

III
EDITION

AFRICA-ISRAEL JOURNAL

Exploring Africa Israel Relationship



MAIN FEATURES

- Importance of Jerusalem to the Jews & Christians. By Pastor Esther Obasi-ike, Ph.D.
- Israel : My journey by Rev. Erik Selle
- Structure of A.I.I. by Bishop Mulige



AFRICA - ISRAEL INITIATIVE

CONTENTS



1.	Editor's Desk by Geoffrey Mabwai	1
2.	Secretariate Report	2
3.	My Journey by Rev. Erik Selle	3
4.	End Year Report from A.I.I. President Bishop Mulinge A.I.I. Structure and Events	6
5.	Evangelical Biblical Teachings: Jerusalem by Dr. Phd Obasike	11
6.	Visiting Israel: by A.I.I. Director of Biblical teaching and Israel tour Pastor Jostine Skevik.....	16
7.	Feasts of God & Prayer for Israel: Fall Feast	19

1. EDITOR'S DESK

Shalom,

I hope you enjoyed our previous Journal which featured on Samaria and Judea, our December edition that brings us to the close of an event-full year focuses on Jerusalem. In our social media we have the viral song sang by a South African Master KG that has seen many people dance to it "Jerusalem", though oblivious of the importance of the city.

A.I.I endeavors to underscore the significance of Israel to the church in Africa and the World.

2020 has made a major mark in beginning of a decade, if years had character most would describe the year 2020 as Villainous. But turning our eyes on Israel we find a contrary narrative in terms of its International relations, most notable Abrahamic accord in August 2020 with UAE, prior of that in February 2020 we had Sudan to normalize relation with Israel while in September 2020 Kenya a public support for Israel notice was issued by US government and many other momentous breakthroughs witnessed during the year, I invite A.I.I Prophets and bible scholars to shed more light to our position in bible history.

Welcome to our December Edition of A.I.J.

Shalom.



Pastor.

Geoffrey Mabwai Sosingot.
Editor. Africa Israel Journal.
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From the Editors Desk

I wish you all a

**Merry
Christmas**

& A PROSPEROUS 2021

2. SECRETARIATE REPORT



Shalom,

We are happy as the secretariat HQ in Kenya to have been visited in the month of November by Pastor Jostein Skevik (Director All Bible studies and tour in Israel) with his lovely wife Margun who were arriving in from Bangui Central Republic of Africa where they had had a successful mission together with Apostle Benoit (Regional Director All Francophone countries). We were later on joined with Rev Eric Selle (founder of All) who came in briefly and proceeded for a mission in Juba South Sudan accompanied with Bishop Mulinge (All President) and pst.Dennis Nthumbi (All Global consulting group).

On the same note of visits, myself and Bishop Mulinge also paid a visit to All Goma Congo where we prayed for the new office bearers. As it concluded with the following.

1. Henceforth the A.I.I. DRC National Director is Mrs. Adel Mudumbi .

2. Dedication to God for the country (DRC) National Leadership Committee has been done.

3. The outgoing National Director - Samuel Mayele is now the A.I.I. French speaking countries Deputy Director, under the A.I.I. Director - Ap. Benoit Boumsong of Cameroon.

4. Also dedication to God for Samuel Mayele and Ap. Myriam Lugolo - DRC's official in the A.I.I. Executive Board, has been done.

Below are some of the pictorials.



Pst. Nicholas, Mrs. Margun, Pst. Jostien, Rev. Erik Selle, Bishop Mulinge, Pst. Geoffrey respectively



Goma DRC Congo team with All President & All Admin Director.



Pst. Jostien, Joshua Hakim (All Youth Director) Pst Geoffrey and Margun Skevik hiking @ 14 falls kenya.

3. ISRAEL: MY JOURNEY



Israel has always been part of my life on some level. My childhood growing up on the India-subcontinent in Bangladesh, Nepal, then USA and Norway, as my parents were missionaries, like all Sunday-school children I learned about the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Caphernaum, Hebron, Beer-sheba, Bethlehem, Samaria, Judea, Jerusalem and all the other places in the Bible. In my memory and imagination these names, people and places formed my mind and thought being raised as a Christian by loving parents preaching the gospel and making disciples of Jesus in a foreign country.

Moving into my youth and discovering interest for political science and history, the last century's developments of two world wars and their aftermath was central to my studies and curiosity. Reading the great book of author Leon Uris called Exodus, I realized the amazing events leading to the establishment of the modern state of Israel. I found the old videos of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion proclaiming the Declaration of Independence on May 14th 1948 fascinating. Of course, reading about the Six-day war in 1967 and Yom Kippur War in 1973, seeing Israeli Prime Minister Begin and Egypt's President Sadat on the lawn of the White House making peace with President Jimmy Carter in 1978, I realized Israel was central to world politics. But it did not yet dawn on me how Israel today connected to my faith or how it fulfilled the prophecies of the Bible, and how interconnected my Christian faith and destiny is related to the Jewish people and the state of Israel.

