW MONTH OF KISLEV

"And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me." says the Lord. – Isaiah 66:23



on.icej.org/RoshChodesh

CHRISTIAN EMBASSY

BLANKETS ISRAEL WITH PRAYER, RELIEF AID

ICEJ STAFF

The global network of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been covering Israel with prevailing prayer amid a difficult war while holding pro-Israel rallies and reaching out to numerous national leaders on Israel's behalf. Meanwhile, our Jerusalem staff has crisscrossed Israel to deliver relief aid and express love and comfort to a people still in shock from the ruthless Hamas assault that touched the raw nerve of the Holocaust.

With the grave atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists in the opening hours of the conflict still coming to light, the IDF is poised to fight both Hamas in the South and the even greater threat of Hezbollah in the North. To aid in this multifront battle, Israeli leaders took the unusual step of evacuating all the communities along the Gaza and Lebanese borders, including large cities like Sderot and Kiryat Shmona.

This unprecedented move meant displacing tens of thousands of Israeli civilians from their homes and sheltering them at guest houses, hotels, hostels, and other facilities throughout the center of the country. Most of these uprooted civilians fled with only the bare necessities. Among them are many shattered Jewish families that have lost loved ones, while other close relatives and neighbors are either missing or being held hostage in Gaza.

Immediately teams of ICEJ staff headed in numerous directions to pack and deliver food parcels and hand out store vouchers and relief items to evacuees, while giving toys and games to disoriented children. At a major food distribution center in Rishon LeZion, an ICEJ team showed up every day to help pack thousands of boxes of food supplies, clothing, and toiletries. While there, the staff had wonderful encounters with other Israeli volunteers, providing words of encouragement as they stood side by side packing these items.

They then transported the packed food boxes in a refrigerated truck that the ICEJ has leased for this charitable partner since 2020. The Hebrew signage on the truck states: "Israel, you are not alone." The ICEJ also is leasing a second refrigerated truck needed by law to deliver perishable foods to the needy. Elsewhere, we provided a BBQ cookout for 200 Israelis now based in the Jordan Valley.

An ICEJ leadership team also visited a *kibbutz* along the central coast where 135 families who survived the Kfar Aza massacre are being housed and cared for. The families were all given vouchers that can be used at grocery stores and Israeli chains to buy what they need most—whether its food, clothing, or household items. All 305 families left from Kfar Aza, who are being housed in other respite centers across Israel, will receive these vouchers.

In addition, the ICEJ has raised almost enough funds already to help donate two ambulances and a Medi-cycle, including one ambulance earmarked for Kibbutz Be'eri, which also suffered heavy losses like nearby Kfar Aza. Some ICEJ branch offices have set a goal to donate several more ambulances—including the ICEJ USA Branch.

The ICEJ also is rushing to order eight more portable bomb shelters to be placed in other vulnerable areas, and we are currently renovating an additional 20 underground shelters in Shlomi, bringing our total in that northern border town alone to 73 refurbished underground shelters and 12 mobile ones above ground.

Your continuing donations to our Israel in Crisis fund will enable us to meet many more urgent needs in the embattled nation of Israel.

At this critical time, Israelis need to know that millions of Christians worldwide are standing with them in their hour of need. Please give your best gift today. 

DONATE AT: www.icejusa.org/crisis



HOW YOU CAN PRAY

FOR THE 2023 WAR WITH HAMAS

The intense war between Israel, Hamas, and other Iranian-backed terror militias has been described by Israeli President Isaac Herzog as the massive assault by heavily armed terrorists against innocent civilians as the worst pogrom—an organized massacre against the Jewish people—since the Holocaust.

What happened on October 7, 2023, is not just a terror attack. It is not just war. It is a spiritual battle against God's people Israel that He chose to be a blessing to the world (Genesis 12:3) and glorify His name. Ultimately, it is a battle against God and His Word.

As Christians, we often say we “love” Israel, but the church needs to turn that into real action as never before. It's time to act and find ways to offer practical help. It's time to speak and find ways to advocate in our communities and government.

And most importantly, it's time to get on our knees and pray. Here are specific areas you can be praying.

Lament and mourn the horrific events and aftermath of the terrorist attacks and war (Matthew 5:4; Romans 12:15).

