



# WORD

FROM JERUSALEM

• • •  
**THE FEAST OF  
DEDICATION  
(HANUKKAH)**

(PAGE 8)

• • •

A dramatic sunset scene in a desert landscape. The sky is filled with warm orange and yellow light, with a bright vertical beam of light descending from the top. In the foreground, several silhouettes of soldiers on horseback are visible, some holding spears and shields. The ground is sandy and hazy.

**THE SPIRIT OF AMALEK  
AND THE WAR ON ISRAEL**



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.



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear friends,

The Feast of Tabernacles had barely ended, and our staff was ready to relax after months of hard work. Yet the next day, we awoke to rocket alarms in Jerusalem and across Israel. As the minutes passed that morning, continual upsetting news emerged from the Gaza border. At 8:00 a.m., I called our friend, Ofir Libstein, to check if he was okay. As mayor of the Sha'ar HaNegev regional council, Ofir had welcomed nearly 700 Feast delegates just two days earlier. He did not answer, and he was soon after named the first casualty of the massive Hamas pogrom of October 7.

Two days earlier we were in the exact location as the massacre. Many Feast pilgrims said our solidarity visit to the Gaza border area was a highlight of this year's Feast. God was undoubtedly there, but no one sensed any warning that the roads we were driving on would soon be littered with burned-up cars and dead bodies.

But God had directed us to be there during the Feast. We were eager to dedicate part of the Be'eri Forest as the new "Christian Embassy Nature Park." We have many longstanding friendships there. Over the years, we have donated almost 200 bomb shelters and much fire-fighting equipment to the western Negev region.

Learning Ofir was dead made my stomach sink. I recall my friend Shai Hermesh's desperate voice over the phone from his safe room in Kfar Aza, where he hid and prayed for 20 hours while Hamas terrorists slaughtered his neighbors. A few days later, our new nature park became the IDF's main entry point to divide Gaza and deal with Hamas. In a way it felt like God embedded us at the center of this conflict so we might take our stand alongside the traumatized nation of Israel.

We must understand that this battle is spiritual and engage it as such—particularly the church. Behind the horror of the massacre of innocent civilians on October 7 is an ancient hatred—even a demonic spirit. In my article "The Spirit of Amalek and the War on Israel" on pages 4-7 of this month's magazine, you'll learn about the biblical history behind this dark spirit and how it has manifested throughout history.

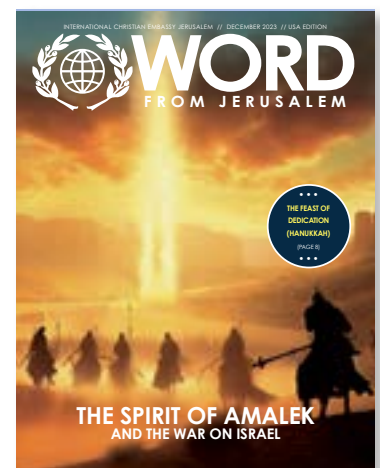
Israel is fighting for its existence, and the global body of Christ must show our support in practical ways as Israel confronts the dark forces of Hamas in Gaza. Please pray, give, and take a public stand wherever possible. We are here on the frontlines for you!

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Juergen Buehler  
President  
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: An ancient battle in the desert (Adobe Firefly)

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# THE SPIRIT OF AMALEK AND THE WAR ON ISRAEL

BY DR. JUERGEN BUEHLER, ICEJ PRESIDENT

Israel is at war! After the mass terrorist attack on October 7, Israel finds itself in one of the most challenging situations since its founding in 1948. The nation currently has its standing army with advanced military equipment, plus a record call-up of over 300,000 reservist soldiers, all deployed on three battle fronts—Gaza in the South, Judea/Samaria (West Bank) in the Center, and the Lebanese border in the North.

However, we must understand that this battle is of a spiritual nature and needs to be engaged as such, particularly by the church. The apostle Paul said, “Our fight is not against flesh and blood but against ... the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). The same holds true today.

On October 7, the world witnessed the worst manifestation of antisemitism since the Holocaust. The attack caught Israel by utter surprise. But even more shocking were the reports coming from the dozens of besieged Israeli communities around Gaza. Most victims were *not* IDF soldiers who fought bravely that day. Instead, the main targets

were women, children, and the elderly, who were brutally murdered, mutilated, raped, tortured, and burned alive in their homes or taken hostage to Gaza. To erase any doubt, the terrorists themselves recorded their atrocities on body cameras, leaving behind a chilling record of their vile atrocities.

Their utter cruelty, however, should not have come as a surprise since, over recent decades, Hamas leaders and clerics have called for the annihilation of every Jew on Earth. And the Hamas Charter expressly cites the *hadith* (tradition) that “Judgment Day” will not come until Muslims kill Jews to the point the rocks and trees cry out, “O Muslims, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him!” And Hamas insists this fight must liberate every inch of Israel from Jewish rule.

An ancient hatred—even a demonic spirit—is at work that shares these exact aspirations. It manifested itself repeatedly through the descendants of Amalek and eventually infected many other peoples as well. This vicious “spirit of Amalek” arose once more on October 7. Rabbinic literature presents Amalek as the archenemy of the Jewish people. Today, we call it *violent antisemitism*.

## AMALEK AND ESAU'S HATRED

The spirit of Amalek is the oldest enemy of Israel. The Amalekites were the first people to attack Israel when they left Egypt for the promised land (Exodus 17:8ff). Amalek was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12) who, according to the rabbis, inherited his grandfather Esau's envy and hatred for his twin brother, Jacob.

This ancient hatred is rooted in certain events in their lives. When their mother, Rebekah, was still pregnant with twin sons, she received a word from God that the "elder will serve the younger." This divine election is referenced by Paul in Romans 9:10–13, and it grew into a root of jealousy in Esau's heart. Second, the Bible describes Esau as a "profane" (ungodly) man who despised his birthright and sold it to his younger brother, Jacob, for a bowl of stew (Genesis 25:29ff; Hebrews 12:16–17). Third, Jacob deceived his father, Isaac, to also receive the blessing of the firstborn (Genesis 27). Altogether, these events created a root of bitterness in Esau that left him ready to kill Jacob (Genesis 27:41).

