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Contexts

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Welcome

The intention this issue had been a short article to begin our consideration of the *Identity* of the prophetic Israel. After reading David Grossman's speech I attempted it trim it down to one page, but, as you can see, I was unsuccessful. (Write if you want the full speech).

Anyway, if you want pictures, go to the Web Site and click on Holy Land. Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Events in Gaza

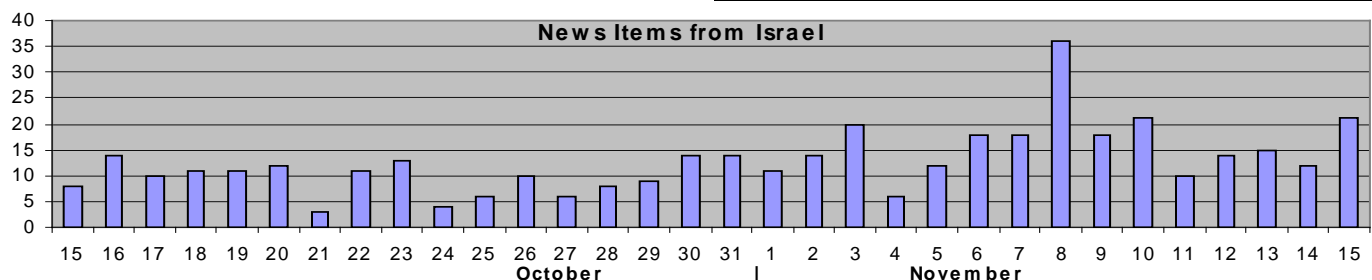
During the last month Hamas has been negotiating for the formation of a new Palestinian government. The purpose of this is to attempt to resolve the prohibition of EU and US aid to the Palestinian Authority that was imposed after Hamas won the election and took control of the Parliament. PM Ismail Haniya expressed willingness to stand down, in favor of a cabinet made up not of politicians but of 'technocrats' – professionals and specialists in their field, who could conduct the government and bring back Western acceptance and participation in development aid.

On November 3rd Mohamed Shbair, professor at a Hamas-linked University in the West Bank, expressed his willingness to accept the nomination to the post, which awaits PA President Mahmoud Abbas' approval.

During this time militants have continued to fire many rockets at Israeli targets. These rockets are unguided, and hit rather randomly. On October 31st Israel began operation Autumn Clouds to attempt to deal with this problem. Two events caused consternation in this period: the (Nov.3) deaths of 2 women who responded to broadcast calls for them to protect militants sheltering in a mosque, and the (Nov.8) deaths of 19 civilians sheltering in a Beit Hanoun house. On Nov. 15th a woman was killed in Sderot, the first fatality in more than a year from the continuous barrage of rockets fired from Gaza.

Events in Gaza	
Operation Autumn Clouds	
October	
<i>Tue 31st</i>	Israeli troops mass on Gaza border 3 gunmen killed in Khan Younis
Nov.	
<i>Wed 1st</i>	Incursion into Beit Hanoun – town is surrounded (Incursion prompted by regular rocket firing into Israel) Militant killed in N Gaza clashes Air strikes kill policeman, 2 militants Tank fire kills 3 Hamas gunmen 3 civilians killed in Beit Hanoun Israeli soldier killed
<i>Thur 2nd</i>	Rockets fired into Israel Missile targets car carrying militants who fired rockets 2 nd missile hits bystanders, 2 killed Residents rounded up, questioned, 15 detained 75-yr-old man killed helping disabled son indoors 60 militants shelter in mosque in Beit Hanoun center Claims of non-conventional weapons being used
<i>Fri 3rd</i>	Israeli bulldozers pull down part of the mosque 3 Palestinians killed during clashes with Israeli troops Air strike kills 2 Palestinians in N Gaza Woman attempt to shield militants in mosque, 2 killed About 60 gunmen succeed in escaping from mosque 2 P-RC paramedics killed while attending wounded
<i>Sat 4th</i>	Snipers kill 12-yr-old girl, civilian in Beit Hanoun IDF tanks guard key intersections
45 dead	Civilians under curfew, eased for 2 hours today

