

Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

I am re-running this article from 2019. Israel turns 72 today! (Their calendar floats on a 360 day year). It wouldn't be right to let this milestone pass by without pointing to these amazing prophetic fulfillments regarding Israel, God's prophetic timepiece. Worth a rerun.

Happy Birthday Israel!

Everything you ever wanted to know about Israel at 71 (72 here in 2020)

As Israel celebrates its 71st anniversary, ISRAEL21c brings you a fascinating statistical snapshot of this remarkable country.

By ISRAEL21c Staff MAY 7, 2019

As night falls on May 8, 2019, Israel will kick off its 71st birthday celebration in the usual Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) style with cookouts, aerobatic shows, silly string, torch-lighting ceremonies and festive fireworks across the nation.

In only seven decades, Israel has proven it's possible to do the impossible at home and abroad, whether greening deserts with world-leading technological knowhow, rescuing people in distress in distant lands, or sending the smallest-ever spacecraft to the moon.

The list of Israeli accomplishments is truly staggering, especially considering the huge amount of resources that must be devoted to defense alone.

Last year, ISRAEL21c brought you a timeline, “70 Years of Israeli achievement,” and a fantastic companion film, “70 Years of Israeli Milestones in 165 Seconds.”

Now we've delved into the statistics to present a fun and fascinating by-the-numbers picture of Israel at 71.

Who we are

As of May 2019, Israel's population is 9,009,000. About 74.2% are Jews, 21% Muslim or Christian Arabs, and the rest non-Arab Christians and others. (Central Bureau of Statistics)

Citizens aged 0-20 comprise 43% of Israel's population. The largest group within that category is 5- to

14-year-olds (18%). The latter category is largest in Jerusalem, making up 21% of its population. (Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem)

Jerusalem is Israel's most populous city, with about 883,000 residents. Tel Aviv-Yafo (Jaffa) comes in second (439,000) and Haifa third (280,000). (Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem)

In Tel Aviv, the largest population segment by age is 35-44 (about 17%), while in Haifa the two highest population groups are ages 5-14 and 35-44 (12% each). (Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem)

The most common family name in Israel is Cohen (one in 50 people). Agbaria is the most common surname among Muslims, Khoury among Christians and Halabi among Druze. (Central Bureau of Statistics)

The most common first names for boys in Israel are Muhammad, Yosef, Ariel, Omer, Adam, David, Daniel, Lavi, Eitan and Uri. The most popular names for girls are Tamar, Abigail, Miriam, Sarah, Adele, Yael, Noa, Shira, Noya and Lia. (Population and Immigration Authority, 2017-2018)

We're a high-tech superpower

Israel hosts about 8,200 active high-tech companies. (IVC Research Center)

30 Israeli venture capital funds raised \$2.55 billion in 2018, the largest sum ever raised by Israeli VCs and 69% more than in 2017. (IVC)

Israel ranks fifth overall on the 2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index, moving up from #10 in 2018. In the R&D Intensity category, Israel ranks #1.

Israel's expenditure on research and development (R&D) as a percentage of its GDP (4.21%) is the highest in the world. (OECD)

Israel ranks #2 among top 10 countries for scientific research, based on the number of scientific research papers released, the number of patents registered, the percentage of GDP spent on R&D and the number of researchers per 1,000 people. (RS Components)

More than 350 multinational corporations have R&D centers in Israel, including IBM, Intel, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Merck, HP Indigo, J&J, GE, Siemens, Qualcomm, Applied Materials and Samsung. Israel has the world's highest per capita number of such centers. (IVC, Ministry of Economy and Industry)

Every year, about 1,400 startups are founded in Israel and some 800 shut down. (Israel Innovation Authority)

Thirteen Israeli-founded companies with headquarters or development offices in Israel are "unicorns," privately held startups valued at \$1 billion or more: Payoneer, Taboola, Outbrain, Gett, Infinidat, ironSource, eToro, OrCam, Lemonade, Fiverr, JFrog, WalkMe and Via. (TechAviv)

The most lucrative acquisition of an Israeli company took place in 2017, when Intel bought Jerusalem-based Mobileye for \$15.3 billion.

Intel is making the largest-ever corporate investment in Israel: An \$11 billion production plant planned in Kiryat Gat.

