



The weekly newsletter article of Parkside Chapel

LIFE NEWS

WHY THE WAR?

parksidevisalia.org

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There were a number of things that I thought I could write about this week, but in light of what is happening in Israel and Gaza, anything else would either seem tone-deaf or trite by comparison. Currently, the death toll keeps rising on both sides, and we can assume it will only continue for the foreseeable future. As we watched the coverage as the events unfolded, Melany and I sat in silent horror, occasional ghastly gasps, and a boiling righteous indignation.

How could anyone do what we saw? How could people behave with such brutality toward other human beings? And not just the ravages of war but the ruthless slaughter of bystanders, including the elderly and children. This is terrorism by any definition of the word.

And yet, we see these acts celebrated by Palestinian supporters around the world. We see them defended while demanding that the Israeli response be proportionate. How we know it's terrorism is the expectation that a proportional response should be in a similar loss of life, not those

who lose their lives. Hamas apologists are fine with an Israeli response that targets the men who carried out this attack: men who hide behind the civilians and under hospitals. They trust that Israel will take the high road and target fighters rather than innocents. But imagine the outcry if Israel's proportional attack was to treat innocent Palestinian grandmas, women, and children the way they treated the Israelis! It would be unthinkable.

This is not just the face of evil. Hamas has revealed a hatred that not only targets innocent human lives but is motivated by bigotry and racism. This is the heart of evil on full display. A premeditated plan to inflict harm and cruelty to unsuspecting people with the ultimate aim of advancing a cause, not self-defense. The people's lives who commanded this attack and equipped the terrorists are not the least bit affected by the blowback that is coming. To them, everyone is a pawn in the advancement of the cause to wipe out Israel and the Jewish people.

As Christians, we know that there is more to the story. This isn't merely antisemitism or an age-old

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political conflict; this is more than conflicting ideologies. This ultimately has nothing to do with economic opportunities or nationalistic freedom. We know that this represents a division that is thousands of years old and yet remains personal to this day. Biblical history reveals a separation of the Abrahamic blessing before the Jews were even a people. Genesis 12-18 reveals that God chose Abraham (Abram at the time) to be the father of the nation through which all the people of the earth would be blessed. We know this blessing to have come in Jesus, our Savior and King.

However, before Abraham had Isaac with Sara, he had Ishmael with Hagar. Ishmael was not to be the son of promise and ultimately was sent away, but not before receiving the blessing of Abraham. Out of Ishmael came the Arab people, and from Isaac came the Jews. Biblical history chronicles the story of the Jews while we see the religious gathering of the Middle Eastern people around Muhammed, the prophet of Islam. It has been the expressed desire of Islam from its origins to wipe out the Jewish people and retrieve the land Israel sits on. What they believe to be their birthright as the people of God.

That's why, apart from a miraculous work of God, this conflict will never cease. It is a deeply rooted struggle between distant and estranged brothers. Israel wants a peaceful existence in their God-given homeland. Throughout Jewish history, they have never sought to expand their territory or invade neighboring nations. And the surrounding fundamentalist Islamic nations want the one thing their younger brother can never relinquish.

So, we pray. We pray for the Lord to work in a time and place where the worst of humanity is on full display. We pray for Jesus Christ, the one hope for both Jews and Muslims' peace, to be lifted up before

them. We pray for the missionaries under God's protection in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel to have the opportunity to bring eternal life to as many as possible while death surrounds them. We trust in the providence of God and pray for His grace to change the most wicked and hardened hearts. So that they come to their senses and see not only the futility of their cause but its depravity. Pray that in their desperation for something good to come of this that they would find Jesus. He is their only hope. He is and has always been, our only hope.

Because of Jesus,

Pastor Nigel



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