Years later, this hatred stirred Esau's heart to mobilize 400 armed men to "welcome" his brother as he returned to the promised land. Jacob knew the depth of his twin brother's hatred and was concerned for his wives and children (Genesis 32:11). So, the night before Esau's army arrived, Jacob wrestled with God and became "Israel." In answer to his prayer, God touched Esau's heart, and the brothers reconciled.

Yet Esau's grandson Amalek retained that jealous spirit and became Israel's archenemy down through history (Numbers 14:25; Judges 3:13, 6:3, 10:12; Psalm 83:7). Amalek often appeared at critical moments in Israel's history, which teaches us important principles for today. The nature of this murderous hatred of Jews is jealousy over Israel's calling and election for world redemption, its inheritance of the land, and the blessing passed down from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob—and then to Jacob's 12 sons.

### Amalek at Rephidim

Amalek first appears as a nation in Exodus 17:8: "Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim." In this well-known story, Moses instructed Joshua to draft an army while he, together with Aaron and Hur, went up a hill to pray. These prayers became the decisive factor in the outcome of the battle: "So it came about, when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed; but when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed" (Exodus 17:11).

### Amalek and David

Right before David became king of Israel, we read about the Amalekites burning David's camp at Ziklag and abducting his wives (1 Samuel 30:1–2). But David "strengthened himself in the Lord" and inquired whether to attack. God told him to pursue and overtake the enemy and rescue the hostages. Amazingly, this all took place near Kibbutz Be'eri and Kfar Aza, where the worst atrocities of the recent Hamas massacre took place. So that is our prayer in this current situation—that Israel may pursue, overtake, and rescue!

### Haman the Amalekite (Esther 3–7)

The last time Amalek appears in the Word of God is in the story of Esther. Haman, the archenemy of the Jews, was an Agagite—

**This vicious spirit  
of Amalek arose  
once more on  
October 7, 2023.**

that is, he came from the house of Agag, the Amalekite royal family (see 1 Samuel 15; Numbers 24:7). His scheme was the most vicious of all previous attacks, as Haman planned to ethnically cleanse Persia of all Jews—men, women, and children (Esther 3:8–9).

For Esther to approach the king on this matter, she needed spiritual support as Moses did with Aaron and Hur. She called all of Israel to a three-day fast (Esther 4:16).

After this fast, things changed quickly, with a complete reversal. The Jews were allowed to defend themselves for two days, and their enemies perished. Amazingly, Haman was hanged on the very gallows he built for the Jews.

## THREE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AMALEK

These stories contain several common themes that instruct us how to pray strategically in these days

### 1. The Nature of the Amalek Spirit

The severe judgment from heaven was due to the type of conflict waged by Amalek. At the end of his life, Moses reminded Israel

to "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way when you came out of Egypt, how he confronted you on the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God" (Deuteronomy 25:17–18).

Amalek's enmity went beyond a mere dispute—it was a vicious, blood-thirsty rivalry. His main targets were the faint and weary and stragglers in Israel's camp. They mainly targeted civilians—like today's grim specter of Hamas terrorism. That is why Jacob was afraid for his wives and children. And Amalek kidnapped the women and children in David's time. Finally, in Esther's day, all of Israel was targeted—men, women, children, and the elderly.

This same demonic spirit of violence was on display in the brutal Hamas slaughter of innocent Israeli civilians. Israeli doctors have concluded that 80 percent of the Hamas victims identified so far had been raped or tortured. Many remain hostage. In addition, Amalek is distinct from other historical enemies like Egypt or Babylon in its declared purpose to annihilate the Jewish people: "They have said, 'Come, and let's wipe them out as a nation, so that the name of Israel will no longer be remembered'" (Psalm 83:4).

### 2. The Nature of the Battle

All these battle stories involving Amalek had one thing in common—they were won through prayer and fasting. For example, after Israel's victory at Rephidim, the story in Exodus makes several significant statements that bear comment:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly wipe out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and named it The Lord is My Banner; and he said, "Because the Lord has sworn, the Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." (Exodus 17:14–16)

- Prayer moves heaven. Moses made a rather amazing statement after this battle. He declared *Yad al kishah Adonai*, or "The hand on the Lord's throne!" Moses understood that as he prayed, he touched the very throne of heaven. His prayer moved the heavenly realm and released heavenly armies to battle on Israel's behalf.

- In every generation, an Amalek will arise against the Jewish people. It was a great challenge in biblical times and



throughout history, but it continues today with its latest manifestation witnessed in the western Negev.

- Amalek's ultimate fate is already sealed. God will blot out their memory from under heaven (see Numbers 24:20). It means that as we apply Moses' strategy, we can expect victory!

The way to overcome this militant, violent spirit of hatred manifesting all over the world now is by targeted, militant prayer with fasting that persists until the breakthrough comes. The end is sealed, and God will have the final word! Today, it is the hands of the church that need to be lifted up. We must be like Moses and Aaron and Hur, supporting each other in prayer. Israel is in desperate need of this prayer covering, and it is for "such a time as this" that we are called.

### 3. Amalek, the Enemy of the Crossroads

The spirit of Amalek manifested itself mainly at significant crossroads in Israel's history. When Esau planned his attack with 400 militants, Jacob was about to cross over the river Jabbok back into the promised land. Jacob was entering his inheritance and destiny when Esau attacked. At this crossroad, Jacob

became "Israel"—the one who saw God face to face (Genesis 32:30ff).

When Amalek attacked Israel at Rephidim, they were at their final stop before Mount Sinai and the most transforming moment in Old Testament history. God came down in fire, made a covenant with Israel, and gave the children of Israel the Ten Commandments.

David's challenge with Amalek could have led to his stoning by his own people, and the man after God's own heart would have missed his destiny. But David strengthened himself in the Lord, won the battle, and two chapters later, became king of Israel.

Finally, if Haman had prevailed, two great heroes of Israel would have perished as well: Nehemiah (who rebuilt Jerusalem) and Ezra (who brought significant spiritual reforms) were still teenagers in Persia and would have been slain.

Even in modern times, we see that just after the birth of the global Zionist movement, the emergence of the worst manifestation of the Amalek spirit in the heart of enlightened Europe. Adolf Hitler and the powerfully seductive Nazi spirit gripped most of the German people, and Nazi Germany slaughtered 6 million Jews just when they

established the modern State of Israel.

### APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Thus, the recent atrocities by Hamas should make us think. *Is Israel at another crossroads? Are we about to enter a season of spiritual revival in Israel when the ancient prophecies of God pouring out His Spirit upon Israel will be fulfilled?* Maybe we are near the promise of Zechariah 12:10-14—when God will pour out a Spirit of grace and supplication, and they will "look upon him whom they pierced." Maybe the times of Ezekiel 36:24-38 will come when God promises to sprinkle clean water on Israel and remove hearts of stone for hearts of flesh.

This is a critical time, not just for Israel but also for the church. It is no longer enough to just profess our love for Israel—it is time for action. Concerted prayer and fasting are urgently needed. Please join our various prayer initiatives and prayerfully consider holding a three-day Esther Fast for Israel in this time of need.

As Moses, Aaron, and Hur saw the breakthrough, and Esther saw a complete reversal of her situation, we are trusting for a big breakthrough for Israel both for its military and soldiers—but also for the spiritual state of the nation. Please join us in this battle. 🌍



Please watch our video teaching series on the Spirit of Amalek at: [on.icej.org/ICEJteachingseries](https://on.icej.org/ICEJteachingseries)

## Please consider the following options to join us in prayer:

- 1 Join our daily Global Prayer Gatherings online.
- 2 Consider joining one of the three-day Esther Fasts for Israel concluding every three days with a joint global communion.
- 3 Join our 24/7 Rosh Chodesh prayer chain online during these days of war and lead your own group of prayer warriors as part of this global movement.



Learn more at: [www.icejusa.org/2023/10/18/icej-on-the-frontlines-of-israels-battle](http://www.icejusa.org/2023/10/18/icej-on-the-frontlines-of-israels-battle)

# TRIBUTE TO MAYOR OFIR LIBSTEIN

Near the end of our eight-day Feast of Tabernacles celebration in October, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem took nearly 700 Christians from some 50 nations on a visit to the western Negev for a solidarity rally with the local Israeli communities along the Gaza border. The colorful, uplifting gathering started with a warm welcome from our friend Ofir Libstein, the mayor of the Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council.

“Welcome again to Sha’ar HaNegev,” Mayor Libstein told our Feast pilgrims. “We are here just three kilometers from the border with Gaza. The people who live here in Sha’ar HaNegev are keeping the Land of Israel. We are keeping the border with the Gaza Strip. ... We have doubled our population in the last 10 years, and everything is with your help—because with your help, we feel safe here. With your [bomb] shelters that you help us buy and put here in the area, we live better lives. And I promise to do everything to keep the Land of Israel [and the] land of this area—and build it stronger and stronger. I am so happy to see you [come] from all over the world ... to see this beautiful place. Thank you very much.”

Sadly, Ofir Libstein was killed just two days later, defending his home community of Kfar Aza from the treacherous surprise attack by Hamas terrorists infiltrating from Gaza on October 7. In fact, he was the first named Israeli casualty of the conflict.

Mayor Libstein was a respected leader and a man of peace. Despite years of unrelenting rocket attacks, he still hoped Israelis could live in peace with the Arabs of Gaza. To that end, he oversaw the construction of a water project taking fresh water into northeast Gaza, but Hamas dug up the pipes and made rockets with them. More recently, he spearheaded a planned joint industrial park near the Erez Crossing that would have employed 10,000 Gazan workers in good-paying jobs.

The ICEJ is committed to honoring the life and legacy of Ofir Libstein by continuing to invest more than ever in the safety and future of the recovering Israeli communities along the Gaza border. 🌍



Mayor Ofir Libstein, David Parsons, and Shai Hermesh during Feast 2023 at the Solidarity Gathering in Sha'ar HaNegev





# *The Feast of Dedication* (Hanukkah)

BY ICEJ USA DIRECTOR DR. SUSAN MICHAEL & ICEJ MANAGING EDITOR KAREN ENGLE



*Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

*(John 10:22-24)*



Many people believe Christmas is the holiday for Christians and Hanukkah is the holiday for Jews. Since Hannukah is not one of God's feasts listed in Leviticus 23, and there is no mention in the Old Testament of the holiday or the historical events leading to its establishment, few Christians give it much attention.

Yet Jesus celebrated Hanukkah—and that fact alone should make Christians curious enough to investigate the possible importance of this festival to their faith.

It is no exaggeration to say that had it not been for Hanukkah, also called the Festival of Lights—celebrated today during our November/December—there may have never been Christmas. Hanukkah prepared the way for the birth and ministry of Jesus. Therefore, Christians may want to not only wish the Jewish community a Happy Hanukkah but celebrate it themselves. Let's unpack the story of Hanukkah to better understand why.

### What Hanukkah Is About

The story of Hanukkah begins during the period between the Old and New Testaments when Antiochus IV Epiphanes became the ruler of the Seleucid Empire. While the Hellenization of the area already threatened the survival of the Jewish religion, Antiochus seemed obsessed with ensuring the demise of the Jewish faith and, thereby, the future of the Jewish people. It's a story that sounds eerily familiar considering the events on October 7 and Hamas' massacre of more than 1,400 Jewish men, women, and children that led to pro-Palestinian protests calling for the eradication of all Jews—not just in Israel but worldwide.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes not only murdered the high priest Onias III but slaughtered 40,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem. He then prohibited temple sacrifices and services—as well as Sabbath and feast day observations. He dedicated the temple to Zeus, destroyed the Holy Scriptures, and forced Jews to participate in heathen rites. In his attempt to destroy every trace of the Jewish religion, the final assault was the slaughter of a pig on the sacrificial altar of the temple, thereby defiling it.

The Maccabean family, from the priestly line of Aaron, led a revolt against this evil ruler and miraculously experienced victory after victory over the mighty Greek forces until, at last, the Jews could purify the temple and restore temple services. They then rededicated the temple to the Lord. Hanukkah remembers this rededication—also called the Festival of Dedication because Hanukkah is a Hebrew word derived from the word “to dedicate.”

The defeat of the Greek forces by this small band of Jewish zealots was nothing short of a miracle. God had once again demonstrated His steadfast love and faithfulness to His people by saving them from the threat of extinction. This is cause enough for celebration!

