



# Defender

"BUT THERE IS A FRIEND WHO STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER." PROVERBS 18:24



## Israel at 70 — Dramatic Change

*Historic changes in Israel/U.S. relationship and in the Middle East.*

You and I are witnessing history in the Middle East where events are now moving at an accelerating pace. Israel's 70th anniversary as a modern nation state, President Trump's courageous and correct decision to pull out of the fatally flawed Iran nuclear deal, direct military conflict between Israel and Iran, and the opening of the new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem are all historic events compressed into the space of mere weeks in April and May.

It's impossible to overstate the magnitude of the change now sweeping across the Middle East — which is why your voice and mine are so needed on Israel's behalf.

The most visible symbol of the shifting geopolitical tide is the new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem — and the other embassies soon to open there as more countries follow President Trump's historic lead.

But even before the embassy opening, Israel celebrated the 70th anniversary of its founding as a modern state on April 18-19th (The date does not coincide with the May 14th, 1948 declaration of Israel's statehood because Israel follows the Jewish calendar.)

In a jubilant Independence Day speech, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared Israel is becoming "a rising world power." Despite Iran and its proxies — Hezbollah, Syria and Hamas — which seek to encircle and

destroy the Jewish state — Netanyahu expressed supreme confidence for Israel's future. "Some seek to extinguish the light coming from Zion," Netanyahu declared. "It will not happen."

But the destruction of Israel is what Iran wants. It struck Israel on May 10, firing 20 rockets at the Jewish state but doing no harm. Four rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome and the other 16 landed inside Syria. Israel immediately retaliated, scrambling fighter jets and firing surface-to-surface missiles in a devastating counter-punch that reduced much of the Iranian military infrastructure inside Syria to rubble.

Iran's missile barrage came after President Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deeply flawed Iran nuclear deal. Trump's announcement followed Netanyahu's stunning disclosure of Iran's nuclear secrets, a trove of more than 100,000 documents Israeli spies spirited out of Iran in January.

Trump's bold decision was the right choice for America, for Israel, and for the world. The only country that benefited from the Iran deal was Iran itself. The pact gave Iran, the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism, a clear path to an atomic arsenal. President Trump's action reverses Obama's failed foreign policy and protects Americans and our closest allies in the Middle East from this malicious regime.

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# A Mighty Victory for Israel's Future

On May 14, 2018 — the 70th anniversary of Israel's Declaration of Independence — the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem was officially opened. In taking this step, President Donald Trump fulfilled a campaign promise, and took a step that made America's support for Israel unmistakable to the entire world. Though Congress passed a law requiring the U.S. Embassy to be moved to Jerusalem back in 1995, each president since used a loophole in the law to avoid complying. Now that has all changed.

In a recorded statement played at the embassy opening, President Trump said, “For many years we failed to acknowledge the obvious: the plain reality that Israel's capital is Jerusalem. On Dec. 6, 2017, at my direction, the United States finally and officially recognized Jerusalem as the true capital of Israel. Today, we follow through on this recognition and open our embassy in the historic and sacred land of Jerusalem.”

Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu left no doubt how important this move was to the Jewish people. He said, “Dear friends, What a glorious day. Remember this moment. This is history. President Trump, by recognizing history, you have made history. All of us

are deeply moved. All of us are deeply grateful. May the opening of this embassy in this city spread the truth far and wide, and may the truth advance a lasting peace between Israel and all our neighbors.”

Of course, not everyone was happy about the move. Massive protests spurred by the Hamas terrorist group in Gaza tried to detract from the event. But it was eye-opening to see the very muted response in other areas. There were no major outbreaks of violence or protest anywhere else. The usual countries like Iran and Turkey loudly condemned the U.S. Embassy move, but the truth is that Jerusalem has long been the capital of Israel, and it is going to be harder and harder for the rest of the world to deny reality.

