

# Soli Deo Gloria (Baruch Maoz)

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We will continue to produce MaozNews monthly until the pandemic subsides, and then revert to producing on a quarterly basis. More frequent updates are available via my accounts with [FaceBook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#)

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## **Israel's New Government**

(Making sense of the senseless)

### **Did Netanyahu Win or Lose the Recent Elections?**

For the sake of those who can't make head or tails of the results of Israel's recent elections, I am going to try and explain the unexplainable and make sense of what, to every reasonable person, is senseless. If I fail, be free to blame Israel's cynical politicians and frustrated voters.

#### He lost

After three rounds of national elections in the space of 11 months, the incumbent, Mr. Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu, again failed to win enough seats in the Knesset (Israel's parliament) to obtain a majority that would enable him to Government with his right-wing bloc. His nemesis, former Chief of Staff Benjamin (Benny) Gantz obtained such a majority, slim though it was, and was therefore tasked by the President to form a Government.

To that end Mr. Gantz had to rely on the parliamentary support of the United Arab List (a coalition of 4 parties). He had a 62 seat majority over Mr. Netanyahu's 58 seat minority, all of whom vowed never to sit in a Government led by Mr. Netanyahu. In fact, most members of Mr. Gantz' bloc differed little in their views from those espoused by Mr. Netanyahu. They only matter on which they differed had to do with Mr. Netanyahu's indictments, his baneful influence on Israel's Governmental and judicial system, and whether or not one indicted for three different counts of corruption should be allowed to form a Government.

#### He won

Unwilling to be part of a government dependent on the Arab vote, three members of the Knesset from Mr. Gantz' political bloc defected and, in spite of their vociferous undertakings to the contrary, joined Mr. Netanyahu's bloc and accorded him an unexpected majority.

Mr. Netanyahu then had a 62 seat majority over Mr. Gantz' 58 minority.

Mr. Gantz then split the list he himself had formed and led, and recommended to the President that Mr. Netanyahu be authorized to form a Government, which the President proceeded to do.

### Israel Lost

The government sworn in is the largest Israel ever had, and the most peculiar of any Government of which I have ever heard. It has 34 Ministers and seven deputy Ministers, with some quite remarkable ministries created for the sole reason of creating enough ministerial posts for the Prime Minister's supporters. Among these are the Ministry of Community Empowerment and Advancement (as if there is no Ministry of Social Affairs); the Ministry of Cyber and Digital matters; the Ministry of Water as well as the Ministry of Infrastructure, Energy and Water; the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs (as if the city does not have a municipality); the Ministry of Regional Cooperation (as if there are neither a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and another of Strategic Affairs, let alone Ministries of Defense and of Intelligence); a Minister for Relations with the Knesset and – believe it or not – a Minister without Portfolio (I suppose even Mr. Netanyahu ran out of bizarre ideas).

To support these hard-working individuals, the ministries of Finance, Internal Security, Health, Education, Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services, the ministries of Interior and of Transportation all have deputy Ministers. The religious orthodox, parties, avid supporters of Mr. Netanyahu, were rewarded with ministries that will have maximal impact on the everyday life of the country's residents, with the largest budgets (except the Ministries of Defense and of Education). Contrary to established custom, the Opposition was refused chairmanship of any of the Parliamentary Committees.

In order to form the new government, Israel's Basic Law was changed. The Government will serve a three year term rather than the usual four. During the first 18 months, Mr. Netanyahu will serve as Prime Minister, with Mr. Gantz as his deputy. Mr. Gantz will then serve for the remainder of the time, with Mr. Netanyahu as his ostensible deputy, the Ministers of defense and Foreign Affairs will be rotate with other members of the Government, and for the duration of the period Mr. Netanyahu is authorized to call new elections any time. Few believe he will actually carry out the agreed rotation, or that he will avoid obstructing Mr. Gantz' every step if the rotation actually does take place.

Both men faced contrasting dilemmas. They were each accorded 15-18 ministerial posts (depending on the size of the government that would be formed). Mr. Netanyahu, whose party won 33 seats, did not have enough Ministerial posts for all his former Ministers. He therefore passed over some of the most capable among them, preferring cronies who proved their personal loyalty to him more than their ability to serve in real ministerial posts. As a result, a groundswell of bitterness is developing among prominent party members.

Mr. Gantz, on the other hand, whose party won 15 seats, did not have enough individuals to fill the Ministerial posts accorded him. After enlisting two from another party, he bargained two more of his accorded posts for one of Mr. Netanyahu's. The country has witnessed widespread protests, primarily in response to the fact that Mr. Netanyahu, indicted by a deservedly-trusted judiciary and at the initiative of his own appointees for serious crimes, is once again Israel's Prime Minister.

If you're confused, don't worry, you're not the only one.

Mr. Netanyahu's trial is scheduled to commence tomorrow (Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>). It is generally assumed he will do all in his power to prolong the proceedings in the hope of forming a political constellation that will grant him immunity.

### Ministry News

1. In the **New Testament project**, I have completed my review of the editorial comments on my translation of **Acts** and am now well advanced in reviewing those on **Paul's letter to the Romans**.
2. In the **Bible study notes project**, I have been asked to do more than originally contracted and am now working on Introductions to the books of the prophets. I've completed the **General Introduction to the Prophets** and the **Introduction to Isaiah** and am just about to end work on the **Introduction to Jeremiah**.
3. **How to Understand the Bible**, I've more or less completed the first three chapters, the last of these being a discussion of the allegorical method of interpretation. The next two will discuss other interpretational methods. I then intend to pose and illustrate specific problems faced by the various methods before posing a possible solution, which will then be illustrated by the same examples. I again welcome any suggestions, expressions of concerns or ideas anyone might have. In later editions of MaozNews, I hope to serialize portions.
4. My last commentary on the Minor Prophets (**Zachariah**) remains on the back-burner until I've made enough progress on the above three projects to enable me to resume this one.

### Family News

There is not much to report on the family front. Thankfully, we are all well, and that is not to be sneezed at during this trying time. We remain in **quarantine**. **Maya**, Avital's second eldest, is preparing to enlist in the Israeli army. **Avital** intends to travel with her to Israel, where Maya will undergo a preparatory course. **Eran** will travel to be with her when she is actually enlisted. **Keith, Shlomit and the children** are moving to Seattle to be near the rest of the family and in the hope that he will be more successful here in finding employment. **Tamar** will be home-schooling **Yotam** and **Avishai**, whereas **Eliya** will commence public schooling.

Thank you for your prayers and for your material support.

in Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

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