The story goes on to claim that when the Jews reentered the city of Jerusalem and the temple, there was only enough of the special oil to light the temple menorah and keep it burning for one day. But the oil miraculously burned for eight days while more was being brought from the Galilee—an eight-day trip there and back.

The story of the miracle oil is nowhere found in the intertestamental writings, and therefore, it is largely believed to be a legend. However, the very first Hanukkah was indeed celebrated for eight days, and the festival was called the Festival of Lights as early as the first century. Perhaps archeology will one day uncover more clues to the story's authenticity—but if not, the Old Testament does provide historical and prophetic background.

### A Turning Point in History

The events leading up to the Maccabean revolt were prophesied in vivid detail in the Old Testament book of Daniel. In chapter 8, the angel Gabriel described to the prophet Daniel the coming abomination of a king who would put a stop to sacrifices and desecrate the sanctuary. This was 250 years *before* it occurred, indicating how serious the threat of annihilation was to the Jewish people back then. The Maccabean revolt was a turning point in history that saved the Jewish people and their religion from the threat of extinction.

This story and the existing archeological finds that support it provides further proof of the existence of the temple in Jerusalem. So while Israel's modern-day enemies— Hamas, Hezbollah, and anyone involved in antisemitic acts—attempt to rewrite history and distort fact by denying the temple ever existed in Jerusalem (or the Jewish people's longstanding presence in the land), the celebration of Hanukkah takes on new meaning. This is especially true when we consider what the New Testament reveals about it.

### Jesus and Hanukkah

John's Gospel references the Feast of Dedication in chapter 10. But to fully understand the significance of what the apostle wrote, we must first consider it in its proper context. To do that, we need to go back two chapters to John 8.

In verse 12 Jesus had proclaimed Himself the “light of the world” at the culmination of the Feast of Tabernacles. Every night for the previous seven nights, the temple had been flooded with light coming from giant oil-filled menorahs in the temple courts. The light was to remember when God's presence was with Israel in the desert manifested as a pillar of fire in and over the tabernacle. Those in earshot would have well understood what Jesus meant by saying He was the “light of the world”: He was declaring He was God's presence among them.

Clearly, many others made that connection because soon after, Jews surrounded Jesus and asked him point blank if He was their long-awaited messiah:

Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? *If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.*” (John 10:22–24)

Notice Jesus had entered the temple during the Feast of Dedication. He would have surely known the story behind the feast and that the temple He stood in would not have been in operation without it.

He also would have known His Jewish brethren were waiting for an earthly deliverer who would relieve them from their oppressors—at

the time, Rome. Jesus proceeded to talk about eternal life and not being snatched from the Father's hand. But then Jesus said something profound that upset those listening to the point they took up rocks to stone Him:

I and the Father are one. (John 10:30)

When Jesus asked why they were about to stone Him, they responded, "Because You, being a Man, make Yourself God" (John 10:33). We must keep in mind that Israel knew God to be her Savior. Many verses in the Old Testament affirm this, but consider just two:

There is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:21–22)

Surely in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. (Jeremiah 3:23)

When Jesus responded to whether He was the Christ, Israel's deliverer, He affirmed their question—indeed, He was God their Savior. Though most Jews of that day did not believe, God had fulfilled His promises to Israel to send a Savior who would be an ordinary man in appearance like those He came to save but would soon suffer and die for the sins of the world.

And this revelation took place on Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

Christians today would do well to remember God's faithfulness to the Jews on that first Hanukkah. Had Antiochus succeeded to annihilate the nation of Israel, it would have ended the Davidic line and there would have been no Jewish woman named Mary to become the mother of Jesus Christ.

The temple would also have not existed for the beginning of the Christmas story. The nativity narrative begins in Luke 1 in the temple with an angel announcing to the priest Zacharias that his wife would give birth to John the Baptist. It is no coincidence that God chose to begin the Christmas story in the temple, the heart of Jewish life and faith, at the time and the place to which they anticipated the return of God's presence.

### The Rest of the Hanukkah Story

But the story does not end there! The rededication of the temple took place on the 25th day of Kislev, or December 14, 164 BC. Within weeks, if not days, the evil Antiochus IV Epiphanes died. The Greek historian Polybius said that Antiochus was on an expedition to the eastern part of the empire to rob another temple when he died of a sudden illness and "certain manifestations of divine displeasure."

Polybius hints at the real possibility that the king suffered God's judgment. Whether he understood it to be the God of the Jews isn't clear—but the non-canonical book of Second Maccabees claims that he did. Nonetheless, Antiochus' sudden death is just one example of many of the demise of those who have come against the Jewish people. Indeed God blesses those who bless His people Israel and curses those who curse them (Genesis 12:3). Upon the king's death, the Seleucid kingdom weakened and fell into irreparable decline.

### The Israel Test

The Bible is clear that God will judge the nations over their treatment of the Jewish people. The Old and New Testaments both teach this, and the principal has been played out repeatedly throughout history.

The most obvious explanation is that the Jewish people are special to Him. He did not just *choose* them but *created* them through Abraham and Sarah, who was past child-bearing years, and He takes their treatment by others seriously.

More than this, God uses Israel to test the hearts of the nations, thereby exposing their goodness, which leads to blessing, or their evil intent, which leads to judgment. Some have likened Israel to litmus paper that when dipped into water shows whether the water is acidic or alkaline. Israel exposes the true condition of people's hearts.

George Gilder, a venture-capitalist businessman, proposes in his book *The Israel Test* that Israel presents a moral and ethical challenge to the world and, therefore, has become the ultimate fault line. At the root of the Israel Test is the knowledge that Israel is contributing more to the human cause through its scientific, technological, and financial advances than any other country in the world, except the United States. He predicts that over the next two decades, Israel will grow into the dominant economy in the Middle East and one of the most productive economies in the world.

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

Through the war with Hamas, God is using Israel to test the hearts of the nations—including our own—and their future will be determined by how they respond.

### The Israel Test and the Church

But could it be that this same test is at operation within the church? In Romans 11 the apostle Paul addressed the attitude of the Roman church toward the Jewish people. He warned believers to ensure their attitude was humble and honoring of the Jewish people. He even cautioned them about possible judgment by God if their attitude was not right.

