

# Israel News Desk

with

**BPF Secretary Steve Lloyd**

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*Romans 1:16* **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.**

With the world still bewildered at dealing with one COVID wave after another, it would seem that there is little news on the Israel front, yet...there is the biggest news on the Israel front. Israel has a new Government and a new Prime Minister.

After 12 years in leadership, Benjamin Netanyahu has been de-throned.

After four elections in two years which in itself is unprecedented, we now look forward to four years of a new Government with leaders taking it in turns to be the Prime Minister, starting with Naftali Bennett. In two years it will be the turn of Yair Lapid.

So what do we know about Naftali Bennett?

This right wing millionaire made his money in the Tech industry and is the first Orthodox Jew, born of American Parents to become PM.

He is the head of the Yamina Party, a small party that won only 7 seats out of the Knesset's 120.

He was born in Haifa of American immigrants from San Francisco, He lived in America and Canada for a while as a child before moving permanently to Israel.

He lives in Raanana, a suburb of Tel Aviv, he is Jewish Orthodox and wears a kippa. He has served in several cabinet positions under Benjamin Netanyahu.

He is very much against Palestinian Statehood citing Israel's security concerns and early in his political career vowed he would do everything possible to make sure that the Palestinians cannot establish an independent state.

If Bennett had his way, he would also annex much of the West Bank to Israel. But that will not happen during this premiership.

Bennett has been quite outspoken in the past, with inflammatory rhetoric over Arabs and Palestinians. He is likely to be more aggressive with Hamas than Netanyahu was, but his immediate concerns are the pandemic, the economy and healing internal rifts.

Meanwhile, Israel's new President is Isaac Herzog, aged 60, former head of Israel's Labour Party. He succeeds Reuven Rivlin and will serve a 7 year term.

USA - An Israeli Search and rescue team have been helping with the search for those still missing in the Florida apartment block collapse. According to Diaspora Affairs Minister, Nachman Shai, "this is one of the best - if not, the best and most experienced-Israeli rescue team" he said. At time of printing, 18 bodies had been found and a 150 were still missing, including some 35 Jews. IDF Officer Oz Gino stated "We will not return until the situation is over, We are here to save lives, rescue bodies or perform any task that is needed from us".

Florida Governor Ron De Santis said "We welcome the expert IDF recovery team to supplement Surfside's search and rescue efforts".

American president Joe Biden told his visiting Israeli counterpart Reuven Rivlin that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon as long as he sits in office. "Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch," Biden said.

UAE - Foreign Minister Yair Lapid inaugurated Israel's consulate in Dubai at the beginning of July, stating "We're starting to get used to making history". He had inaugurated the Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi the day before. Lapid said the consulate "is a place of dialogue between two talented peoples who want to contribute to one another, where we can change the world together".

srael - A new type of early human previously not known to scientists has been discovered in Israel. Scientists from Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University believe the new 'homo' species intermarried with homo sapiens and was an ancestor of the Neanderthals. A team of anthropologists spent years analysing the fragments of a skull, lower jaw bone and tooth that were uncovered in a quarry at Neshar Ramla in 2010, comparing them to hundreds of fossils around the world from different eras. Tel Aviv University anthropologist professor Israel Hershkovitz said "We know that modern humans - or

homo sapiens - arrived in this area 200,000 years ago," he added. "When we started excavating, we expected to find remains of homo sapiens. We did not realise that another form of human was living alongside them".

Mexico - The foundation stone has been laid for a "City of Torah" in Mexico. The village - to be comprised almost exclusively of charedim - is being built near Tztapan de la Sal, 75 miles from Mexico City, and hopes to attract 120 families. It will have a Yeshiva, synagogues, Kosher supermarkets and schools for both its Ashkenazi and Sephardi populations.

Cyprus - Israel has sent several planes with firefighters to fight a huge killer forest blaze in Cyprus. At least 4 people have died as the fire raged north of Limassol and Larnaca and forced the evacuation of eight nearby villages. The Cypriot interior Minister called the fire the "most destructive" blaze in the eastern Mediterranean island nation's history. Israel Foreign Minister Yair Lapid told his Cypriot counterpart Nikos Christodoulides that Israel would do all it could to help bring the fire under control.

Lebanon - Israel has offered help to cash strapped Lebanon as its northern neighbour faces a financial meltdown. The World Bank has described Lebanon's worsening woes as one of the world's worst financial crises since the 1850's. Israel and Lebanon are arch-enemies and do not have diplomatic relations. In fact, Lebanon denies Israel's right to exist. But despite this, Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz has sent a proposal for humanitarian aid to Lebanon through UNIFIL. It happened as Beirut faces a desperate plight. Violence and protests have been breaking out around the country as basic services collapse. UNICEF has stated recently that 77% of Lebanese households do not have enough money to buy food. It is also reported that they are running out of hundreds of essential drugs. Electricity outages and gas shortages are commonplace and the Lebanese army announced it is offering tourists helicopter rides for \$150 dollars in order to make money. Gantz stated "Israel has offered to help Lebanon in the past, and today as well, we are prepared to work to help it grow and get out of this crisis." At time of printing Lebanon had not responded to Gantz's offers or the proposal sent to UNIFIL.

Once again, we see that despite its own problems, it is blessing other countries around the world with assistance by whatever means it can.

Please pray for the peace of Jerusalem, pray for the Israeli Defence Forces as they protect their borders and pray for the Jewish people wherever they are around the world, that they will come to understand and know that Jesus Christ is their Messiah.

May God bless you.

Steve