

# Israel's 75th Anniversary Brings Jewish Gratitude for God's Promises

As an Orthodox Jew, Jonathan Feldstein, his family and others have already celebrated Israel's 75th anniversary.

On the Jewish calendar, Yom Haatzmaut, as it is called in Hebrew, came on Wednesday, April 26. Feldstein, a dual American-Israeli citizen, says he and his family celebrated the occasion just like Americans do for the Fourth of July—with a barbecue.

But Feldstein realizes the magnitude of the occasion means much more than just a holiday. It's the celebration of the triumph for the Jewish people over immense struggle for Israel's existence, and he says that the Jews don't take any of that for granted.

"There is nothing better than being in Israel and being a Jew, whom God gave the keys to the land to our ancestors," Feldstein told Charisma News' John Matarazzo in a recent interview. "And now with three generations living here in the land, it's just extraordinary."

While many take pride in the heritage and history of their nation, Feldstein says he's not sure "pride" is the right word for Israelis. He sees it as more of a "privilege" to be a Jew in Israel and he cherishes his ancestors and what they accomplished.

"You know, I have pride sitting as a father and grandfather at the head of a three-meter-long table that's packed with my family. That's unavoidable," Feldstein says. "I have joy. I have gratitude that I can drive an hour from my house to go to see things that are biblical.

“But I have the privilege of living what God promised and prophesied, that we were going to come back [to Israel]. I see and I hear Jewish life revived here. ... It’s as if we’d never been exiled. So again, it’s not even pride, it’s just joy. It’s elation. It’s the privilege of getting the best Christmas gift you ever could and not ever wanting to return it.”

Christmas, a Christian holiday? Feldstein doesn’t mind. In his work for the Genesis 123 Foundation, Feldstein helps build bridges between Jews and Christians. And, he has a great number of Christian friends, many of whom have huge ministries.

“I get into some awfully interesting an edgy territory for an Orthodox Jew,” Feldstein says.

He’s particularly fascinated by one significant event that will happen surrounding the celebration of Israel’s Independence Day on the Gregorian calendar, on May 14. The International House of Prayer and Pastor Mike Bickle will be taking part in an initiative he and his staff put together called the Isaiah 62 Fast, a three-week venture from May 7 to May 28.

It’s still 10 days away, but 5 million people have responded to this call and made a commitment to fast and to pray for one hour each day for the city of Jerusalem and for Israel during those three weeks.

And Feldstein is all in.

“I think it’s extraordinary,” Feldstein says. “I’ve not met Mike Bickle, and I was not aware of any of the plans for the 21 days of prayer and fasting [until a friend recently told him]. I’m in awe, I’m humbled and I’m grateful.

“This is something that I’ve never seen and that is completely innovative. So, smack in the middle of those 21 days, we’re praying but we are also celebrating the other anniversary [of

Israel's Independence Day]. It's also in that time of the season when we have Pentecost , and we have the celebration of the reunification of Jerusalem. So, these are very significant."

Feldstein tells his Christian friends that he covets their prayers.

"I always hate the phrase that we're serving the same God, because He's the only God, and Jews and Christians are the only ones who actually worship and revere Him. I'm grateful, and I look forward to one day to be able to connect with Mike and thank him in person." {eoa}

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