

Lion of Judah Monument Rises in Israel as Symbol of Friendship Between Christians, Jews

Predicted rains held back Tuesday morning, May 5, 2020, so a magnificent new monumental bronze sculpture named the "Lion of Judah" could be installed in the heart of Jerusalem. The massive 11-foot long statue was permanently placed in Bloomfield Park, located between the Old City and new Jerusalem, behind the King David Hotel, in sight of Mount Zion and the Jaffa Gate. Amos Cohen, who is responsible for all 174 public sculptures in the city of Jerusalem, said on Tuesday:

"This the most beautiful of all the pieces of art we have in the city because it is a lion and the symbol of the city of Jerusalem. It means more to me than any other piece of art in the city. ... My heart is filled right now. I love the Christian community. They do so much for the city of Jerusalem, and they do so much for the State of Israel and my heart is with you in friendship and thank you."

At some time in the future a formal dedication and blessing of the lion statue will take place, but it has not been scheduled. Millions of photographs will be taken by tourists from around the world of this majestic symbol of Israel, King David, the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish Messiah. The ancient wall of the Old City in the background will forever identify this iconic lion sculpture with Israel. This internationally copyrighted monumental piece of fine art is expected to become one of the top tourist attractions in the Jewish nation.

The historic day was 14 years in the making. Giving a lion

sculpture to Israel was the dream of American artist, Max Greiner, Jr. and his wife, Sherry. It has been their desire to give his most valuable No. 1 bronze casting from his signed and numbered life-size edition to the Jewish nation as an eternal symbol of friendship and love between Christians and the people of Israel.

The "Lion of Judah" sculpture is not just another lion statue, according to the artist. The massive 1,123-pound piece of bronze art was sculpted to specifically honor the God of Israel. Greiner, who is an evangelical Christian and strong supporter of the Jewish state, said:

"My goal with this realistic, yet stylized lion composition was to visually communicate majesty, dignity, strength and courage, while also expressing shalom. I prayed to the God of Israel that He would help me sculpt the lion's face so it conveyed wisdom and authority, but also love and peace. I sculpted the original carving out of clay, patterned after the largest lion that ever lived. Then, I increased the size 5% for God! My art foundry, Eagle Bronze, also donated their profits on this project because the Christian owners, Monte and Beverly Paddleford, love Israel too!"

The 68-year-old, internationally collected professional artist (whose work has been owned by U.S. presidents, attorney generals, governors, senators, representatives and the stars of American business, sports, music and film) said: "This No. 1 Lion of Judah bronze sculpture is a gift of love and support from my wife, me and the millions of Christians around the world who stand with Israel!"

This imposing piece of fine art was placed in Israel thanks to the help, prayers and donations of thousands of Christians and Jews over many years. After the life-size art was carved on Aug. 10, 2017, the Greiners recruited their friends, Jeff and Barbara Anderson, founders of Leadership Inc, to collect donations from Christians to cover all the expenses. Art

benefactor and president, Jeff Anderson, wrote: "Leadership Inc is pleased that our gift of the mighty Lion of Judah, on behalf of American Christian leaders, is now beautifully displayed in Jerusalem for the perpetual enjoyment of the people in Israel."

The first major donor to the Lion of Judah art initiative were Christian leaders, Bob and Linda Morris, of Collinsville, Illinois. The president of Dodi Yavoh, a 28-year-old pro-Israel ministry, worked tirelessly for more than four years to see the lion statue placed. Linda wrote:

"As a leader of tour groups to Israel during my 58 trips to The Land, and because of my love for the Israeli people, I determined that Max Greiner's Lion of Judah sculpture was destined to be placed in Israel as a permanent witness to the nations of G-d's blessing and acknowledgment of Jerusalem as its eternal capital. Baruch HaShem Adonai!"

However, the art initiative stalemated until the deputy mayor of Jerusalem became involved. Jerusalem's Mayor Moshe Lion, the City Council and the Public Art Committee headed by Deputy Mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, first had to approve the symbolic art gift from evangelical Christians. Then, a suitable location had to be found. After official acceptance was finally granted, Deputy Mayor Nahoum was assigned the job of placing the statue somewhere in the city. A strong supporter of the art project, the deputy mayor wrote:

"The Lion of Judah is the symbol of the strength and glory of the City of Jerusalem. We are honored to accept this wonderful gift symbolizing another strength and that is the friendship between the evangelical community and the Jewish people. We thank the artist Max Greiner for this beautiful initiative that will stand forever in our capital city as a sign of love, friendship and mutual appreciation."