- Pray over the recent widows, widowers, and orphans, parents who lost their children, splintered and homeless families, and others who lost loved ones and are grieving.

Pray for anyone in Israel and Gaza caught in the crossfires of the war (John 14:27; Romans 10:13).

- Pray for lives to be spared and terrorism to end.
- Pray that people will cry out to God and experience His supernatural peace and salvation.

Pray for Israel's leaders (Psalm 20:7).

- Pray for wisdom for all decision-makers who are trying to protect the innocent, save lives, and bring about justice.
- Pray that Israel's leaders would have sharp minds and godly wisdom.
- Pray that Israel's leaders will not put all their trust in their military might but call on the name of the Lord for protection.

Pray against false narratives (Isaiah 54:17).

- Pray that the Lord would shut every lying tongue that would seek to justify this violence and carnage against Israel and the Jewish people.
- Pray that the pro-Palestinian protests around the world will fizzle.

Pray for Israel's soldiers and military leaders (Zechariah 10:5).

- Pray that God would protect Israel's soldiers and military leaders, including the many believers in Jesus who are serving.
- Pray that military leaders will make the best decisions for the nation

in confronting Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Iranian-backed terror militias threatening Israel.

- Pray for wisdom, strength, and a sharp mind for every soldier.

Pray for the hostages in Gaza.

- Pray for the men, women, and children taken captive in Gaza. Pray for protection over their minds, hearts, and bodies.
- Pray that no additional harm would come to the hostages from the captors.
- Pray for the safe return of all hostages.
- Pray for wisdom and resolve among Israel's leaders and military to be able to make the best decisions for how to rescue the hostages.
- Pray for the special ops units brought in to deal with the hostage situation. Pray for their protection as they enter Gaza and supernatural wisdom.

Pray for Israel's enemies (Matthew 5:44; Psalm 83).

- Pray for God's mighty hand of restraint against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria.
- Pray that things quickly deescalate in the North.
- Pray for those leaders and individuals set on destroying Israel as a nation, that God would supernaturally meet them and cause them to repent and turn from their evil ways.

Pray that God will protect the Jewish people and that many will turn to the Lord in this time of trouble.

- Pray Psalm 121 over the Jewish people, both in the Land and abroad, that they will be shielded from any harm and lone-wolf assignments arising from within the Arab and Muslim communities: “Behold, He who keeps (guards) Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. ... The Lord is your keeper; the Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.”
- Pray Deuteronomy 1:30 over the Jewish people: “The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.”
- Pray 2 Chronicles 20:17 over the Jewish people: “You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!” Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you.”
- Pray Isaiah 54:17 over the Jewish people, that no weapon formed against them shall prosper.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6–9).

- Ultimately, pray for the peace of the only city in the world God has placed His name and to where our Lord Jesus Christ will return: Jerusalem.

JOIN THE ICEJ GLOBAL PRAYER CALL

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem will be hosting its Global Prayer Gathering DAILY until further notice. We are committed to stand with Israel in prayer. We would love for you to join us for timely updates, prayer, and worship. Please join us daily at 9:00 a.m. (EST), 6:00 a.m. (PST). Register at: www.icejusa.org/event-item-global-prayer-gathering

ICEJ WAR RELIEF EFFORT INCLUDES TOYS FOR EVACUATED ISRAELI CHILDREN

LAURINA DRIESSE, HEAD OF MEDIA AND PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The ICEJ staff in Jerusalem are working around the clock to bring urgent relief to the embattled nation of Israel. In one example, an ICEJ team just traveled on Thursday to Haifa, where they spent the day packing gift bags with toys for children in families evacuated to the North from the Gaza border area.

After the horrific massacre of over 1,200 civilians in the Israeli communities bordering Gaza on October 7, 2023, and the ensuing barrages of Hamas rockets, hundreds of Israeli families living in the western Negev were evacuated to temporary housing in hostels and hotels across Israel. These families had to hastily leave their homes with little in their hands.

The ICEJ staff packed 250 bags with big toy trucks, Lego building blocks, coloring books and crayons, canvas painting set and pastels, fun stickers, and many other items to help traumatized children relax better in their new surroundings. When the ICEJ team entered one of the hotels to deliver the gifts, they were greeted by clowns that entertained the children with dancing and lively musical activities.