Already, Guatemala has opened their embassy in Jerusalem, and at least half a dozen other countries are discussing taking steps to follow the example of America. This represents a huge shift in international relations. Even Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have publicly supported Israel's right to exist in peace and safety, and to take necessary steps to defend their people from attacks. Great things are happening!

*“May the opening of this embassy in this city spread the truth far and wide, and may the truth advance a lasting peace between Israel and all our neighbors.”*

*– Prime Minister Netanyahu*



# Another Mighty Victory for Israel's Security

As part of the omnibus spending package passed through Congress to fund the operation of the government for the year, the Taylor Force Act was finally passed into law. This has been a long time coming, and Christians in Defense of Israel worked tirelessly behind the scenes in Washington to secure passage of this important law. What we found was that many who said they supported it didn't actually want to vote for it — but we kept on, and it is now the law of the land!

Named for U.S. Army veteran Taylor Force, who was brutally murdered in a terrorist attack in Tel Aviv in 2016, the bill requires the Palestinian Authority to make a choice — they can either end their barbaric practice of making payments to terrorists and their families for attacks against Jewish people, or their flow of U.S. dollars will stop. As a reminder, here is the official summary of the purpose and impact of the bill:

**PASSED**

## The Taylor Force Act

This bill prohibits certain assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 from being made available for the West Bank and Gaza unless the Department of State certifies that the Palestinian Authority:

- is taking steps to end acts of violence against U.S. and Israeli citizens perpetrated by individuals under its jurisdictional control, such as the March 2016 attack that killed former Army officer Taylor Force;



- is publicly condemning such acts of violence and is investigating, or cooperating in investigations of, such acts; and
- has terminated payments for acts of terrorism against U.S. and Israeli citizens to any individual who has been convicted and imprisoned for such acts, to any individual who died committing such acts, and to family members of such an individual.

The Palestinian Authority has said it will continue to make these blood-money payments. And you can be sure that CIDI will be continuing to hold the State Department's feet to the fire to ensure that if the PA does not fully comply with the law, all U.S. funding will be stopped. A huge thanks is due to every friend of CIDI who signed petitions, contacted their elected representatives, prayed and gave to make this massive change a reality.



## VISIT ISRAEL!

You can join Mat and Anita Staver in Israel next year on the Liberty Ambassador Counsel® VIP Tour, March 31-April 9, 2019.

This unique trip offers you a very special Israel experience and takes you to more than 25 historic sites including Jerusalem, Galilee, the Jordan River, Judean Desert, Jezreel Valley and the Mediterranean.

Learn more at  
[www.CIDIIsrael.org/tour](http://www.CIDIIsrael.org/tour).

# Covenant Journey Counters Campus Anti-Semitism

Israeli civic leader Natan Sharansky blasted American universities in 2005 as "islands of anti-Semitism." A Soviet-era refusenik who later served in Israel's Knesset and now leads the Jewish Agency, Sharansky said college campuses are places where "Israel is epitomized as the epicenter of everything that is hateful in the universe." More than a decade later, not much is changed. Israel is still demonized on campus and pro-Israel students are silenced.

"I see two disturbing trends on college campuses," says Christians in Defense of Israel President Mat Staver. "Christian college students are walking away from their faith and there's a rising tide of anti-Semitism."

## Two-Way Solution

Covenant Journey, an affiliated ministry of Christians in Defense of Israel, offers a solution on both fronts. Founded in 2014 by Mat and Anita Staver, Covenant Journey takes Christian college-age students with leadership potential to Israel for an immersive 10-day life-changing experience to strengthen their Christian faith and equip them to be goodwill ambassadors for Israel.

Students experience biblical, historical, and modern Israel, and return home transformed with a renewed love for God and for Israel.

"There is something unique about this place, where you connect with our Judeo-Christian history and, more importantly, you connect with Jesus, and that's what makes the difference," said Staver, who personally leads many of the trips.