A church that honors its Hebraic roots as wild branches grafted into the natural olive tree receives great strength and nourishment. To dishonor the very root that supports our faith brings spiritual decline, judgment, and even death. "Remember," wrote Paul, "that you do not support the root, but the root supports you" (Romans 11:18).

Antiochus IV Epiphanes failed the Israel Test, and his kingdom is long gone. Others throughout history have also fallen short on the test and experienced decline and extinction. May our nation and churches pass the Israel Test in this current battle against God's enemies by blessing and supporting the one nation He created to bring glory to His name. 🌍

*Watch for the next article in our 12-part series on the Feasts of the Lord in the January 2024 issue of Word From Jerusalem on the biblical calendar versus the Gregorian calendar—and how it impacts the feasts.*

God uses Israel to test the hearts of the nations, thereby exposing their goodness, which leads to blessing, or their evil intent, which leads to judgment.



# CALLING ALL CHRISTIANS TO JOIN ICEJ IN PRAYING FOR ISRAEL!

OVER 20,000 HAVE JOINED GLOBAL PRAYER GATHERING



Soldiers carrying a corpse in a body bag in Kfar Aza (Flash90)

Israel's current battle against Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and other Iranian-backed terror militias is the nation's most daunting crisis in its modern history. Even as more grisly evidence emerges of the brutal Hamas onslaught against innocent Israeli civilians on October 7, pressure is growing on Israel to halt its legitimate military response and thereby hand Hamas the victory. The people of Gaza themselves also need deliverance from Hamas. Meantime, Hezbollah has been coiled to strike with tens of thousands of deadly missiles from Lebanon at any minute.

In response to this dire threat to Israel, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is calling on Christians everywhere to join us in praying as never before for the peace and well-being of this restored nation. The church has reached a time when it is not enough just to say, "We love Israel." Real action is needed!

Prayer is a powerful spiritual weapon in the heavenlies. At the outset of this crisis, we decided to turn our weekly Global Prayer Gathering (GPG) into a daily time of urgent prayer and intercession for Israel until the nation can declare victory in this war. Thousands of Christians from around the world have been joining us daily for these online prayer sessions, where we give updates and offer prayer alongside Christian leaders and intercessors from Israel and around the world.

Many participants in the daily GPG have found that it gives them great encouragement and hope for dealing with this crisis, as the news out of Israel and the region is often troubling. One lady from England recently wrote us:

For the first two days after the attack and before I'd discovered ICEJ, I felt in such shock and that Jewish and messianic friends and family in Israel and London were alone, heartbroken, and frightened. Now each day it is a privilege and profound holy encouragement in our Lord to listen, worship, pray, and be in your comforting presence. Thank you! I'm so blessed to discover ICEJ after all this time.

In addition to the daily GPG prayer vigil online, the ICEJ leadership also has called for a Global Esther Fast to bring together those willing to fast and pray into this difficult situation. We believe these recurring three-day periods of fasting and prayer are delivering "Esther strikes" to the dark enemies of Israel in the spiritual realm.

Find out more about how you can join our urgent prayer efforts at: [www.icejusa.org/event-item-global-prayer-gathering](http://www.icejusa.org/event-item-global-prayer-gathering)

## PRAYER POINTS

1. Pray that the war will be successful in completely removing the threat of Hamas from not only Israel but the entire Middle East. Pray for resolve among Israel's leaders to pursue this battle to the end (Psalm 18:34ff).
2. Pray for the protection of all Israeli soldiers who serve their nation! (Psalm 91).
3. Pray for unity among the people of Israel—that this war will become the catalyst for a newfound brotherly spirit throughout the nation (Luke 11:17).
4. Pray for protection for all those in the region who seek to live in peace with Israel. Pray that God would send a spirit of repentance and reconciliation with Israel throughout the Arab world.
5. Pray that many "Rahabs" might come forth to join Israel in restoring calm to the region.
6. Pray for Arab Christians in Israel, the Palestinian territories, and the wider Middle East to have the courage and moral clarity to take a clear stand against the evil spirit driving Hamas. Pray that God's Spirit will remove the veil of Replacement Theology from their hearts.
7. Pray that this conflict will become a catalyst for spiritual renewal in Israel and the region. 🌍



Find out more about how you can join our urgent prayer efforts at: [www.icej.org/pray-with-us](http://www.icej.org/pray-with-us)



## ICEJ ORGANIZES TENNESSEE RALLY TO SUPPORT ISRAEL

# “OUR TIME IS NOW”

ICEJ USA STAFF



On October 27, 2023, Jews and Christians gathered in unity to support Israel in Nashville, TN, to respond to one of the darkest days of history, when Hamas terrorists slaughtered over 1,400 Israelis and hundreds of mostly civilians were taken hostage to Gaza. ICEJ USA Deputy Director Daryl Hedding spoke at the rally that drew hundreds of Israel supporters, enthusiastically declaring to the crowd: “We come together today to tell Israel, ‘You are not alone!’ and ‘You [Israel] have a right to self-defense! We will support you no matter how long this war takes to win.’” Hedding’s powerful speech included the following commission:

“During the Holocaust, there were three main groups of people: the Nazis and their collaborators, the Jewish victims, and the bystanders. Most people were bystanders who thought they were innocent. But Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pas-

tor who gave his life trying to stop the Holocaust, had this to say about bystanders: ‘Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.’

“Brothers and sisters, bystanders are not innocent. Our time is now. This might be the defining moment of our generation when we find out what we are really made of. We cannot look evil in the face and shrink back in fear. The command Moses gave Joshua in Deuteronomy 31 before taking on the giants in the promised land is a rallying cry for us today: ‘Be strong and courageous. Do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.’ May God give us and Israel the strength and courage for the days ahead. And may God bless Israel and the United States. *Am Israel chai*—the people of Israel live!”



## MARCHING TOGETHER FOR ISRAEL IN WASHINGTON, DC

SHANNON BENNETT

ICEJ LEADERSHIP OUTREACH COORDINATOR

*“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*  
—Psalm 133: 1

That’s the passage that comes to me when I think of the November 14 March for Israel rally in Washington, DC. It was a united effort from day one. We learned from our Jewish friends that the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Federations of North America were planning a rally and seeking to bring all who loved Israel to Washington, DC, on November 14. The challenge: November 14 was less than two weeks away. For this to succeed, we needed the cooperation of many diverse groups—and a miracle.

