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# Israel

**Total area:**

20,770 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:**

8,723,260 (2017)

**Literacy:**

98%

**Official languages:**

Hebrew, Arabic

**GDP (PPP) per capita:**

\$36,379 (2017 est.)

**Life expectancy:**

82 years

**Religions:**

76% Jewish, 16% Muslim, 2% Christian, 2% Druze, 4% other religions

## Prayer points

### 30,000 Jewish believers

The number of Jewish people turning to Jesus in Israel has increased significantly in recent years. In 1948, when the state of Israel was established, the population of 600,000 included only 23 believers in Jesus as their Messiah and there were no Israeli congregations. Seventy years later, it is estimated that there are now some 30,000 Jewish believers in Jesus and over 300 congregations. During a recent outreach in Jerusalem, thirteen Jewish people turned to Jesus as our two missionaries based there shared the Good News with them. Pray for the church in Israel as it continues to grow. (Christian Witness to Israel - July 2018)

### A presence on campus

Christian student groups in Israel usually struggle to advertise their events on campus due to strict rules limiting religious activities. However, in March, Haifa University organised a fair for student groups on campus and allowed the Christian students to have a booth. The students took it seriously and wore special T-shirts. It was a great opportunity for them to be known on campus and for conversations with students at neighbouring booths. Some interested students left their contact information to continue to talk about faith. The Haifa group is arranging a trip to Jerusalem to walk the Via Dolorosa and has invited these students to join. Please pray for this trip and for students' conversations there to be full of the person of Christ. (IFES - May 2018)

### The Bible in Modern Hebrew

Christian Witness to Israel's publishing house in Israel, is currently translating the New Testament into Modern Hebrew. The Old Testament is already available in five volumes and has made the scriptures accessible to large numbers of Modern Hebrew speakers in Israel and beyond. The only other access to them is in ancient Hebrew, an antiquated language most cannot understand. Their translation is available on an evangelistic website in Israel and when it was taken down for maintenance calls came in from around the world, particularly from the Orthodox community, asking where it had gone. Please pray that the New Testament translation will be read by this community and many other Jewish people and that, through it, they will come to know the promised Messiah of Israel. (Christian Witness to Israel - January 2018)

### **Ukrainian Missionary to Israel**

Tel Aviv has the highest population of homeless people out of any city in Israel. The majority of these desperate people are also alcohol or drug addicts and suffer from some form of mental or physical illness. A missionary, born in the Ukraine, was a former drug addict himself before the Lord intervened in his life and now runs a weekly outreach to the homeless of Tel Aviv. He shares the gospel, while also providing practical help and support through the rehabilitation his congregation organise. Many have come to profess faith in the Messiah, been baptized, and are on the way to leading fruitful lives free from substance abuse and homelessness. Please pray that the Lord would continue to bless the lives of those living on the streets of Tel Aviv as the Good News is shared with them. (Christian Witness to Israel - November 2017)

### **Worship in an Orthodox Kibbutz**

A visiting university team from the USA saw fruit of their ministry when a 93-year old Jewish woman gave her life to the Lord in the city of Nazareth. Nazareth is a large city with a number of believers. However, the short-term team was then tasked to do ministry in a kibbutz, in the Jezreel Valley, where no believers live. Groups of two and three students walked the streets and prayed for open doors, both spiritually and literally. The sleepy hamlet seemed like a dead end for ministry and the planned open-air worship time appeared to be doomed. Team members remembered thinking, these inhabitants would not appreciate a noisy song fest. But a local authoritative man welcomed the group to sing in an open area. "It's no disturbance to us at all" he said. Pray for the ministry in this valley to bear fruit. OM Israel desires to see salvation through Jesus Christ come to those living in Jezreel, whether they are 93 years old or 9 years old. (Operation Mobilisation - September 2017)

