

**GAZA**

On its' face, it just seems crazy. You see, there's this cease fire, - and only one side, - the Israelis, - abide by it. The other party, Hamas, (the Palestinian terror group), - continues to fire rockets at Sderot and other centers of civilian population in Israel. Even by its Charter, Hamas has ever been committed to the destruction of Israel. Now this goes on for months. But there is nary a word from the world. You see, the UN routinely condemns Israel for just about anything, while winking at Arab terrorism directed against Jewish targets. [The number of UN General Assembly resolutions aimed at the Israel numbers in the hundreds, - with hundreds more Security Council Resolutions that were vetoed by the US.<sup>1</sup>] Then Israel, after ample warning, - decides to do something about it. So it launches its air force against the areas where the rocket attacks are being launched from and against known Hamas fighters. Israeli planes took out hundreds of Palestinian gunmen. However a number of civilians were also killed, as Hamas operatives had placed themselves and their rocket launchers among the civilian population. And the world was aghast.. at Israel. Still, rockets continued to rain down on Israel. Then, according to DEBKA sources, President Bush personally gave the go-ahead to Israeli PM Olmert for "air, sea and ground operations" against the Gaza Strip. The US would stand by Israel in the UN.<sup>2</sup>

Israel's goals in the military operation are two-fold; - taking the rocket sites and destroying the military wing of Hamas.<sup>3</sup> Prime Minister Olmert called the Israeli incursion "unavoidable".<sup>4</sup> But the Israeli attack is having interesting fallout on many levels. For one, the rival group, Fatah, led by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas stands to benefit from any weakening of Hamas. It has long been the position of the Bush Administration, - as well as the stated aim of the incoming Obama team, - that Israel and the West can only work with the 'moderate' terror group Fatah in setting up a Palestinian State. Such a state will not bring peace, however. The Palestinians have stated their intentions to have all of Palestine. It took them only hours to start launching rockets at Israel from their new forward bases when the Israelis abandoned Gaza in the summer of 2005.

The conflict is also revealing fissures in the Muslim front against Israel. While Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Syria, - (both Iranian clients), - continue to talk a good game of support of the Gazans, - Egypt and the Saudis are distancing themselves from the Hamas terrorists. These latter two nations have varying degrees of ties to the West, are considered more moderate than some,- and most importantly perhaps face indigenous radical Islamic movements that endanger the present regimes. Cairo has reacted by closing the Egyptian border with Gaza, preventing the Palestinians there from fleeing to safety in Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

But perhaps the real story behind the Gaza conflict, is that it allows Israel to "deal a strategic blow to Iranian expansionism". At least that's the opinion of Yossi Halevi and Michael Oren, writing in the LA Times. If the Iranian proxy could be slapped down, it could damage Iranian prestige, perhaps allowing the moderates to gain at least a temporary ascendancy. This in turn would allow for the negotiation of a Middle East peace.<sup>6</sup> And of course, that is just what the whole world desperately seeks. Before our eyes, we are seeing the set up for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Scripture tells us that in the last days the entire world will become obsessed with the fate of Jerusalem. Now while some events must occur prior to the fulfillment of that word, we are witnessing the time of preparation. The peoples and powers of the globe are indeed becoming obsessed with just what is happening in that tiny little land of Palestine. Unfortunately, the world is coming to the wrong conclusions. It is ready to take from God's people the Land that He has ordained for them. People from around the globe are rallying against Israel's attempt to stanch the flow of rockets against their people. Seven-hundred-thousand took to the streets in Istanbul and 40,000 in Morocco. Thousands more hit the streets in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Oslo, Sydney, Melbourne

and elsewhere. The UN and the world's governments are taking a stand for the cause of the Palestinians; - a people that was an artificial creation, - brought into being to be used as a tool to destroy Israel. Seventy thousand Iranians have signed up to give their lives as suicide bombers in the cause against the Jews.<sup>7</sup> Zechariah 12:3 tells us, **“And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.”**

Now it was in 1948 that Israel was reborn as a nation. The people of Judah and Israel had begun to return, joining the remnant that had over the centuries, remained in the Land. That reestablishment of Israel after over 1,800 years in exile is what many call the ‘super sign’ that we are indeed, living in the days before Christ's return. There is a time, on the near horizon, described in Joel 3:1-2. It tells of God's judgment that will be visited on the nations for their dealings with the Jews and God's own Land. **“For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.”**

### **WATERING DOWN THE GOSPEL**

**“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons”.** (1Timothy 4:1)

**“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”** (2Timothy 4:3-4)

The Scriptures are very clear. There is only one way to the Father, - that being through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. But you wouldn't know that by what a majority of American Christians believe. A form of universalism is taking hold amidst the ranks of the Church. In a recent study Pew Research found that over half of the Christians surveyed believed “that at least some non-Christian faiths can lead to eternal life”. This was a follow up to a 2007 study that got about the same results. And they're not just talking about other Christian faiths. Pew was interested in that very question after their last survey and was careful to design the research to find that out. Those who claimed to be Christians of one sort or another were identifying non-Christian faiths as possible roads to the Father. [This, despite the fact that Jesus clearly stated in John 14:6, that **“No one comes to the Father except through Me”**.] Here are some examples of just where the train has left the track.