After completing military service and my university studies, I was interested in moving to Africa in 1998. However, God had another plan and I was happy working in Norway, newly married and our



Rev. Erik Selle,
Founder Africa Israel Initiative.

first born just having arrived. Then in the year 2000 something happened that changed the course of my life. I felt in my spirit that God wanted me to go to Israel. It was a new thought to me, and I was a bit surprised. I arrived in the land of my Sunday-school stories for the first time, and attended a conference in Jerusalem. My first visit was only for a week. But already arriving at the airport at Ben Gurion, something happened. At that time, we still walked out of the airplane down the stairs, and as I set my foot on the land of Israel I felt a sensation of joy that took me totally by surprise. I felt the moment I stepped on the soil of the land, that I had come home. Nothing can explain it, nothing except I rejoiced in my spirit and I felt strong emotions in my heart. And there and then, I realized there was a secret to Israel that I had not discovered before. My heart was instantly filled with love for the land and the people, and my love with God reached a new level.

Through this week in Jerusalem, with extensive seminars and lectures on the Bible, history, international law and contextual politics, I realized the lies against Israel that we are exposed to on a daily basis from media, academia, politicians and NGOs cannot stand unchallenged. Suddenly I understood that the anti-Semitism in Europe that enabled the Holocaust is astonishingly not dead, but it is a vibrant and active evil force in the world today. Like Benjamin Netanyahu so eloquently stated: Israel has become the Jew among the Nations, and I realized: Not on my watch. On a deeper level I understood that anti-Semitism is also an evil force against Christianity. This is seriously ironic, as anti-Semitism historically has been a plague in the Church. But there is no Christianity without Israel and the Jewish people, in reality there is no Islam without the Jewish people and Israel either. Both claim to be Abrahamic religions, so how can you hate the children of Abraham and claim for him to be your "father" at the same time? For Christians it is even more disastrous, because through Jesus we serve the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There is no God other than the God of Israel. He is the creator of heaven and earth. That is why the land of Israel is the land for all Sunday-school children in the world. The Bible I read, is the Bible I share with the Jews, came from the Jews and will be fulfilled where it began. There simply cannot be any anti-Semitism in the Church.

In Jerusalem that week in 2000, God gave me a calling, purpose and destiny. I could not let the contemporary lies against Israel stay unchallenged, not on a spiritual level and not on a political level. I went home to Norway and started to arrange seminars, inviting speakers from Israel, lobby in Parliament and making my own pro-Israel campaigns. One meeting was packed, and two Christian leaders was on the front row. It was a lecture from a PhD student on Israel and International Law. One of the Christian leaders got so angry he literally yelled in the meeting, the other came and offered me a job. That's how I started working in the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) in 2004. Then, as you have read in previous editions of the Africa-Israel Journal, I met Pastor Israel Ssekamatte from Uganda, and he came with the calling to go to Africa and share about God's love for Israel. The rest is history. In April 2012 we launched the Africa-Israel Initiative in Lusaka, Zambia, and from there we have come far.

Now we see a new era in Jewish-Christian relations. The Words in Zechariah 8:13 is a reality for our generation. God brought Israel home. The People of Israel has come home to the Land of Israel. She has become a blessing to the world. Today you do not have to be Christian to see the potential of strong bilateral relationship with Israel. Israel has become a miracle. A start up nation of unique entrepreneurship and innovation. Any leader and nation looking for prosperity, peace, stability and freedom will benefit of strong relationships with Israel. In agriculture, health, medicine, technology, energy, security, Israel is the right partner for development and growth.

I am glad I stand with Israel. It has been an amazing journey. Not always easy, but very fulfilling and meaningful. I have been to Israel nearly 100 times, I have had the great blessing to visit Afrika 30 times. My family and children are blessed, and even my church started growing as I passed on the mantle of pastoring after 15 years to pursue my calling for Israel.

Today I see Africa rising. God has called Africa to take a stand for Israel on the global arena. My brother from another mother, Pastor Israel, has been on many continents preaching and ministering, and many more are following. Export of agriculture products is now sold on the world market from Africa due to Israeli technology, Israel Allies Caucuses are established all over the continent and Malawi just announced their embassy location in Jerusalem - the Capital of Israel. 3000 years ago Jerusalem was the Capital of Israel under King David. After 2000 years of exile King David's people came home. Now Jerusalem is again the Capital of Israel, Hebrew is again spoken and our Sunday-school land is no longer history but contemporary live and vibrant.

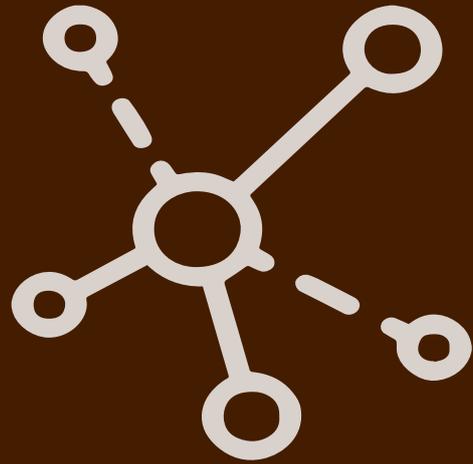
For me Israel has become a part of my own life and destiny. I will say with the words of Ruth: "Your people will be my people, and your God my God". (Ruth 1:16). I am a better Norwegian and a better Christian after connecting with my spiritual roots and heritage. My country and your country will only benefit of what is right and just. Our nations will prosper and develop by strong bilateral ties with Israel, and Israel is blessed by our friendship.

I stand with Israel.

Rev. Erik Selle
Founder Africa-Israel Initiative



Rev. Erik, Pst. Ambrose & Bishop Mulinge



4. BISHOP MULINGE ON 2020 REVIEW ON A.I.I. ACTIVITIES: Structure of A.I.I.

Shalom!

