

# Israel Magazine

Volume 28 • No. 2 • March 2024

A Successor for Rev. M. L. Dekker

War Experiences

Support and Education in Moldova

Abraham, our Father



BOARD FOR ISRAEL  
OF THE NETHERLANDS REFORMED CONGREGATIONS



## FROM THE EDITOR

Rev. A. Schot



Dear Israel friends,

Many of our readers will be following the news about the situation in Israel with interest. In this issue of *Israel Magazine*, you can read something about how the Nechama congregation of Rev. M.L. Dekker and the Grace and Truth congregation of Rev. D. Zadok experience the war. The need is very great. At the same time, we are amazed to see how there is sympathy, also from the people who support our work. The emergency fund is used as best as possible through these congregations. You can read how our volunteer Mr. G.J. Roukens has worked with others to prepare this properly.

Many hearts are occupied with the war and its suffering, and that is understandable. However, we know that there is another matter that rises above this and that is the progress of the proclamation of God's Word. It is therefore with rejoicing that during our trip to Israel

last January, there was boldness to allow Deacon Ari ben Dayan to become a minister in the congregation. Under God's blessing, through the work of Rev. M.L. Dekker, a Reformed congregation emerged. We look forward to this church continuing to be served in God's favour through the three offices.

In this issue, you can also read about the progress of the work among the Jews in Moldova. Diaconal aid may also be provided there. And this support also serves the preaching of the Word among the Jews.

In the progress of the kingdom of God, we may see again and again that the LORD is pleased to confirm the covenant with Abraham. We thought it would be appropriate to focus on Abraham, our father, in a few articles. The father of all believers, Jews and Gentiles.

## WORKERS ABROAD



### ISRAEL

Family Rev. M.L. Dekker  
POB 2156,  
Nof HaGalil (Nazareth-Illit)  
1751508 Israel



### HUNGARY

Family Rev. I.L. Zöld  
Kishalom Street, 35.2  
Budapest, 1163  
Hungary

An expression of support is very much appreciated!

## COLOPHON

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**Editor-in-chief:**  
Rev. A. Schot

**Editors:**  
J.J. de Jong, L. Vogelaar, A.C.H. van Vuuren

**Children's pages:**  
T.M. Bruijnzeel-Lodder, M. Hoekman,  
I.M. Janse, E. Oosterwijk

**Contact:**  
Bureau voor Kerkelijke Dienstverlening  
Houttuinlaan 7 - 3447 GM Woerden -  
The Netherlands  
Tel.: +31 (0)348-489929  
E-mail: [info@boardforisrael.nl](mailto:info@boardforisrael.nl)

**Presenters:**  
J.A. Jobse, J.J. de Jong, A. Karens, and  
H. Ligtenberg; appointments via the above-  
mentioned telephone number or e-mail  
address or via one of the ministers who are  
members of the Board.

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BOARD FOR ISRAEL  
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# Service for the Work in Israel

“

A large number of volunteers is involved in the activities of the Board. Through this series of articles, the editors want to acknowledge these people, who often do important work in the background. In this article, you can read an interview with Mr. G.J. Roukens, who has been involved as a volunteer in the activities of the Board since approximately 2003.

## What sparked your interest in Israel?

I was already interested in Israel in my younger years. I followed the Six-Day War in 1967 hour by hour. Of course, it could not be happening that the nation of Israel, God's people, would be completely destroyed, even by much more powerful enemies. The 'received' victory aroused my interest. And later, when I read the expectations for the Jewish people in the books of W. à Brakel, Th. Van de Groe, M'Cheyne, and certainly of the Apostle Paul in Romans 9-11, my interest became indelible.

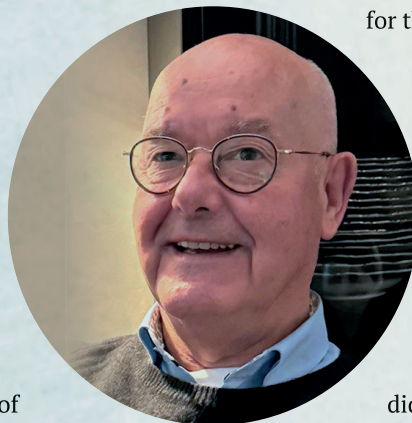
## How did you become a volunteer?

Around the year 2003, the Board asked me to be a volunteer fundraiser/adviser.

