

Kingdom Report

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Quo Vadis? Israel, Iran and the Church

This war was a disaster for both Israel and Iran. Both will use the ceasefire to prepare for the next round. In Iran there is an underground Church revival. In Israel there is profound despair of the future. In the Church...where now?

Quo Vadis ("where now") Iran?

A quiet revival is sweeping across the Middle East. In Iran, where there were just 500 Christians in 1979, the underground church has grown to over 1 million believers, making it the fastest-growing church in the world. Afghanistan, despite being one of the most dangerous places for Christians, is seeing thousands turn to Christ in secret. Even in Saudi Arabia, where conversion is forbidden, there are increasing reports of native Saudis following Jesus. Many share remarkable stories of vivid dreams and visions of Christ, calling them by name and drawing them to the gospel. Against all odds, faith is rising in the most unlikely places.

The Islamic Shiit revolution is under serious questioning by the people. Iran is Persia. A proud civilization over 2500 years old. The post 1979 Islamic Revolution population want change. The people rallied as a nation under the Israeli attack.....but after the war?

One thing is certain. God is on the move among the people of Persia. They remember kings Cyrus and Darius. Both passed decrees from heaven when God spoke through His prophets. Those decrees have not been annulled in heaven. Change is coming.

Quo Vadis Israel?

Here is something South Africans can appreciate about the problems Israel face.

- If you have been to the Kruger National Park here is something you might not realize. Israel is about the same size as Kruger Park. The 10 million population of Israel (7,3 million Jews, 2,5 million Palestinians) must fit in that space. Except half of Israel is Negev desert and the other half (of Kruger Park) must fit 10 million people.
- On 22 June 1941 Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa invading Russia for "lebensraum"
- On 13 June 2025 Israel launched Operation Rising Lion for the same reason "lebensraum".
- The other thing South Africans can understand. When you are an Apartheid state divided on the basis of race and the world turns against you with sanctions, boycotts, disinvestment and demonstrations on college campuses and city streets...then you know the end is coming.

A prayerful thought for the Church: After 77 years of prayer and fasting since 1948 by millions of evangelical Christians for the peace of Jerusalem, the blessings of God on Israel and the salvation of Jews.....the revival is happening in Iran, not Israel.

The Future of Israel in Question : A Crisis of Faith for the Evangelicals

The dust has settled from the twelve-day war between Israel and Iran that raged from June 13-25, 2025, and as the sirens have finally fallen silent, evangelical Christians worldwide find themselves confronting a profound theological and spiritual crisis. The ceasefire that President Trump brokered has brought an uneasy peace, but the devastation left in its wake extends far beyond the physical damage to cities and infrastructure. For millions of Christians who have long held Israel as the centerpiece of their eschatological faith, the war's aftermath presents uncomfortable questions that can no longer be ignored. The conflict began with Israel's surprise pre-emptive strike against Iran's nuclear facilities, military installations, and key commanders¹. What followed was an unprecedented exchange of ballistic missiles and airstrikes that left many Israelis dead and over 3,000 wounded, while Iranian casualties reached nearly 1,000 according to various estimates. Yet the physical toll, devastating as it was, pales in comparison to the deeper wounds this war has inflicted upon the foundations of evangelical Christian thought regarding Israel's place in God's end-times plan.

The Economic Devastation

The economic impact of the twelve-day war has been staggering, forcing evangelicals to confront the reality that God's supposed "chosen nation" appears increasingly vulnerable rather than divinely protected. Israel's economy has sustained losses estimated between \$12-20 billion, representing up to 3.3% of the nation's GDP. The daily cost of the war reached \$725 million, with military expenses alone consuming \$593 million per day for offensive operations.

This economic hemorrhaging has pushed Israel's budget deficit from 5.5% to 8.5% of GDP, while public debt has risen from 69% to 74%. The compensation claims from war damage have already reached 5 billion shekels (\$1.47 billion), with officials estimating this could double the costs from all previous conflicts combined. Such financial strain hardly reflects the image of a nation under divine protection that evangelical theology has long proclaimed. The war's economic impact has been particularly devastating to Israel's high-tech sector, which accounts for 64% of exports and one-fifth of GDP. Thousands of reservists were pulled from critical roles, creating workforce shortages that have had lasting consequences. Ben Gurion Airport suspended operations, usually handling 300 flights and 35,000 passengers daily, while the Bazan oil refinery—Israel's largest—was forced to shut down after Iranian strikes, resulting in daily losses of \$3 million.

For evangelical Christians who have long pointed to Israel's economic prosperity as evidence of divine blessing, these figures present a troubling contradiction. How can a nation supposedly central to God's end-times plan suffer such devastating economic losses? The reality suggests a country struggling under the weight of prolonged conflict rather than one enjoying supernatural protection.