Finally, we have come to the close of the year, Africa - Israel Initiative has been strong in comforting Israel, empowering Africa and influencing the world,

I will give a brief summary of A.I.I. structures.

Board of Trustees:

Bishop Dr. Winston Iwo - Nigeria, Rev Ambrose Nyangao- Kenya, Rev Erik Selle– Norway, Bishop - Dr. Andrew Phiri - Zambia, Apostle Miriam Wabiwa- DR Congo, Rev. FermoOgila - S. Sudan, Bishop Joshua Mulinge - Kenya. And the Secretary to the Board is Bishop Andrew Phiri.

The Board of Trustees managed to have a successful zoom meeting on 24th of September 2020: This is an annual meeting for all board of trustees members.

The Executive Board: it comprises of :-

- President: Bishop Joshua Mulinge, Kenya.
- Vice President: Pastor Emmanuel Ntyomba, Rwanda.
- International Diaspora Director : Pastor Israel Ssekamatte, Uganda
- Administration Director: Pastor Nicholas Otieno, Kenya.
- Strategic Development : Apostle Benoit Boumsong, Cameroon
- Youth Director: Mr. Joshua Hakeem, Kenya
- Director of Bible teaching and Israel tours : Pastor Jostien Skevik Norway and
- Founder of All: Rev: Erik Selle, Norway.

So far there 6 Regions, led by Regional Directors: They are:-

Southern Africa, Western Africa, Eastern Africa, French speaking countries, Europe and USA..

Regional directors report to the All president through the Administration director (Pastor Nicholas Otieno) who is based at the A.I.I. International HQs Secretariat in Kenya.

Regional Directors meetings are scheduled to be quarterly (after every three months in a year).



Bishop Joshua Mulinge,
President Africa Israel Initiative.

- **Southern African countries region: are led by Bishop Andrew Phiri of Zambia – the Regional Director:** Its countries comprise of: Madagascar, South Africa, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia. They are headed by honourable national directors as follows.

Rev. Samoela – Madagascar, Bishop Petrus - S. Africa, Pastor Kathryn – Botswana, Lady Kamosa – Malawi and Bishop Nkonde – Zambia.

- **Western Africa countries region: are led by Rev. Dr. Daddy Ibulubo of Nigeria – the Regional Director.** Its countries comprise of Nigeria and Ghana. They are headed by honourable national directors as follows :

Apostle Jide Adeleye – Nigeria and Rev. Mike Nyave – Ghana.

- **Eastern African countries region: are led by Pastor Nicholas Otieno of Kenya – the Regional Director.** Its countries comprise of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan and Ethiopia. They are headed by honourable national directors as follows :

Pastor Nicholas Otieno – Kenya, Evangelist Teddy – Uganda, Rev. Mrema – Tanzania, Rev. Steven – Rwanda, Lady Monicah Bate - S. Sudan and Rev. Amanuel – Ethiopia

- **French speaking countries region: are led by Apostle Benoit Boumsong of Cameroon – the Regional Director and is assisted by Pastor Samuel Mayele of DR Congo – the Assistant Regional Director.** Its countries comprise of: Cameroon, DR Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Central Africa Republic and Ivory Coast (Cote D’Ivoire). They are headed by honourable national directors as follows:

Apostle Benoit – Cameroon, Mrs. Adel Mudumbi – DR Congo, Apostle Clotaire – Congo Brazzaville, Mr. Alex – Central Africa Republic (CAR), and Pastor Gilles - Ivory Coast (Cote D’Ivoire).

- **Europe countries region: are led by Pastor Aloys of Norway – the Regional Director.** Its countries comprise of: Norway, United Kingdom and Sweden. They are headed by honourable national directors as follows:

Rev. Erik – Norway, Bishop Stephen Kasuvu – United Kingdom, Pastor Belton – Sweden.

USA Region : has several coordinators, whose names are as follows :

Rev. Robert Kantner and Apostle Moses Wang.

Regional Directors coordinate with the national directors within their region to organize, mobilize and create programs in line with A.I.I mandate of Africa blessing Israel.

The A.I.I HQs office in Nairobi city, Kenya offers support in coordinating and acting as liaison office. Also it offer professional help and guidance where needed to strengthen relations with specific bodies, diplomatic missions, and non-governmental organizations.

A.I.I has Three Key International events that are Annual:

1. Annual visit to Israel and 2. Nairobi Jerusalem Summit. 3 Rotational annual conference.

All Countries are encouraged to find ways to participate in these events. Below is a report and chronology of events by the secretariat in Nairobi Kenya.

Calendar of events for All Kenya as reported by the secretariat:

Chronology of Events of A.I.I: (A.I.I in Nairobi Kenya).

- Holocaust memorial: in the month of January
- Senior Bishop Clergy Breakfast in the month of March
- Aliyah. In the month of June/July
- Visit to Israel: in the month of October.
- Nairobi Jerusalem summit: in the month of November.
- Caucuses report and events still in the formative stage.

International holocaust remembrance day:

January International holocaust reembrace day normally falls on the 28th day but it was held 3 days later on the 31st January. The event is normally a fund raiser for the holocaust survivors.

Attendance for the event was roughly 150 people

The event was held on a Sunday afternoon and took less than two hours.

