



Caspari Center
for Biblical and Jewish Studies

NEWS

June 2017



From the CEO

Elisabeth E. Levy

Dear Partners and Supporters of the Caspari Center

Beginning at sundown on May 1st, we celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's independence day. One day earlier, we celebrated Yom HaZikaron, memorial day for nearly 24,000 soldiers who have died since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

One week before these important days in the life of modern Israel, the country participated in annual Holocaust Day observances where we remembered the 6 million Jews who died during the Second World War. There has been a very high price paid for the existence of the State of Israel. Yet we are in awe that today, there are 6 million Jews now living in Israel – the same number which died during the Holocaust. It is a modern miracle.

An additional modern miracle was commemorated on May 23rd, when the country celebrated its 50th Jerusalem Day, which marks the reunification of the city of Jerusalem after the Six Day War in 1967. This newsletter has a story about this topic, as well as updates about what is happening in our ministry. Thank you for taking some time to catch up with us!

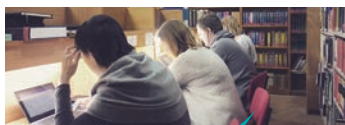
We are grateful for your financial support and prayers for our work. May the God of Israel bless you from Jerusalem.

Memories and Insights for Life

In cooperation with MF, the Norwegian school of theology, the Caspari Center hosted an accredited, Master's degree-level course. The course's content focused on the Bible in its original context, biblical archeology, history, and contemporary issues in the body of Yeshua in Israel. This was the fourth time in eight years the Caspari Center hosted and facilitated this four-week course.

The students received lectures in both Old and the New Testament subject areas – sometimes in a classroom, and sometimes on the site in which the Biblical account happened. They hiked down the wadi to Qumran and up to Masada. They spent one week in the Galilee, tracing the narrative in the Gospel of Mark. They saw new excavations in archeology in Migdal (Magdala) and on Mount Zion. Though four weeks were not enough time to discover everything this land offers a student or a pilgrim, it is enough to give a person new insight and memories for life.

We were gratified to receive positive feedback from the students. Here's what some of them had to say:



"This course has given me new knowledge, insight and experiences!"

"I am reading the Bible in a new way!"



"This course has been one of the most important things I have done during my studies of theology. It has given me brand-new insight both for the back ground of the Bible and the land of Israel, both in past and present time."

"The course is going to shape my life as a pastor."



Thanks to your partnership in this ministry, we are able to serve these future pastors and leaders.

Six Day War

Maria / Librarian



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War, which resulted in the re-unification of Jerusalem. The celebration focuses on the Old City, the true Jerusalem, the location of the Temple and holy places named in Scripture. The Jews have returned to their country and to their city, just as the Bible prophesied they would. The Six Day War in June of 1967 was a turning point in the history of modern day Israel. It was also a turning point in the thinking of many Evangelical Christians. Some believers had taken an interest and supported Israel before the war. However, for many others, what took place during June 5th –11th, 1967 changed the way they viewed Israel and led to a new rise of Christian Zionism.

‘All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.’ (Isa. 41:11) At the beginning of the war, it wasn’t clear whether Israel would even survive, and if it did, what the cost would be. Arab nations surrounding Israel threatened Israel’s existence, and their leaders spoke of the total destruction of the Jewish

country. However, by the end of the war, Israel had tripled its area, taking the Gaza strip and the Sinai from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank from Jordan. And, most importantly, Israel had gained control of the Old City of Jerusalem.

‘I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem’ (Zech. 8:8)

Following the war, Israel experienced a wave of national euphoria. The Jewish nation had not only survived but had also gained control over the most of Biblical Israel. The war also had a tremendous religious significance. Under Jordanian rule prior to the war, Jews could not visit the holy places, such as the Western Wall or the Temple Mount. Although the administration of the Temple Mount remained in the hands of the Jordanian Muslim Waqf, the Jews were now in control of Jerusalem. Many religious Jews saw this as a sign of the beginning of the Messianic Era.

‘Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.’ (Luke 21:24) Many Christians saw the re-birth of the nation of Israel in 1948 as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Through June 1967, the Old City of Jerusalem was ‘trampled by the Gentiles’. The war changed that. When Jesus spoke of the End Times, He mentioned Jerusalem as one of the signs of His return being imminent. For many, the capture of the Old City was a clear sign that Jesus would be returning soon. The Six Day War truly made Israel the ‘sign of the times’ to many believers and it has remained as such ever since.