## What have you committed yourself to?

Partly due to my business background, I was able to participate in various projects in Israel, such as the home of Rev. M.L. Dekker and the design of the Tea & Coffee Shop Balalaika in Nazareth. In between, I contributed to fundraising for the church building of the Grace and Truth congregation of Rev. David Zadok, quite a challenge! Due to the connection with the Support Fund for Israel, I also came into contact with the 'Renovation Ebenezer Home' project, the

Protestant-Christian care home in Haifa. In the meantime, Balalaika has been expanded with a walk-in store for second-hand clothing with the aim of building more contacts. We coordinate the collection of clothing and the making of beautiful skirts of a reasonable length for the walk-in store in Nazareth.



## The war of October 7 breaks out

The Board quickly set up the 'Emergency Fund for Israel' to help the affected people and soldiers, including trauma processing projects. Here we were able to use our contacts and network to set up a large number of the right emergency aid projects. At the end of November, a friend and I, who is on the Israel committee of the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk, did 'field work' in Israel for these aid projects.

We visited many locations, from Northern Israel to the Gaza Strip, to speak to the people involved and to coordinate the projects with the Board. I will never forget this trip, so really different from other times. The country is at war. The hotels, otherwise full of tourists, were now full of evacuees from the affected war zones. Many projects are still ongoing. We're still in the middle of it. I experienced that the Israelis expressed their gratitude, because Reformed Christians stand with them and provide emergency aid.

## Would you like to say something else to the readers of Israel Magazine?

The best help we can give is prayer. Let this resonate in our living rooms, in the schools, and in the pulpits! Ultimately, we received God's Word through the Jewish people. Shall we not then pray for their spiritual restoration? With gratitude, I hope to serve the Jewish people through the Board for Israel.

”



# Joyful News

## from the Nechama Congregation

On February 15, *De Saambinder* published a message that Deacon Ari ben Dayan has been admitted to become minister of the Nechama congregation in Nof Hagalil (Nazareth). That is very joyful news. This means that a successor for Rev. M.L. Dekker is provided. This development is delighting and for this, only the Lord deserves all honour and thanksgiving.

Deacon Ben Dayan is 58 years old and comes from Peru. Because his father is Jewish, he and his family had the opportunity to make "Aliyah" [immigration] to Israel in 2005. A few years earlier, during a period of great health problems, he came to repentance and his worldly life changed into a life that sought the will of the Lord.

Ben Dayan was trained as a lawyer, but his training was not accepted in Israel. He mainly did factory and security work in Israel. After living in Jerusalem for six years, the family moved to Afula in Galilee. There is a large Peruvian community there.

He met Hilton ben Shimon, who took him to the Nechama congregation at Rev. Dekker's house. In 2017, he was elected deacon and in 2020, he was asked to take up the work in the Balalaika coffee shop. He experienced the fact that he was allowed to do this evangelization work as an answer to his prayer. A desire had been born in his heart to work in God's vineyard. After Rev. Dekker announced his impending departure, the call to the ministry was bound to his heart. A sermon on the calling of Peter in John 21 was of great importance.

Rev. Dekker has been working on equipping the consistory members for some time.



Deacon Ben Dayan and Rev. M. L. Dekker

For Ben Dayan, this training will now be further focused on the ministry. The intention is that Ben Dayan will be confirmed as a minister in the fall, the Lord willing. The training will continue afterwards, including input from the Board for Israel.

We will repeat what was stated in the press release: "It is delighting for Rev. Dekker and for us that before his departure he can confirm a successor who has the confidence of the congregation. From the beginning, it was hoped that an independent congregation on a Reformed basis would be established in Israel. We are delighted that another important step can now be taken in this regard. We hope that everything will continue to progress under the blessing of the Lord in the time to come."