The American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI) network was activated to publicize the event to their constituencies. The Jewish community activated their own networks. And

on a beautiful, sunny November 14, 290,000 people met on the National Mall to support Israel and call for the freedom of the more than 200 hostages held in Gaza.

For us, the morning started at David’s Tent DC, a 24/7 worship and prayer ministry on the National Mall. They devoted that morning to intercession for Israel while we staffed a table to check in those who preregistered with us for the rally. We then joined the throngs of people at the March for Israel. Our signs read “Christians for Israel,” and we were stopped many times by Jewish attendees who wanted to share their heartfelt thanks, give hugs, and take photos with us. I think we were all a bit overwhelmed by the warm reception. It clearly mattered that we were there to stand with them.





ICEJ USA Director Dr. Susan Michael

## RECOGNIZED AMONG TOP CHRISTIAN ALLIES GLOBALLY

SHANNON BENNETT, ICEJ LEADERSHIP OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The Israel Allies Foundation, the umbrella organization for 50 Israel Allies Caucuses representing 1,200 legislators, recently released its annual listing of Israel's Top 50 Christian Allies from various denominations and church networks around the globe. Dr. Susan Michael, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem's USA National Director and International Board Member, was included in the lineup, which included a prestigious cadre of Americans such as former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and actor and director Gary Sinise.

This most recent honor follows on the heels of Dr. Michael's recognition by She Leads America and the US House of Representatives as a Christian Woman of Distinction 2023. For more than 40 years, Susan has pioneered the development of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in the United States and around the world. She has developed numerous educational initiatives and formed the powerful American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI) network. After decades of engagement with Israel, she is often called upon to address complex and sensitive issues such as the dramatic increase in antisemitism, Jewish-Christian relations, and Christian support for Israel.

Josh Reinstein, president of the Israel Allies Foundation (IAF), commented on the significance of the work of those included in the list, telling *The Jerusalem Post*, "We are honored every year to recognize these incredible men and women of faith from across the world. They are Israel's greatest friends and most loyal allies. Due to their years of hard work, we are seeing the embassies moved to Jerusalem, antisemitism called out, bomb shelters built, pro-Israel policies enacted at the highest levels of government—the impact of their support is truly limitless."

The Israel Allies Foundation chose to publish the annual list for the biblical festival of *Sukkot*, also known as the Feast

of Tabernacles, as the holiday holds a special meaning for many Christian supporters of Israel. According to Zechariah 14:16, there will come a time when individuals from all nations will come to Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday. In anticipation of this, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, headed by Dr. Juergen Buehler, also included in the Israel Allies Foundation list, has welcomed thousands of Christians worldwide for the Feast of Tabernacles for over 40 years. The annual gathering has become Israel's largest tourist event.

As the list was published, no one knew that these allies would be so quickly put to the test as they stand with Israel during this unprecedented moment in its history. Just moments after the festival of Sukkot ended, Hamas began its horrifying invasion of the country, barbarically murdering and kidnapping Israeli civilians, including women, children, and the elderly. In response, Dr. Michael commented:

This is a wake-up call for all of us. Being counted as one of Israel's top Christian allies is an incredible honor. However, now more than ever, the responsibility of being a true friend of Israel necessitates that we speak out and add to our numbers. We haven't been this way before. The church can no longer ignore the reality that evil is rising to levels we haven't seen in our lifetime. Christians must understand God's purposes and plans for Israel, as well as the debt we owe them, as it was through them God brought us everything Bible-believing Christians hold dear—including our Messiah.

Putting actions to words, Dr. Michael has been interviewed on numerous programs to explain the crisis in Israel and how Christians can help. In addition, the US branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is working hard to provide for the practical needs of the thousands who have lost their homes and loved ones in this vicious attack. 🌍



# ALIYAH CONTINUES EVEN DURING GAZA WAR

BY HOWARD FLOWER, ICEJ ALIYAH DIRECTOR

**A**liyah to Israel is continuing despite the intense war with Hamas in Gaza, and the pace could even pick up given the current wave of antisemitism sweeping the globe.

Over the coming weeks, the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem is supporting Aliyah flights for 111 Jewish youths ages 14 to 18 immigrating from the former Soviet republics. After they complete their study program, they will be eligible to become Israeli citizens and serve in the IDF to defend their new homeland. The ICEJ is also working in these former Soviet countries to help with their Aliyah preparations, logistics, and airport transport.

In the meantime, the ICEJ is also sponsoring flights for 61 Ethiopian Jews who will arrive in Israel from Addis Ababa as soon as they get their exit documents.

So far this year, the ICEJ has assisted over 5,000 Jewish immigrants during various stages of their journey home to Israel, as well as with immediate integration needs. These numbers include sponsoring homeward-bound Aliyah flights for more than 1,300 Olim (newcomers). Worldwide Aliyah is expected to exceed 50,000 Jews this year—numbers not seen since the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

These figures do not include the nearly 300,000 Israeli citizens living abroad who have rushed home to defend their ancestral homeland. With most flights in and out of Israel canceled due to Hamas rocket barrages from Gaza, EL AL and other Israeli airlines have still been operating out of Ben-Gurion Airport, and the inbound flights are packed

with a mix of returnees and new immigrants. Some Israeli airplanes have added extra seats to accommodate the increased demand, and Israeli pilots have even allowed people to sit on the floor in the galley or in the cockpit.

Despite the raging war, significant numbers of Jewish immigrants have come from not only the Former Soviet Union (FSU) but the United States and France too—and the Christian Embassy is a part of this patriotic wave of Aliyah.

## How Wars and Terror Attacks Impact Aliyah

Often, wars in Israel or Islamist terror attacks against Jews and other “infidels” around the world have resulted in stirring waves of Aliyah that strengthen Israel. For instance, Israel’s surprisingly swift victory in the 1967 Six-Day War instilled a sense of pride and confidence among Jews worldwide in their national homeland and inspired a bump in Aliyah that lasted into the 1970s.

A significant surge in Aliyah from the United States followed the September 11 terror attacks, and during those years, the ICEJ sprang into action to assist many of those Olim.