<i>Sun 5th</i>	Hamas gunman killed in Beit Hanoun clash with IDF Police officer killed in N Gaza 47 dead
<i>Mon 6th</i>	Israeli missile hits school bus in Gaza, 16-yr-old killed Air strike kills 2 ICRC medics evacuating wounded 57 dead
<i>Tue 7th</i>	Troops withdraw from Beit Hanoun overnight 4 rockets fired from Gaza to Ashkelon Woman killed in N Gaza home by tank shell 7 militants & civilian killed in N Gaza 57 dead
<i>Wed 8th</i>	Israeli shells hit Beit Hanoun house, kill 19 in shelter Hamas urges violent response to 19 dead Defense minister calls halt to IDF shelling in Gaza Gunmen fire at European Union office in Gaza 57 dead
<i>Thur 9th</i>	Gaza air strike kills 2, inc. Hamas rocket commander Olmert blames 19 deaths on technical failure
<i>Sat 11th</i>	US vetoes resolution condemning Gaza deaths
<i>Sun 12th</i>	16 yr-old killed in air strike aimed at rocket militants
<i>Tue 14th</i>	5 rockets hit Sderot from Gaza
<i>Wed 15th</i>	13 rockets hit Sderot, woman killed nr Olmert home Air raids on 5 militant homes in refugee camps in N Gaza 800 residents leave Sderot on donated buses
<i>Thu 16th</i>	2 more rockets hit Sderot 80 dead
<i>Fri 18th</i>	Four rockets land in Ashkelon Tanks lead incursion into Beit Lahiya UN General Assembly passes condemnation of Gaza action



Christian Zionism – Identity

Our discussion of the issue of Identity concerns the makeup of the state.

4. Identity (F)

The ethnic makeup of a prophetic Israel would be...

Could the prophesied Israel include non-Jews (both racially and by religion)?

whoever is resident

including Secular Jews

Jewish and Christian believers

Conservative, Reform & Orthodox Jews

Only Jews recognized by the Orthodox

The question of how homogenous the state should be is a major concern to Israelis these days, for two reasons; security and representation. A state that included an Arab population (especially if a large number of those in the Palestinian occupied territories were included) would be a major security risk. Additionally, even if this population was even better than tolerant towards the state of Israel, the number of Palestinians has begun to outnumber the number of Israelis in the state. The consequence of this is that a democratic single-state solution to the current situation would give the non-Jewish population a stronger vote.

As I prepared this article, I came across a recent speech by David Grossman. He is an Israeli writer, and – for the worst of reasons – was in the news during the Lebanon conflict, because his son, Uri, was killed while serving with the IDF. His speech, which is excerpted here, reminds us of the wide range of opinion in Israel itself, and the discrepancy between the stance of Christian Zionism and that of at least a fair portion of the Jewish population.

David Grossman's speech at the Rabin memorial (on Saturday, November 4th, 2006) – attended by P.M. Ehud Olmert

The annual memorial ceremony for Yitzhak Rabin is the moment when we pause for a while to remember Rabin the man, the leader. And we also take a look at ourselves, at Israeli society, its leadership, the national mood, the state of the peace process, at ourselves as individuals in the face of national events. It is not easy to take a look at ourselves this year. There was a war, and Israel flexed its massive military muscle, but also exposed Israel's fragility. We discovered that our military cannot be the only guarantee of our existence. Primarily, we have found that the crisis Israel is experiencing is far deeper than we had feared, in almost every way.

I am speaking here tonight as a person whose love for the land is overwhelming and complex, and yet it is unequivocal, and as one whose continuous covenant with the land has turned his personal calamity into a covenant of blood. I am totally secular, and yet in my eyes the establishment and the very existence of the State of Israel is a miracle of sorts that happened to us as a nation - a political, national, human miracle. I do not forget this for a single moment. Even when many things in the reality of our lives enrage and depress me, even when the miracle is broken down to routine and wretchedness, to corruption and cynicism, even when reality seems like nothing but a poor parody of this miracle, I always remember. And with these feelings, I address you tonight.