Rev. A. Schot and Rev. M.H. Schot



J.J. de Jong, general secretary



# WAR EXPERIENCES

*Immediately after the terrible events on October 7 in Israel, the Board for Israel set up an emergency fund together with the Israel Support Fund Isaïc da Costa.*

*In the past three months, €1.1 million was raised for this purpose, an overwhelming amount, which shows how great the commitment to Israel is among the people who support our work. A lot of help could already be offered. We previously reported about this in advertisements and on our websites and we*

*hope to continue to do so in the near future.*

*In the following articles, Rev. M.L. Dekker and Rev. D. Zadok write about their experiences. Rev. Dekker mainly discusses how the congregation experiences the war situation, and Rev. Zadok gives impressions of the war and the help provided through the congregation.*

*The war continues. The need remains great. Your support with financial resources, but especially with prayer, therefore, remains necessary.*

## Congregation Nechama - Rev. M.L. Dekker

### Sadness and Prayer

**T**he evening before October 7, we were together as a congregation. It was the last day of the Feast of

Tabernacles. We meditated on the celebration of this autumn festival in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The sermon was about Nehemiah 8:11. Yasmine, our oldest member, celebrated her 85th birthday. We had a good time together.

The next day Israel was plunged into deep mourning. We were all sad and bewildered. There was fear in society. The following week we gathered as a congregation in our

home to pray for the great need the country was in.

From every family a son, brother, grandchild, or nephew has been drafted into the

army. Some serve in Gaza to this day. Two young people from our congregation are also currently enlisted. This creates a deep connection with each other as a congregation. There is much prayer



Deacon Ben Dayan with his niece



for the country, the soldiers, the hostages, but also for the people in Gaza who live in the darkness of a religion of hatred. Our congregation is intensively involved in deploying emergency aid for Israel.

During the Corona period, we as a congregation moved to a church building in Arabic Nazareth. After October 7, the congregation members no longer felt safe in this environment. Three-quarters of the population in Nazareth is Muslim. The consistory then decided to

return to our home in Nof HaGalil. The services therefore take place at our home again.

In this war we may notice that the Lord provides openings for conversation, also in the church. Many people feel powerless and depressed. The entire society is traumatized. They come with all kinds of questions. From the start of the war, we have kept the coffee shop and thrift store open to encourage people and pray with them. There are new visitors to the weekly Bible study in

the coffee shop. Delighting!

We also experience blessings in the church. Two people have decided that they want to be baptized and are now following baptismal catechesis. A young man from the church would like to attend Bible school. These are encouragements to our little congregation in this terrible war. The Lord is faithful in all these tribulations, He maintains His Church. That gives hope and expectation.

## Congregation Grace and Truth - Rev. D. Zadok

# Comfort and Support

**A**s I am about to board the plane homebound to Israel, first and foremost I would like to thank the Board for Israel for their full support of our help in the October 7 war. A day that has been named the Black Saturday. Nothing in our country has remained the same. In one day our security, dignity, and honour were violated in the vilest way. However, the Lord continues to sit on His throne high and lifted up, just as Isaiah saw Him. Also His promises to Israel remain unshakeable, while everything else has been shaken, and in those promises and through Christ we find hope and comfort.

There is much that can be said about the war and the situation. The atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists and some of the Gazan citizens are unprecedented. Since the Holocaust, there has not been

one day in which so many Jews and Israelis were murdered, raped, and taken hostage. At times even

the definition of man's depravity is not enough to describe the depth of their evil. And yet, with all the



HaGefen gave coloring pages to children who are in bomb shelters





*Rev. D. Zadok in conversation with emergency and disasters management director Dr. Ron Lobel during a visit with a delegation from the Board of Israel*

hardship, they need Christ to save them from their misery and the doom that is awaiting them. But I want to emphasize the many good things that have come out of this ongoing deadly war. Before October 7, our country was div-

ided, with so many demonstrations and schism between left and right, religious and secular, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and many other divisions. But after October 7, there is a huge unity. Israelis from all over the world flew in to participate in the war. On the battlefield everyone is fighting together with no distinction. So many civilians have been drafted in or have been supporting in endless means the efforts of war. Grace and Truth congregation is no different on that. We have 35 people from our congregation who have been drafted in, including our older daughter, Maayan. In the beginning of the war we had five families that needed to be evacuated. Through the Emergency Fund set up by the Board for Israel in the Netherlands and the Disaster Fund of the NRC congregations in North-America, our congregation has been able to help literally thousands of Israelis. That help has extended to the needy, Holocaust survivors, evacuees, and believing soldiers who have been severely injured. We also purchased life-saving equipment for various

units. The war has afforded me to meet many high-ranking officials in the military, municipalities, suppliers, as well as in hospitals. As of now we have spent more than 200,000 euros in various needs. Less than 10% of it has been for our own congregation, while the rest has mostly been for the others and particularly the non-believers.

