



Miniature model of Jerusalem from the Second Temple period.

Israelnews, November 2010

## The ongoing madness

### A sustained campaign to de-legitimize and dismantle Israel and those who defend her

The word most often heard now concerning Israel is “isolation.” The now-infamous Gaza flotilla clash, which had more to do with an anti-Israel agenda than with humanitarian aid for the “beleaguered” residents of Gaza, has recharged the anti-Israel Left and enabled it to issue increased calls for Israel to be sanctioned and/or boycotted.

The Left is sadly supported by much of the global press. As a consequence, labor unions in some parts of the world are refusing to off-load ships with Israeli products, and traditional churches such as Presbyterians, Anglicans and Lutherans, are intensifying their calls for disinvestment from Israel. This assault on Israel’s legitimacy is so widespread, sustained and, sadly, effective that the “average Joe” is buying in to it or, because of pressure and intimidation, giving in to it.

This is the climate in which we now operate. In short, there is a sustained campaign to de-legitimize and dismantle Israel, and those who defend her are targeted in the same way. However, we are not moved by public opinion, but by the Word of the living God. We are thus convinced that Israel’s modern-day restoration is not a political coincidence, but rather solid evidence of God’s faithfulness to His promise to Abraham some 4,000 years ago. We will stand firm in our support of Israel and her right to exist in the land that God forever gave her (Genesis 17:7–8). This includes proclaiming that Jerusalem is and should remain the undivided eternal capital of the Jewish people. Israel’s claims in this regard are beyond dispute.

However, the de-legitimization campaign has brought together radical Muslims and radical leftist in the Western democracies. These are very strange bedfellows, as Islam’s well-documented abuse of women, honor killings,

executions of those Muslims who convert to other religions, and its agenda to introduce *sharia law* wherever it gets a foothold, are all blatant contradictions of the Left’s thinking. So, why would “the Left” tolerate such blatant contradictions? The answer is simple: They [the Left] unite with radical Islam in their hatred of Israel and their desire to see her removed from the Middle East. So, what could be at the root of this hatred? Only one thing: anti-Semitism! The hatred of things Jewish is an old and deadly malady of the human heart that is so intense, it will unite the most unlikely groups. This is a disease of choice, a deliberate decision to persecute, hound and destroy Jews. The new target of those filled with this hatred is the “corporate Jew,” or Israel. They disavow anti-Semitism and insist that their accusations against Israel are legitimate because of political concerns. This is the Big Lie!

Their narrative twists history, denigrates the truth, and denies any Jewish connection to Jerusalem or the Temple Mount. Nevertheless, the liberal Left marches hand-in-hand with the Muslim militants! Meanwhile, smelling weakness in the American administration, Mohmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran has stepped up his war against the Jews by prodding Hezbollah toward renewed armed conflict with Israel on her northern border and on the Web. The message is clear: The Jews were never exterminated by anybody, but now they deserve it. When will the madness stop? (*Excerpts from The ongoing madness by Rev. Malcolm Hedding, executive director of the ICEJ, JPost International Edition. Sub-heading added.*)

On October 7, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, “Today’s war is not being fought with bullets but with lies and distortions of truth. The battle fields are international institutions...such as the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.” (*ECI Press release, October 8, 2010*)

# David Dolan reporting from Jerusalem

## Worst riots in several years

Sounds of border-police stun-grenade fire and ambulance sirens reverberated for many hours throughout the center of Jerusalem on September 22, as Israeli Jews put the finishing touches on their outdoor Succot booths. The ferocious clashes erupted in the troubled Silwan neighborhood near the Temple Mount. At least ten Israelis, five of them policemen, were wounded during the prolonged clashes, which quickly spread to other Arab neighborhoods. One Israeli man was stabbed in the back; private cars were torched or smashed, along with a number of city buses. Thick smoke covered the Temple Mount complex and the nearby Mount of Olives for much of the day. Palestinians hurled stones and metal objects upon thousands of Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall.

David Dolan writes about the situation right in his neighborhood, “I just heard another shot being fired here in Jerusalem (probably a stun-grenade) as I am writing... we have had daily clashes in the eastern part of the city and other locations. The Israeli government is apparently trying to keep a lid on the situation, and the local media—in holiday mode since we are still celebrating the week-long Feast of Tabernacles—has been under-reporting the situation, which may be for the best.” David continued, “For instance, a Jewish apartment was hit by Palestinian firebombs just around the corner from my home...but most major news outlets did not report the attack, despite the fact that the apartment was set on fire. Another apartment was hit last week in my neighborhood, but that time the hurled Molotov cocktails did not ignite a fire.”