### **Holocaust Survivors**

A recent survey found that, of the estimated 189,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel, about 45,000 live in poverty, sometimes having to make a choice between food and medicine. Our missionaries in Israel continue to reach out to the decreasing numbers of Holocaust survivors, many of whom, having faced unimaginable tragedy early on in life, are now suffering in their old age. By sharing the good news about Jesus with them and demonstrating his love by helping to meet their practical needs, a number have come to confess Jesus as their Messiah. There is a great urgency for this group, as their average age is around the mid to late 80s. Please pray that the Lord will continue to meet the spiritual and practical needs of this diminishing community through the work of CWI and for many more to come to trust Jesus. (Christian Witness to Israel - July 2017)

### **The Messianic claims of Jesus**

Most Jewish people around the world are only culturally Jewish, and have an array of religious beliefs that include atheism, humanism, Buddhism. Yet, many observant Jewish people are committed to practicing the particulars of the Jewish faith. One of the few common threads for Jewish people around the world is their refusal to consider the Messianic claims of Jesus. This makes Jewish people difficult to reach with the gospel, and yet we must according to Acts 1:8. Will you join us in praying that people would feel less afraid to investigate the person of Jesus? Pray that Jewish people would begin to accept the Jewishness of Jesus. (Chosen People Ministries - May 2017)

### **Feeling unsafe**

Church leaders say many Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories now feel unsafe, after recently being the target of attacks and inflammatory speeches. An imam at the Al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem recently posted a video on the Internet urging Muslims to be in a constant state of war against the 'polytheist enemy', namely Christians, and also against Jews. In May, a mob attacked property in the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem, following a row between a Christian and a Muslim. Pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in Israel and the Palestinian Territories to be salt and light in their communities. Pray too that moderate Muslims and Christians will unite to stand against extremism in all its forms and promote religious tolerance. (Release International - July 2015)

### **Clouded by violence**

The worldview of all who live in Israel or Palestine today is clouded by violence and conflict. The daily reality of checkpoints, guns and soldiers merely serves to reinforce entrenched historical opposition and prejudices. As a result, the encounter between Israeli and Palestinian is all too often preconditioned by both real and perceived threats, in a way which does not allow space for an alternative story to play out. Pray for the work of Musalha, which promotes reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, as demonstrated in the life and teaching of Jesus, both among believers, and more widely in the two communities. (BMS World Mission - January 2013)

### **Young believers**

Praise the Lord that young Israelis are coming to faith in greater numbers than ever before. The Internet has become an invaluable source of information about the Messiah of Israel, particularly for this younger generation. For example the word Yeshua (Jesus in Hebrew) is Googled from Israel on average 25,000 times a month. At a recent count the word God was being searched about 71,000 times a month, Messiah 96,000 times and New Testament 5,300 times. Pray that these young believers will grow in grace and go on to serve their own generation. Pray also for the reception from relatives and friends to their new-found faith, which can often result in rejection and persecution from those closest to them. (Christian Witness to Israel - September 2012)

### **Disillusioned with religion**

Please pray for the many Jewish people who, having become disillusioned with traditional religion, get caught up in New Age or occult practices. Many Jewish people are attracted by the New Age as they seek spiritual fulfilment. Please pray for the various outreaches and book tables that are held at New Age fairs and for those who work among such Jewish people, seeking to bring the truth of the gospel and the true light of Messiah Jesus to them. (Christian Witness to Israel - May 2012)

### **Faith in the Messiah**

Give thanks that an increasing number of young Israelis are coming to faith in the Messiah in their homeland. Please pray that these believers will have a significant impact on their local communities and families as they grow in faith. They can often face rejection or persecution from those closest to them as they profess faith in Jesus. Please pray for their protection and ongoing witness amidst conflict in Israel. (Christian Witness to Israel - May 2012)

### **Request for Palestinian statehood**

The Palestinian request for statehood at the UN in September 2011 again highlighted how much the Israel-Palestine question is not just a Middle Eastern issue but a world question. Somewhere in the midst of entrenched, historical, cultural and religious views, lies a body of Christian believers who straddle both the Israeli and Palestinian cultural divides. Pray for wisdom for religious and political leaders on both sides as they seek to lead their respective communities to greater harmony and acceptance. (BMS World Mission - March 2012)