Prayer Requests

Please pray for...

- Caspari staff travelling in and out of Israel during the summer
- planning and preparing for seminars and lectures for the coming fall
- those who spread the gospel to the Jews throughout the world



Political Issues

The Jerusalem Post May 4, 2017

On Tuesday May 2, UNESCO passed another resolution challenging Jewish claims to Jerusalem with 22 in favor, ten opposed, 23 abstentions and three absentees. The resolution "...declared Israel's attempts to shape Jerusalem's character to be null and void, and called for the cessation of Israeli archaeological digs in the capital." Jerusalem's Mayor Nir Barkat said he was outraged by the vote, called UNESCO anti-Israel, and said the organization sides with Israel's enemies. Jerusalem residents and visitors were also united in their criticism of the resolution. One said it was 100% wrong, and another called it "...utter nonsense, like saying that New York is not part of the USA."

Excerpt from Forgiveness Brochure

Since 2013, Caspari Center's Israel Director Alec Goldberg has been producing weekly programs in the Russian language that are broadcast by Haifa-based online TV ministry Oasis-Media. One of the teaching series from the past year, entitled "Forgiving Our Debtors", featured a detailed exposition of the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:1-35). At a staff meeting earlier this year, the team suggested we rework this powerful teaching material into print booklets that could be used for small group or individual Bible study. Today the brochure is almost ready for the printer. It will be printed first in Russian, then in Hebrew. We may also add other translations in the future. Below is a short excerpt of the teaching. Enjoy!

Alec Goldberg

/ Israel Director



The first thing that strikes an informed reader of Jesus' parable is the magnitude of the unmerciful servant's debt. Ten thousand talents is the payment for 200,000 years (!) of a Roman soldier's work. Isn't the figure itself a message? It certainly is. Getting the answer right is essential, if you desire to make sense of the whole parable and become a merciful and forgiving person. The message is that our own debt to God is inconceivably huge.

Facing such an astronomical sum at the presentation of the bill – billions of dollars in modern monetary terms – may evoke knee-jerk denial: "I am neither Hitler, nor Stalin, nor Mao! Where does that figure come from?"

The answer: "True, you are much more decent than these monsters – that is, from a purely human perspective. But not necessarily so from the divine one".

When "decent Jewish guy" Isaiah, son of Amoz, found himself in the manifest presence of God, he exclaimed "Woe to me!" Later, he made a profound statement on God's behalf: "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa 55:8-9 NLT).

Having realized the magnitude of our debt, we can better appreciate God's mercy. As those who have received such great mercy, it should be natural for us to forgive our own debtors whose debts are, according to Jesus' parable, very small compared to what we have been forgiven. And it is showing mercy that is the key to forgiving not in word only, but the Jesus way – "from the heart" (Matt. 18:35). Yes, pitying – and not ourselves only, but also the very people who hurt us.

forgive us our sins,
as we also have
forgiven our debtors...



Shabbat School Seminar 20 years

This spring marks 20 years since the Caspari Center began organizing yearly seminars for Shabbat school teachers. At our most recent seminar, on May 26th, we celebrated this anniversary.



Interestingly, during the preparation and also just before the event, we encountered an unusual number of difficulties beyond our control. Despite these distractions, the Lord showed us his favor and blessed us with an excellent seminar. Our joy was shared by children and youth workers from 26 Israeli congregations.



What is it that continues to draw the teachers to these seminars over the years? The seminars present an opportunity to meet fellow teachers from other congregations, to discuss ministry challenges, to re-focus the vision and, of course, to receive inspiration and practical knowledge required for the ministry.



Every participant comes to the seminar with their own personal needs. Among the feedback from this recent seminar, we found the following encouraging message: "I am so happy I came to the seminar. I had many questions, so many that I didn't even know whether I should work with children at all. But the seminar gave me answers, in addition to advice for my personal life."



Great is the Lord who is faithful to his servants and who meets everyone's needs!



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"Equipping His people for works of service, so that the body of Messiah may be built up" Ephesians 4:12

If you would like to know more about the Caspari Center and its activities, write to caspari@caspari.com or visit our website, www.caspari.com. You can support our work by prayer, volunteering, or financial gifts to help with individual projects or the general work of the center.