

A Word from Jerusalem

July/August, 1999

*May there be peace within your walls, and
prosperity within your palaces. Psalms 122:7*





Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

With a new government assuming power, Israel is in a season of change. We have sent greetings to the Prime Minister-elect of Israel, Gen. Ehud Barak, inviting him to attend this year's Feast of Tabernacles celebration and will follow up with a formal invitation once he is installed. There are indications he will be friendly and sympathetic towards Christians and will recognise the support we offer in our firm commitment to Israel. Certainly, he needs our

prayers, as there are many challenges ahead — final status talks, the unity of Jerusalem, relations between religious and secular Israelis and so forth. (Please see the article on pages 3-4).

It is interesting that Israelis who identify themselves as secular can never quite separate themselves from their traditional biblical roots. Mr. Barak has appealed for unity based on this recognised area of common ground among Israeli Jews. One of the first things he did was to go to the Western Wall and place a prayer from the Psalms in one of the crevices, as an expression of thanks to the Almighty. He also included several quotes from the Bible in his post-election speeches.

The out-going prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, has not been forgotten by Christians. There are many who continue to appreciate his stand on God's Word as the foundation for Israel's modern existence and his appreciation and understanding of the role of Christians in Israel's modern history and the value of our support. At the Embassy, we have received many well wishes for Mr. Netanyahu and his family and many are praying that his time out of office will be fruitful and productive, and a preparation for whatever the Lord has for him in future.

The 1999 Feast of Tabernacles will be of the utmost spiritual importance as we near the turn of the millennium. This will be a great time to be in Israel and to minister our encouragement to the people of the Land as they consider many questions, especially about the impact the momentous days ahead will have on their lives.

As the challenge of the millennium draws closer, Jerusalem daily sees signs of preparations for the expected increase in Christian pilgrims coming to observe this landmark occasion. Among the great influx of visitors expected next year are many Catholics. One Italian tour operator has already booked 18 thousand hotel rooms — and paid for them up front. This is in anticipation of the period from February to April next year, to coincide with the Pope's visit. It is therefore providential that we rescheduled our next Christian Zionist Congress for a year later — at the beginning of the year 2001.

While the vast majority of Christian visitors to this country are peaceful and of a sound mind, the press has made much lately of the so-called "Jerusalem Syndrome" disorder. The spiritual setting of Jerusalem is certainly intense and the city seems to be a magnet for some unbalanced people. At the moment, the nation's social services are preparing themselves for a possible increase in the number of such visitors during the year 2000.

Israel's leading expert on "Jerusalem Syndrome" recently commented in public to us that there had never been a single reported case of the disorder among pilgrims coming to the Embassy's Feast of Tabernacles celebration. This is so because the vast majority of the pilgrims who come to Israel are humble believers who come to serve, to learn and to receive.

Here in Jerusalem, we find that many tourists are searching for a spiritual reality in their lives. Jerusalem is an ideal place to witness to them, since the redemptive acts happened right here.

Even as Israel prepares itself for many visitors in the year 2000, the Embassy continues to reach out to the nations with the prophetic message for these days. As we go to print, the Embassy's tour of Brazil is in full swing. A characteristic of this tour has been the attendance of big, enthusiastic crowds.

In Rio de Janeiro more than 5,000 Christians filled the largest indoor auditorium in Brazil. The Embassy's gifted worship team were joined in every city by many Brazilian singers, musicians and dancers. In Sao Paulo, the team had a difficult time in getting the people to go home. They tried to bring the meeting to a close five times, but those in attendance only wanted to continue to worship. The meeting finally came to an end at about 1:30 am! Also in Manaus, on the Amazon River, thousands attended the celebration.

Worldwide we trust that the Spirit of God will challenge many more in these significant days of the turn of the millennium, to worship Him and also to be an encouragement to the Jewish People.

Our publication team just made a very interesting visit to the archaeological digs at the City of David, just outside the present walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. We were invited by the City of David Visitors' Centre. The findings in this dig are very important as they again confirm the Bible and Israel's historic claims to that part of Jerusalem, which will fall under Muslim control should the city be divided again. We hope to schedule a visit to the City of David's new findings, during the Feast.

In line with the election pledges and recent prayers of Israel's new leader, we will continue to seek the unity and peace of Jerusalem in the days ahead.