## Far-reaching family ties

The intense violence began when an armed Israeli security guard, who works at the *City of David* Jewish enclave, stopped at an intersection in Silwan. He was quickly surrounded by a group of local Palestinian men wielding rocks, including 32 year old Sami Sirhan, a known Palestinian activist. Police reports said the incident appeared to be a deliberately staged ambush. The guard attempted to escape the area, shooting first in the air and then at Sirhan as the men refused to move back. Sirhan was killed. His subsequent funeral later in the day sparked off the worst rioting in the city since the Al Aksa uprising ended in 2004.

Some media reports said that Sami Sirhan was a member of the large Sirhan family clan which spawned Sirhan Sirhan, a Palestinian who assassinated the U.S. presidential candidate **Robert Kennedy** in Los Angeles in 1968.

## IDF gets ready

On the tenth anniversary of the start of one of Israel’s worst ever conflicts—the Palestinian Al Aksa attrition war, which took over 1,100 Israeli lives, mostly civilians, and over 5,000 Palestinians, a majority of them armed fighters—IDF commanders were busy preparing for the possibility of a major new wave of violence if American-mediated peace negotiations break down once again, as many expect. However, unlike during that four year conflict, Israeli security officials warn that a renewed wave of Palestinian violence today could be quickly supported with active military intervention by Syria and Hezbollah, along with Hamas militia forces that now fully control the Gaza Strip. In other words, a full blown conflict may result on a scale not seen since the 1973 Yom Kippur war.

Such a conflict could also be sparked by an IDF strike on Iranian nuclear targets or a successful Hezbollah or Hamas assassination of a senior Israeli political or military official. During September Hezbollah leaders again threatened revenge the car bomb killing of a top Hezbollah military commander—Imad Mughniyehin, in Damascus, February 2008—by carrying out assassinations of Jewish officials, even though Israel has strongly denied any responsibility for his death.

In continuing preparations for a potential major conflict, full-scale brigade level military exercises involving live fire are now being held on a regular basis. Military forces have been reinforced on the Golan Heights and along the Lebanese border, and sea patrols have been stepped up off the coasts of Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

With regional war possibly looming, Israel’s new incoming Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Major General Yoav Galant, was busy during September putting together his new military team. His vacated position as head of the Southern Command, in charge of all operations involving the Gaza Strip, will be taken over next February by Major General Tal Russo, who previously served on the general staff. In a surprise move, the new head of Military Intelligence—a crucial position given that he is responsible for giving regular strategic assessments to senior government officials—is not someone serving on the general staff, as is usually the case. The new head is Brigadier General Aviv Kochavi who previously served as Russo’s deputy.

*(Excerpts from David’s September 2010 News Update. For complete monthly news reports, books, and his speaking schedule, please visit [www.ddolan.com](http://www.ddolan.com).)*



# Jesus and the Holy Tongue

## Did Jesus speak Aramaic?

Did the historical Jesus speak Hebrew? The supposition of New Testament scholars—indeed, the virtually unchallenged assumption in Bible dictionaries and Gospel commentaries for well over a century—is that his native tongue was Aramaic. That is beginning to change. The research of a generation of scholars living in Israel, both Jews and Christians, strongly challenges this conventional conviction.

First, some background: The “holy tongue” (*lashon kodesh*) of Hebrew has been spoken for millennia by the Jewish people. Written Hebrew dates back more than 3,000 years, to the time of David and Solomon. In the sixth century B.C., however, the First Temple was destroyed and the elite population of Judea was exiled to Babylon. There they learned to speak Aramaic, a sister Semitic language to Hebrew, and the lingua franca of the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian empires.

The remnant that returned to Israel 70 years later, under Ezra and Nehemiah, spoke Aramaic in daily discourse, like the majority of their fellow Jews who remained behind in Babylon. (The Oral Law, known today as the Babylonian Talmud, was compiled in Aramaic around the year 500 A.D.) The widespread influence of Aramaic continued in the Eastern Mediterranean until the Arab conquest in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It is not a stretch, therefore, to surmise that Aramaic was the vernacular in Israel in the time of Jesus. This supposition seems supported by the appearance in the Gospels of occasional Aramaic words, like *Talitha kumi* [“Little girl, I say to you, arise”] (Mark 5:41) and *Raca!* [good for nothing] (Matthew 5:22).

