

558 “O Jesus, make it stop”

(Suggested: Copy, paste and read in Subfolder: Faith & Topical Issues)

We start with a few words from last week’s Reflection, which became all too relevant, suddenly and unexpectedly, for the people of Israel last Saturday, October 7th, when Hamas terrorists burst from Gaza into southern Israel to do their worst: “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psalm 50.14-15, KJV). Many devout Jews within the largely secular state of Israel were indeed offering their thanks to God and paying their vows on that special Sabbath Day at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. Amidst their shock, grief and anger we can be sure that the Jews in Israel and beyond, along with numerous Christians around the world, are indeed now “calling upon the Lord in this day of trouble”, claiming His promise of deliverance whereby He will be given the glory that is His due.

The reasons behind the long-running hostility between the Jews of Israel and the Arabs of surrounding nations are framed by a widely-accepted narrative: that the Jews are the often-brutal occupiers of Palestinian land, whose real owners, “the Palestinians”, now struggle helplessly under the Israeli jackboot. Thus “the Palestinians” are kept perpetually angry by their leaders over the claimed occupation of their land by the Jews, and they are taught, from kindergarten to old age, a deep hatred for the Jews, as decreed in the Qur’an: killing of Jews is urged, applauded and rewarded, as we have seen since Saturday in various disturbing scenes in major cities around the world.

No peace deal, usually involving “the two-state solution”, is therefore acceptable, for the various leaders (of Fatah in the “West Bank”, Hamas in Gaza, and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon) are driven by the violent Islamic attitude to the Jews. Yet all the while Israel genuinely longs for a real peace with her neighbours, and has repeatedly made generous offers to achieve such peace. As one senior military official in Israel has put it, “If they laid down their arms, there would be peace; if we laid down our arms, there would be slaughter”.

Now nobody is saying that the Jews are “sweetie-pies”, for scripturally we read often that the Lord calls them stiff-necked, rebellious, deaf and blind (egs., Exodus 33.3 / Isaiah 30.9; 42.18), plus from the New Testament, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3.23, KJV). But the Jews also remain as “the apple of his eye”

(Zechariah 2.8), the Lord's original covenant people, with whom He clearly still has "unfinished business" (see Romans Chapters 9-11); and, surrounded by hostile neighbours who have made several attempts to "drive the Jews into the sea", they are legally entitled to self-defence.

We put "the Palestinians" in inverted commas because there are no such distinct people. Those known as "the Palestinians" today are simply Arabs, culturally and linguistically identical to the Arabs in the surrounding countries. There has never been a Palestinian state, Jerusalem has never been the capital of such a state, and is not mentioned in either the Qur'an or the PLO manifesto of 1964; Muhammed's claimed ascension to heaven from Jerusalem, thus making the city "the third holiest site in Islam", he later explained was in a dream.

The "Palestinian refugees" of today are the offspring of Arabs who were living in what was to become the State of Israel in 1948. Contrary to the popular narrative, these Arabs were not mercilessly kicked out of their land and homes by the wicked Jews. Rather, their own Arab leaders told them to leave while the Arab armies obliterated the new Jewish state as it was born. By God's grace Israel just survived; the Arabs could have then returned to their homes, now in the Jewish State of Israel, with full political and civil rights, but were encouraged not to do so. Today Arabs in Israel still have those rights, including seats in the Knesset, and Israel provides employment for thousands of Arabs from Gaza and the so-called "West Bank". Such facts surely do serious damage to the popular narrative.

These lesser-known "home-truths" may well be a shock to some of our readers, for they are so contrary to what we are always being told. The plain fact is that Muslims are taught in the Qur'an to hate Jews and other infidels, and unfortunately many these days are doing just that, with increasing boldness and viciousness, in the Middle East and elsewhere.

We await Israel's response in Gaza with trepidation, and we pray for the day when God's mercies in Christ shall prevail over the present hatreds and miseries, as they surely will (egs., Matthew 28.18 / Philipians 2.10-11 / Revelation 21.4). We can humbly lift to the throne of grace those final words in Siegfried Sassoon's poem "Attack" - "O Jesus, make it stop!"