One of the many experiences that I have had has been developing a deep relationship with the commander of a special unit. I have visited them and provided some protective and life-saving equipment. One time we drove together to the north to meet a supplier, and we spent about half of that three-hour's drive speaking about faith and what we as Messianic Jews believe and why.

As you read this article, please continue to pray for our country, for the safety of our soldiers, and for the safe return of all the hostages. Thank you again for standing with us. You are enabling us to stand tall and reach our people in their darkest time. Please continue to stand with us in prayers and support.

**EMERGENCY  
SUPPORT**

**YAD NECHAMA  
PROJECT**




Your donations are appreciated!

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# FOR THE CHILDREN

‘Shalom,  
boys and girls!’

## Shalom

On Israel Day in December, many boys and girls made a beautiful window hanger with the word ‘SHALOM!’ Here you can see photos of it. Maybe it hangs in your window!



## Peace

The word ‘shalom’ is a greeting in Israel, the same as when we say ‘hello.’ But it is more, because it is also a wish: Peace! You probably know that the Lord Jesus also greeted His disciples this way: Peace be to you! With the Lord Jesus this greeting was not a wish, just a gift! Only He can give us peace, He is the Prince of Peace!



## Pray

Psalms 122 contains a call for all of us: ‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!’ That is always necessary, but especially now, because there is a war in Israel. The people were terribly attacked on October 7. Many people have been killed and taken hostage. Since that day, Israel’s army has had to fight the enemy again.





# Encourage

Also from the congregation of Rev. M.L. Dekker, there are young people who have to fight for their country as soldiers. That's very difficult. You understand that their families are worried, because young soldiers die every week.

Therefore, would you like to join in to encourage the soldiers? Send a card, letter, or drawing to Rev. Dekker's house and he will ensure that the mail reaches the soldiers! Everyone choose two names to send mail to, and then please pray for these soldiers every day.

These are their names:

Andres  
Aracela  
Camilla  
Eden  
Yaret  
Ma'or  
Michael

You can send the mail to this address:

POB 2156  
Nof haGalil (Nazareth Illit)  
1751508 ISRAEL



## BOYS AND GIRLS,

would you also pray for:

- liberation of the hostages;
- protection of the soldiers;
- comfort for the families of fallen soldiers;
- strength for Rev. Dekker and his wife, who feel the tension of the war every day;
- love for the enemies of Israel, that they may become friends.

'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem;  
they shall prosper that love Thee.'  
Psalm 122:6

Ask them to pray for these things  
at home, at school, and at  
church too!





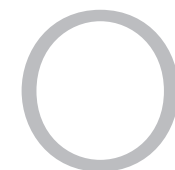
*The soup kitchen work is an important link in reaching the Jewish residents*

# Support and Education in Moldova

M. de Geus



In the final days of last year, Pastor Yuri Maevschi was our guest. We learned under what circumstances the Bridge of Life Church in Chisinau (Moldova) has its place, and how it works with Word and Deed among the beloved for the fathers' sakes. It is mainly the situation of that part of the population that Mr. De Geus is concerned about.



Our Board has been working with the Relief Board of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations for about 20 years, and diaconal need in Moldova is great, staggeringly great.

The income of a worker is barely 250 euros per month, while the cost of living is no lower than ours. People try to provide for the family by working multiple jobs. An old-age provision, if there is one, amounts to a few tens of euros at most.

The congregation lost a lot of outside help in recent years. We may note that we – the Board for Israel and the Relief Board – have more opportunity to contribute than before. You as friends of Israel contribute to this, for which after the Lord, we are very grateful for.

## Difficult winters

Due to the sharply increased costs, the heating in the church hall can hardly be used. Our financial support allows the church to be heated and helps the members of the





Board members M. de Geus and Rev. A.P. Baaijens in front of the monument in Chisinau

congregation through the winter. It is impossible to put into words how happy people are with this help, now that such basic needs, which are 'normal' for us, are also within reach for them.

Soup kitchen work occupies a large place. Twice a week a group meets in the church hall and receives a hot meal. God's Word is always opened, and a pastor meditates on it. The soup kitchen work is therefore an indispensable link in reaching people from the Jewish community who have often wandered far away from their roots. It is understandable that if there is a lack of money for food, there is also a lack of other things, such as clothing, footwear, medicines, medical treatment, aids such as glasses, hearing aids, etc. We also think of transportation to and from church.

