

Christian Friends of Israel UK

WATCHMAN'S PRAYER LETTER

A Guide to Intercessory Prayer

December 2023 ~ Jewish Year 5784



I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give (Habakkuk 2:1)

Mourning Turned Into Joy

“This is what the LORD says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.” This is what the LORD says: “Restrain your voices from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded,” declares the LORD. “They will return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your future,” says the LORD. “Your children will return to their own land” (Jeremiah 31:15-17).

The October 7th massacre perpetrated by Hamas terrorists took place in the land of Israel, but the tears, sorrow, and deep anguish from this tragic day in Israel’s history have touched the four corners of the earth, as Israel strives for healing from the devastation that took place on its soil. The casualties are well known but bear repeating because the figures are incomprehensible. Over 1,200 people were murdered, over 5,500 wounded, and sadly, 244 men, women, and babies were taken hostage in Gaza – their condition unknown. We remain prayerful for their safe return.

Israelis have rallied together in solidarity, prayers, and tears ending a season of political and religious infighting. “Never again is now,” is a refrain being heard from Jews all over the world as they comfort each other. Families and loved ones of the hostages together with Israel supporters have been tireless in their “Bring them Home” campaign calling for a global response to affect the return of the hostages from Gaza. Hearts are broken as people attempt to return to some form of normality of daily life.

Israel is no stranger to war, trials, anti-Semitism, the evil machinations of nations or religious extremists. The day after it declared statehood, five Arab nations invaded Israeli territory. Psalm 2 speaks of nations in uproar, peoples plotting in vain, and the earth’s kings taking positions conspiring against the LORD and his anointed. Despite these perpetual vexations, God’s chosen people have thrived and prevailed from one attempt at their

extermination after another, and it is not simply due to military might, as Israel had no defence force for 2,000 years.

Is it not the God of Israel who keeps Israel? It is amazing and continues to inspire awe and reverence in the hearts of those who take account of this set-apart people. *“There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty ... Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, but you will trample down their high places”* (Deuteronomy 33:26, 29).

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1-2). Some translations render this in a Hebrew context to mean *“Speak to the heart of Jerusalem.”* What does the expression *“heart of Jerusalem”* mean? Perhaps more than just a gentle and tender way to speak. This is the core of Jerusalem. This is a message to the people’s hearts – to everyone, but especially to the families and children. For example, how comforting it would be to the children to say, “Your fathers do not need to go to the army anymore because there is no more war.” This would be a dream. Yet this is not the present reality as Rachel’s seed is weeping, waiting, striving, and praying to end existential threats of terror on all fronts. God says “comfort” because he knows Israel will go through trials. “Israel needs this comfort” says Tobi, a volunteer at CFI Jerusalem.

The Great Comforter, the Holy Spirit, is a person, not just an action or feeling alone. Jesus promised to send the Comforter who would be with us forever (see *John 14:16*). The word Comforter also translates as helper, advocate, and intercessor. He who comforts pleads another’s cause before a judge, and is called to one’s side, especially in aid. The Spirit of God often works through us to dispense his comfort of pleading intercession, advocacy, and aid to those who need it, and especially his beloved Israel.

On the night of the attacks, CFI Executive Director, Tristan Hall, quickly rallied all CFI Jerusalem staff to help and CFI’s Israel Watch to pray. Later they joined the families of the hostages and the local community in the National Day of Prayer held on the one-month-mark of the invasion. The attendees at the Western Wall lit 1,400 candles, one for each person believed to have lost their life (numbers later reduced to 1,200). We mourned with those who mourned, exchanged hugs, worshiped, and cried out to God in prayer.

We who are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel are to comfort. God has hope and a future for Rachel's children. Through his Spirit we can all take part in comforting his people, whether through love-filled advocacy against the current rise in anti-Semitism, prayer, or direct practical aid. Let us not miss this moment to be Christian friends of Israel. "*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity*" (Proverbs 17:17).

Comforting Israel With Our Prayers:

- **Thank the Lord** for drawing the Jewish people closer together and subduing all divisions (see *Psalms 133; Romans 8:28*).
- **Praise God** for the global outpouring of prayer that has been shielding Israel like a wall of fire. Pray that this continues to grow until the wider Church is praying for Israel and her salvation (see *Ezekiel 22:30*).
- **Pray** that the Jewish people in Israel and abroad would be comforted by God's love. Israel is one family, when one part suffers adversity they all feel it (see *Isaiah 40:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5*).
- **Continue believing** for the hostages to be returned, safe and secure (see *1 Samuel 30:18-19*).
- **Intercede** for Israel's leadership to be protected and guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray for divine discernment from heaven and wise counselors for Bibi Netanyahu and all officials as they make existential decisions for Israel (see *2 Chronicles 32:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:1-4*).
- **Seek** the security of Jews in the diaspora during the present rise of anti-Semitism. Pray more consider Aliyah (see *Jeremiah 16:14-16; Hosea 2:14*).
- **Pray** for the salvation of Israel. Many are expressing their hope and longing for the Messiah to deliver them out of their troubles, and we agree with this longing (see *Romans 11:25-26*).
- **Believe** for the IDF soldiers to be filled with courage to win this war against evil (see *2 Chronicles 32:6-8*).
- Pray for the reconciliation of Jews and Arabs, to form the one new man in Messiah. Believe that all strongholds and longstanding walls of enmity will be broken in Jesus (see *Ephesians 2:14-18*).

Thank you for standing with Israel. Now more than ever, we must pray fervently as Israel traverses a defining season in her story. May you go from strength to strength enduring in God's unending grace.

In God's Service, Suzie Georges

Wall of Prayer Supervisor

Christian Friends of Israel – Jerusalem (UK edited version)

CFI UK News and Prayer items

Given the ongoing conflict with Israel's enemies, tragic loss of life and abduction of hostages, we are grateful for your prayers here in the UK as we provide solidarity alongside the Jewish community and reach out to our own Christian constituency. We thank the Lord that our exhibit of the CFI UK Resources Stall at CRE Midlands Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th November 2023 went well. Virtually all who came by were understanding of Israel's present plight and the pressures placed on us as Israel's Christian friends. Both Robin's and Jacob's talks went well, which was a huge encouragement to us. The following Sunday Jacob spoke at Suncoast church Eastbourne, the title: 'Exploring the Bible - the Line and the Land'.

We have continued to receive and process many gifts to CFI Jerusalem's Communities Under Attack project and their Emergency Fund, the transfer of which we are bringing forward to give them early access to them.

Our extra online prayer meetings are going well, as has dissemination of helpful written material and online updates as the situation develops. We also had the opportunity to highlight various online briefings and a prayer rally at Westminster that took place toward the end of last month, where an estimated 10,000 Jews and Christians gathered in solidarity for the people of Israel, those who have lost loved ones and those with family taken hostage. It was so moving to hear a brave father tell of his 8-year-old daughter taken hostage, enduring separation on her 9th birthday.

Jacob was able to speak at the event and convey our Christian gratitude for Israel and UK Jewish community who have contributed so much to our life over the years. We have the modern innovations in agriculture, water tech and medicine, our Judaeo-Christian heritage and freedoms in the UK, and supremely benefit from their conveying God's word of Law, Prophets, Psalms and Apostles, who spread the message throughout the world.

Thank you for your prayers which we value greatly. Let us remember,
"Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:17)

"The Lord is full of compassion and mercy" (James 4:11)

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