## Testimonies

"While in Israel, I fell in love not only with my Savior on a deeper level, but also with modern-day Israel and the Jewish people," said Samuel, who visited Israel with Covenant Journey in 2015 and returned as a CJ Ambassador in 2016, followed by an internship in 2017.

"I literally saw history come alive. Seeing the different places that Jesus touched while he was on earth expanded my faith profoundly. I now further understand the geopolitical significance of the country and the Jewish people and am better equipped to advocate for a stronger alliance between Israel and the United States," recalled Julia, who recently graduated and now works in the White House.



Mat Staver and Covenant Journey students with Hannah Pick-Goslar, a Holocaust survivor and childhood friend of Anne Frank.

"Nothing will make your faith in Jesus more real or tangible," insisted Laura of her 2018 trip to Israel. "It's almost like a concentrated dose of biblical reality, and it will absolutely alter your life and your relationship with Jesus."

So far, about 1,000 young Christian leaders have visited Israel since Covenant Journey's first tour in 2014. These young leaders hail from more than 300 colleges and universities, including large and small, private, state, and Christian schools, as well as Ivy League, medical, law, engineering, and technical schools

The cost to students on this selective tour is \$500, but the actual total expense for the 10-day tour is \$3,500. The actual cost including administration is much higher. It's an investment, underwritten by generous partners like you, to strengthen young Christians in their faith and raise up the next generation of pro-Israel champions.

## Speaking Out for Israel

For Covenant Journey alumna Bri, visiting Israel empowered her to reach out as an ambassador to Jewish, Palestinian, and Arab student groups at the University of Southern California. She always knew she supported Israel, but she lacked the knowledge and confidence to stand up against Apartheid Week and other anti-Semitic events on campus. Covenant Journey changed all that for Bri.

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"My biggest calling [on campus] was to have conversations about what people thought about Israel," Bri said. "If they would let me, I would

share about my trip. I had so many conversations with people. Some disagreed with me, but I am still having those conversations." Trained in film, Bri now works full-time for Cru in Paris using her skills to work with missionaries in the Middle East. It was the Covenant Journey experience that redirected her future.

### Learn More

Each year Covenant Journey takes more than 230 young Christian leaders to Israel on five 10-day trips. While this year's trips are filled, qualified Christian college-age students may apply for 2019, beginning in August.

To learn more, visit [www.CovenantJourney.org](http://www.CovenantJourney.org). Covenant Journey is the most powerful ministry for the millennial generation. Be a part of making history by raising up Gideon's army. Pledge your monthly support of our Covenant Journey ministry.