Intel, which employs about 12,800 Israelis in five centers throughout the country, is the most active foreign

corporate investor in Israel, putting \$435 million into more than 90 Israeli companies — \$120 million in 2018 alone. (IVC, Intel Capital Israel)

We're healthy, happy and long-lived

Israel has the lowest rate of diet-related deaths in the world. (Global Burden of Disease Study, Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation)

Israel ranks fifth in the world for healthy longevity and 11th in the world for overall happiness. (2018 United Nations World Happiness Report)

Average life expectancy for Israeli men is 80.7, and 84.6 for women, as of 2017. (Central Bureau of Statistics)

Israel ranks 10th on the 2019 Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index. 88.6% of Israelis say they are pleased with their lives. (Central Bureau of Statistics) 85% of Israelis over the age of 20 feel safe walking alone in the dark in their residential area. (Central Bureau of Statistics)

We are a tree, fruit and veggie empire

In 1948, about 2% of Israel was covered in trees. Now it's up to around 8.5%. Since its establishment in 1901, Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael-Jewish National fund (KKL-JNF) has planted more than 240 million trees in Israel.

Israel is one of the only countries in the world that ended the 20th century with more trees than it had at the start. (KKL-JNF)

As of the end of 2018, every Israeli has access annually to an average 152 kilograms of fruit and 154kg of vegetables. (Central Bureau of Statistics)

In 2017, the leading crops produced in Israel were potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and peppers on the vegetable side; and bananas, apples, avocados and grapes on the fruit front. (Central Bureau of Statistics)



Citrus fruit is Israel's largest agricultural export, adding up to \$230 million in 2017. The value of all Israel's fresh and processed agricultural exports was about \$2.2 billion in 2016. (Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development)

We have a flourishing tourism industry:

The Western Wall in Jerusalem is Israel's most visited tourist site. Photo by Mendy Hechtman/FLASH90

In 2018, Israel welcomed a record-breaking 4,120,800 million incoming tourists.

The Western Wall in Jerusalem is the most-visited tourist site, followed by other sites in Jerusalem's Old City: the Jewish Quarter, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Via Dolorosa, Mount of Olives and the Tower of David Museum. Outside Jerusalem, the most popular tourist sites are Masada, the Church of the Annunciation, Tel Aviv Port, Capernaum and Caesarea. (Ministry of Tourism)

In 2018, almost half of all Israelis (4.1 million) traveled abroad – 2.2 million of them once, and 1.9 million

twice or more. (Central Bureau of Statistics)

The Israel Hotel Association lists 370 member hotels, encompassing a total of 54,864 rooms. This number does not include hundreds of small boutique hotels and bed-and-breakfasts (tzimms) across Israel.

The most expensive hotel rooms in Israel are the Noble Suite at Waldorf Astoria Jerusalem and the Presidential Suite at the Ritz Carlton Herzliya, each approximately \$5,000 per night in high season.

We invest heavily in water desalination and conservation

Israeli households, industry and agriculture consume 2.1 billion cubic meters of water every year. (Mekorot National Water Carrier)

Israel recycles 87% of its wastewater for agriculture, much more than any other country in the world. Some 31% of irrigation water originates from wastewater treated at more than 150 plants. (Mekorot)

Sixty to 80% of Israel's municipal water, adjusted according to season and real-time demand, flows from large coastal desal plants in Sorek, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Palmachim and Hadera. (Mekorot) Sorek is the largest seawater reverse osmosis desalination plant in the world. The 100,000-square-meter facility can produce 624,000 cubic meters of water daily — 20% of domestic water consumption. (IDE Technologies)

We know the birds and the bees

As of 2019, Israel counts some 545 resident species of birds. (Israeli Birding Portal)

Every year some 500 million birds of 150 to 200 species migrate across Israel in their twice-yearly pilgrimage to and from warmer climes in March and November.

Israel has about 500 beekeepers with a total of 110,000 hives. (Israeli Honey Board)

Israel's annual honey yield is about 3,000 tons. About 1,600 tons of honey is consumed by Israelis every Rosh Hashana to symbolize the hope of a sweet Jewish New Year ahead. (Israeli Honey Board)

We're extraordinarily well educated

Twelve Israelis have been awarded Nobel prizes: S.Y. Agnon, Menachem Begin, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Daniel Kahneman, Aaron Ciechanover, Avram Hershko, Robert Aumann, Ada Yonath, Dan Shechtman, Michael Levitt and Arie Warshel.

Israel has the highest number of engineers and scientists per capita. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Israel ranks third among OECD countries for the percent of its population that has attained higher education and fifth for its total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Israel boasts a literacy level of 97.8% of citizens above the age of 15. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Israel is home to 66 institutions of higher education: Seven research universities, one open university, 23 teacher-training colleges, 21 academic colleges and 14 private colleges. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
A small Israeli-Arab village in the Lower Galilee has one of the highest numbers of doctors per capita in the world.

