



How We Experienced the Miracle Israel

by Brigitte B. Nussbächer

We have perceived with our own eyes in Israel how God stood by His people. We have seen with facts and figures how the statements of the Bible become reality and we have experienced God's promises coming true everywhere in Israel today.



"Bruchim haba'im le'Israel - Welcome to Israel" the pilot's voice sounded from the loudspeakers and the plane slowly taxied to the final position. We looked curiously out of the window. What would we find in this country, about which so many contradictory things are reported and which did not exist 100 years ago? I didn't know then, what a life-changing experience I was about to have!

Our journey was preceded by a rather difficult decision-making process. It seemed to be part of the "general education" of Christians to visit Israel once to see the ancient sites. Nevertheless, I had not been drawn to Israel for those reasons. The reports of those who returned from visits to Israel had done little to change it. When they spoke about the so-called "holy" sites, I always wondered, what good it would do me, to look at those ruins or memorial churches. I was much more interested in what God was doing today - in the present.

In the end, it was actually another thought that prompted the visit. In 2018, several countries, founded after World War II, celebrated their 70th anniversaries - including Israel. After watching documentaries about India and Pakistan on this subject, I wondered how Israel had used those 70 years. Compared to the other countries, it must have been incomparably more difficult to build something from nothing. As late as 1867, Mark Twain had described this country as desolate, a silent, sad place without man, tree or shrub. What had become of it?

And so we embarked on a historical study trip, which in retrospect turned out to be the perfect choice. We would never have experienced and gotten to know so much in any individual vacation. While we were driving from Ben Gurion Airport to Tel Aviv, we listened to the story of how this city came into being and we heard about the lottery of plots in April 1909 for a few dozen families



north of the millennia-old port city of Jaffa. They wanted to

build the first modern Jewish city on the sand dunes bought by the Dutch banker Jacobus Kann. And then suddenly, we passed the first skyscrapers and entered this city: Tel Aviv. Today, after around only 100 years later, it is the most modern and cosmopolitan metropolis of the Middle East.



In the very original and lively Palmach Museum in Tel Aviv we learned about the impressive struggle of the Jewish people for their independence. And about their prehistory: when the UN decided in 1947 to divide the former British mandate into 2 countries: one Jewish and one Arab. We learned of



the protest of the Arabs and of the pressure exerted on the Jews, not to seize this opportunity. We heard the proclamation of the Jewish state by David Ben Gurion on May 14, 1948 followed by the attack of five Arab countries Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon at midnight on the same day.

One must visualize the situation at that time. About 650,000 Jews, many of them Holocaust survivors, who had just left the horror behind, tried to defend Israel (which as a newly founded state had no established army) with rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers against a majority of 160 million Arabs (equipped with tanks, artillery, armored personnel carriers, airplanes and warships). A ratio of 1 : 246! One realizes from a human perspective the situation looked hopeless. Israel's survival was a miracle. I left the museum with tears in my eyes. Now we understood what a high price the Jewish people (after the extermination of 6 million by the Holocaust) paid for their existence in the War of Independence.



We were all the more amazed at the joy of life and energy that is palpable today on the streets of Tel Aviv and that we experienced in the people we met. We saw the ability of this people, to quickly build something from nothing (they have the second highest number of startups in the world). Also, their ingenuity to find solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, such as using water desalination



plants on the Mediterranean to solve water shortages and computer controlled drip irrigation to grow plantations in the desert. We were surprised that Israel has the second highest rate of academics and the third highest rate of patents in the world. We marveled that 23% of all Nobel Prize winners come from this small nation that makes up only 0.2% of the world's population.

We experienced their creativity as well as their sense of art and beauty. Israel has the most museums and orchestras per capita and is second in the number of books published. Whoever attends a concert here will encounter a very high artistic level and great enthusiasm from the audience.



We walked through cities, towns, landscapes and were impressed: unbelievable what has been created here in only 70 years. Where once there were swamps, sand dunes and desolate land –



pioneering spirit, innovation and perseverance have given rise to flourishing life everywhere. Israel is the only country where the desert has receded, millions of trees have been planted, and drip-irrigated oleander blooms along the highway. A poor agricultural state has been transformed into a country with leading technology and a strong currency. Today, Israel is one of the 10 most influential countries in the world and is also ahead in the Happiness

Ranking. (See graphic below)



The more Israelis we got to know personally, the more we appreciated their constructive attitude, their dynamism and their courage - despite their struggle for their right to exist, which continues to this day.