The means of transport, that's all we could call the old bus, literally ran out last year after 26 years of loyal service. We were able to hand over a used bus from the Netherlands in

November 2023. It is very important for the congregation to be able to distribute food and literature to those who cannot possibly come to the church hall to have a meal. How happy they are with that!

#### Also teaching

The diaconal work may thus be a vehicle to gain space to spread God's Word. It evokes many different reactions and yet, and this is always surprising, there is room for it. We hope to tell you more about this in a next issue of *Israel Magazine*. By means of theology lessons for twelve students, on-site preaching and reading, the necessity of coming to the knowledge of Christ as the Saviour sent from God is pointed out in a simple manner. The Lord grant that the seed sown may grow to maturity on the heights of the mountains. During such days, we may experience that we have a task

in this perishing world, where everything is under judgment because of sin, but also that we are deigned to be a small link in the proclamation of the Gospel.

In those days in Chisinau, we also tasted something of the suffering that the Jewish people underwent and still undergo. There would be a lot to report about that. We visited a monument close to the church at the site where the German occupiers killed 14,000 Jews and threw the bodies down a steep slope into two large cylindrical pits 16 meters deep. A silent shudder comes over us as we try to imagine what took place there.

A bizarre detail is that right behind the monument is a large Mercedes-Benz building. You will understand that there has been a lot of concern about this.



The soup kitchen work



# ABRAHAM, *our* FATHER

Rev. A. Schot



In several articles, we would like to discuss the life of Abraham, *our* father. We are looking at how he was the father of all believers from the Jews and Gentiles.

## God's sovereignty

The history of the Jewish people goes back to Abraham. The national existence of Israel begins with the calling of Abram. The prophet Isaiah points out: 'Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him' (Isaiah 51:2).

Why Abraham? Here God's sovereign good pleasure shines. Abraham is compared to a rock and Sarah is compared to the hole of a pit (Isaiah 51:1). A dead rock and an empty pit were the objects of God's election. Here also lies the kinship of the Gentile Church with the Jewish people. Abraham, their father, is also the father of all believers. A Christian also reads his history here! This

good pleasure is a source of wonder. However, it is also a reason for hatred. Antisemitism and Christian hatred have essentially the same background.

## Separation

Abraham was separated from Mesopotamia by God's calling. His calling consisted of a threefold command: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee' (Genesis 12:1). With these three 'axe blows' God uprooted him. Naturally, there was no reason to leave this place. It was one of the most fertile places on earth. But the moon god Sin was served there. Terah's family also served this idol, according to Joshua 24. The revelation of God brings a separation with the world and idolatry. This

separation was very far-reaching for Abram. It spread into his family and even into his father's house.

If Abraham is our father, we will be sojourners on the earth. This sojourning connects Abraham's spiritual children. Here is also a point where Jews and Christians feel related. A community life with the Lord leads to a separation from the world.

## Obedience

God commands Abram to follow him to 'a land which I will show thee.' Abram doesn't know which country that is. In five years, he will have already traveled halfway through before the Lord makes it known to him. It also turns out to be a very difficult piece of land, wedged between world powers that





are already asserting themselves. The way was unknown to Abram, but God would be his guide. He was given to follow out of obedience of faith. 'By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went' (Hebrews 11:8). Once again, a point that connects Abraham's spiritual descendants, obedience of faith. This faith gives recognition between Jews and Christians.

### **Blessing**

When the God of glory appeared to Abraham (that's what Stephen says in Acts 7:2), He also spoke about the Seed. During this appearance, Abraham came into contact with God's holy attributes. He learned that he couldn't exist before them. It came to a complete break with sin. But he needed a Saviour. This would mark the rest of his life. He saw his need for the Seed. This blessing of

the Seed is the greatest of the seven blessings promised to him. 'And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed' (Genesis 12:3). It also becomes immediately clear that this blessing extends to all families of the earth. Abram is the progenitor of Christ and therefore also the progenitor of all true believers.

