

The events...

Britain's strategic needs, burgeoning alliances with Arab leaders and the clear justice of the Zionists' dreams coalesced on 31st October 1917, when Britain's war cabinet agreed the final wording of a letter to Lord Rothschild and the Zionist Federation; a letter which became known as "The Balfour Declaration". It is notable that most of the British War Cabinet were also evangelical Christians.



The 2007 re-enactment of the Battle of Beersheva

One other event took place on 31st October 1917, which was key to the intentions in the Declaration. General Allenby won a key battle against the Turks and Germans for the desert town of Beersheva. Without a plan for the future, the victory at Beersheva would have been just another battle in a long and bloody war, a footnote in history. The two events, occurring at the same time yet thousands of miles apart, was a sure sign that this was God bringing His plan for the Jewish people's restoration to their land closer to its fulfilment.

"His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." (the Balfour Declaration)

The centenary...

By itself, the Balfour Declaration carried little legal weight. It was simply an expression of intent by the British government of the day. Five years later however, in the aftermath of World War One, its intent and most of its very wording were incorporated into international law in the San Remo Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine.

Christians and biblical teaching were instrumental in the events leading to the Declaration, going right back to the Reformation. This gives Christians who love the Jewish people and the state of Israel a desire to celebrate the centenary of this short but vital document along with the Jewish community.

This leaflet is published by the Balfour 100 (Christian) working group, a team of Christian ministry leaders co-operating with leaders in the Jewish community to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, 2nd November 2017.

Major events will be held in London, Manchester, Glasgow and other cities. Additionally, many smaller local groups will be marking the centenary in their own ways and there will be major tours to Israel to visit key locations and to join a centenary re-enactment of the battle of Beersheva.



For a pack of event materials, events information, or to publicise a local Balfour 100 event, contact us here...



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Celebrating the centenary of the signing of the
Balfour Declaration, 2nd November 1917

Christians
and the

**BALFOUR
DECLARATION**

What is the Balfour Declaration?

Who were the key people in its creation?

Why is it important for Christians?

How will its centenary be marked?

Back story...

Five hundred years ago the Reformation led to the Bible being translated into English and read by the common man. This led to a greater interest among Puritans in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

By the 17th Century there was a growing awareness among evangelicals that the Bible prophesied the return of the people of Israel to their historic Promised Land. In the 19th Century many well-known preachers like Bishop J.C.Ryle and Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon taught on the restoration of the Jews to their land. Bible-believing Christians had a huge influence on the governments of the time (such as William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury).



J.C. Ryle



Charles Spurgeon

Ryle, Spurgeon and others were influential in presenting the case for the return of the Jews. As Bible students they longed to see the return of Jesus Christ. Before that could happen, the Jews had to be back in their own Land (Israel). This then became the central focus of their prayer and political action.

This seemed impossible while the ancient Land of Israel was under Muslim Turkish control and the Jewish people scattered for 2,000 years.

"...[in at least ten prophets] the gathering and restoration of the Jews in the latter days are expressly mentioned. They all predict the final gathering of the Jewish nation from the four quarters of the globe, and their restoration to their own land."
(Bishop J C Ryle)

The people...

In 1896 Austrian Jewish journalist Theodor Herzl, incensed at the anti-semitism he saw around him (especially the Dreyfus affair), wrote a book called 'Der Judenstaat' on the need to re-establish the Jewish State as the only viable long-term solution for the survival of the Jewish people.



Theodor Herzl



William Hechler

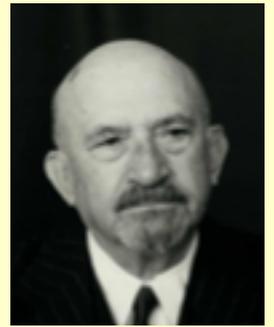
As Herzl began the movement that became known as "Zionism" he became friends with an evangelical Christian minister, Rev William Hechler. Hechler's high level contacts as a diplomatic chaplain enabled Herzl to gain valuable patronage for Zionsim and helped to envision influential leaders, including the Kaiser of Germany.

Historians have noted that if Herzl had not had Hechler's support and encouragement to continue his work, Zionism might never have been birthed as a political movement. Hechler, a spiritual heir of the likes of Ryle and Spurgeon, was one of the first "Christian Zionists".

As the 19th Century became the 20th, another partnership between Jew and gentile was developing that was key to the furtherance of the dream of a revived Jewish homeland.

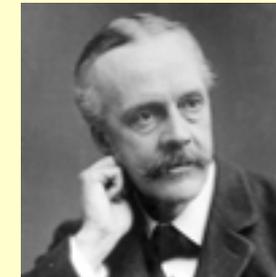
"The Jews who wish for a State will have it. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes".
(Theodor Herzl in "Der Judenstaat")

Chaim Weizmann, born in 1874, was one of fifteen children born to a Jewish couple in Belarus. He studied biochemistry in Germany and moved to Manchester, England in 1904. Becoming a leading bio-chemist in the years that followed, Weizmann also became a leader in the Zionist movement in Britain.



Chaim Weizmann

During World War 1 he developed an important chemical ingredient for gunpowder, which brought him to the attention of the British Government and particularly Lord Balfour, with whom he had already become friends.



Arthur Lord Balfour

Born in Scotland, Arthur Balfour became MP for Manchester East (where he first met Weizmann) in 1885, and was Prime Minister from 1902-05. In 1917, when the Balfour Declaration was made, he was Foreign Secretary

This was the partnership that eventually led to the letter known to this day as the 'Balfour Declaration' (Balfour was the signatory). A friendship developed, during which Weizmann, the ardent Zionist, persuaded Balfour, an evangelical Christian, of the case for a homeland for the Jewish people in the then "Palestine."

"The allied nations with the fullest concurrence of our government and people are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth."
(Woodrow Wilson, March 1919)