In His Name,
Johann Lückhoff

Israel's New Leader: Will Barak Put Unity First?

Jerusalem's Western Wall, long considered the holiest site in Judaism, now seems to be the accepted place of pilgrimage for those assuming political leadership in Israel.

So it came as no surprise to see the newly elected prime minister, Gen. Ehud Barak, visit the *Kotel* the day after his convincing victory over incumbent Binyamin Netanyahu on May 17th. But few expected the sudden outburst of deeply religious rhetoric in his post-election speeches.

After a very divisive campaign season, the victorious Barak struck a decidedly conciliatory tone when addressing supporters in the early hours of the morning after polls closed. "From now on... we are all one nation," he said, reciting the same psalm Netanyahu had quoted in his 1996 victory speech: "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." (Psalm 29:11)

The next day at the Wall, Barak placed a prayer between the massive stones reading: "May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces," taken from Psalms 122:7. (Cover Photo - courtesy GPO). He then addressed waiting TV cameras, saying, "In the Torah, it is written... 'and Israel encamped there.'" Barak added, "And Rashi commented, 'as one man, with one heart.'"

As celebrations continued, he underscored the "unity" theme in every speech with repeated references to religious themes. "Here I am, impoverished in deeds..." said Barak, quoting from the ancient prayer recited on Yom Kippur by the pious, humble person selected to beseech God to accept the pleas of his fellow penitents.

Barak's initial pleas for unity centred on the traditions of his people – those common cultural and sacred symbols that define "Jewishness." And while some on the left scoffed at this abrupt display of religious convictions, Barak appeared sincere in his commitment to repair the religious/secular rift so magnified during the recent election. This fissure was most clearly evidenced by the big gains scored in the Knesset race by the Sephardic, ultra-Orthodox *Shas* party and the anti-haredi *Shinui* party, who both profited from their roles as opposite lightning rods in the *kulturkampf* between religious and secular Israelis.

Barak's successful campaign strategy paraded his

status as Israel's most decorated soldier to deflect charges that he would be too dovish on crucial security and peace issues as final status talks with the Palestinians approach. While laying claim to the mantle of slain leader Yitzhak Rabin, Barak also was adamant his "red lines" in a final settlement with PLO leader Yasser Arafat were not that different from the positions of Netanyahu and the

Likud. Rather, he wanted the decision for voters reduced to a choice of who could better unite the nation and heal the growing societal divisions between religious and secular, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, immigrant and *sabra*, Jew and Arab.

In the end, a solid majority of the Israeli electorate, including half the Jewish voters, opted to put their future in the hands of a military hero with solid security credentials, but with relatively little experience in politics. Although best known as a highly-decorated soldier, Barak has a master's degree in systems analysis from Stanford, is a classical pianist and an expert in Hebrew literature. He is considered intelligent and individualistic.



Supporters of Ehud Barak and Binyamin Netanyahu vying for attention at a major intersection in central Jerusalem .

Last-minute withdrawals by other candidates had left Barak in a two-man race with Netanyahu, who was pinning hopes on a second round run-off. Netanyahu conceded defeat only minutes after polls closed, and vacated his party's top post. The stunning, but honourable move was a defining moment at the end of an opposition campaign aimed simply at "getting Bibi."

To a degree, Netanyahu was a victim of his own success, as his policies reduced incidents of Palestinian terrorism to the point the issue carried less weight with many voters than in 1996. Further, he was perceived as too close to *Shas*, whose leader Aryeh Deri had been convicted on fraud and bribery charges in the midst of the campaign. This proved costly, especially among the large Russian immigrant voting bloc that previously had helped put him in power.

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Israel's New Leader:

Continued from page 3



Large election banners displayed on houses in Bezael Street, Jerusalem.

A BIG TENT: With 45 days to form a coalition, Barak has been seeking as broad a government as possible – for two basic reasons. First, even though he has little room to criticize his mentor Rabin, it seems he accepts the premise that the Labour leader made contentious concessions in the Oslo process with only a narrow coalition, ignoring half the country. With a final settlement on the near horizon, he genuinely appears to want as wide support as practical.