### **Covenant of Grace**

Later in history, Abraham receives a covenant sign in his body, circumcision. This is also what connects us to Abraham and his people. Guido de Brès writes in the Belgic Confession of Faith, article 34: 'As the children in Israel formerly were circumcised upon the same promises which are made unto our children.' Circumcision and baptism are about the same covenant and about the same promises. The only thing that differs is the time. Circumcision existed before Christ's blood was shed and

baptism replaced circumcision. Real Jews (God praisers) are people with a circumcised heart. From that connection with father Abraham, we sing during baptism: 'Jehovah's truth will stand forever; His covenant-bonds He will not sever; The word of grace which He commands to thousand generations stands; The covenant made in days of old with Abraham He doth uphold' (Psalter 425:5/Psalm 105).

### **God's way**

So Abram departed. He does not know the way. Abram had to go west, and God led him north and then with a long detour to the land of promise. Just like the detour the people of Israel later took. It is the same with the road to heavenly Canaan. Jews and Christians also feel connected in this regard. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. The path that God took with him 100 years later is still highly relevant.





# MOURNING

“

**This week Israel is in deep mourning. Once again soldiers have been killed in Gaza. On the front page of the newspaper of Wednesday, January 24, there are 21 photos of radiant young men. The youngest reservist is 22 years old; the oldest is 40 years old. Our thoughts go to the sad families, to the young widows, and to the children without fathers.**

Israel is working to create a safe corridor along the border inside Gaza, where no houses are allowed and where no one is allowed to enter. Anyone who does come will be labeled a terrorist. Several houses have to be blown up for this. IDF soldiers were planting explosives in an apartment building, but Hamas fired a grenade, causing the explosives to detonate prematurely. The building collapsed, killing 19 soldiers.

IDF soldiers in a tank saw the terrorists emerging from a tunnel and tried to maneuver the tank so that they could eliminate them, but this was not possible in time, after which their tank was also hit by a rocket. Two soldiers were killed and two others seriously injured. This happened less than 600 meters from the border with Israel.

On the same day, another long tunnel was found in Khan Younis and the army found the largest missile factory yet in South Gaza.

In the evening, the alarm app on my phone showed twelve rocket alarms in the north, rockets fired from Lebanon. An Israeli army base was lightly hit. Things were also restless on the West Bank. Every year around Christmas, we visit Christian families in the Palestinian village of Burqin behind the city of

Jenin. Burqin has one of the oldest churches, an early Christian basilica. The miracle of the ten lepers is said to have taken place here. The beautifully preserved church, restored with support from the Leiden University Fund, contains one of the oldest stone bishop's chairs in the Middle East. Jenin is a hotbed of Hamas, so the entire northern border of the West Bank has now become a military zone. We will probably no longer be able to visit Burqin before our return to the Netherlands.

Everything is on edge. We read in the media that five Arab countries have drawn up a plan for a two-state solution. This is a wasted effort. The leaders of Hamas,





who enjoy luxury in Qatar and other countries, speak out clearly in the media: Not two states, no, they want the country back from the 'river to the sea.' They speak clearly that October 7 will be repeated. Not once, but several times. Every time! A Hamas terrorist warned a hostage mother who was released with her two daughters: 'Don't go back to your kibbutz, go live in Tel Aviv, because we will come back!'

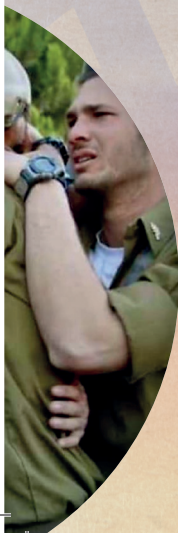
When you read and hear all this, you wonder: When will the eyes of the world finally open?

Thankfully, the 'Hamas rapist regime,' as it is called here in Israel, does not have the last word. There is One above, the God of Israel! The people of Israel are alive to this day because He lives! It became so clear to me again when I was preparing a sermon on the history of Joshua. How the Lord calls and encourages His servant three times: 'Be strong and of a good courage' (Joshua 1:6). In Joshua 1:4, the God of Israel Himself speaks about the borders of the Promised Land: 'From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.' Hamas cannot change that with all those screaming protesters in pro-Palestinian demonstrations. God fulfills His counsel and His Word is truth. It also applies today: 'For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye' (Zechariah 2:8).