Senior Bishop Clergy Breakfast: This is a meeting organized to raise awareness for Aliya and seek support from the senior bishops and clergy.

Aliyah Fundraiser: this event A.I.I Kenya normally holds in June or July to pray for Israel as well as raise fuds to support the Jewsreturning back to Israel (ALIYAH).

Annual Visit to Israel: Through direction given by Pastor Jostein Skevik who is A.I.I international Director of Bible study and tour to Israel in the month of October we have continued to enjoy elaborate and wonderful visits to Israel at a reasonable budget. Due to covid this was not possible this year however we look forward to 2021 and Pastor Jostein will furnish us with the details and budget for the next tour.

Nairobi Jerusalem summit November: A.I.I International annual conference for 2020 was put off due to covid 19 and for 2019 and 2018 the successful event was held at Parklands Baptist Church in Nairobi Kenya.

END OF EVENTS REPORT BY SECRETARIAT:

Financial Reporting: Our financial reporting will be in an acceptable international currency which is the US dollars for easy reference. Therefore, all member countries are required to submit their report in usd currency whatever little amount they have expended. The Nairobi secretariat will provide for a format template for the financial reporting.

Since A.I.I calendar is scheduled to close in December, all the financial and activity reports are to be submitted to the secretariat by 31st January following year, this to enable the secretariat have the reports ready and published by March in our (A.I.J) Journal.

The reports received will be taken through audit and made public after approval by board of trustees.

Donations and monetary contributions (Funding): In 2018, more than 100 per cent of A.I.I funding was in the form of voluntary contributions, the remainder represents administrative budget, funded from 90 % voluntary work.

I would like to recognize contribution received to our office in Nairobi from Norway, Cameroon, Rwanda, DR Congo and Kenya, this has gone a long way in helping the secretariat coordinate and conduct our activities of Africa blessing Israel.

A.I.I is also looking to foster and build more collaborative relationships with other likeminded partners within Africa and also find efficiencies in our work where it makes sense for the progress of A.I.I countries across Africa.

Report on organization structure and support:

The secretariat under pastor Nicholas has seen tough season, but with much support from Norway and corporation from member countries directors the year 2020 has seen A.I.I continue in being strong in its mandate for Africa blessing Israel.

A.I.I Journal: We have had additions to the secretariat. I would like to recognize and acknowledge the Editorial team joining us on board Pastor Geoffrey Mabwai. He will serve as the Editor for the A.I.J.

Membership: Other areas we look forward to have a desk is membership. A.I.I enjoys sizable number in terms of membership and maintaining a database and keeping members in touch and engaging them on interested areas and follow ups will be added advantage to fulfilling All mandate.

VOTE OF THANKS:

I take this opportunity to thank all of you who make A.I.I what it is today from the Board of trustees, Executive Board of Directors the regional Directors the country directors and the office administrators I want to say a big thank you for your engagement to this great work, and may the God of Israel give back to you pressed down shaken together full measure running over.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and prosperous 2021.

Bishop Josua Mulinge.
President Africa Israel Initiative.



Bishop Mulinge with App Benoit at a recent function in Cameroon.



5. EVANGELICAL BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

Importance of Jerusalem to the Jews & Christians

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy (Psalm 137:1-6 KJV)

Psalm 137 is a prayer of desperation borne out of deep love, passion and conviction. Part of this prayer has become a song to remind the world of the importance of Jerusalem. Why did King David vow never to forget Jerusalem? David went to the extent of swearing that if he forgot Jerusalem let him be accursed.

Jerusalem has been the holiest city in Judaism and the ancestral and spiritual homeland of the Jewish people since the 10th century BCE. The city of Jerusalem is given special status in Jewish religious law. In particular, Jews outside Jerusalem pray facing its direction.

According to the Hebrew Bible, the First Temple, at the site known as the Temple Mount today, was built by King Solomon and finished in 950 BC, and Mount Moriah is where Abraham almost sacrificed his son and talked to God. When the Babylonians captured the city in 580 BC, they destroyed the temple and sent the Jews into exile. That is, all worshiping was practiced in the temple and only the temple.

From the Babylonian capture, Judaism was codified. The Tanakh (Old Testament) laid the foundation for both Christianity Islam (Wikipedia)



Pastor Esther Obasi-ike, Ph.D,

Jews practice Judaism and believe so much in the patriarchs. Worship is at the Centre of everything in Judaism. Judaism is the way of life of the Jewish people and Jerusalem also referred to Zion is the physical location for the practice of Judaism.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. (Isaiah chapter 62:1KJV).

The subject of Messiah-ship is very central to all Jews

Jews have lived in the land of Israel for nearly 4000 years going back to the period of the biblical patriarchs (c1900BCE). The story of the Jewish people, Israel its capital Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple there has been one of exile destruction and rebirth. In its 4000 years of history, Jerusalem has been destroyed many times and many times reborn. There has always remained a Jewish presence in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem and the Jewish people as a whole always dreamed of returning and rebuilding it a longing reflected in the concluding words of Israel national anthem, 'HaTikvah' (The Hope) (Israel & Judaism Studies online)

The Kings of Israel were to reign from Jerusalem because it is considered as the place where the God of Israel resides. David sought to make Jerusalem both the political and worship centre for the Jews. *And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it. (1 Chronicles 13:6)*

The King's proposal was pleasing to the people so they all concurred- *And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Sihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it (1 Chronicles 13:4-6)*

Eventually the ark of God was brought back in Jerusalem
So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts (2 Samuel chapter 6:15-18)

The ark of covenant stays in Jerusalem because of its spiritual meaning- God is with us!