Rampant antisemitism throughout Europe during the second Palestinian intifada (2000–2005), and later the Gaza rocket wars of 2009 and 2014, also prompted scores of French Jews to come home to Israel.

In 2013 the Boston Marathon bombing—committed by two Muslim brothers from Chechnya in southern Russia, a region with millions of Muslims that has been a hotbed of antisemitism for decades—triggered more Aliyah.

The hatred of Jews in the Caucus region boiled over again in October in response to several days of Palestinian calls for violence against Jews on a popular Telegram channel. An angry crowd of Muslim youths and women in Dagestan searched a hotel looking

for Jews and Israelis, and then a larger lynch mob invaded two airports in search of Israelis and Jews coming on a scheduled flight from Tel Aviv. Quick thinking on the part of local authorities saved the Jews from certain harm, but many Muslim rioters and police were injured. No doubt, many in the Jewish community still left in Russia will be considering a move to Israel after this frightening incident.

With tens of thousands of predominantly Muslim refugees from the Middle East now marching through the streets of European cities and stridently calling for Israel’s demise (“From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free”), Jewish communities are having to increase their protection around synagogues, and we will likely soon see another Aliyah surge from France and other parts of western Europe. Indeed, Israel welcomed 26 French Jewish immigrants in late October.

Israel’s Minister of Immigration, Ofir Sofer, met them at the airport and said: “These immigrants prove precisely during a difficult war the belief of the people of Israel in the righteousness of their path, a belief that has accompanied the Jewish people for thousands of years. ... We will continue to realize the vision of the return to Zion at any time.”

Immigration to Israel over the past year set a two-decade record with 38,000 new immigrants celebrating their first Shabbat as Israeli citizens. This surge in immigration was widely attributed to the war in Ukraine and its aftershocks throughout the Russian-speaking countries. This month the ICEJ will be helping young Jewish people from several of these former Soviet republics come to Israel, even while we also are standing strong with relief aid, prayer, and solidarity with the Jewish nation in one of its most difficult hours.

Join us in this urgent and timely effort to build up Zion and help strengthen the nation of Israel! Make your best gift today to the ICEJ’s Aliyah efforts! 🌍

Donate at:  
[www.icejusa.org/aliyah](http://www.icejusa.org/aliyah)







## ICEJ CARES FOR EVACUATED ISRAELI FAMILIES

ICEJ STAFF WRITERS

ICEJ staff member Tunde Johanics and Elie\*

The Christian Embassy is truly on the frontlines of Israel's fierce battle with Hamas terrorism, as we bring support and comfort to many hurting people.

One key area of our support is taking care of Israeli evacuees, as thousands of people from the southern and northern border regions have been relocated to safer areas of Israel, finding shelter in hotels, guest houses, youth hostels, or other temporary housing.

The ICEJ has been hosting and caring for three evacuee families who relocated to a safe house we arranged in Tzur Hadassah, just south of Jerusalem.

Two ICEJ staff members have been on hand night and day to look after these traumatized people. Our team prepared rooms for their arrival and, ever since, has been taking them shopping or to the pharmacy as needed, sharing a word of encouragement, offering a hug, or simply listening to their stories.

ICEJ staff member Tunde Johanics recently shared a personal encounter she had while looking after the evacuees, who are coping with trauma and learning how to handle the ongoing crisis.

"A Jewish girl named Elie\* stood out to me," said Tunde. "Despite the pain she carries, she remains an incredibly open and smiling individual. Even during her suffering, she never forgets to smile."

Elie invited Tunde for a cup of coffee and poured out her heart and pain—and especially her deep concern for her boyfriend, John. He is currently going through a period of depression and worry, the result of the abduction of his childhood friend, Isaac, on October 7. Isaac had attended the music festival near Re'im, which was attacked by dozens of Hamas terrorists that Shabbat morning. While Isaac's girlfriend managed to escape the clutches of the terrorists, Isaac was not as fortunate. The weight of this tragedy is overwhelming, yet Elie continues to persevere and fulfill her responsibilities at work.

Elie kindly invited me to join her in reciting the Shema—a daily declaration of faith—after sunset, as is customary among the Jewish community. She also suggested we read several Psalms together. Reading Scripture with Elie and praying alongside her was a beautiful moment for us both.

In moments like these, when words may fail us, sometimes simply being present with someone can convey more than words ever could.

"It is truly a privilege to serve the Jewish people during such a challenging time," said Tunde. "Our hearts are heavy with concern for their losses and the grief they are currently enduring while trying to defend themselves."

The grief and sorrow felt by these families run deep. Everyone seems to have a friend or relative directly impacted by the tragedy that occurred on October 7. But the ICEJ is here to offer comfort and hope for a better future. As we continue to support these displaced Israeli families with housing, food, and care, please consider what you can do to help—and keep them in your prayers.

### How Your Donations Help

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

You will be:

- Assisting evacuated Israeli families with housing, food, clothing, and emergency aid—plus providing toys and activities for children
- Joining urgent food distribution efforts to the elderly, new immigrants, and needy families nationwide
- Supplying more vital emergency equipment and protective gear for first responders
- Placing more bomb shelters and renovating existing shelters in vulnerable Israeli communities
- Delivering more ambulances and other emergency medical equipment
- Providing clothes, tents, sleeping bags, and other outdoor equipment for those safe guarding outlying communities
- Funding trauma counseling for Israeli medical workers responding to the crisis and families severely shaken by this conflict 🌐



ICEJ staff prepare to distribute AID for Israelis impacted by the war,

\*Name has been changed for privacy

Donate at: [www.icejusa.org/crisis](http://www.icejusa.org/crisis)

# 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)*

**T**he 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](http://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](http://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
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**Share the cost: \$300**

## 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**

## 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
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**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
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**Share the cost: \$50**

## 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
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**Share the cost: \$100**

## 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](http://www.icejusa.org/donate-bomb-shelters)

## 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

### Do the Israel Defense Forces Violate International Law?

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

Amid a region filled with tyranny, violence, and human rights abuses, Israel strictly abides by the tenets of international law, and this includes during the current War with Hamas. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) incorporate the principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), or “war law,” into their basic doctrine, and the nation’s Supreme Court oversees all of Israel’s military and government decisions. Their record of compliance with international law is strong.

