

# Israeli Jews



## Quick Facts

**Pop. in Israel:** 5,000,000

### Subgroups:

- Ashkenazi: 1,500,000
- Sephardi: 1,500,000
- Soviet Jews: 1,000,000
- Falasha: 90,000

**Religion:** Secular, Ethnic

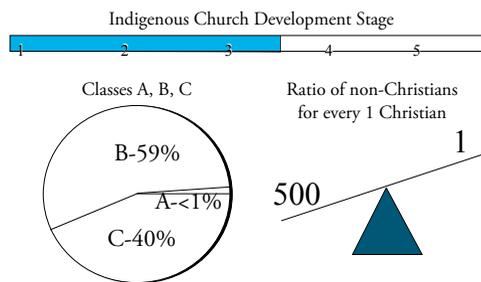
**Believers:** 0.2%

**Scriptures:** NT, OT

**Ministry Tools:** JRGT

**C Status:** 3 **M Status:** 3

**MS Subgroups:** 50+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church  
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined  
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

**Identity:** The Israeli Jews are the descendents of the ancient Hebrew people, who were scattered throughout the world following successive invasions of their homeland. Encouraged by the Balfour Declaration in 1917, large migration of Jews from over 100 countries began re-settling Palestine, to the dismay of the surrounding Arabs.

**Lifestyle:** Israeli Jews have the highest standard of living of any Middle Eastern population, and are ranked 23rd in the world by the UNHDI. Immigrants to Israel were generally highly skilled professionals, educators, and entrepreneurs, enabling rapid progress in establishing universities and technically advanced industries. However, large military expenditures, high-taxation, fluctuating tourism, and boycotts by surrounding Arab nations, keep the economy from even greater expansion.

**Customs:** Military service is compulsory for males and females beginning

at the age of 18. Three years of service is required for men, and two years for women. Following this term, soldiers enter the reserves which requires active duty three weeks out of every year.

**Religion:** The term Jew has both ethnic and religious connotation in Israel. The vast majority of Jews in Israel are considered *hiloni*, or secularists, though most of these still participate in passover and other Jewish traditions, which the *hiloni* consider more cultural than religious in significance. A small minority (12%), the *Haredi*, are ultra-orthodox and exert a disproportionate influence on the country through their political parties, which often determine the balance of power in coalition governments. The Haredi consider themselves the true followers of the faith as handed down by Moses, and strictly follow a set of complex laws based on the Torah.

**Christian Outreach:** The number of Messianic Jews, or those Jews who are

followers of Jesus but retain their cultural identity as Jews, is rapidly increasing. Their presence has evoked a strong response and debate within the Jewish community about what it means to be a Jew (e.g. you can be an atheist and still considered a Jew). Today, in Israel there are at least 70 messianic Jewish congregations with about 8,000 members.

## How to Pray:

☞ The Haredi continue to push for anti-conversion legislation. Pray for full religious freedom in Israel, and for the acceptance of Messianic Jews as a recognized and authentic Jewish tradition.

☞ There is a brewing controversy between Messianic Jews seeking to make bridges into the community, and Christian expatriate missionaries seeking to convert Jews by confrontational evangelism and extraction (from their culture and family). Pray for unity and sensitivity on both sides, and for the best approach to prevail.

☞ There are over 140,000 Messianic Jews in the United States. Pray for effective cooperation within this movement. Pray also for the discipleship of the 1 million U.S. Jews who say they believe Jesus was the Messiah.

**Every year 45,000 Israeli Jews die without Christ.**