

JUNE MESSAGE: MONTH OF

PRAYING FOR THE NATION *of* ISRAEL AT THIS TIME



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Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. ...Peace within your walls and prosperity within your palaces. . Ps 122. 6-7

He came unto His own but His own received Him not. But as many as received Him He gave them power to become the sons of God. Jn. 1. 11-12.

As we approach mid-year, we focus on an issue that has preoccupied the whole world since October 7 last year. On that date, Hamas, the ruling authority in Gaza entered and slaughtered some 1,400 babies, youths, adult men and women alike, committing some of the most horrific hostilities against the nation of Israel and even non-Israelites living in or visiting that nation. Strikingly, today the world's attention seems to have shifted to blaming Israel for its reprisal attacks against the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. First, there was complaint that the response was disproportionate. Afterwards Israel was accused as illegal occupants of Palestinian lands and should be eliminated. Only few groups of people across the nations condemn Hamas for the initial attacks nor a demand that it returns the remaining 125 of the over 252 hostages they took.

Strangely, young people all over the world within and outside university campuses have joined calls for the boycott of Israeli goods and even for the elimination of Israel with their slogan 'from the (Jordan) river to the (Mediterranean) sea'. This predictable reaction was exactly Hamas' main strategy in attacking the nation of Israel on October 7. They counted on the fact that human memories are short. No one would remember what they did when the victim retaliates. This strategy has worked well to the point that the only major ally that Israel has in the United Nations Security Council, the United States of America, has begun to show greater sympathies to Hamas and its allies for domestic and international political agendas. Three European allies of Israel-Norway, Ireland and Spain have recognised the Palestinian state at the United Nations. South Africa got the International Court of Justice at the Hague in the Netherlands to make requests for international warrants to arrest two top Hamas leaders and Israel's Prime Minister and Defence Minister.

Israel's war aims since October 31 are to destroy Hamas, its terror infrastructure and free the hostages. In the process of prosecuting this war, many innocent civilians besides soldiers have died on both sides. These civilians become a part of a collateral damage. But this is also another plank of Hamas strategy: to hide behind human population, mosques, hospitals etc from where they continue to launch their barrage of rockets into Israel. Moreover, Hamas soldiers are indistinguishable from civilians.

This war has metamorphosed into an international and cultural battle between religions--with Islamic-led nations like Iran and Turkey cheer-leading the Hamas cause and conflating it with the struggle for Palestine that hosts all the three Abrahamic religions. These nations have been joined by the political left--an opportunity to overthrow the present global and national socio-economic and political structures of western capitalist civilization. Many Christians who watch conventional media broadcasts of deaths and destruction of lives and property in Gaza are also genuinely concerned and confused on how they can support the nation of Israel at this point in time. Its only recently that information on the global and domestic dark monies that support the Hamas initiatives and the campaigns in their support are being laid bare in the social media.

We suggest below how we can at this time pray for Israel in the light of the Lord's command cited above.

First, we should pray that the Prince of Peace helps to bring a quick end to this war and all hostilities. Hamas should be compelled to apologize for the wicked attack on the nation of Israel on October 7 and return the hostages unconditionally. Second, we must pray and

also raise our voices and influence in our nations to ensure that all the nations funding Hamas and its allies, like Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Hutus across the Red Sea are severely and seriously sanctioned. Moreover, our youths and the international community must be educated on the facts that Israel has divine and international right to exist in Palestine and also to defend herself as a nation. Her grave sacrifices to support the Palestinian cause by forcibly removing her own nationals from Gaza in the peace for land swap in 2005--as happened also before needs to be celebrated. Hamas should not be allowed to continue its reign of terror that it meets out freely and forcibly to the Palestinians, copying the negative example of Hezbollah in Lebanon. These groups should be treated like ISIS or Boko Haram, El Shabab and other terror groups around the world.

Thirdly, we must also pray that the nation of Israel be focussed on neutralizing Hamas' terror leadership and the recovery of the hostages. More nations and leaders around the world should join Israel in this effort. It is the most advanced democracy in the Middle East and many European leaders are beginning to understand that once Hamas- led terrorists succeed in Israel they would be coming for them in their own nations that have already been flooded with large numbers of immigrants. Some of these want to impose on their host countries and communities the very thing that led to the destruction of their own nations: sharia law and unaccountable theocracies.

Finally, we must also pray for mercy for the nation of Israel to come to the knowledge of the Messiah whom her religious and political leaders persecuted in life and death--and that the self -pronounced curses at the Lord's crucifixion be reversed by His blood--see Mt 27.25.

We must also all learn key lessons from this unfolding international tragedy: it is better to live by love rather than hatred. Hamas, a terrorist organization that trains young Palestinians to hate Jews, Israel and non-Muslims especially after it came to power through a contrived electoral process in 2005 has spent the huge aid resources poured into Palestine by Israel, European nations, US and the United Nations to construct underground tunnels and rockets aimed at destroying Israel. This is the Amalek spirit that manifested periodically in Bible times and continues to date (Ex. 17.8, 15-16; Esther 3.1; 1 Sam. 30.1). We should also pray that the Lord will raise many more Elijahs who would reconcile the religious and political elites in Israel across the generations to the one and only Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Mal. 4. 5-6). More Elijah-spirit led Messianic Jews should press the case for an Israel that welcomes the greatest of all times, Yeshua as Saviour and Lord, like the early apostles did turning their world right side up. (Acts 17.6, Rom. 11.15). We should also raise our voices to support peace, prosperity and innovation that modern Israel has trail- blazed with benefits for many nations of the world since her 1948 founding. Hamas and their collaborators should be encouraged along this path in the spirit of the Abraham accords.

Please let us all pray and work for Israel's peace and prosperity and also of our own nations during this month as we pray and work for the peace of Israel. We should also seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ who has demonstrated for us what it means to live as God's son in our world.

D. Olowu
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