## Why Israel Matters: Season Two

COMING  
SOON

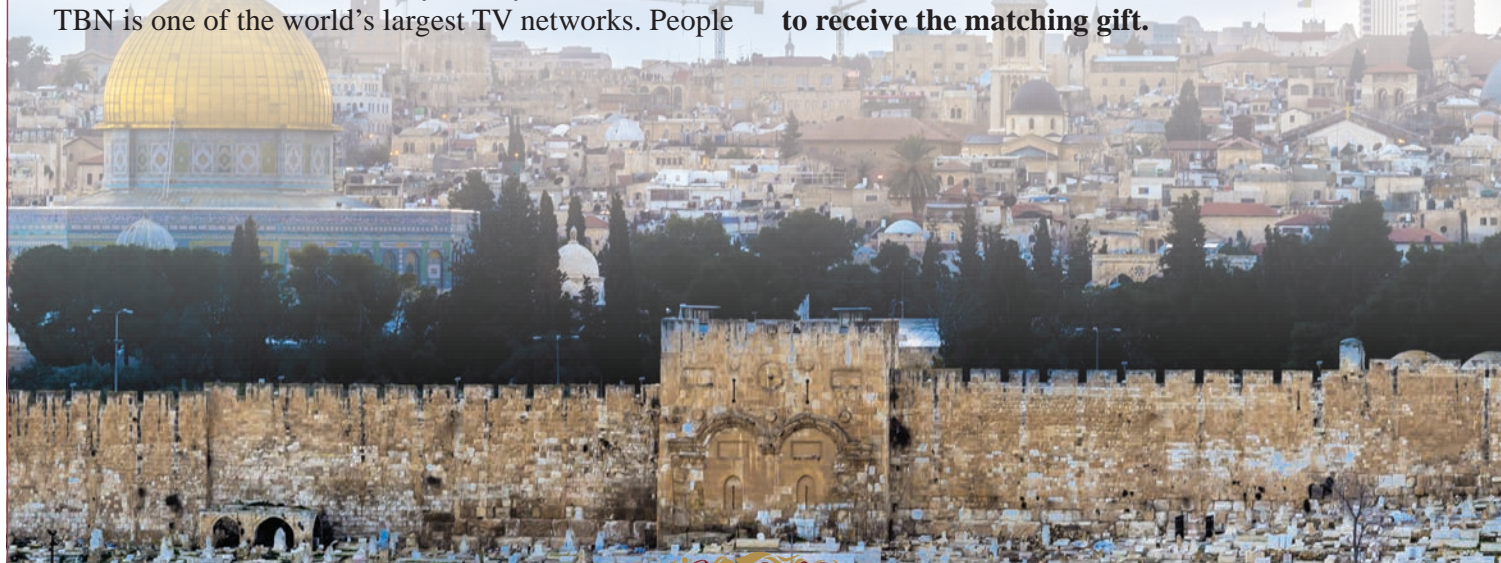
Last year we premiered one of the most powerful tools for support of Israel ever with the 13-part original series *Why Israel Matters* which aired on the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Over and over since then we've heard from people who have been touched by these programs in such a wonderful way. Israel is a land of ancient history, storied traditions, and opposing peoples. In the western world, this Middle Eastern nation is seen through the hazy lens of news headlines and political spin.

What we set out to do with *Why Israel Matters* was to give viewers an up close and personal view of this small nation that plays a big role on the world's stage. We explored the big picture topics associated with Israel by zooming in on first-hand accounts of actual people who live in this historic land. Since it debuted in February 2017, TBN has continually aired the series on its worldwide network. What you may not know is that TBN is one of the world's largest TV networks. People



around the world have been watching Season One of *Why Israel Matters*.

**Now we are thrilled to share with you that, due to its popularity, TBN has asked us to produce Season Two of *Why Israel Matters*! And there is even more good news. We have received an amazing matching gift challenge of \$250,000 which will cover half of the cost of producing and airing the second season. Once produced, TBN has offered to air it worldwide at no cost to us. We cannot miss this opportunity. We must raise \$250,000 to match the gift and begin production. I am calling upon you for help to raise the \$250,000 match. We must raise the entire amount to receive the matching gift.**



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Despite the nuclear deal, Iran has spent the last two years building its military presence inside Syria, establishing a forward operating base to attack the Jewish state. But Israel has shown it can and will defend itself. And it has a strong ally in the U.S. under President Trump.

America's new embassy in Jerusalem shows the renewed strength of the U.S.-Israel bond. Speaking at the embassy's dedication ceremony on May 14, Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked President Trump for keeping his word by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and opening the U.S. Embassy to Israel in the Holy City. "President Trump," Netanyahu declared, "by recognizing history, you have made history."

And the prime minister also extended his gratitude to the "many friends who have prayed for this day and have worked for this day." That's you, my friend.



Your generosity, your prayers, and your friendship with Israel helped bring us to this day!

Your voice is being heard. Your ongoing support for Israel through Christians in Defense of Israel is making a difference. Thank you for standing with me as we partner together to bless and defend God's chosen people and the Jewish state of Israel.



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**CHRISTIANS IN DEFENSE OF ISRAEL**

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Thank you for your interest in CIDI's vital work and for your continuing prayer and financial support!