The death of young people is a horrible, ghastly waste. But no less dreadful is the sense that for many years, the State of Israel has been squandering, not only the lives of its sons, but also its miracle; that grand and rare opportunity that history bestowed upon it, the opportunity to establish here a state that is efficient, democratic, which abides by Jewish and universal values; a state that would be a national home and haven, but not only a haven, also a place that would offer a new meaning to Jewish existence; a state that holds as an integral and essential part of its Jewish identity and its Jewish ethos, the observance of full equality and respect for its non-Jewish citizens. Look at what befell us. Look what befell the young, bold, passionate country we had here, and how, as if it had undergone a quickened ageing process, Israel lurched from infancy and youth to a perpetual state of gripe, weakness and sourness. ...

One of the most difficult outcomes of the recent war is the heightened realization that at this time there is no king in Israel, that our leadership is hollow. Our military and political leadership is hollow. I am not even talking about the obvious blunders in running the war, of the collapse of the home front, nor of the large-scale and small-time corruption. I am talking about the fact that the people leading Israel today are unable to connect Israelis to their identity.

The fundamental characteristics of the current Israeli leadership are primarily anxiety and intimidation, of the charade of power, the wink of the dirty deal, of selling out our most prized possessions. In this sense they are not true leaders, certainly they are not the leaders of a people in such a complicated position that has lost the way it so desperately needs. Sometimes it seems that the sound box of their self-importance... exists only in the space between two headlines of a newspaper or between two investigations by the attorney general.

Look at those who lead us. Not all of them, of course, but many among them. ... When was the last time a prime minister formulated or took a step that could open up a new horizon for Israelis, for a better future? When did he initiate a social or cultural or ideological move, instead of merely reacting feverishly to moves forced upon him by others?

Mister Prime Minister, I am not saying these words out of feelings of rage or revenge. I have waited long enough to avoid responding on impulse. You will not be able to dismiss my words tonight by saying a grieving man cannot be judged. Certainly I am grieving, but I am more pained than angry. This country and what you and your friends are doing to it pains me... Yitzhak Rabin took the road of peace with the Palestinians, not because he possessed great affection for them or their leaders. Even then, as you recall, common belief was that we had no partner and we had nothing to discuss with them. Rabin decided to act, because he discerned very wisely that Israeli society would not be able to sustain itself endlessly in a state of an unresolved conflict. He realized long before many others that life in a climate of violence, occupation, terror, anxiety and hopelessness, extracts a price Israel cannot afford. This is all relevant today, even more so.

We have been living in this struggle for more than 100 years. We, the citizens of this conflict, have been born into war and raised in it, and in a certain sense indoctrinated by it. Maybe this is why we sometimes think that this madness in which we live for over 100 years is the only real thing, the only life for us, and that we do not have the option or even the right to aspire for a different life. By our sword we shall live and by our sword we shall die and the sword shall devour forever. Maybe this would explain the indifference with which we accept the utter failure of the peace process, a failure that has lasted for years and claims more and more victims.

And these are partly the cause of Israel's quick descent into the heartless, essentially brutal treatment of its poor and suffering. This indifference to the fate of the hungry, the elderly, the sick and the disabled, all those who are weak, this equanimity of the State of Israel in the face of human trafficking or the appalling employment conditions of our foreign workers, which border on slavery, to the deeply ingrained institutionalized racism against the Arab minority. When this takes place here so naturally, without shock, without protest, as though it were obvious, that we would never be able to get the wheel back on track, when all of this takes place, I begin to fear that even if peace were to arrive tomorrow, and even if we ever regained some normalcy, we may have lost our chance for full recovery.