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*Burqin has one of the oldest churches, an early Christian basilica*





# Ezra for Israel

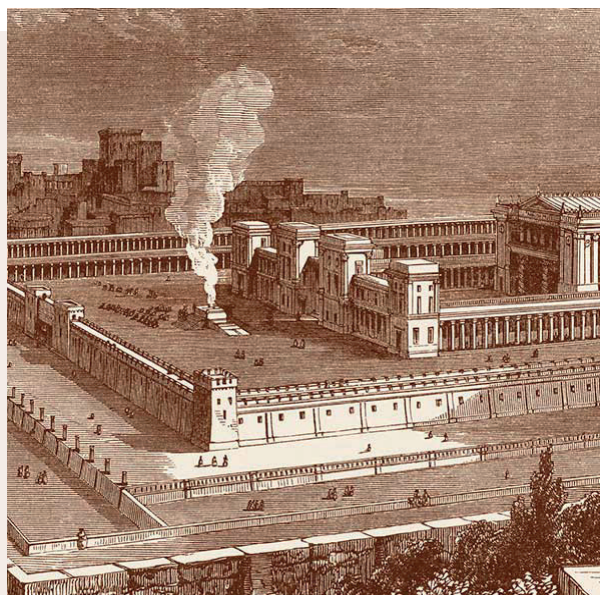
The following is the second of three installments of the meditation on Isaiah 27 by Rev. J. De Kok during the "Crescendo Sings Psalms" sing-along concert.

What does Isaiah mean with this vision, for you understand very well that the Bible is not a book of fairy tales. I already mentioned the dragon's name, Leviathan, and I said that you could hardly imagine a more terrible creature, but what does Isaiah mean with it? Well, Isaiah is looking forward. He sees the kingdom of Babylon lying in the sea of nations, but it is going to arise, and it is going to conquer, conquer, and conquer. It is also going to conquer Israel. With its strong claws and powerful jaws, it will drag Israel to Babylon. However, Isaiah also sees the sword of God that will slay Babylon. What is this sword of God? It is the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. (Just read Isaiah 27 with the marginal notes that explain this text so nicely.) Then Israel may return under King Cyrus; Israel may return from its captivity. And then? Then Isaiah's prophecy goes into fulfillment. Really? When the people of Israel arrived in Jerusalem, didn't they find it to be a heap of ruins? Yes, but they could begin to restore it. They first built the altar, and then they laid the foundations of the temple. There, beside those foundations, the prophecy of Isaiah went into fulfillment.

Just listen. In Ezra 3:11 we read, "And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid." There you see it: Babylon was destroyed by God's sword, the people of Israel could return from captivity, the foundations of the temple were laid, and the people could rejoice by turns as if amid a vineyard of red wine. Thus, the prophecy was fulfilled. It was nice to be able to meditate on it, but if I would say no more than this, I would be doing God's Word a great disservice.

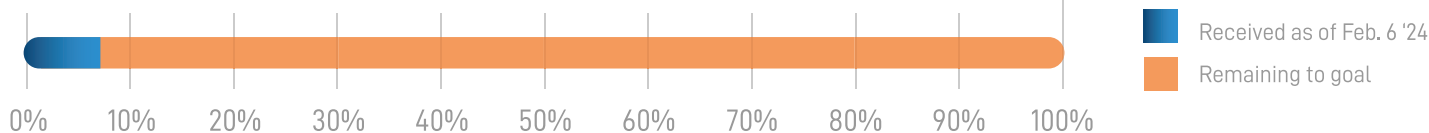
You know, don't you, that Leviathan, that enormous, deceitful serpent, that scaly monster, is still alive? Really? Yes, but children, you need not be afraid if you walk along the water, that it will suddenly come out of the water and grab you. No, that is not what I mean. This prophecy has a deeper meaning, because that serpent, Leviathan, is a picture of the devil. It is the same serpent that we read about in Genesis 3, where it spoke to Eve, and it is still the same serpent who attacks everything associated with God's Church. That serpent, that terrible monster, is also active today. How do I know that? Look, here lies the open Bible, and Satan does not like that. He wants to grab you and me, and he wants to drag us all into perdition. That is awful, but it is reality, also today.

(to be continued, the Lord willing)



## Financial Overview for Ezra for Israel

Total Budget for 2024: \$132,000



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Canadian Charity: 815441563 RR0001

Contact info:

Ezra For Israel  
PO Box 178  
Diamond City, AB T0K 0T0

Telephone: (403) 553-3582  
Cell Phone: (403) 308-0083  
Email Address: [info@ezraforisrael.ca](mailto:info@ezraforisrael.ca)

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