Tel Aviv trivia

Coastal Tel Aviv-Yafo boasts many distinctions apart from being the heart of Israel's startup culture.

Tel Aviv is the world's 10th most expensive city, tied with Los Angeles. (The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2019 Worldwide Cost of Living Survey)

Tel Aviv is Israel's most expensive residential area. The average price of owner-occupied dwellings was ₪2,176,700 (\$610,053) in the second quarter of 2018 (GlobalPropertyGuide) and 68 apartments priced at over ₪5 million (\$1.3 million) were sold in Tel Aviv during the first half of 2018 (madlan.co.il).

Time Out of London ranks Tel Aviv the best city in the Middle East.

There are 13 beaches along Tel Aviv-Yafo's coastline, visited by some 8.5 million people annually. (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality) Tel Aviv has the highest number of pet dogs per capita in the world, at one pooch per every 17 residents. (Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality)

Tel Aviv has been called the world's top destination for vegan tourists (Daily Meal) and vegan capital of the world (The Independent). The highest concentration of vegan restaurants is in the Florentin neighborhood. Of the 21 Israeli residents listed on the Forbes 2019 World Billionaires list, many live in Tel Aviv — including the wealthiest Israeli man, Roman Abramovich (who was listed by Forbes as Russian although he got Israeli citizenship in 2018) and Shari Arison, the richest woman in Israel.

Random awesome factoids

Israel has more than 230 museums, believed to be more museums per capita than any other country in the world. (CNN Travel)

Israel shipped \$61.9 billion worth of goods around the globe in 2018. The top five exports are gems and precious metals (24% of total exports), electrical machinery and equipment (13.8%), pharmaceuticals (9.1%), optical, technical and medical apparatus (8.6%) and machinery including computers (7.8%). (World's Top Exports)

There are more vegans (5%) and vegetarians (8%) per capita in Israel than anywhere else in the world.

Every day, Osem produces one million bags of Bamba, Israel's top-selling snack. Surveys show that 90% of Israeli families buy Bamba on a regular basis.

Israel has won nine Olympic medals since 1952: one gold in sailing, one silver in judo, and seven bronze (four in judo, two in sailing and one in canoeing).

Israeli rhythmic gymnast Linoy Ashram set a world record with a score of 20.65 points in the clubs event at the Rhythmic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup Championship in 2018.

Guinness World Records certified in April 2019 that Isaak Hayik of Or Yehuda, Israel, is the oldest soccer player in the world.

A new Guinness World Record was set for most people using virtual reality displays at the same time, when Israeli company Mobileye made a presentation to 1,867 business leaders at the 2017 YPO Edge conference in Vancouver, Canada.

Tribulation Preview

By Hal Lindsey

Ever wonder what the last days of this age will look like? Well... look around.

Please don't misunderstand. This is not the tribulation that Jesus, Daniel, and others in the Bible warned about. We who know Christ will be gone before that begins. But as we get closer to that time, we can see how those events are preparing to play out.

A Drudge Report headline on March 9th read, "Market Bloodbath." Later in the day, the Drudge Headline said, "Italy Quarantines Entire Country." The USA Today headline said, "Midwest farmers face a crisis. Hundreds are dying by suicide." Later, the USA Today lead headline said, "Dow plummets 2,000 points, oil prices drop as global recession concerns mount." The lead story in the Jerusalem Post said, "All travelers returning to Israel from abroad will enter isolation."

People are ill at ease, frightened, skittish, worried. The financial unrest caused by the coronavirus COVID-19 is making matters worse. Then over the weekend, Russia and Saudi Arabia began an oil price war. Markets are down close to 20% from all time highs less than a month ago. That illustrates the volatility of a world in rebellion against God.

Despite our shortcomings and sin, I hear nothing about repentance or having sorrow for wickedness. In Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Day proclamation of 1861, he wrote about God's ongoing provision for the nation despite the terrible war. He said that these good things, "...are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

Lincoln went on to invite his fellow citizens "to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience."

Even in Thanksgiving, he spoke of humility and repentance before God.

In 1789, President George Washington also set aside a day of thanksgiving for all Americans. His proclamation said, "It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor."

Washington said the day should "be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be—That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks." But Washington did not stop with proclaiming thanks to God. He said it would also be a day to beseech God "to pardon our national and other transgressions."

