

ISRAEL: praying light into darkness

Last week we prayed for **IRAN** and today we continue our journey of prayer by calling *light into darkness* as we focus on **ISRAEL**

Print out the information below, and at any time of day, place the map of Israel before you, light a candle, and hold Israel before God. Let the flame remind you that Christ's light still shines in the midst of fear and fire.

INFORMATION



Israel today is a nation of just over **9.8 million** people. Its population is young by Western standards, with a median age of around **30**, and it is home to a mosaic of communities: Jewish (about 73%), Arab (about 21%), and smaller groups including Druze, Bedouin, Circassian, and others. Religiously, according to a major Gallup survey **65%** of Israelis say they are either “not religious” or “convinced atheists”, making Israel more secular than most countries in Europe. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics only **12.5% Jews** see themselves as

religious with **11.3%** identifying as ultra-Orthodox

The Christian community in Israel is small but ancient, representing **roughly 2% of the population**. Critically important though is that more than **75% of Christians in Israel are Arab Christians**. Though small in number, the Christian community carries a profound spiritual heritage, tracing their roots back to the earliest followers of Jesus. Many serve quietly in reconciliation work, humanitarian aid, and bridge-building across deep divides.

Israel is home to **49 distinct people groups**, with **97%** of the population in these groups being unreached. And while the gospel has a long history in this land, many communities — Jewish and non-Jewish alike — remain unreached or resistant due to historical wounds, cultural barriers, and religious identity

All of this unfolds against the backdrop of a devastating and prolonged conflict with Iran. Since February 28, 2026, **24 civilians have been killed** and more than **6,412 have been injured**. The full extent of strikes on Israeli territory has not been publicly released due to restricted information and ongoing security concerns. What is known is that communities across the north and south have lived under repeated alerts, displacement, and psychological strain.

This is the Israel we hold before God: ancient, wounded, diverse, and of profoundly spiritual significance.

INSPIRATION

This is a testimony of how the small Arab Christian community in Israel are becoming instruments of reconciliation and peace

Dr. Yohanna Katanacho often says, “In suffering, we discover a new space – a space in which God is present.” As an Israeli Palestinian Evangelical Christian, he learned this truth not as an idea but as a lived reality. Growing up under severe restrictions, he faced daily obstacles: his university was shut down for three years, studying as a Palestinian Israeli was illegal, and he was arrested simply for attending a chemistry class. Soldiers stopped him constantly.

As he studied the Bible, Yohanna one day came across the text in Matthew 5:44 that says, “love your enemies”. The command felt impossible. He closed his Bible and prayed, “God, I cannot be a traitor. I cannot love my enemies. This is too difficult”

*One day, at a Christian coffee shop near Jaffa Gate, he found a small flyer titled **REAL LOVE**, containing the prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 53: “like a lamb being led to the slaughter.” He slipped it into his ID card and went home to negotiate with God. “I cannot love my enemies,” he said. “But I will keep this flyer in my ID. When soldiers stop me, they will see it. I won’t lie and say I love them. I will simply say, **‘This is how my God wants me to relate to you.’**”*

Day after day, soldiers stopped him. They opened his ID, saw the flyer, and asked about it. Yohanna repeated his prepared line. Slowly, obedience started reshaping his heart. He began walking the streets praying, "God, let them stop me so I can tell them about Jesus."

One night, carrying Arabic church bulletins under his jacket, Yohanna approached Damascus Gate and encountered three soldiers. Fearing they would mistake the papers for political flyers, he prayed for protection. When they indicated that he needed to come to them to be searched, he panicked and without thinking unzipped his jacket quickly to show the flyers to them. Thinking that he was carrying weapons the soldiers raised their guns and pointed it at his head. Instinctively, Yohanna placed his hand on his heart and said, "I love you." Shocked silence followed – both by the soldiers and Yohanna. Then the guns lowered, and he shared Christ with them.

They told him, "We wish all Palestinians were like you." He replied, "No—I wish you were like me."

Through these encounters, Yohanna learned that love is not a feeling but a daily decision. Exercised in the midst of hatred, love becomes stronger by the grace of God.

These are the people we pray for: peace-makers, courageous, bridge-builders, and with hearts focused on God.

INTERPRETATION

We pray to the Lord of light and mercy, and as we light our candles, **we hold Israel before Him now.**

The Indigenous Church

Lord, strengthen Your people in Israel — Arab Christians, Messianic Jews, immigrant believers, and ancient communities. Root them in courage, surround them with Your presence, and let their witness shine like a steady flame. Give them unity, tenderness, and endurance. Let their love outshine fear and their hope outlast conflict.

Peace

Let Your peace rest on Israel — in cities, villages, border towns, and contested spaces. Calm fear, silence violence, and open a path toward healing.

Reconciliation

Heal the divides between communities, generations, and leaders. Where suspicion has grown, plant trust. Where bitterness has taken root, plant mercy.

Protection of civilians

Guard the innocent, shield the vulnerable, and let no life be lost to the cruelty of conflict. Protect families living under threat, and restore safety to those who have been displaced.

Wisdom for leaders

We pray for Israel's leaders — the President, Isaac Herzog and the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Cabinet, and military and civil authorities. Turn their hearts, like a David of old, toward justice, humility, and restraint. Give them wisdom that protects life and dignity.

Comfort for the grieving

Hold every grieving family close. Let Your comfort be deeper than their sorrow and Your nearness stronger than their pain.

Hope for the future

Plant hope in the soil of suffering. Let new possibilities rise, and let Israel's future be shaped by peace, dignity, and renewal.

Lord, let Your light shine over Israel, and let the darkness not overcome it. Amen.

Next week we will continue our journey as we pray for LEBANON.