Secondly, he is concerned that leaving out all the right-of-center and ultra-Orthodox parties will further alienate religious and Sephardi elements beyond tolerable limits. *Shas* supporters in particular have felt attacked from several angles of late — the judiciary's prosecution of Aryeh Deri; the verbal barrage from former TV commentator Tommy Lapid and his combatively secular *Shinui* party; and the aggressive bid by Natan Sharansky and *Yisrael B'Aliyah* to wrest control of the Interior Ministry traditionally held by *Shas*.

At first, Barak vowed to include only those coalition partners who accepted his core guidelines for future peace talks, and progress was sluggish. But once Deri finally resigned as head of *Shas*, the way was paved for their possible inclusion in a coalition with the support of about 70 Knesset members. Besides *Shas* (17 seats), other key partners for Barak's One Israel (26) could include *Meretz* (10) on the left and the Centre party (6), with the more hawkish *Yisrael B'Aliyah* (6) and the National Religious Party (5) working inside the government to resist imprudent peace and security decisions.

A third religious party, United Torah Judaism (5), wants to join the government, but has demanded Barak abandon his plan to draft yeshiva students. The outcome

of this decision could affect *Shas* and NRP as well.

The *Likud*, reduced to 19 seats, appeared content for a while to lead the opposition and rebuild under the interim leadership of Ariel Sharon. But when Barak ran into difficulties in meeting the hardline demands of *Shas*, the *Likud* suddenly is back in the picture as a potential major coalition partner.

As we go to press, little time and much work remains for Barak to close all the deals with his preferred coalition partners and he may need to expand his cabinet to 24 seats in order to have enough portfolios to distribute. Yet as is often the case in this process, when the doors begin to close, the concrete demands of many parties tend to soften and agreement is reached quickly.

And then Barak will be obliged to make pilgrimage to the next site now expected of new Israeli leaders – Washington, DC. There he will be asked two questions: Are you prepared to resume implementing the Wye Memorandum withdrawals in Judea/Samaria? AND are you ready to withdraw from all the Golan in exchange for a peace treaty with Syria?

Barak's exact answers are still a mystery, although he did publicly outline his essential positions in final status talks: Jerusalem should remain Israel's undivided capital; no return to the pre-1967 borders; no "Arab army" west of the Jordan River; and "most" Jewish settlements would remain under Israeli sovereignty. Notably absent is any reference to Palestinian statehood. Barak also pledged to withdraw from south Lebanon within a year.

A big signal of things to come may be who lands the Foreign Ministry slot, since Barak is under pressure from inside his Labour faction to appoint Yossi Beilin, known for pursuing such private foreign policy initiatives as Oslo. But post-election surveys indicate that Barak's surprising margin of victory (56%) was not necessarily a mandate for rapid concessions to the Palestinians and Syrians. Both a Gallup poll and the "Peace Index" survey by Tel Aviv University found that the majority of the public voted with unity and economic improvements in mind, rather than the advancement of the peace process.



So far, Barak appears to understand this message.



You are warmly invited to attend the 1999 Feast of Tabernacles, the last Succot of this millennium. The theme of this Feast is “The Reaping of the Harvest”, in the spirit of these significant days, as we see millions all over the world coming into the Kingdom in preparation for the return of the Lord.

For this year’s Christian celebration of the Feast, some very exciting features are planned. We are expecting pilgrims from a variety of countries, including native Guatemalans, Bushmen from the Kalahari Desert in Africa, native North American Indians from the north-western region of the USA and Canada, and groups from the Pacific area, such as the Indonesian island of Bali.

In line with the theme, one of the gifted speakers will be Pastor Niko Njotorahardjo. He has a church in Indonesia with over 70,000 members, and his ministry as an evangelist is well-known all over that region. He is planning to bring around 300 pilgrims from his congregation to the Feast.

With this year’s emphasis on harvesting the nations of the world, we are preparing a very colourful presentation that also will illustrate the diversity amongst the people of God, while respectful of our unity in Jesus Christ. For example, a special presentation of tribal and native costumes will be on the programme.

As every year, a wide range of teaching sessions, healing services and workshops will be presented by popular speakers from abroad and from Israel.

Special excursions on the agenda of events will include a visit to the settlements and tours of the exciting new archaeological finds in the ancient City of David, outside the present walls of the Old City.

The Feast worship team is gathering from all over the world and will consist of extremely gifted musicians, singers and dancers who will present an even higher standard than ever before. Beautiful new banners specially made for this Feast and its theme will also be featured.