After selecting Park Blumfield as the ideal display location,

Deputy Mayor Nahoum assigned Orthodox Rabbi, Pesach Wolicki, the responsibility of installing the statue in the park, after he volunteered his services to the artist and the city of Jerusalem. Rabbi Wolicki's personal ministry endeavors to build bridges of love and trust between Christians and Jews. After the bronze installation on May 5, 2020, Rabbi Wolicki commented:

"The Lion has always been the symbol of the strength of Israel and the Kingdom of God in Jerusalem. It is no mistake that the coat of arms of the city of Jerusalem today is a rising lion. The majestic Lion of Judah sculpture by the eminent artist, Max Greiner, represents the highest aspirations of the Jewish people as we are reconstituted in our land after 2,000 years of exile—exactly as the Bible foretold. Israel has risen like a lion. Jerusalem is being rebuilt. The face of the lion, as Max planned it with such great artistry, projects power and strength, without conveying arrogance or intimidation. This is a feat of remarkable artistic skill and sensitivity. The word for this complex expression is quite simple—majesty. This is what the nation of Israel strives to be in the world. We are powerful and strong, and at the same time we are a beacon of love and compassion for the entire world."

Before Deputy Mayor Nahoum's involvement, the project languished as the expensive sculpture waited inside a wooden crate in a warehouse Beit Shemesh for two years. However, by the sovereignty of God, the deputy mayor sat next to former U.S. Congresswoman and Presidential candidate Michele Bachmann at a luncheon hosted by The Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast (JPB) in June of 2019. This non-profit religious organization annually gathers thousands of Christians and Jews from around the world to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. This providential meeting resulted in Congresswoman Bachmann and her friend, Connie Wilson, taking the deputy mayor to see the stored statue in Beit Shemesh warehouse. After seeing the lion statue in person on June 10, 2019, Deputy Mayor Fleur was

convinced the work of art needed to be placed in a prominent location in Jerusalem. Congresswoman Bachmann wrote after the installation on May 5, 2020:

“The Lion of Judah is a symbol of the love and strength the God of Israel demonstrates to His people. This magnificent statue is very special to everyone who has seen it. The Lion of Judah may well symbolize to generations, both young and old in Jerusalem, the joy of knowing the One who made them, the true Lion of Judah!”

Bachmann; Albert Veksler; and former Knesset Member, MK Robert Ilatov, co-chair the annual two-day religious conference. Previously, in February of 2018 at the international convention of the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), Veksler volunteered to assist the Christian donors in finding the best possible home for the lion statue, believing the sculpture would be a wonderful visual reminder of the love and support that all genuine Christians have for Israel. Veksler wrote:

“We are thankful for the beautiful gift from the American Christians by the hands of Max Greiner, to encourage the Jewish people in this challenging time and to remind us that: ‘As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him, he is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the LORD of hosts will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill’ (Isa. 31:4).”

The Texas sculptor delivered his delicate clay sculpture to the Eagle Bronze art foundry in Wyoming on Aug. 12, 2017, for casting into bronze. The No. 1 “Lion of Judah” statue was later shipped by truck and rail to the Harvest of Israel warehouse in Morristown, Tennessee, where it was loaded into a 40-foot container with humanitarian supplies. The steel container was then trucked to the Port of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Harvest of Israel, a non-profit evangelical Christian ministry located in Morristown, Tennessee, collects humanitarian aid and ships it monthly in 40-foot containers to TJP in Israel. The lion sculpture left the USA on June 7, 2018, bound for Israel. Founder of Harvest of Israel, Pastor Dean Haun said, "It has been one of the greatest honors of our ministry to ship the Lion of Judah to Israel. We pray our friends in Israel will enjoy this wonderful gift."

The container arrived at the Port of Ashdod, Israel, on July 18, 2018, where it was finally transported to The Joseph Project (TJP) warehouse in Beit Shemesh, following the ancient path of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 5:1). The bronze lion statue was stored in a wooden box for two years, waiting to be "called" into Jerusalem. The Scriptures state the Ark of the Covenant was stored for 20 years in the house of Abinadab in Beth Shemesh before arriving in Jerusalem under the reign of King David (2 Sam. 6:11).

The Joseph Project is one of the largest humanitarian charities in Israel. They graciously transported and then stored the crated lion sculpture from July 29, 2018, until the lion's release on May 5, 2020. The charity has imported tens of millions of dollars worth of humanitarian aid into Israel for over two decades according to Board Chairman Hank Rich, who said: "We were asked to use our logistical capabilities to bring this magnificent statue to Israel. We are proud we could play a role."

Many Christians and Jews believe that God wanted His lion statue installed at this precise time in world history. Providentially, the lion statue has been placed during the administration of Jerusalem Mayor Moses Lion. Thousands of Christians are praying that this symbolic lion statue will be used by the God of Israel to bless the Jewish nation and usher in great prosperity and a giant wave of new tourism. It is also providential that the "Lion of Judah" was installed between Passover and Pentecost, as the entire world paused and

sheltered in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.