The calamity that struck my family and myself with the falling of our son, Uri, does not grant me any additional rights in the public discourse, but I believe that the experience of facing death and the loss brings with it a sobriety and lucidity, at least regarding the distinction between the important and the unimportant, between the attainable and the unattainable. Any reasonable person in Israel, and I will say in Palestine too, knows exactly the outline of a possible solution to the conflict between the two peoples. Any reasonable person here and over there knows deep in their heart the difference between dreams and the heart's desire, between what is possible and what is not possible by the conclusion of negotiations. ...

Let us take a look at those who are meant to be our partners. The Palestinians have elected Hamas to lead them, Hamas who refuses to negotiate with us, refuses even to recognize us. What can be done in such a position? Keep strangling them more and more, keep mowing down hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza, most of whom are innocent civilians like us? Kill them and get killed for all eternity?

Turn to the Palestinians, Mr. Olmert, address them over the heads of Hamas, appeal to their moderates, those who like you and I oppose Hamas and its ways, turn to the Palestinian people, speak to their deep grief and wounds, acknowledge their ongoing suffering. Nothing would be taken away from you or Israel's standing in future negotiations. Our hearts will only open up to one another slightly, and this has a tremendous power, the power of a force majeure. The power of simple human compassion, particularly in this a state of deadlock and dread. Just once, look at them not through the sights of a gun, and not behind a closed roadblock. You will see there a people that is tortured no less than us. An oppressed, occupied people bereft of hope. ...

Go to the Palestinians, Mr. Olmert, do not search all the time for reasons not to talk to them. You backed down on the unilateral convergence, and that's a good thing, but do not leave a vacuum. It will be occupied instantly with violence, destruction. Talk to them, make them an offer their moderates can accept. They argue among themselves far more than we are shown in the media. Make them an offer that will force them to choose between accepting it or preferring to remain hostage to fanatical Islam. Approach them with the bravest and most serious plan Israel can offer. With the offer than any reasonable Palestinian and Israeli knows is the boundary of their refusal and our concession. There is no time. Should you delay, in a short while we will look back with longing at the amateur Palestinian terror. ...

Maybe, Mr. Prime Minister, you need to be reminded, that if an Arab leader is sending a peace signal, be it the slightest and most hesitant, you must accept it, you must test immediately its sincerity and seriousness. You do not have the moral right not to respond. You owe it to those whom you would ask to sacrifice their lives should another war break out. Therefore, if President Assad says that Syria wants peace, even if you don't believe him, and we are all suspicious of him, you must offer to meet him that same day. Don't wait a single day. When you launched the last war you did not even wait one hour. You charged with full force, with the complete arsenal, with the full power of destruction. Why, when a glimmer of peace surfaces, must you reject it immediately, dissolve it? What have you got to lose? Are you suspicious of it? Go and offer him such terms that would expose his schemes. Offer him a peace process that would last over several years, and only at its conclusion, and provided he meets all the conditions and restrictions, will he get back the Golan. Commit him to a prolonged process, act so that his people also become aware of this possibility. Help the moderates, who must exist there as well. Try to shape reality. Not only serve as its collaborator. This is what you were elected to do. ...

Disagreements today between right and left are not that significant. The vast majority of Israel's citizens understand this already, and know what the outline for the resolution of the conflict would look like. Most of us understand, therefore, that the land would be divided, that a Palestinian state would be established. Why, then, do we keep exhausting ourselves with the internal bickering that has gone on for 40 years? Why does our political leadership continue to reflect the position of the radicals and not that held by the majority of the public? It is better to reach national consensus before circumstances or God forbid another war force us to reach it. If we do it, we would save ourselves years of decline and error, years when we will cry time and again: "Behold land, for we hath squandered."

From where I stand right now, I beseech, I call on all those who listen, the young who came back from the war, who know they are the ones to be called upon to pay the price of the next war, on citizens, Jew and Arab, people on the right and the left, the secular, the religious, stop for a moment, take a look into the abyss. Think of how close we are to losing all that we have created here. Ask yourselves if this is not the time to get a grip, to break free of this paralysis, to finally claim the lives we deserve to live.