Female soldiers from the IDF's Home Front Command helped supervise the children, giving their parents a much-needed break. One hundred people from the battered southern towns of Ashkelon, Netivot, and Sderot are taking refuge at this hotel.

Many large families are being packed into a single room for the duration of their stay. Some are staying until next week to have a break from the constant barrage of rockets back home, while others may stay longer. In addition to handing out the bags of toys to children, our team discovered a large family had little to eat since their arrival, so we brought them meals. Next, we moved on to two distribution centers in other parts of Haifa where we dropped off more toys. Displaced families will now come to

the distribution centers to receive the gifts, as well as other donated relief items they need.

One distribution center was at a college where classes are suspended, but the students were also collecting donated items and helping evacuated families. The ICEJ delivered 60 toy baskets to this center and spoke to those working tirelessly to organize the donated goods. These traumatized Israelis were deeply moved to hear that Christians around the world are standing with them.

ICEJ AID assistant Jannie Tolhoek said one worker asked her if she was planning to leave Israel. Jannie shared the story of Ruth and Naomi, stressing the vow of Ruth that "Your people shall be my people and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16). Tears of gratitude began flowing on all sides, and the ICEJ team received many warm embraces.

During this time of Israel's most daunting crisis in a generation, the ICEJ is standing in solidarity with the Jewish nation and people. We are on the frontlines to bring comfort and hope to Israelis on behalf of Christians worldwide.

The ICEJ is currently assisting evacuated Israeli families with housing, food, clothing, and emergency aid. We are involved in other urgent food distributions across the country, including to the elderly and needy families. We are providing helmets and protective vests to some 110 civilian volunteers in regional security services. We are ordering more bomb shelters for the north and south of the country and funding the refurbishment of another 20 underground shelters in the vulnerable northern town of Shlomi, which brings our total to 73. We are raising funds to purchase several ambulances. And we will provide called-up Israeli reservists with needed warm clothing, tents, and camping equipment as they stand day and night defending the northern border. 🇮🇱



ICEJ staff and volunteers box up food, toys, and basic necessities for evacuees

You, too, can help us do all this and more by supporting our Israel in Crisis fund. Please donate today at: www.icejusa.org/crisis



ICEJ USA Director Dr. Susan Michael
Recognized as a 2023

CHRISTIAN WOMAN OF DISTINCTION

SHANNON BENNETT, ICEJ USA CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Dr. Susan Michael (right) with She Leads America Founder Liz Doyle

She Leads America, a network of Christian women leaders engaged in all sectors of society, recognized Dr. Susan Michael as one of its 2023 Christian Women of Distinction at a gala held at Museum of the Bible on September 22, 2023. Recipients are nominated by their peers and include notable leaders such as Gov. Kristi Noem, Dr. Alveda King, and Virginia’s Lt. Gov. Winsome Sears.

On September 21, Dr. Michael was recognized for her achievements by the US House of Representatives alongside others recognized by She Leads America. The recognition was written up in the Congressional Record for that day. Rep. Lisa C. McClain stated, “Susan’s studies and travel to Israel over the past 45 years have allowed her to skillfully handle a variety of issues regarding biblical and modern Israel. To that end, Susan is a remarkably gifted author, teacher, and speaker. She has produced highly cited articles, podcasts, and education resources, serving many throughout the world. Mr. Speaker, these women, including Dr. Michael, have left an indelible mark on countless lives. They are pioneers whose examples have inspired many—and [they] will continue to.”

Dr. Michael said, “It is a particular honor to be recognized in

the Congressional record because my father appeared in it many years before. My father raised me to be everything I could be, and he funded my education, including my studies in Israel. It was there I found my life’s purpose.”

Dr. Michael’s recognition was significant in that she is the first recipient whose work and expertise are primarily focused on providing Christians with a biblical and historical perspective on the significance of the modern State of Israel and Jewish-Christian relations. Recently, she has been called upon to address complex and sensitive issues such as the dramatic increase in antisemitism, the ongoing threat of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons, and the significance of the the biblical significance of Israel and the Jewish people. Her experience working with Arabs, Jews, and Christians from many national and denominational backgrounds has equipped her to handle delicate topics central to an understanding of Israel with extraordinary clarity and grace.