But Israel’s detractors are keenly aware of this reality and manipulate international law in a way to make Israel look bad. The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA) says that Israel’s enemies invent “rules that are applied only to Israel and not to other states or in other situations.” In so doing they distract from their own violation of human rights and the abuse of their people.

Palestinian leaders—the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza—are systematic violators of international law. Hamas targets civilians—but it also oppresses its own women, persecutes minorities, and murders its political opponents. In the West Bank, the PA frequently employs torture and jails political opponents simply for disagreeing.

#### Protecting Human Rights

Conversely, a core value of the IDF is the protection of human life and dignity—regardless of whether that life is Israeli or Palestinian. The IDF Code of Conduct reads:

The IDF and its soldiers are obligated to protect human dignity. Every human being is of value regardless of his or her origin, religion, nationality, gender, status, or position. ... IDF servicemen and women will act in a judicious and safe manner in all they do, out of recognition of the supreme value of human life.

While Palestinian terrorists seek to maximize civilian casualties regardless of age or gender, Israel does everything in its power to minimize harm to all civilians. Israeli Defense Forces use various strategies to accomplish this, from telephone calls to dropping leaflets alerting civilians to move out of harm’s way to diverting missiles mid-air.

Hamas terrorists, however, wear everyday clothing so they are indistinguishable from civilians, which greatly endangers the lives of the civilian population. According to the Foreign Press Association, Hamas releases phony civilian casualty statistics. They also censor and threaten foreign journalists so they will not reveal Hamas activities. In the current War with Hamas, the United Nations has even been cooperating with the terrorist organization—and while condemning Israel’s actions taken in self-defense, never condemned Hamas’ terrorist activities nor initiation of the conflict.

#### The Right of Self-Defense

International Humanitarian Law does not explicitly prohibit the use of force to eliminate an organization such as Hamas—which Israel, the United States, and other countries consider a terrorist group. Israel’s use of force to achieve its aim of eliminating Hamas also abides by the right of self-defense under UN Charter Article 51, which allows Israel actions of “inherent” self-defense derived from customary international law under the law of armed conflict.

Following Article 51, Israel takes every possible step to target only Hamas militants and infrastructure and minimize civilian casualties, while Hamas, rather than protecting Gazan civilians and moving them out of harm’s way, uses civilians as human shields to make Israel out to be the unethical one.

#### Highest Code of Ethics

In a 2018 article in *the Jerusalem Post*, one Arab Israeli IDF soldier called the IDF “the most humane and moral army in the world with the highest code of ethics and human values.” He writes:

The IDF is an army that faces complex challenges and dilemmas in an explosive region, but it is an army that is level-headed and always keeps human life as its ultimate highest value. The IDF is an army that will bend over backward to save lives and to ensure that innocent individuals are not harmed, even if it means complicating the military operation.

Though in war there may be incidents that don’t live up to these standards, they are exceptions and not the norm and do not reflect the IDF—nor the State of Israel. 🌍





## Stand with Israel in This Time of Crisis



On Saturday, October 7, Hamas invaded Israel with the intent of cutting her off from being a nation, that her name would be remembered no more. By killing more than 1,400 men, women, elderly, and even **helpless babies** in the most horrific ways, and taking hundreds of others hostage, they proved their evil and dark intent.

**Israel is at war and needs your help!**

Israel needs food, medical supplies, and trauma assistance for victims of terror, as well as ongoing help for evacuees. You can help provide for these needs and join our ICEJ team on the frontlines by donating today.

Please send in a gift today at: [www.icejusa.org/crisis](http://www.icejusa.org/crisis)

**Join our  
ICEJ team  
on the  
frontlines  
by donating  
today**



**DONATE TODAY AT**  
[www.icejusa.org/crisis](http://www.icejusa.org/crisis)

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
call 615-895-9830





# FAITHFULLY SUPPORTING ISRAEL

**PARTNER  
WITH US  
IN 2024**

Be a part of that future generation spoken of in Psalm 102 that is partnering with the Lord in His work to restore Zion, for the set time has come.

## PARTNER LEVELS

### **Covenant Partner**

Show your love and support for Israel by partnering with the ICEJ. Become a Covenant Partner at a giving level of at least \$30 a month. In appreciation, you will receive the following resources:

- A Partnership Certificate
- The Word From Jerusalem magazine
- A year-end gift of appreciation

### **Ambassadorial Partner**

Partnership in ministry is a gift God gives to strengthen and undergird His work. Become an Ambassadorial Partner with the ICEJ at a giving level of at least \$100 a month. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Covenant Partnership level plus:

- Exclusive access to ICEJ's regular Mid-East and or ministry updates from Jerusalem
- An invitation to attend our ICEJ USA leadership briefing during our national conference

### **Builder of Zion Partner**

Isaiah declared the Lord will call Zion's walls "salvation" and her gates "praise" (60:18). As we walk together side by side, the ICEJ would be honored if you would become a Builder of Zion Partner at a giving level of \$2,500 a year or more. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Ambassadorial Partnership level plus:

- A discount of \$200.00 on a pilgrimage tour to Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles or other qualifying tour
- An additional gift acknowledging you as a Builder of Zion Partner

### **Gateway of Zion Partner**

Show compassion for Zion and bless the people of Israel. The ICEJ would be honored if you were to become a Gateway of Zion partner at a giving level of \$20,000 a year or more. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Builder of Zion Partnership level plus:

- The opportunity to meet with ICEJ leadership and/or receive personal briefings on ICEJ projects that are of interest
- Special invites to exclusive events such as pastors' lunches and VIP meetings that are held in your area or community
- An additional gift acknowledging you are a Gateway of Zion Partner

### **Watchmen of Zion Partner**

I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. The ICEJ would be honored if you become a Watchmen of Zion Partner at a giving level of \$50,000 a year or at a lifetime level. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Gateway of Zion Partnership level plus:

- Access to ICEJ conferences, events, and VIP meetings
- Personal briefings by ICEJ leadership team
- Receive a unique plaque recognizing you as a Watchmen of Zion partner

### **SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO**

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ONLINE  
[www.icejusa.org/partner](http://www.icejusa.org/partner)

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