Jerusalem plays a key economic role for the Jewish economy.

A major source of livelihood in Jerusalem is government and public service employment. Since 1967 business activity and investment in the city have been stimulated by the housing boom and the ever-increasing influx of pilgrims and tourism.

Israel's global prominence in high-tech industries has had an impact on Jerusalem as well: two high-tech office complexes—one in the neighborhood of Malha, next to the city's largest shopping mall, and the other in Har Hotzvim—employ thousands of highly educated scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs (Britannica online)

The nation of Israel is one of the wealthiest on earth which they attribute partly to the covenant God had with father Abraham- *(But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day- (Deuteronomy 8:18).*

In the light of the discussion above Jerusalem was and still remains an important place for the Jews because of

- ITS HISTORICAL RELEVANCE
- ITS SPIRITUAL RELEVANCE
- ITS ECONOMIC RELEVANCE

Let us look at the importance of Jerusalem to Christians. Christians believe they are the spiritual Jews by faith - *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham (Galatians 3:7).* Since salvation through Jesus Christ gives Christians the legitimacy to become spiritual Jews it therefore suggests that whatever is important to the natural Jews applies to the spiritual Jews.

Christians believe that Jerusalem is very important to our faith. Our Christian faith is governed by both the old and new testament with the new being the fulfilment of the Old Testament. The historical importance of Jerusalem explains the origin of our faith, its present relevance and its futuristic characteristics.

The Christian faith is rooted in our belief in Jesus Christ the Son of God who became man to redeem humanity, reconciled us back to God and he is our preparation to meet with God after death. Everything surrounding the events leading to the redemption story and the ultimate salvation has connections with Jerusalem.

As a baby Jesus was dedicated in the temple in Jerusalem; brought up as a child in Jerusalem (Luke 2: 1-52); He preached in Jerusalem, attended syna-

gogues, did signs and wonders in Jerusalem. He was intentional about his activities in Jerusalem so much so that his last supper with his disciples was carried out in Jerusalem (Luke 22:7-23), he was arrested in Gethsemane, tried and crucified at Golgotha. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they didn't understand the prophecies written about it (Luke 13:33-35). Of worth noting is verse 33 where Jesus said for it cannot be that a prophet perished out of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is

considered a holy city. *A man who professes to be a prophet can be tried on that ground only by the grand Sanhedrin which always resides at Jerusalem and as the Jews are about to put me to death, under the presence of being a false prophet therefore my sentence must come from this city and my death take place in it* (Clarke commentary on Luke 13:33). This act was expected to bring fear upon law offenders - *And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously* (Deuteronomy 17:13)

Jerusalem being a holy city nothing defile should be found within (Nehemiah 11:1; Isaiah 52:1) because God moves within the camp to defend Israel against their enemies.

Jesus was crucified outside the city gate of Jerusalem so that salvation can come to all and sundry –

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (Ephesians 2:12-17).

The significance of Jesus dying outside Jerusalem remains a source of gratitude to the gentiles who by his death and resurrection can access grace. We are looking forward for a better city still to come, the new Jerusalem which is completely pure, adorned as a bride (Revelation 21:2). The physical Jerusalem is a type of spiritual Jerusalem bringing hope to the saints of the reign of Christ and the co-reign of saints with Jesus Christ in the New Jerusalem.

In Acts of the apostles we are reminded of the importance of that location – The apostles were instructed to wait in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them for the work of the ministry (Acts 1:8). Most Christians believe that the early church was born in the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-2). The church headquarter and the council was in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-21). Jesus will return from Jerusalem - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come*

in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey (Acts 1: 9-12)

The Christian faith has so much to do with Jerusalem that we cannot afford not to pray for Jerusalem.

In conclusion- our Christian obligation and responsibility will not be complete without us loving Jerusalem; praying for the peace of Jerusalem; giving to Jerusalem and preparing for the New Jerusalem

Shalom!

By Pastor

Esther Obasi-ike, Ph.D.