“Leadership can be lonely,” said Dr. Michael, “I want to express my gratitude to Liz Doyle, executive director of She Leads America, and all of those involved in this important work of honoring women in leadership.” 🌟

Share the Spirit of Giving This Holiday Season

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so."

(Proverbs 3:27)

The ICEJ is on the front lines of Israel's battle to defend us all from jihadist terrorism, and we invite you to join us in this just cause. As we head into the holiday season, our friends in Israel are focused merely on survival—and they need our help. Don't miss this opportunity to do something deeply meaningful for Israelis impacted by the war with Hamas.

Consider a few ways to involve friends and family:

- Let your kids or grandkids participate in choosing how to help—like giving toward providing basic necessities for those evacuated from southern Israel.
- Come together as a small group or Bible study and be part of establishing or renovating a bomb shelter.
- Forego family gifts and redirect those funds toward war relief efforts.

Keep reading to explore all the ways you can share the spirit of giving in this dire time.

Donate at: www.icejusa.org/crisis



AMBULANCES

During the attack on October 7, 2023, most ambulances were stolen, looted, and burned. Your gift toward ambulances and Medi-cycles will go toward replacement vehicles.

Cost for one ambulance	\$118,800
Cost for one Medi-cycle	\$42,660

Share the cost: \$300

www.icejusa.org/ambulance

EVACUATIONS

The ICEJ is helping take the more than 4,000 Israelis who live in southern Israel to a safe place in the North, usually a short-term respite away from the front lines.

Initial giving goal	\$250,000
---------------------	-----------

Share the cost: \$300

BULLETPROOF VESTS AND HELMETS

Many volunteers are standing with Israel to provide needed help, but they need protective covering. Help provide helmets and protective vests to volunteers in first-responder teams.

Cost per set—protective vest and helmet	\$1,445
---	---------

Share the cost: \$100

BASIC ITEMS FOR RESERVISTS

Thousands of reservists that have been called up from outside Israel need basic items. Each set includes things like forehead and hand flashlights, towels, batteries, sleeping bags, coffee kits, quick-opening tents, socks, and more.

Cost per unit	\$19,645
---------------	----------

Share the cost: \$50

BOMB SHELTERS

Bomb shelters (bell and cube) were a desperate need even before the war, but presently, we are also helping raise funds to not only place bomb shelters in the North and South but renovate and repair existing shelters for immediate use, many of which are community underground shelters. When you gift a bomb shelter or help share the cost, you bring hope and peace to people in dire need.

Cost of one bell shelter	\$18,500
Cost of one cube shelter	\$26,000

Underground community shelter renovations

In the North	\$57,850
In the Center	\$37,000

Share the cost: \$150

www.icejusa.org/donate-bomb-shelters

BASIC ITEMS AND FOOD FOR EVACUEES AND OTHERS

Your gift to this fund will assist evacuated Israeli families with housing, food, clothing, and emergency aid, plus toys and activities for the children.

Average cost of a food basket	\$185
Initial giving goal	\$250,000

Share the cost: \$25

TRAUMA ASSISTANCE FOR TERROR VICTIMS

Those impacted by terror in Israel need immediate care from professionals. When you give to this fund, you will help provide therapy sessions for children and families, as well as first assistance to families needing a financial boost to help them through these days of crisis when they cannot work or function as usual.

Initial giving goal	\$200,000
---------------------	-----------

Share the cost: \$100

DESTROYED HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

Many families lost everything in the attack on October 7—their homes and communities were decimated—and they will need help starting over. When you give to this fund, you will help these families and communities rebuild what was lost.

Short-term emergency help per family	\$1,500
Initial short-term giving goal	\$150,000
Long-term help per family	\$8,000
Initial long-term giving goal	\$400,000

Share the cost: \$150



YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

Seven Tenacious Antisemitic Tropes in Full Force Today

Part 2 in a 2-Part Series

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

An antisemitic trope is a myth or sensational report, misrepresentation, or lie defamatory toward Judaism or the Jewish people as an ethnic or religious group. Some tropes date back to the birth of Christianity, like the belief that Jews are collectively responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. Others include untruths like the Jews controlling the media and the global financial system with the goal of world domination, that they are profiteers and spies, and that they perform ritual murder or "blood libel."