The Social and Physical Infrastructure of Israel

The 12-day war between Israel and Iran left extensive infrastructure damage across Israel, with Iranian missile strikes causing unprecedented destruction to both civilian and critical facilities. The Soroka Medical Center in Beersheba suffered a direct hit that caused extensive damage and a suspected chemical leak, injuring 71 people at what Israeli President Isaac Herzog called a "beacon of coexistence for Israelis and Palestinians". The Weizmann Institute, a major research institution, sustained heavy damage from Iranian strikes. At least 31 ballistic missile impacts were reported in populated areas or critical infrastructure sites,

including power stations in southern Israel. In Tel Aviv the Stock Exchange, the headquarters of Mossad and the IDF military, all destroyed. Including parts of the Prime Minister's residence.

The scale of property destruction has been staggering, with Israel's Tax Authority receiving over 41,000 compensation claims, including 32,975 for structural damage alone. Officials estimate that buildings require complete demolition, compared to just one building from all previous attacks since October 2023. Residential areas bore heavy casualties. The total property damage costs are estimated to reach 5 billion shekels (\$1.47 billion), representing double the compensation claims from all previous attacks combined since the Hamas assault of October.

In Bat Yam, 61 buildings were damaged and nine people killed in a single missile strike. Over 9,000 Israelis were displaced from their homes, with dozens of structures damaged or destroyed.

The psychological toll has been equally devastating. The constant threat of missile attacks, with sirens sending millions to bomb shelters repeatedly over twelve days, has left lasting trauma on the civilian population.

A Society Fracturing Under Pressure

The war has exposed deep fractures within Israeli society that evangelical supporters can no longer ignore. While Prime Minister Netanyahu initially enjoyed a boost in approval ratings, with 82% of Jewish Israelis supporting the attack on Iran, deeper analysis reveals a nation struggling with internal divisions and mounting pressures.

Netanyahu's political position remains precarious despite the perceived military success. Polls suggest his coalition government would still fall short of the 61-seat majority needed to retain power. The war served as a temporary distraction from ongoing domestic crises, including massive protests over judicial reforms and the prolonged Gaza conflict, but these underlying tensions remain unresolved.

The social fabric of Israeli society shows signs of severe strain after nearly two years of continuous warfare. Military commanders have warned of exhaustion among troops, with soldiers serving continuously since October 7, 2023. Equipment failures and maintenance shortages have plagued military operations, leading to preventable casualties that have sparked public anger and questions about leadership competence.

International Isolation and Diplomatic Failure

Perhaps most troubling for evangelical supporters is Israel's growing international isolation, which contradicts promises of divine favor and global blessing. The European Council has called for immediate ceasefires and expressed deep concern about civilian casualties, while taking note of reports on Israel's compliance with international agreements. The International Commission of Jurists has condemned Israel's actions as violations of international law and threats to international peace and security.

Israel's actions in Gaza have increasingly isolated the nation globally, with widespread condemnation of military actions that have resulted in some estimates of 100,000 Palestinian deaths. Images of devastation in Gaza, including the loss of thousands of children, have circulated widely on social media, turning even traditionally pro-Israel elements in the West against the country's policies.

This isolation extends beyond diplomatic criticism to potential economic consequences through boycotts and sanctions. The growing international pressure represents a fundamental challenge to evangelical teachings that those who bless Israel will themselves be

blessed. Instead, the reality suggests a nation whose actions are increasingly viewed as unacceptable by the international community.

Even the United States, Israel's strongest ally, has shown signs of strain in the relationship. President Trump's public frustration with both Israel and Iran during the ceasefire negotiations, including his use of profanity on live television to express displeasure with Israeli actions, signals that even evangelical-friendly American leadership has limits to its patience.

The Great Exodus: God's People Leaving the Promised Land

One of the most theologically challenging developments has been the dramatic increase in emigration from Israel, reaching levels unprecedented since the nation's founding. In 2024, approximately 82,700 Israelis left the country. After this war and when Ben Gurion airport opens expect a mass exodus. There are 600,000 American Israelis in Israel and 1,3 million Russian Jews. Plus hundreds of thousands from Europe. All have passport options back from where they came.

The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics reported that nearly 50% of those leaving were olim (immigrants), many of whom had previously made aliyah (immigration to Israel) based on religious or ideological convictions. The irony is stark: those who came to Israel believing in its divine destiny are now among those fleeing its realities.

Nearly half a million Israelis have left since October 7, 2023, suggesting a crisis of confidence in the nation's future among its own citizens. This trend began even before the recent war with Iran, with emigration surging during the months of massive protests over judicial reforms.

For evangelical Christians who have long proclaimed Israel's role as the eternal homeland of the Jewish people, this mass exodus presents an uncomfortable reality. If Israel truly represents God's plan for the Jewish people, why are so many choosing to leave? The emigration statistics suggest a population voting with their feet against the narrative of divine protection and blessing.

The departure of skilled workers, particularly from the high-tech sector, threatens Israel's economic competitiveness and undermines claims about the nation's divinely blessed prosperity. When those with the most options choose to leave, it raises fundamental questions about the sustainability of the current trajectory.