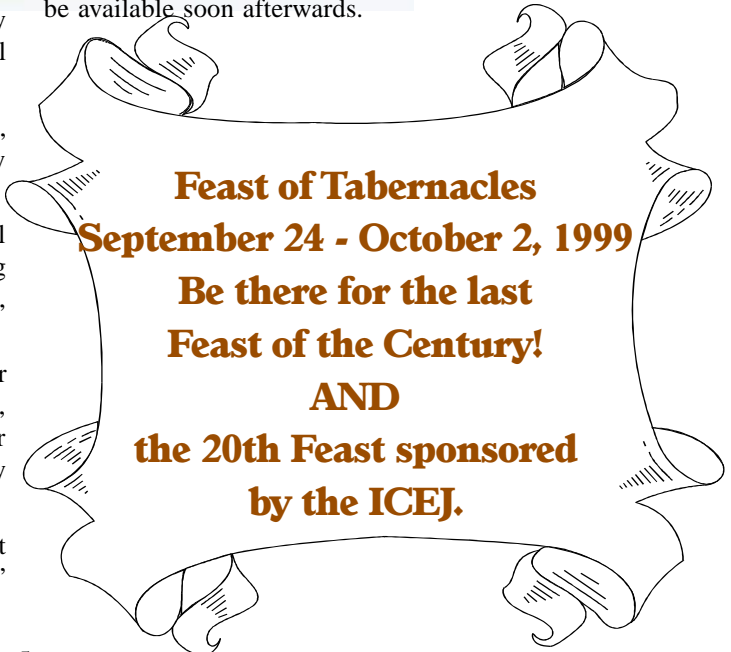
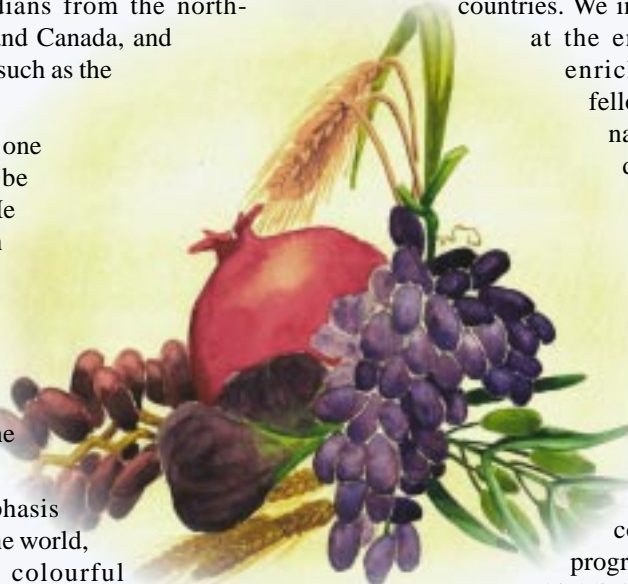
A very interesting dimension to this Feast celebration will be the presentation of the “seven species”

that are identified in Israel as being important for the harvest and the survival of the nation. The “seven essential species” listed in the Bible are: Wheat, Barley, Grapes, Figs, Pomegranates, Olives and Dates (honey). On each of the seven nights of the Feast, one of these varieties will be woven into the sub-theme and into the stage decoration and costumes.

We hope that you will be praying about coming. We will be able to accommodate every pilgrim, even though several thousand are expected from over 100 countries. We invite you to come to Jerusalem at the end of this millennium to be enriched and to experience the fellowship of the believers from the nations and also to enter a new dimension in your relationship with the Lord.

If you are unable to come to the Feast personally, we ask that you pray for us and also for the people of Israel to be encouraged and comforted by the presence of so many Christians who love and care for them in the name of the Lord. For those unable to come, a video of the complete programme of each evening as well as a highlight video of the entire Feast will

be available soon afterwards.





Irmeli, Nina & Corrie

Naomi's story

From our Soviet Jewry Nursing Team

Forty-nine-year-old Naomi is a doctor who immigrated with her husband, a dentist and their son from Uzbekistan in 1991. Very soon after their arrival she was diagnosed as having breast cancer and she subsequently had a mastectomy.