Antisemitic tropes are not new; they existed millennia before World War II and, sadly, did not end with the murder of the 6 million Jews in the Holocaust. Antisemitism—and the propaganda encouraging it—continues to smolder today and is merely old myths in a new age.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), these myths have led to violence against Jewish communities worldwide throughout the centuries. Though the myths might "look" different today, manifesting in new forms, they are still provoking antisemitic violence, and according to the ADL, "finding [a] voice in the tweets and public statements of elected officials or resonating with the extremists who carried out violent attacks against Jews."

Part 1 of this series in last month's *Word From Jerusalem* discussed how these untruths play a critical role in increasing antisemitism. Seven of the more tenacious antisemitic tropes in full force today, according to the ADL, follow.

1. Jews Have too Much Power and Want World Domination.

A common myth is that Jews dominate banks, media, governments, and other institutions and are working to advance a covert, wicked agenda to control the world. This false belief leads to blaming social and political ills on the Jewish people. For example, the Rothchild family has been accused of trading insider information to profit from the Napoleonic wars, starting the Civil War, assassinating J. F. Kennedy, and controlling the US economy. This myth was birthed in 1903 when *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was published in a Russian newspaper, which stated the Jews had the tools to take over the world, leaning on age-old antisemitic tropes

that furthered imagery of the greedy, scheming Jew (more on this below).

2. Jews Are Disloyal.

The belief that Jews hold allegiance only to fellow Jews, a Jewish agenda, or the State of Israel is another common trope. As a result, people end up seeing Jews as untrustworthy citizens whose loyalty does not align with the country they live in. For example, American Jews may feel a connection to the State of Israel for historical, familial, or religious reasons. But so do other Americans living in the United States who have a kinship with another country. However, because they are Jews, American leaders and politicians are often viewed with skepticism, and, according to the ADL, lies about their duplicity have been blamed for "fanning the flames of social and political unrest." At some points in American history, people even debated whether Jews deserved civil rights or should serve in the military.

3. Jews Are Greedy.

Another ongoing stereotype about Jews is that they are greedy and covetous, unwavering in their quest for wealth, yet stingy misers with a tight grip on their money. The ADL states those who affirm this untruth believe Jews "exert control over the world's financial systems" in one breath but "regularly [cheat] friends and neighbors out of a buck" in another. Though American Jews indeed collectively represent the highest-earning religious group in the United States, the ADL argues that demonizing them for their hard-earned economic place and accusing them as money-grabbing or hungry for power implies their wealth is undeserved instead of a reflection of their commitment to hard work.

4. Jews Killed Jesus.

Known as "deicide," this myth believes the Jewish people are collectively responsible for Jesus' death and has been used to justify antisemitism for millennia. Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, was an antisemite whose book *On the Jews and Their Lies* influenced Hitler's autobiographical manifesto *Mein Kampf*—leading to Nazi propaganda that popularized this myth to "justify" the Holocaust as "divine retribution." Extremists see Jews as the deadly enemy of Christianity. Sadly, this trope en-

dures today even though scholars, religious leaders, and historians have deemed it baseless and unsupported by Scripture; even Pope Paul IV said Jesus' crucifixion cannot be charged against all the Jews back then—nor against Jews today.

5. Jews Use Christian Blood for Religious Rituals.

The idea that Jews murder non-Jews and perform religious rituals using their blood is known as “blood libel.” For example, in medieval times, people believed Jews used Christian blood to bake their Passover *matzah* and drank it as medicine.

Though absurd and dangerous, blood libel disturbingly hasn't stopped. For example, in 1928 a missing four-year-old girl led to a rumor that Jews had killed her as part of a religious ceremony. In the mid-twentieth century, Nazi propagandists used blood libel as evidence that the Jews were a danger to society that should rid them—*Der Stürmer* devoted an entire issue to this myth. More recently, the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported that a Syrian diplomat read accusations of blood libel against the Jews during a United Nations Human Rights Commission session—fortunately, drawing an immediate protest. And in 2002, a flyer portraying an image of a dead Palestinian baby circulated San Francisco State University, saying Jews had killed the child in a religious ritual.