Pastor in charge Redeemed Christian Church of God Solution Centre Nairobi Kenya

& Founder and President Queen Esthers' Generation

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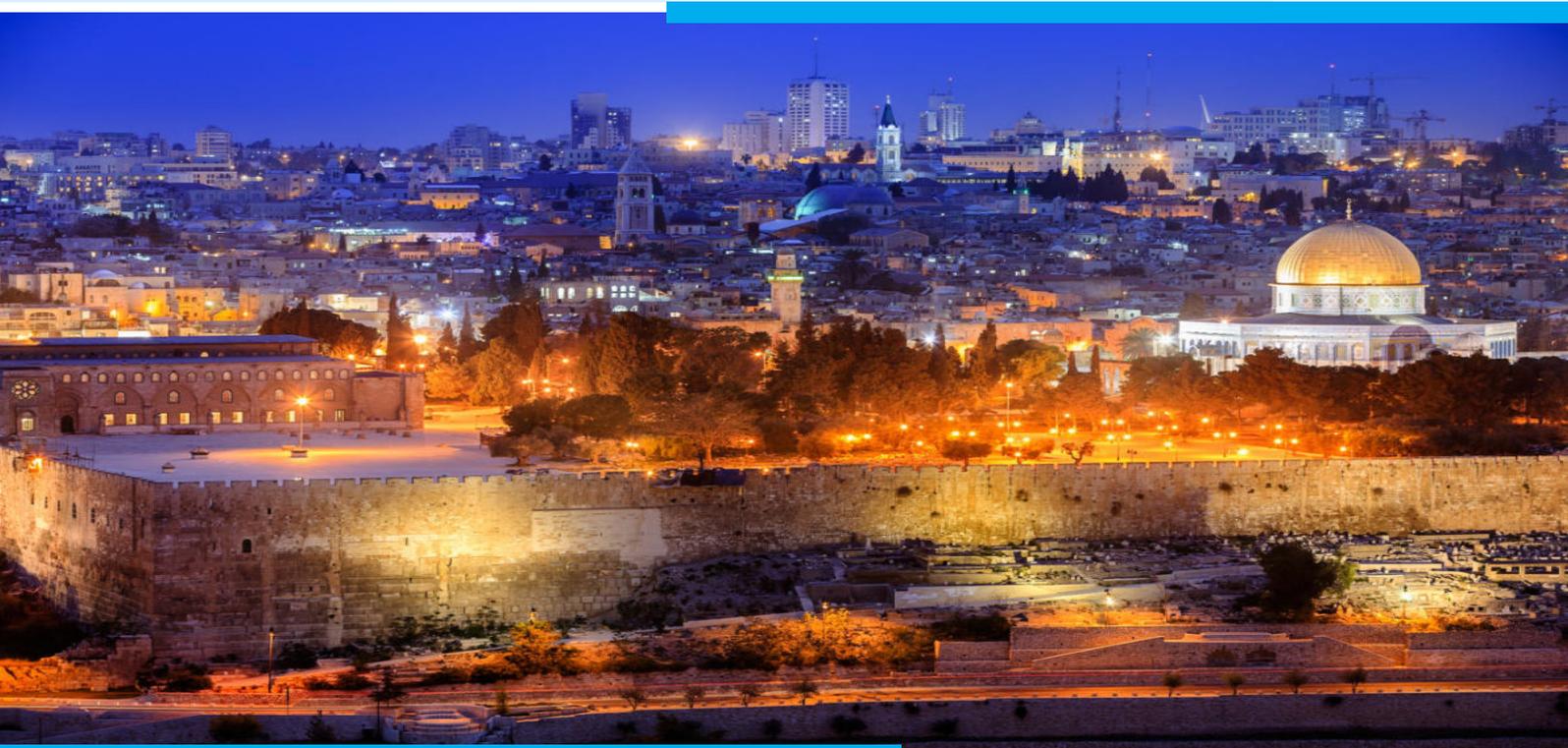
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6. THE ULTIMATE TRAVEL DESTINATION

I have been to Israel 63 times. The first time I visited the country and the holy city Jerusalem changed my life forever. I have been a tour leader for many hundreds people and like me I have seen them all go home transformed! Why is this? What is so special with the experiences Israel can offer?

The answer is simple. It is the homeland to our savior and lord Jesus, to our spiritual forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to the prophets and apostles, to king David and Salomon and all the others we know from the scriptures. And the bible says we are heirs together with them to the land of Israel: "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.» (Ep. 2:19-20)

The country is very small, but yet so big. You can ski in the morning on Mt Hermon in the very north, and swim in the sea in Eilat in the south a few hours by car in the evening.

Most people we have on our groups are more interested in the land of the Bible than swimming and relaxing. There is so many places to visit. And as we tour around, the Bible comes alive. We read and teach from the bible on the actual places the events happened. Even now after all my tours I still visit new places and learn new things. I will now mention just a few places that is important for most people to come visit. And that still speak



Pst Jostein Skevik
Director Bible Dept. Africa-Israel Initiative

to me when I go there.

Jerusalem. Israel's third and present capitol. The city of God where our spirits are born again. We always have Bible teaching on Mt. Olives overseeing the city. This is the place where Jesus ascended to heaven and will come again to reign. From here we go a few hundred meters to the garden of Gethsemane. Then we go into the old city to pray at the western wall. Usually we end up in the Garden Tomb to have communion beside the empty tomb.

Shilo. The biblical heartland where 85 percent of the bible happened is the so called "West bank", that is Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Israel's first capitol is Shilo, located in Samaria. Here we have the teaching where the Tabernacle stood for 369 years during the time of the judges. In Samaria we also go to places like Betel, the mountains of blessing and curse and of course Elon Moreh where God spoke to Abraham for the first time in the promised land and showed him the country. Here we read in the bible that we, the Christians, are actually fulfilling the prophecies by our very presence here.

Hebron is Israel's second capital. Here we find the tombs of the patriarchs, the Machpelah cave, and streets and findings from the time of Abraham.

Capernaum. The city of Jesus, where he healed Peters mother in law and performed many wonders and miracles. Around the shores of the sea of Galilee we find many of the places we read about in the Bible. For many the highlight in this area is to worship together with messianic Jews on the very sea where Jesus and Peter walked on the water. The baptism site by the river **Jordan** is a must, and many people tour participants have been baptized there. Travelling to or from **Galilee** we take our groups to Gilgal in the Jordan Valley. Here Joshua established the first camp in the holy land. The offering alter is still there, and the tabernacle place is a great spot for Bible teaching!

