

# Freedom of Religion in the Holy Land



Christianity: Persecution,  
Expulsion and  
Hope for the Future

# Christianity in Israel

**Christianity** is practiced by more than 161,000 Israeli citizens (about 2.1% of population).



*Israel is the only country in the Middle East  
with Freedom of Religion for all*

# Christians under Palestinian Rule



Approximately 10% of the Palestinian population in Judea and Samaria were Christians in the 1990s. The updated number of Christians under the Palestinian Authority today is 1% of the population.

# Christians under Palestinian Rule

Since the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2006, anti-Christian attitudes have been on the increase.

In 2005 there were 3,000 Christians in Gaza. Today, only a few hundred remain in the Gaza Strip .



# So what does all this mean?

The Christians of the Middle East are in danger. They are:

- Persecuted
- Murdered
- Tortured
- Forcefully converted
- Discriminated against
- Expelled

If we don't stop these atrocities we will loose more than our people, we will loose our history, and therefore, our identity.

# Bethlehem



Matthew 2:1 - Now when Jesus was born in  
Bethlehem of Judea.

# Jericho

Luke 18:35,42,43: And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging... And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee... And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.



# Temple Mount

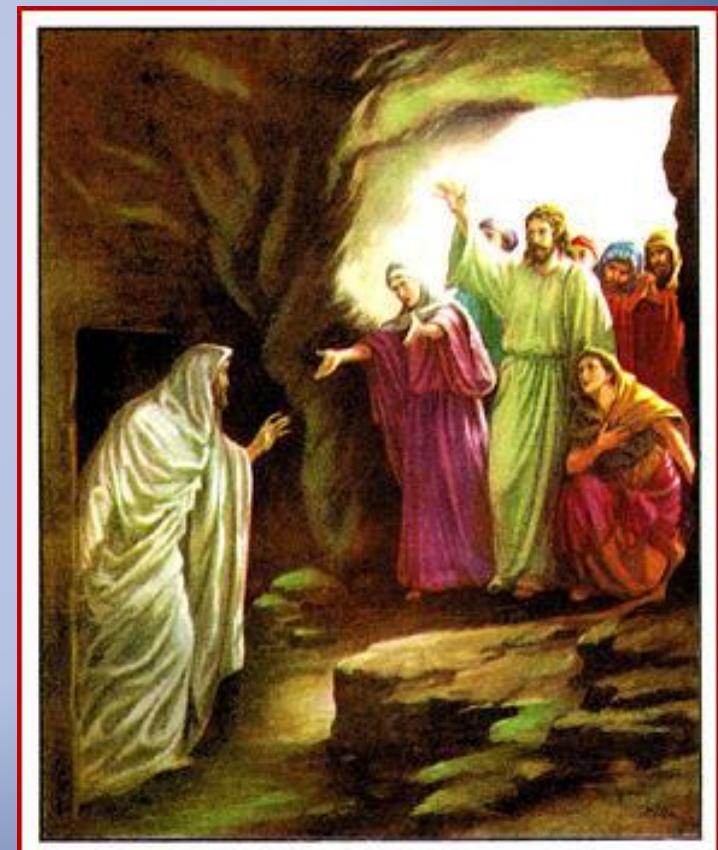


John 7:14 - Now about the midst of the feast  
Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

# Bethany

John 11:1,39-44, Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha... Jesus said, Take ye away the stone...

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.... And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth.



# In Palestinian Territories

*February 2003, Shehem, The Tomb of Joseph* being destroyed by PLO activists. Today it is under a mosque.

*September 18, 2006, Tulkarem*– Two churches were set afire in response to comments regarding the nature of Islam by **Pope Benedict XVI** .



*Jun 18, 2007, Gaza* - Christians in Gaza fear for their lives as Muslims burn bibles and destroy crosses. They have issued an appeal to the international community and a plea for protection against the increased attacks by Muslim extremists.

## Israel protects Christians and Christianity

If Israel is weak, we are weak.

If Israel is vulnerable, we are vulnerable.

If Israel is attacked, we are attacked.

If Israel falls, we all will fall.

What about the rest of the  
Middle East?

The Christian population in Muslim countries has decreased from an average 20% to 5% in the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone.



The Christian society in Israel is the only Christian community in the Middle East which has experienced population growth through the last decades.

# Christianity in the Middle East



Christians are persecuted, murdered and expelled from their homelands across the Muslim World.

# All over the Muslim world

*November 5, 2012 – Pakistan: A church was burned while Muslims were protesting a film that carried material objectionable to Islam.*



*August 2013-Current – Egypt: Dozens of churches have been destroyed, over 500 dead, and 3,000 injured.*

# What does the future hold?

# The Gardens of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36 - Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.



# Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Matthew 27:59-60 , when Joseph had taken the body... he laid it in his own new tomb, and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

## Psalm 83

O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God! For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones. They say, “Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!” For they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant.



Hope

Strength

Prayer

Unity