This Month

Oct	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Nov	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																																																																																																	
	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T		T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W																																																																																																																																																																	
Sudan	38 killed in South Sudan																Jinjawid attack & rape in Darfur																Govt. ok's larger AU force																Jinjawiid kill 63, many children																Jinjawiid being remobilized in W. Darfur																Militias kill 30 in refugee camp																UN provides \$30m for AU in Darfur																																																																																															
Somalia	Syria, Iran, Libya, Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea, Djibouti and Saudi Arabia support OIC with arms & fighters																Islamists fighters close to Ethiopia																Ethiopia 'at war' with Islamists																Govt & Islamists in talks																Islamists attack positions in Puntland																Floods in south displace 1000s																																																																																																															
Pakistan	Indian troops clash with Kashmir Islamists																5 die in clan feud																Army attack Taliban madrassa, kills 80																Pro-govt. sheikh killed in Waziristan																Suicide bomb kills 42 soldiers																Kashmir grenade attacks kill 5																																																																																																															
Afghan.	78 suicide attacks this year. Large offensive in south.																Suicide bomber kills 1 in Khost																9 tons of hashish seized in SE																55 insurgents killed in battle in south																NATO soldier killed by roadside bomb																Tribal elders reopen schools, 20 in 2 weeks																																																																																																															
Iraq	Police commanders suspected in death squads, reassigned																Prince Philip meets with UK troops																17 killed in Basra police minibus																Greek woman NGO worker freed after 1 week																US raid in Shia area-5 killed																																																																																																																															
US Deaths:	3/30: 2,317																5/31: 2,459																7/31: 2,578																8/31: 2,626																9/30: 2,700																10/31: 2,806																11/15: 2,858																																																																																															
	Sectarian violence in Balad, 60 killed in 4 days																12 killed planting bomb in Ramadi																Univ. professor killed in Baghdad																7 US killed in 3 incidents																Mortars kill 8 in Sadr City																US raid in Ramadi kills 30																																																																																																															
	11 US troops killed today																Sunni & Shia tribes clash nr Suwayra																Oct. US troops death toll is 100																Mortars kill 7 in Baghdad																Iraq army arrest 41, kill 6 in incidents																80+ abducted from Min. of Ed. (Int.Min. gunmen suspected)																																																																																																															
	Slovak troops to leave in Feb.																Curfew in Amara																Bomb kills 3 Iraqi troops in Tal Afar																Sadr City bomb kills 28 laborers																Explosives cache found nr Baji																3 US killed in 2 incidents																6 US killed in Anbar																																																																																															
	Body of Syriac priest found in Mosul																5 US killed in Anbar																US military policeman killed by sniper																Baghdad total curfew																Polish, Slovak soldiers killed																2 Mosul reporters killed in 3 days																																																																																																															
	PUK member killed in Mosul																6 suicide bombers attack police in Mosul-20 killed																Baquba attack kills many police																Vehicle ban in Mosul																Car bomb kills 15 in wedding convoy																Saddam sentenced to hang for Dujail massacre																Car bombs kill 8 in Baghdad market																9 Shia killed, 11 kidnapped in Latifiya																55 bodies found in Baghdad																																																															
	A total of more than 240,000 estimated to have fled homes for safety since Feb bombing of Shia mosque sparked sectarian violence. Many Shia/Sunni couples forced to divorce by families, clan.																100s of Mehdi militia attack Amara police stns. 10 killed																Govt. agrees to timeline for reducing violence																Polish helicopter hit by gunfire, lands safely																Car bomb kills 15 in wedding convoy																Saddam sentenced to hang for Dujail massacre																Car bombs kill 8 in Baghdad market																9 Shia killed, 11 kidnapped in Latifiya																55 bodies found in Baghdad																																																															
	Mortars kill 9 in Balad																4 firemen killed in error																2 suicide bombs in Ramadi kill police																100 of Interior Min. charged with torture																Suicide bomber kills 35 recruits																4 UK die in attack on patrol boat																																																																																																															