## Or Hebrew, the holy tongue?

What evidence is there to the contrary? First, [along] with the resurgent nationalism evoked by the successful Maccabean revolt a century and a half before Jesus; [there] came a corresponding revival in Hebrew as the national language. The Dead Sea Scrolls have confirmed that, by the first century, Hebrew was again a spoken language in Israel. The various documents, the vast majority of which are written in Hebrew, reflect a distinct and developing Hebrew language in spoken as well as written forms. Dr. Randal Booth (JerusalemPerspective.com) has noted another significant feature of the Qumran library: With one exception, no *targums* (Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible) were discovered. Apparently the Essenes had no need of them, since they both read and spoke Hebrew. This finding accords with Luke’s account of Jesus’ synagogue



A copy of one of the Dead Sea scrolls on display.

sermon in 4:16ff, in which no use is made of a *targum*. Only later, in the second and following centuries, do *targums* play an important role in Jewish life.

Considerable additional data supports Hebrew as a commonly spoken language in the first century: There is epigraphic evidence (e.g., Hebrew inscriptions on coins and ossuaries) and literary evidence (e.g., in Josephus’ account of the Jewish war against Rome and the Temple’s destruction). More than 1,000 parables preserved in rabbinic literature, including those from the earliest period, are all in Hebrew. In the Talmud, even a parable that appears in the midst of a story in Aramaic will be told in Hebrew.

Within the Synoptic Gospels themselves, Matthew and Luke especially have preserved hundreds of Hebraisms, idioms or figures of speech, and extended passages that, though written in Greek, can be retroverted word-for-word into perfect Hebrew syntax, word order and even idiomatic expressions characteristic of the period.

Based on pioneering research in Israel over the past 50 years by Jewish and Christian scholars, we now can state the following confidently: **Jesus of Nazareth lived in a vibrant multilingual and theologically rich milieu, in which Hebrew was a living, spoken language, along with Aramaic and Greek. Like other Jewish sages who used Hebrew to transmit teachings such as parables, the historical Jesus also taught primarily in the “holy tongue.”** The significance of this discovery is far-reaching, and will help us appreciate our Hebrew Savior more fully.

(Excerpts from *Jesus and the Holy Tongue* by Dr. Dwight A. Pryor, who is founder and president of the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies; [www.jcstudies.com](http://www.jcstudies.com). The article was published in *The Jerusalem Post Christian Edition*, July 2010.)

## 2011 Calendar is now available

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**Cover:** *Displays of clay vessels in the Davidson Center in Jerusalem. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel" (Jeremiah 18:6).*



**April 2011:** *Church crosses along the Via Dolorosa remind pilgrims of all faiths of the importance of Jerusalem for Christians. "And they pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene...to bear His cross" (Mark 15:21).*

## Lance's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday in February

Lance Lambert—one of the most distinguished of Bible scholars, teachers and lecturers on Israel today—celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 5, 2011. We wish to bless Lance with a financial gift as a token of our appreciation of his life and ministry. We will accept donations earmarked "Lance 80" till January 15.



Born in 1931, Lance grew up in Richmond, Surrey in the U.K., and came to know the Lord at twelve years of age. He entered the school of African and Oriental studies at London University to prepare for work in China. However, the revolution closed the door to European missionaries and his entry into China. Having discovered his Jewish ancestry Lance became an Israeli citizen in 1980 and now has his home next to the Old City of Jerusalem. His father and many members of his family died in the Holocaust. Lance's Update recording is a unique perspective on current events in the Middle East. (*Visit [www.lancelambert.org](http://www.lancelambert.org) for details.*)

## No child left behind...

Special-needs children need our help

I fondly remember our 2008 visit to Rosh Zurim kibbutz in Gush Etzion Jewish community in Israel. The kibbutz is home to several educational institutions, including Sadna, a unique elementary school for special-needs children from all over Israel. These children will always need care; therefore, the program is planned with their future in mind. A variety of vocational and recreational workshops include carpentry, ceramics, weaving and photography to keep them active, and also, to prepare them for their adulthood.

When we toured the workshops, classrooms and spoke with the teachers and caregiver families, it was obvious to us that the Sadna program has proved to be a success with the children that attend the school. It offers hope for these children and their families. Since the outbreak of the war of terrorism in 2000, more families are looking for long-term care. It is because some of the child victims of terrorism have become special-needs children as a result of either the physical or the emotional damage caused by terrorist acts. Israeli children pay a high price for Palestinians' aspiration for a state within the Jewish state of Israel.

We were glad to see how Sadna's stables function as a therapeutic horse-back riding program. Also, children learn to care for horses and clean the stables. A few of the older children have advanced well and are now giving riding lessons to younger children.

Special-needs children and youth must be cared for their entire life. As their families often find it impossible to keep them home, the cost of care becomes a burden. I appeal to you to join us in our efforts to help provide critically important assistance and to bless the entire families. (*Hannele Pardain, Executive Director, CFI-USA*)



*During the visit to Rosh Zurim, Cynthia from PA became acquainted with one of the Sadna program's horses.*