Expect that after the ports and airport resume operations the exodus out of Israel will be a flood of people.

Military Exhaustion and the Limits of Human Strength

The Israeli military's performance during the Iran conflict, while tactically successful in many respects, has revealed deep systemic problems that challenge evangelical assumptions about divine protection. After nearly two years of continuous warfare in Gaza, the Israel Defence Forces show clear signs of exhaustion and overextension.

Military commanders have warned of severe fatigue among troops, with soldiers describing a loss of purpose and motivation as the Gaza conflict has dragged on without clear objectives. Equipment failures have become increasingly common, with tanks, armored vehicles, and weapons systems showing the wear of prolonged use without adequate maintenance periods.

A recent study found that at least one in eight Israeli military reservists is now considered mentally unfit to return to Gaza due to post-traumatic stress disorder. The psychological toll

of prolonged warfare is creating a manpower crisis that threatens military readiness and effectiveness.

For evangelicals who have long proclaimed Israel's military prowess as evidence of divine favor, these realities present uncomfortable truths. The Israeli military appears to be a conventional force subject to the same limitations of equipment, morale, and human endurance that affect all militaries engaged in prolonged conflict.

Quo Vadis the Church? A Time for Theological Reassessment

The aftermath of the Israel-Iran war demands that evangelical Christians engage in serious theological reflection about long-held assumptions regarding Israel's place in God's plan. The traditional Christian Zionist narrative that has shaped evangelical support for Israel since the 1960s requires honest re-examination in light of current realities.

The doctrine of unconditional support for Israel based on promises to Abraham has led many evangelicals to provide blanket endorsement for Israeli government policies, regardless of their moral implications. This approach has often prioritized political ideology over biblical principles of justice, mercy, and peace. The recent war's aftermath, with its toll of civilian casualties and regional destabilization, challenges believers to consider whether such support truly aligns with Christian values...or scriptural sanction.

Biblical scholarship increasingly questions whether modern Israel can be simply equated with biblical Israel, noting that God's covenant promises were conditional upon faithfulness and obedience. The New Testament's teaching that the true Israel consists of all who have faith in Christ, regardless of ethnicity, suggests a more complex understanding than the nationalist interpretations that have dominated evangelical thought.

The growing international isolation of Israel and the humanitarian crises in Gaza and the broader region should prompt evangelicals to consider whether their theology has led them to support actions that contradict fundamental Christian principles of protecting the vulnerable and seeking peace.

Toward a Broader Understanding of God's Heart for All Nations

The crisis surrounding Israel's recent conflicts offers evangelical Christians an opportunity to rediscover biblical teachings about God's heart for all nations. The New Testament clearly teaches that the Gospel is for "every tribe and tongue and people and nation".

The exclusive focus on Israel as God's primary concern in the end times has led many evangelicals to minimize or ignore the suffering of Palestinians, Lebanese, Iranians, and others in the region. Such selective compassion contradicts the universal scope of Christ's love and the biblical mandate to care for all who bear God's image.

Jesus' teaching about peacemakers being called children of God challenges the militaristic interpretations of prophecy that have characterized much evangelical eschatology. Rather than eagerly anticipating warfare as a sign of Christ's return, believers should be actively working for reconciliation and justice for all peoples in the region.

The early church's understanding of God's kingdom emphasized transformation through love rather than conquest through violence. The apostolic witness consistently pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes, not to political restoration of national power.

A Call to Renewed Faith and Action

The devastating aftermath of the Israel-Iran war serves as a wake-up call for evangelical Christians to reassess their understanding of God's purposes in history. Rather than clinging

to interpretations that have proven inadequate to address current realities, believers must return to Scripture with fresh eyes and humble hearts.

This reassessment does not require abandoning concern for the Jewish people or support for Israel's legitimate security needs. Rather, it calls for a more balanced approach that extends equal compassion to all peoples in the region and evaluates political actions according to biblical standards of justice and righteousness.

The human cost of recent conflicts—Israeli civilians killed in their homes, Palestinian families destroyed in Gaza, Iranian communities devastated by airstrikes—demands a response that transcends political loyalties and embraces the full scope of God's concern for human flourishing.

Evangelical Christians must ask themselves difficult questions: Has our theology led us to support actions that contradict the character of Christ? Have we allowed political ideology to override biblical principles of mercy and justice? Are we truly advancing God's kingdom through our approach to Middle Eastern politics?

The current moment offers an opportunity for renewal and reformation. Just as the Reformation called the church back to Scripture after centuries of institutional corruption, today's crisis calls evangelical Christians back to the radical message of Jesus—a message of love for enemies, compassion for the suffering, and hope for all nations.

The end times are not about choosing sides in earthly conflicts but about the ultimate triumph of God's love over human hatred, divine justice over political expediency, and eternal peace over temporary victories. As evangelical Christians witness the suffering in the Middle East, they are called not to escapist hopes for rapture but to preaching the gospel that reflects Christ's heart for all nations.