Those are a examples of the leadership that made America a nation where more people have lived in more freedom and with more prosperity than any nation in the history of the world. Yes, they were flawed leaders, but their ideals set in motion something extraordinary — something that has greatly blessed the whole earth.

First, they were thankful to God. Second, they were humble before God. Third, they were actively repentant.

Today is a totally different story. Today, public repentance would not be politically correct. To repent implies the existence sin, and the righteous expectations of God that we as a nation fail to meet.

It's another preview of the tribulation. Revelation 9:21 is one of the most remarkable verses in all the Bible. Terrible calamities will have fallen on the earth by that time — calamities that are a direct result of human sin. But John, being given a vision of those future events, tells us, "They did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts."

But today, the church is still here. We can't make the world repent, but we can provide an example of repentance and humility before God. We the Church can humble ourselves and pray. We can seek His face. We can turn from wickedness and sin. While we remain in this world, we are to be salt and light within it.

Iran's Ayatollahs Will Struggle to Survive the Oil Slump

by Con Coughlin April 23, 2020

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has tried to put a brave face on the latest setback to hit the regime, claiming that Iran is unlikely to suffer as much as other countries from the oil price drop because it is less reliant than others on crude exports.

If that were truly the case, then Tehran would not be asking the IMF for a bailout, and Mr Rouhani, together with Javad Zarif, Iran's Foreign Minister, would not be begging Washington to remove sanctions.

The truth of the matter is, for all the regime's attempts to claim it has everything under control, that the country is teetering on the brink of collapse, and the ayatollahs are fast running out of options to save themselves.

At a time when Iran's Islamic regime is already facing unprecedented pressure over its handling of the coronavirus outbreak, as well as its disastrous handling of the economy, the global slump in oil prices could well prove to be the final straw for the ayatollahs.

Even before this week's dramatic collapse in global oil prices, which saw the key gauge of U.S. crude prices, the West Texas Intermediate benchmark, tumble into negative territory for the first time in history, the mullahs were already under intense pressure over their catastrophic running of the country during their four decades in power.

A combination of the regime's clumsy attempts to cover up the true extent of the coronavirus outbreak in Iran, combined with the disastrous impact the US sanctions are having on the Iranian economy, have resulted in the regime facing the most sustained period of domestic dissatisfaction since the 1979 revolution.

With the collapse in the global oil market, the pressure on the ayatollahs is set to increase even further as they risk losing a vital income stream at a time when the country's economy is already on its knees.

According to recent estimates by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Iran needs global oil prices to reach the highly unlikely benchmark of \$195 a barrel just in order to meet its budget requirements for 2020.

With current predictions suggesting oil prices are likely to remain around the \$19 a barrel mark, the ayatollahs are facing the prospect of an economic Armageddon: the oil slump means there is little prospect

of a revival in the country's economic fortunes for the foreseeable future.

With inflation running at 35%, and the country facing widespread unemployment, the ayatollahs have become increasingly dependent on the country's oil revenues to keep the economy functioning. Their ability to generate revenue from oil sales, though, has already been severely affected by the impact of US sanctions, with Iranian oil exports declining from their pre-sanctions level of two million barrels of oil per day to around 300,000 -- a decline of more than 80%. Now, following this week's slump, even that modest amount is under threat.

The scale of Iran's deepening economic crisis is reflected in the regime's recent decision to seek \$5 billion in emergency funding from the IMF, its first request for outside help since the 1979 revolution.

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One indication of the growing disconnect between the regime and ordinary Iranians is the claim by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that it has successfully launched a military satellite into orbit for the first time, an undertaking that seems completely inappropriate for a country teetering on the brink of bankruptcy.

In times of crisis, the regime has often resorted to stirring up tensions in the Gulf, and elsewhere in the Middle East, as a means of increasing pressure on the US and its allies. To that end, Iran's IRGC have been accused of conducting a number of confrontational operations in the Gulf this month, including the temporary seizure of a Chinese tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, which proved to be deeply embarrassing for Tehran, as China is one of the few countries still buying its oil.

There has also been an increase in Revolutionary Guard patrol boats harassing US warships operating in the Gulf, a development which has prompted U.S. President Donald Trump to order the US Navy "to shoot down and destroy" Iranian gunboats if they continue with their provocative actions.

The ayatollahs may still believe they can survive the current crisis, but the reality is that their prospects of overcoming all the obstacles they face, from coronavirus to the collapse of the Iranian economy, become more challenging by the day.