6. The Holocaust Never Happened.

Holocaust denial uses made-up history as reason to deny that the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews during World War II, despite extensive credible evidence. The ADL says in its most developed form, Holocaust denial is:

... an antisemitic conspiracy theory claiming Jews around the world knowingly fabricated evidence of their own genocide in order to extract reparations from Germany, gain world sympathy and facilitate the alleged theft of Palestinian land for the creation of Israel. It is founded on the belief that Jews somehow are able to force major institutions—governments, Hollywood, the media, academia—to promote a lie at the expense of non-Jews.

Holocaust denial is deeply offensive to Jews, most of whom can trace the loss of a family member to this genocide.

7. Israel Has No Right to Exist.

Most disturbing is the recent increase in the delegitimization of Israel, also called “Anti-Zionism”—denying the Jewish people's right to self-determination. Since the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, when Rome dispossessed the Jews of their sovereignty over the region, Jews have longed to return to Zion (Jerusalem). “Zionism” is the belief Jews should have a safe place to live and the right to nationhood. Anti-Zionism distorts the truth of what Zionism is, demonizing the modern State of Israel by associating criminal acts with Israel out of context and even inventing new accusations against the nation. A current example are Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns that accuse Zionism and the Jewish State of being akin to other forms of hate, such as racism or sexism. Though criticism of Zionism is not antisemitic, anti-Zionists often lean on antisemitic tropes to delegitimize the nation—targeting anyone who supports Israel's right to exist—Jews and Christians alike.

Conclusion

Antisemitic tropes can initially appear subtle in the form of inappropriate remarks, stereotypes, or labels that are easy to normalize. But doing so only reinforces harmful attitudes.

It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to educate ourselves to recognize the common patterns of antisemitism throughout history and understand how antisemitism takes root and operates so we can respond responsibly. Normalizing antisemitic tropes strengthens the continually mutating disease.

Most importantly, we must not remain silent when we witness these tropes. Doing so makes the harmful messaging seem commonplace—and when that happens, these myths about the Jewish people evolve into what appears like truth, which leads to acceptance. 🕊️

Source: “A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era.” *Antisemitism Uncovered*. Accessed September 11, 2023.

ANTISEMITISM: WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW AND HOW TO COUNTER IT

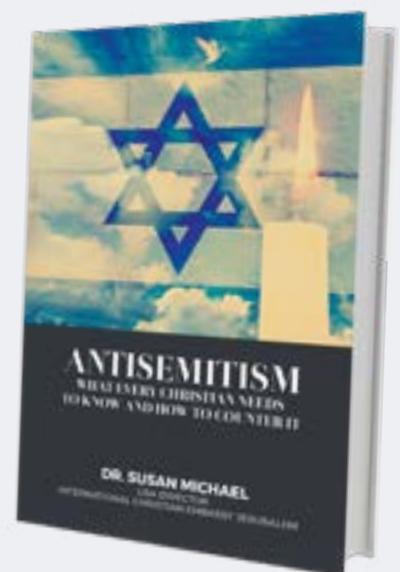
Worldwide antisemitism has surged in the wake of Hamas' atrocities across Israel, according to the Anti-Defamation League, as Hamas supporters and other antisemitic actors threaten and target Jewish and Israeli individuals and institutions.

The Evangelical Christian demographic is the only one with the political and moral weight to push back against this evil—but we must be well-equipped to do so. In *Antisemitism: What Every Christian Needs to Know and How to Counter It* by Dr. Susan Michael, you'll learn what antisemitism is, where it is found, and how to come against its influence prayerfully and vocally.

This small booklet is just 40 pages and informative—perfect to give to friends and family.

Get your copy today on Amazon or the ICEJ USA bookstore at:

www.icejusa.org/store





AMBULANCES *for* **ISRAEL**

During the criminal attack on October 7, most ambulances in the southern region of Israel were stolen, looted, or burned. We have been asked to replace ambulances to help provide needed medical support.

The ICEJ USA has already purchased one ambulance. Donate today to help us provide another one right away. Our goal is to provide five ambulances! Please send your best donation today!

Total cost for one ambulance: \$118,800



**Israel
Urgently
Needs
Ambulances**

**Help Us
Reach
Our Goal**



DONATE TODAY AT
icejusa.org/ambulance

FOR MORE INFORMATION
call 615-895-9830