In 1997 her social worker contacted us because her husband was also very sick with cancer, but before we had time to visit this family, her husband passed away. When we visited Naomi, we realised that the situation in this little family—a mother with a 17-year-old son, was very difficult. At that time there was really no need of our nursing help and Naomi didn't want it. So we only visited them twice and gave them a Russian night feast video and our telephone number in case she needed us.

About six months later Naomi called us to say that she had broken her arm and it had been put in a cast, making it very difficult for her to take a shower by herself. So we began visiting her twice a week, but our visits at that time were very short.

We sensed how difficult it was for her to trust us, as Christians and we were careful to build the relationship with her slowly. We only gave our practical nursing help and prayed for her in our prayer meetings.

On her birthday we put a psalm in her birthday card, as we do with all the others that we help. This touched her so much that it brought tears, but she did not say anything.

All this time Naomi's health was getting steadily worse and her son, who had graduated from school, was preparing to go into the army. Then in July 1998 Naomi's brother

arrived from Kiev to help her. The brother's health was also not very good, but he was very helpful in the house and helped her as much as he could.

At Succot Naomi's health was very bad. She was unable to come to the Feast of Tabernacles, although she wanted to, but her brother was able to come. Afterwards she was able to watch it on the video that we gave her. Slowly, slowly, we have built up a closer relationship with Naomi, where we drink coffee with her and listen to her worries about her son, who does not always behave the way she would like.

Naomi's brother wanted to go to Ulpan, but did not have time for this. So we lent him a Russian-Hebrew book with tapes so that he could study at home, as it seemed that he was planning to immigrate too.

One morning after Succot, one of our team went on her regular visit to Naomi and found her in terrible pain in the bathroom. She had just broken her hip, so of course, a visit from a nurse was very welcome. Our nurse was able to help her out of the bathroom and to prepare her to go to hospital and waited until the ambulance came.

We visited her in hospital several times after the operation and because of our help she was able to be released very quickly. Afterwards she was very appreciative of our help with her showers.

We feel that our relationship with Naomi has changed into a real friendship. We are planning to take her out for a cup of coffee and she is looking forward to it.

Special Visitors

A leadership delegation from the Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee, together with Ministry to Israel, were hosted recently in Jerusalem by the International Christian Embassy. The Church of God denomination, representing over 5 million members in 27,000 congregations worldwide, is highly supportive of efforts to comfort Israel and promote *aliyah* (the return of Jews).

Shown in photo (standing, left to right) are Paul Lauster (CoG), Carl Richardson (CoG), John Gregory (CoG), Paul Duncan (CoG), Mrs. John (Norene) Nichols, Johann Lückhoff (Executive Director of ICEJ) and Tim King (ICEJ), (seated) Michael Utterback (Ministry to Israel/ICEJ), John Nichols (CoG), and Lamar Vest (First Assistant General Overseer of CoG) and his wife, Mrs. Lamar (Iris) Vest.



Royal Finds in the City of David

The swiftly rushing stream that emerges at Gihon is a familiar sight to tens of thousands of tourists who have visited this biblical site in recent decades. Many have passed this ancient spring to follow its flow through Hezekiah's tunnel, winding underneath the buried remnants of the City of David, to the pool of Siloam, mentioned in the Gospels.

But Yigal, the enthusiastic young manager of the visitor's centre for the City of David archaeological excavations, is excited about sharing with the ICEJ things not so familiar — the impressive new discoveries unearthed at this site in the past year or so. Perhaps these revealed treasures can best be described as “regal.”

For several years now, archaeologist Ronni Reich of the Israel Antiquities Authority has been supervising the excavations in the original City of David, just south of the Temple Mount of Jerusalem's Old City. As he and his teams have progressed beyond the prior work of Kathleen Kenyon and other notables, the rate of exceptional finds has increased at such a brisk pace, the theories to explain exactly what they are looking at are under constant revision.

The latest discoveries include the base of a watch tower and a gate just above the entrance to the Gihon Spring which is believed to be part of the imposing defence system originally used by the Jebusites to guard this critical source of water for their city. King David and his men were able to penetrate the stronghold of Jebus in this area, and for the next several centuries this same fortress and spring supplied life to the growing city of Jerusalem.

The digs also have exposed narrow steps carved in bedrock as you descend past the gate toward the spring. These are thought to have been used by donkeys carrying water back up the steep incline to the walled city above. Yigal points out that one can turn to the Bible and vividly imagine the scene described in 1 Kings 1 concerning the coronation of King Solomon at this very spot.