	Mehdi leader held in Hindiya																US troops kill 10 in Sadr City raids																8 bodyguards of Allawi arrested																UK soldier killed in Basra																Suicide bomb on minibus kills 11																Egef, nr Latifiya, 8 kidnapped																4 Kirkuk primary teachers killed																																																																																															
	Govt. meets Amara tribal leaders																Gunmen kill 28 in police convoy																Al Qaeda leader killed in Ramadi																Baathists to be allowed govt. jobs																Suicide bomb on minibus kills 11																Egef, nr Latifiya, 8 kidnapped																4 Kirkuk primary teachers killed																																																																																															
	150 Mehdi battle police in Suwayra																11 soldiers kidnapped nr Baquba																Sadr City car bomb kills 7																Suicide bomb kills 17 in Baghdad cafe																																																																																																																																															
	Mahmudiya bombs, mortars kill 16																AI Iraqiya TV sports presenter killed																56 bodies found in Baghdad																																																																																																																																																															
Iran	UN plans to begin sanctions																																Argentina charges Rafsanjani in 1994 bombing-																2 bombs kill 5 in Ahvaz																																																																																																																																															
Turkey	260 Turkish troops join UNIFIL II in Lebanon																																Govt. tells UN Hezbollah smuggling from Syria																3 PKK rebels killed in Sirnak province																																																																																																																																															
	5.2 earthquake nr Istanbul																Army kills 3 PKK in Batman																																																																																																																																																																															
Lebanon	Report: Hezbollah used cluster munitions in N Israel attacks																Israeli planes conduct mock raids																7 die in family feud																Indonesian troops head for Lebanon																Hezbollah man killed by bomblet while clearing																																																																																																																															
Egypt																																	Sinai police seize 4,000lbs of explosives on 11/2, 11/7																																																																																																																																																															
Israel	Olmert calls for meeting with Siniora																IDF admits use of phosphor bombs in Lebanon																3 militants killed during clashes																Home of Hamas official bombed by IDF																Gaza rocket hits Sderot, nr Olmert house, kills woman																																																																																																																															
	Tanks enter Gaza, 2 militants killed nr Jabalaya, 2 nr Rafah																IDF raid in S.Gaza-1 killed																3 killed by IDF nr Jenin																Protests against planned gay festival																IDF shelling kills 19 sheltering in house in Beit Hanun																UN calls Israel to cease flights over Lebanon																2 nd Lebanon war general resigns																																																																																															
	IJ militant killed by IDF in Jenin gunbattle																Olmert continues talks to enlarge coalition																Lieberman proposes 'Chechnya model' offensive in Gaza																Militant killed during arrest raid in Nablus																PFLP militant killed in Nablus raid																																																																																																																															
	Israeli planes conduct mock raids over Lebanon. French forces almost fire during 'raid'. Beginning Oct.31 Israel conducts operation Autumn Clouds to prevent rocket firing from Gaza																AP journalist abducted, freed																Police investigate Olmert business																																																																																																																																																															
	7 die in IDF raid in Gaza																3 killed in Gaza																Foreign minister to visit Qatar																GAZA INCURSION - see p.1																																																																																																																																															
WB & Gaza	Israeli visa policy separates thousands of Palestinians from their families in Gaza & West Bank. Incursion into N Gaza in November.																Egypt guards intercept arms headed for Gaza																Shots fired at PM convoy in Gaza																Al Aqsa Martyrs officer killed by gunmen																Spanish aid worker in Gaza abducted, freed																Abbas/Hamas agree on unity govt. plan																Talks on unity govt close to agreement																Haniyeh willing to stand down as PM																70day teacher strike ends-no pay in 6 months																Unity govt. of 'technocrats'																Unity govt. will be of 'technocrats'																Shbaib selected as new PM															
Oct	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Nov	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																																																																																																	
	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T		T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W																																																																																																																																																																	