We heard about the fighting in the Six-Day-War in 1967, about the liberation of the Old City of Jerusalem, and how the Jews regained access to what is now their holiest site, the Western Wall.

And we learned of the "Valley of Tears," so named for an initially hopeless situation. In the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Syrian army broke into northern Israel with over 1,000 tanks and was stopped by fewer than 200 Israeli tanks

We saw the rebuilding after repeated destruction, whether it was the Hurva Synagogue in Jerusalem or the settlements in Gush Etzion.

And we perceived that even the frequent terrorist attacks in this area cannot rob the people of their joy or courage to live, even if they have to mourn painful losses.



We witnessed the "guardians of Israel", the young soldiers on the streets, who security. We listened to the testimonies of so-called "lonely" soldiers, who voluntarily left their home countries, relatives, friends and a comfortable life to serve in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces). In fact, the IDF also plays an important role in integration and creating a common denominator in Israeli society.

The population diversity is amazing. Holocaust survivors from all over Europe, the approximately 700,000 Jews expelled from surrounding Arab countries after Israel's founding, immigration from Africa, and the large waves of aliyah from the former Soviet Union have all contributed. Israel's population has increased 14-fold in the last 75 years (by comparison, the world's population has "only" doubled in the last 50 years).

What we loved most, was hearing the stories of those, who came to Israel voluntarily because they considered it their role and task to build this country and who are working with great energy to do so!

But what impressed us most of all - and indeed surprised us - was the intense, intimate and living relationship that many Jews have with God. Since in the secular, church and free-church circles from which we came we had not been taught about the role and significance of Israel and Judaism, either as a spiritual root or for the future. We had implicitly supposed that such a relationship with God was only possible among Christians. But we saw with our own eyes how wrong this assumption was.



Today I know, thanks to the shattering but also enlightening book "A journey to the Holocaust" by Susanna Kokkonen, that the Christian faith was consciously differentiated from Judaism. Emperor Constantine the Great introduced the recognition of Christianity as a legitimate religion, appointed himself head of the Church for political reasons and convened the first Council in 325. He declared that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus. Thus they were considered "God's murderers"; damned and unworthy of the grace of God and man. Another teaching of this time, "Replacement Theology" stated, that Israel had forfeited its role in God's



plans and that Christians were now the new Israel. The church fathers before and after this first council systematically denied the eternal covenant between God and the Jews, or believed that God had abrogated this covenant.

The influence of these teachings, which have been in circulation for over 1700 years, was frighteningly profound. It is the base for legitimizing Jew-hatred and persecution of the Jews, for here denial and ignorance was already created. This led to the ideological origin of the Inquisition, pogroms, crusades and the Holocaust.

One consequence of this was that, on the one hand, translations attempted to omit references to Judaism; and on the other hand, the Jewish origins for many Christian themes had not been mentioned. Examples include Christian festivals, all of which have their equivalent in Jewish biblical festivals (e.g., Passover-Easter, Shavuot-Pentecost, Christmas-Chanukah) and customs: the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, in which young adults are accepted into the community of believers, is the model for communion/confirmation/youth ordination – to name just a few examples.

The same is reflected in art. For example, if you wander through the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, (one of the most famous art museums in the world with works of painting and sculpture from ancient times to the late Baroque), you will notice that there are pictures of Adam and Eve from the Old Testament. The next major theme is the announcement of Jesus' birth. Everything in between is blanked out.



Thus, to this day, many are unaware of their Jewish heritage. Derek Prince, a Bible teacher of our time (and those who have known me for a long time, are aware that I worked for Derek Prince Ministries for years), once summed it up this way: *We are deeply indebted to the Jewish people. Without them, the church would have no patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible, and no Savior. If we lacked all this, what would there be left to bring us salvation? All the nations of the earth owe the most precious of their spiritual heritage to the Jews.*

But although we had met Derek Prince personally and much of our image of Israel was shaped by his words, we came to the realization that we too were prisoners of the thinking of the church fathers. We too had thought that the Jews had to be lost, since one could only come to the Heavenly Father through Jesus. In doing so, we studiously overlooked the fact that Paul clearly says in Romans 11 that God has not rejected his people (verse 1), that he does not reclaim his gifts and does not revoke the promise of his election (verse 29).