When David's older son Adonijah tried to proclaim himself King of Israel at nearby En Rogel, Bathsheba interceded with her husband King David on behalf of her own son, who had been promised the throne. David told Zadok the royal priest and Nathan the royal prophet to place Solomon on his own mule, take him down to Gihon, anoint him there, blow the trumpet and proclaim “Long live King Solomon.” It was the place of coronation before

City gate found above the Gihon Spring, originally built by the Jebusites. The inhabitants of King David's Jerusalem passed through this same gate to access their main water supply.



all the people.

Only metres from these finds is the remains of a large man-made pool for water that Reich now believes was an integral part of a water system for Jerusalem more complex than originally thought. It is connected to the well-known Warren's Shaft, providing a safe underground means to access water from the Gihon during times of war.

Another startling find may unlock the riddle of where David's palace once stood in the upper reaches of his capital. Openings were recently found leading down to a large, unusual water cistern that appears to fit the description of the one mentioned in Jeremiah 38. The bottom is filled with 3 meters of hardened mud, matching the account of Jeremiah being lowered into a cistern in the vicinity of “the king's palace” filled with mud so thick, it took 30 men to lift him out. Future digs planned for this area are expected to clarify the layout of “the courts of the king” in ancient Jerusalem.

The task of unearthing the many biblical treasures of the City of David has long been hampered by its location in the Arab neighbourhood of Silwan, many of whose residents oppose a Jewish presence there now, or proof of it in the past. Several hundred Yemenite Jews first resettled this area of the Kidron Valley in 1882, after walking hundreds of miles across the desert to *Eretz Israel*. They lived beside the small Arab village of Silwan for some 47 years, until their eviction in the Arab riots of 1929.

Current efforts to reclaim this important Jewish inheritance are being led by *Elad*, which has helped purchase almost 60% of the area lying within the walls of the City of David. The group supports 20 Jewish families living there, as well as the increasingly fruitful search for its regal treasures.

ICEJ Special Events at the Turn of the Millennium

Updated Schedule

On the extraordinary occasion of the advent of the Third Millennium of the Christian era, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem plans an exciting series of musical events to mark this special Christmas season.

December 23, 1999 — Televised Christmas Concert

The first of our three-night special Christmas concerts from the International Convention Centre Jerusalem will feature music performed by internationally known recording artists from the USA and will be televised in America and other nations.

December 25, 1999 — World Premiere: Special Production Of Handel's "Messiah"

This concert in Jerusalem will be a premiere performance of the classic oratorio Handel's "Messiah," accompanied by an interpretation in movement and dance. It will feature the internationally acclaimed Christian Performing Artists Fellowship group, under the directorship of Patrick Kavanaugh.

December 26, 1999 — Choir Festival

This fun-filled night will feature multiple choirs singing Christmas favourites. Each choir was chosen because of its unique style of presentation. There will be something for everyone.

All events are sponsored by the ICEJ and will be held at the **International Convention Centre in Jerusalem**. For information on tickets and other details, write or call us at:

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, PO Box 1192, Jerusalem, 91010, Israel;
Tel: +972.2.566-9823; Fax: +972.2.566-9970; E-mail: icej@icej.org.il

New Golden Menorah in Jerusalem

The Jerusalem Municipality recently unveiled a new \$14 million menorah at the Great Synagogue which was donated by the artist Moshe Prag. It stands 5 meters high, over 3 meters wide, weighs four tons and took 10 years to finish.

The unveiling was held on Jerusalem Day, marking the 32nd anniversary of the unification of Israel's capital city. Jerusalem was unified during the Six-Day War in 1967 after being divided for only 19 years since its establishment as the city of David 3000 years ago.

The "candlestick" is of significance to both Jews and Christians. In Exodus 25, God instructs Moses on how to make the menorah, to be placed with other instruments of divine service in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. Zechariah sees a prophetic vision of a menorah described in the fourth chapter of his book. The Apostle John then sees a similar vision of seven lampstands (Revelations 1:10-20), representing the seven churches, with Jesus standing in the middle.

From a biblical standpoint the menorah is a most appropriate symbol for Israel and thus appears on the official seal for the nation.



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