

Why the People of Israel Will Always Prevail

“Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground in reverence to the king and said, “Let my lord King David live forever'” (1 Kings 1:31).

When the mantle of leadership was passed down from King David to his son Solomon, the transition was not exactly smooth. As it became clear to David's family and closest advisors that his time of death was near, one of his eldest sons, Adonijah, decided to seize the opportunity to appoint himself as David's successor.

Now, David had already specified that Solomon would succeed him, but Adonijah sought to take advantage of his father's weakened state and promote himself anyway. Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, was concerned about her son's future. King David promised to instate Solomon as the rightful heir to the throne and indeed he did. Bathsheba gratefully responded, “Let my lord King David live forever.”

What did Bathsheba mean by what she said? She was speaking to a man on his deathbed. In addition, this phrase became the precursor to another similar one: “David, King of Israel, is alive and well!” This phrase has become part of Jewish liturgy and also forms the words for one of the most basic, universal and well-known songs across the Jewish world. What is the meaning of these words and why are they so relevant even today?

Around the second century of the common era, the rabbis in Israel had a dilemma. According to Jewish law, every new month had to be announced by two witnesses who spotted the new moon in the sky. However, the Romans, who ruled and oppressed the people of Israel at the time, made this ancient practice

illegal. The rabbis decided to devise a code phrase that would signify the onset of the new month. The phrase was: "David, King of Israel, is alive and well!"

This phrase was fitting as a symbol for the new moon. In Psalm 89:37, we read that God will establish David's throne "forever as the moon." Just as the moon waxes and wanes, so, too, would David's dynasty have its highs and lows. At times, it would seem completely gone; however, God's promise was that it would always reappear and shine brightly again.

Today, thousands of years later, we sing the song that David is alive and well as a symbol of the people of Israel's perseverance throughout centuries of persecution. The House of David has come and faded and will return to full glory again.

The people of Israel have had highs and lows, but they will never completely disappear. As individuals, we all have had times where we have shone brightly and times where we have felt lost in darkness. However, like King David, we will prevail. Our light will shine again. {eoa}

Yael Eckstein is the president of the International Fellowship of Christian and Jews. As president of *The Fellowship*, she also holds the rare distinction of being a woman leading one of the world's largest, religious not-for-profit organizations, having raised \$1.8 billion –mostly from Christians– to assist Israel and the Jewish people. She is the author of the newly released "Generation to Generation: Passing on a Legacy of Faith to our Children.