We often go to the different borders Israel have to its neighbor countries. Here we activate our spirits and pray for the borders. This prayer burden we take with us home after being on the borders to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Gaza.

We also meet and interact with the people in all the places we visit. We witness how they live, what difficulties they face. We meet with the leadership of the state and various communities, and from them we hear about the challenges and experiences they have. We also hear about the innovation and development, the coexisting and progress in different areas of life and society that we never hear about in media.

It will be too much to go into details about places like **Bethlehem**, the **Dead Sea**, the **Ela** Valley where David killed Goliath. The well of Abraham in Be'er Sheva makes an impression, to be in Caesarea by the sea where apostle Paul where in prison, Caesarea Philippi where Peter declared that Jesus is the Mes-

siah, the son of the living God. **Jaffo** where Peter met with Simon the tanner, is close to the modern city of **Tel Aviv**. In Eilat we can swim with dolphins in the Red Sea and snorkel over the reefs there. Jeep safari in the **Negev** desert followed by a camel ride before the dinner in a Bedouin camp. **Nazareth**, Sikem, City of David, **Mt. Carmel** where Elijah fought the prophets of baal.... The list is endless.

When people return to their homes, they become witnesses and ambassadors for the state of Israel. At home, the bible reading has changed. Memories, images of places, even the smell of them is there when the bible is read. And one day, we will all be back in Kingdom of Israel, together with the King of Kings. In the meantime, we all have to do our part preparing for the King to come.

-Jostein Skevik
Director Bible Dept.
Africa-Israel Initiative



Bible teaching by pastor Jostein Skevik on Mt Olives...

7. FEASTS OF GOD & PRAYER FOR ISRAEL:

YOM KIPPUR



Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement began at 6 pm on Sunday 27th Sept 2020. The greatest day of the Temple priesthood was Yom Kippur in which the High Priest entered once a year to the Holy of Holies. The theme of holiness is central to the Day of Atonement. The Hebrew word for holy, **kadosh** is used more than 80 times in the book of Leviticus. The 2 underlining scriptures for this theme are;

Lev 19:2 *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.*

Lev 20:26 *And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

Kadosh means “to set apart” or “to cut apart”. Thus Israel was to be separated from sin and from the heathen influence of the nations of the world. Although the laws of Leviticus were given to instruct the people in holiness, the principle of grace flows deeply throughout the book. God realized that Israel could never maintain His perfect standards. So in His Grace He provided the sacrificial system, a way for Israel to be once again reconciled to God in covenant fellowship.

The sacrificial system and especially the Day of Atonement are an expression of God’s compassion and grace. The law is a series of instructions given to help Israel to live in holiness.

The Old Testament system of animal sacrifices has not usually been portrayed as an expression of God’s grace and mercy. John 1:17 says, “*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*”. Some people have interpreted this scripture to mean that grace was nonexistent in the Old Testament. Yet this verse merely teaches that the grace and truth expressed in the OT were fully realized when God, who is all grace and all truth, became incarnate and dwelt among men. Jesus Christ is God’s living example of the grace and truth foreshadowed in the Old Testament scriptures.

The atonement was effective only as long as an Israelite remained perfectly and completely obedient to the law, and that could not have been for long. The Yom Kippur sacrifices needed to be repeated annually.

The Day of Atonement foreshadowed the great day of the LORD when salvation and atonement would be made for Israel and the gentiles through the death and resurrection of the Son of God at Calvary.

The Biblical name for the Day of Atonement is **Yom Hakippurim**, meaning “*the day of covering or concealing.*” The sacrificial system was designed to cover sin until it was finally put away through the death of Jesus Christ. Atonement hides rather than removes sin from God’s sight. The covering is total and allows God to look upon the Israelites as if their sin didn’t exist. God creates a shelter of sacrificial blood to protect worshippers from His wrath.

God ordained that the Day of Atonement should fall on the tenth of Tishri, ten days following the feast of trumpet which represents repentance. It is important that repentance should precede redemption. On Yom Kippur a person was able to act on his repentance by offering a sacrifice for his sins. However animal sacrifices were only effective when presented with a contrite heart as stated in Psa 51:16-19

It is noteworthy that God placed Yom Kippur before the feast of Tabernacles, the season of Joy. The children of Israel could only rejoice once they were redeemed and their sins forgiven. The Day of Atonement rises as a peak among the mountains of the feasts – a peak that one must scale to experience true joy. For God could pour out His blessings of joy only upon a forgiven people.

Four main elements composed the biblical institution of the Day of Atonement: “On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement; it shall be *a holy convocation* for you, and *you shall humble your souls* and present *an offering by fire* to the LORD. *Neither shall you do any work* on the same day” **Lev 23:27-28**

The LORD had issued a solemn warning that no man may see His face and live (**Exo 33:20**). But on the Day of Atonement, and only on that day, God made an exception. On this day, the high priest was commanded to enter into the presence of the Shekinah in the Holy of Holies and make atonement for the sins of Israel. When he entered the Holy of Holies, the high priest saw the Lord’s presence as a brilliant cloud hovering above the Mercy seat. The word for mercy seat can also be translated as “*the seat of atonement*”, for it has the same root, **kafar** that is used in the Hebrew.

