

Israel's Independence Day: A Personal Look Back

✖ On our calendar May 14 is the date of Israel's independence. The Israelis celebrate their Independence Day on the 5th day of their month *Iyar*, which was April 29 this year because they go by the Jewish calendar.

Thirty years ago today I was in Israel when the country celebrated its 31st anniversary. Jamie Buckingham, 12 other Americans and I went to climb Mount Sinai. It was my first trip to Israel-indeed my first trip outside the United States. What an experience! We met in Israel with some Christian friends of Jamie's who took us around to interesting sites. My reaction-like so many others-was that it made the Bible come alive.

We visited several *kibbutzim*-the collective farms that have helped Israel so much over the years. We had dinner there one night, on Israel's "Memorial Day." The memory of those who died in the War of Independence, the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War was still very fresh. Then after a two-minute time of silence at dusk they moved from a very solemn Memorial Day to a very joyous celebration of their independence.

After that trip I wrote a cover story in the October 1979 issue of *Charisma* called "Meeting God on the Mountain." As I have reminisced about making this trip 30 years ago, I pulled the article out of the archives and re-read it. I decided it was something many people might enjoy reading because it is a deeply spiritual account of making a trek through the desert and climbing Mount Sinai. The things I learned from God were timeless and I hope you enjoy reading the article (below).

Being in Israel and participating in its Independence Day made

a very deep impression on me. It was my first trip to Israel and only a few months after Pastor John Hagee made his first trip to Israel. He said that he "went a tourist and came home a Zionist." My trip had a deep impact on me as well. I've visited several times since then and over the years my interest in Zionism has become stronger and stronger.

This week I finished my part of working on a manuscript by Benny Hinn on the situation in the Middle East titled *Blood in the Sand*. Although I don't personally edit most of the books my company publishes, I got involved in this one partly because of my deep and long-standing friendship with Benny (going back to 1978) and partly because this is such an important book for us when it releases on August 5. But also partly because I have such a strong personal interest in the situation in the Middle East.

I won't tell you now everything that's in Benny's book, but I will remark on the fact that he reminds the reader what a grave threat Israel is in at this point in its history, especially from Iran, which is in the process of developing a nuclear warhead.

If you have not registered to attend the Christians United for Israel Summit in Washington, D.C., on July 20-23, I urge you to do so today. You can register by going online at

If there was ever a time Israel needs your help it's now. Iran is racing toward a nuclear weapon and they will use it on America and Israel unless the outcry of U.S. citizens prevents it. Your voice is needed in Washington, D.C., this July 20-23. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

It makes me believe that it's more important than ever for us Christians to stand with Israel. In fact, we have started a "Standing With Israel" fund through Christian Life Missions, which many of you have already supported. With any donation of \$25 or more, we will send you a copy of David Brog's excellent

book *Standing With Israel* in which he makes the argument that evangelical Christians are Israel's best friend. He also explains a great deal about the roots of Christian Zionism. [Click here](#) if you'd like to support Israel in this way. We guarantee that every dollar will go to Israel, either to help build a bomb shelter or to help other worthy projects that come along.

I hope you'll leave your comments about what I've written, and also take time to read my article about my Mount Sinai trip, and comment on it too.