And then we were in Jerusalem, meeting the Jewish people of Israel for the first time in their own land.

What became very clear to us was, that the founding and survival of this state, its rapid progress and achievements, the courage to live and the strength that can be observed in so many people in Israel, cannot be explained rationally and humanly, but led back to a special source of energy and power. Here in Israel, God could be experienced everywhere in everyday life.

For over 2000 years, the Bible has spoken of a living God who chose Israel as his people and who promised to bring this people back to the land of their ancestors after they had been scattered and to provide them with special gifts. However, observing this all at once with our own senses, changed us.



As we sat on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, the thought came to me, that Jews were accused of not recognizing Jesus - although what was happening around him was obvious and clear ... And today many Christians do not recognize, what God is doing in and with Israel - although it is just as obvious and clear.



We began to read the Bible with different eyes. What we had overread until then, now stood out clearly.

When you realize that Jesus himself said in Matthew 5:17 "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill,*" it is hard to over-read the significance of Israel and Jerusalem.

For on Mount Zion and at Jerusalem shall be salvation - says Joel 3:5.

And Zechariah foresees (in chapter 8, verse 22): *People from great and mighty nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to make the LORD merciful*

Isaiah prophesies (in chapter 60, verses 2-3): *Darkness covers the earth and darkness the peoples; but over you (Zion) the LORD rises, and his glory appears over you. And the nations will go to your light, and the kings to the brightness that rises above you.*

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The Bible speaks in Zechariah 8:23 about the fact that "*in those days ten people from nations with all different languages will hold a man from Judah by the skirt and ask: We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*" - for us, those days have already dawned...the relationships with our Jewish friends and the connection with Israel have become one of the most valuable constants, an enrichment and a source of learning in our lives!



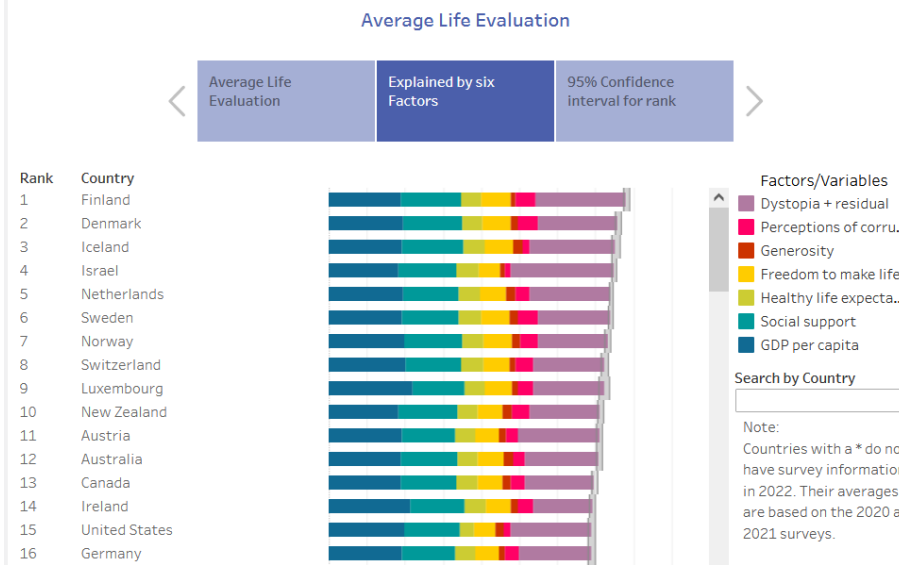
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World Happiness Report 2023

Figure 2.1 Ranking of Happiness based on a three-year-average 2020-2022



Source WHR World Happiness Report: <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/world-happiness-trust-and-social-connections-in-times-of-crisis/#ranking-of-happiness-2020-2022>

World's Most Influential Countries, 2021

Rank	Country	Region	Score
1	United States	North America	98.53
2	China	Asia & Pacific	98.39
3	Russia	Europe	98.28
4	Germany	Europe	95.71
5	France	Europe	95.26
6	United Kingdom	Europe	94.87
7	Japan	Asia & Pacific	89.67
8	India	Asia & Pacific	89.11
9	Italy	Europe	86.6
10	Israel	Europe	86.38

Source CEOWORLD Magazine: <https://ceoworld.biz/2021/02/10/ranked-worlds-most-influential-countries-2021/>