The Mercy Seat stood upon the Ark of the Covenant but was not part of it (*Exo 35:12*). It was surrounded by the cherubim who stood as guardians of the divine Presence. The Mercy Seat was so identified with the Holy of Holies that in *1 Chro 28:11*, the Holy of Holies is referred to as “*the room of the mercy seat.*” And perhaps the Mercy Seat was the most important part of the Holy of Holies because it was over the Mercy Seat that the presence of God dwelt in the cloud. It was on this precise location that heaven reached down to earth, enabling man to make peace with God.

On the Day of Atonement

To enter the Holy of Holies, the high priest was first to bathe his entire body, going beyond the mere washing of hands and feet as required for other occasions. The high priest had to be personally pure if his intercession was to be accepted.

The high priest’s clothing was designed to reflect the holiness and purity desired by God. Rather than donning his usual robe and colorful garments as described in *Exo 28* and *Lev 8*, Aaron was commanded to wear special garments of linen, the same fabric worn by the angels of the LORD as stated in *Eze 9:2-3,11; 10:2, 6-7; Dan 10:5; 12:6-7* and the risen Messiah Himself as in *Rev 1:13-15*.

It should be noted that the high priest was not required to wear the Urim and Thummim on the Day of Atonement. There was no need for those vestments, which were God’s instruments of direct communication to the people, for on this day the high priest met God face to face. The high priest was to make some offerings.

It appears from Numbers 29:11 that the offerings of the Day of Atonement are divided into three groups.

- *Continual burnt offerings – Included the usual sacrifices that were offered in the Temple twice a day*
- *Festive sacrifices – offered for the high priest and the priesthood and for the people of the congregation as well.*
- *Sacrifices for the Day of Atonement – a young bullock as a sin offering for the high priest, his household, and the sons of Aaron and another sin offering for the congregation*

Aaron was commanded to take two handfuls of incense and place them in a fire pan full of coals taken from the altar of God. The cloud arising from that

incense would cover the Mercy Seat with the sweet fragrance of Aaron's prayer for forgiveness. Only then was he ready to present the sin offering for himself and his household according to **Lev 16:6, 11**

The glory of God shone brilliantly, enshrouded by the clouds of incense. Aaron then took the blood of the bull and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat, first on the east side, then in front, seven times. With that offering completed and his own sins atoned for, Aaron was ready to present the sacrifice for the nation.

Two male goats had been selected, and Aaron had cast lots, choosing one to be offered before the LORD and the other as the scapegoat. Aaron slaughtered the first goat on the altar (Lev 16:5) and sprinkled the Mercy Seat with its blood (Lev 16:15), trusting that God would accept the sacrifice as an atonement for the people of Israel.

The Scapegoat

The high point and most unusual element of the Yom Kippur sacrificial ritual was the ceremony involving the second goat, the scapegoat. The Hebrew word for scapegoat is *azazel*. Other than the four times it is used in Lev 16, the word does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures. The root of the word *azazel* contains the idea of removal. It was designed to teach the Israelites that their sins, once removed, would also be forgotten. The two goats were viewed as one offering: *"And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering."* **Lev 16:5.**

The slaughtered goat showed the congregation that God's wrath was appeased while the live goat was sent to the wilderness bearing the sins of Israel, illustrating that they had been removed as stated in **Psa 103:12.**

The two goats foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When the Messiah died on Calvary, He paid the penalty for our sins, as did the goat that was slaughtered. He also removed sin. John the Baptist proclaimed in **John 1:29** the following; *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

Jesus Christ is not only the slain Lamb who protects us from the wrath of God (**Exo 12**), He is not merely a *"sheep led silently to the slaughter"* (**Isa 53**), and **He is also the *azazel* (Lev 16)**. For through His death, the sins of all who believe are completely removed.

PRAYER FOR ISREAL:

Pslam 133: prayer for Israel and the Church. For unity
Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psa 133:2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

Psa 133:3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.



Western wall - Africans praying.

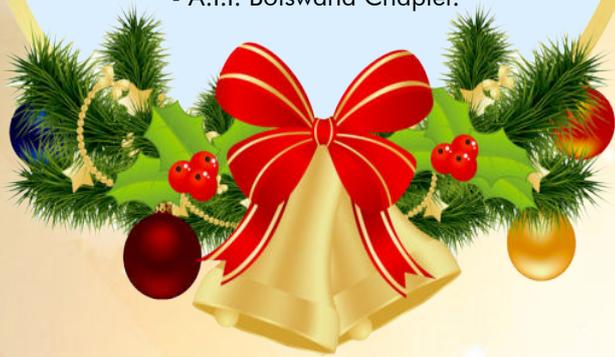
MERRY CHRISTMAS



*Wishing you all
the joy of the season,
new achievements, new goals
and new inspirations.*

*May your new year be
loaded with joy and happiness.*

*Pastor Kathy
- A.I.I. Botswana Chapter.*



*Christmas isn't about opening presents. It is
about opening our hearts to Christ's love.*

*May Israel open her heart to Christ's love.
Similarly, let Africa Israel Initiative Family
and all Israel lovers open our hearts to Christ's
love.*

*Wishing Israel, All Family & all Lovers of
Israel a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New
Year*

*Kamoza Chimungu
Malawi*

*Merry
Christmas*



*From the
Board of Directors
Africa Israel Initiative*

...

*Merry
Christmas*

and a prosperous new year



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