Over three-fourths of Catholics and 64% of white evangelicals believe that Jews can be saved without accepting Jesus as their savior. More remarkable is that 62% of Catholics, 35% of white evangelicals and over half of the white mainline Protestants believe that Islam can also serve as a path to God. The numbers are similar when it comes to evaluating the chances of those of the Hindu faith. And nearly half of Catholics say that even atheists will get in as do about a quarter of evangelicals.<sup>8</sup> This is an example of extreme Biblical ignorance. The Scriptural test is simple. John 3:18 states clearly, **“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”**.

Christians seem to have difficulty with this principle too. Only about 30% say that salvation is through a belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior. And directly contradicting Biblical truth, 29% hold that we are saved by our actions alone. That number rises to 47% among Catholics.<sup>9</sup> This is a reflection of the hyper-tolerance that has invaded not only the culture but even the Church. It is changing what we believe as Christians. And most importantly, by not sharing the exclusivity of Jesus' saving work, - it is denying a knowledge of the Truth to many, as we wink and say they are OK. In so doing it is relegating them to a Christ-less eternity.

### Religious / Cultural Expression

We find that this new universalism among those that call themselves believers in Christ is expressing itself in various ways. In Great Britain, some clergy have taken to adding Hindu snowmen, Chinese dragons and a Jewish temple to their traditional Christmas displays. The upshot of all this is that instead of broadening the appeal of the Christian faith, these types of compromises are adding to the spiritual ennui that afflicts the UK and much of Europe. Church attendance in England is plummeting. That trend is expected to continue. Right now there are about 3 million Sunday church goers, but that number is expected to drop to around 700,000 by 2050. By then, the Muslim faithful should comfortably outnumber active Christians.<sup>10</sup>

In the US this tolerance is finding expression in the confused ramblings of many of our political leaders and opinion shapers. President elect Obama, - though claiming Christ as his Savior, - stated “I believe there are many paths to the same place”.<sup>11</sup> The most watched – and consequently – dangerous woman in America, Oprah Winfrey, once announced that: “One of the mistakes that human beings make is believing that there is only one way to live...there are many paths to what you call God.”<sup>12</sup> Even President Bush, - a famously professing Christian says of the Bible, “No, I’m not a literalist, but I think you can learn a lot from it”. That’s why the confused President could say of Allah, - the *god* that countenances the killing of innocents in the cause of jihad, - “I believe we worship the same God”. Now in a linguistic and cultural sense he may be right. However, even Islamic scholars will tell you that that is not entirely accurate.<sup>13</sup> So all of these protestations of divine equivalency are pretty scary to we who take God at His word. *But to the rest of the not-so-involved-but-professing-religion crowd: It seems only fair, right?* But it’s not at all in line with what the Bible teaches. Proverbs 14:12 tells us, **“There is a way that seems right to a man. But its end is the way of death”**. That is the stark choice given: Christ or Death. We serve ourselves or we serve our God. There is no in between. And there is no ‘good enough’!

### Opening The Door To Gay Inclusionism

However it is just this post-modernist rejection of an absolute moral standard, defined as it is by God, - in the Scriptures, - that provides the entrée’ for the militant-sodomite culture. If the Bible is subject to the interpretation by men; - if in the words of Newsweek’s Lisa Miller, “the Bible is a living document”<sup>14</sup>: Then it becomes possible to justify just about anything. This is demonstrated in the nods of approval given to the ‘gay’ lifestyle by members of the clergy. We’ve seen this before among mainline Protestants and certain liberal wings of the Catholic priesthood. But now even a member of what is becoming known as the Emergent Church is speaking out in favor of same sex marriage, - giving it his ecclesiastical approval. Tony Jones is a leader in that ‘cutting edge’ movement that seems to adopt the language of the post-modern culture combined with a cafeteria style mysticism, to express its religious philosophy, dressed as it is, in the robes of Christianity. Jones once admitted that “biblical prohibitions to homosexual sex should be taken seriously”. Yet now, increasingly colored by his post-modern feelings and experiences, he, over time has felt himself “drifting toward acceptance that gay persons are fully human persons and should be afforded all of the cultural and ecclesial benefits” that he enjoys. [And here lies a critical error in assessing the Biblical prohibitions against homosexuality. It is the act that is condemned, - not some squishy, hard-to-define feeling or inappropriate sense of attraction. The heterosexual male may want to ‘bed’ every attractive woman he meets. But that is only a temptation unless and until acted upon in thought or deed.] So this emerging leader of Emergent Christianity, now states, “I believe that GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, queer) can live lives in accord with biblical Christianity...and their monogamy can and should be sanctioned and blessed by church and state”.<sup>15 16</sup> *Tony, - as Christ would say to the Pharisees, - Have you not read...*

So he joins a chorus of many that seek some religious approval for their sin, - [expressly defined in the Bible], - that calls for, - in the words of a feature Newsweek article, - a “move beyond literalism”. And Hollywood celebrities join their voices painting Christians who believe in the sanctity and unchanging nature of God’s word, as homophobes filled with hate. That chorus includes popular actor Jack Black, - best know for his role in *The School of Rock*, who starred in a video called, “*Prop 8 – The Musical*”, accusing Christians of selective reading of the

Scriptures to build their case against gays.<sup>17</sup> *Newsweek's* Lisa Miller again, quotes a Presbyterian pastor saying the "church should recognize the validity of committed same sex relationships", and Rev Chloe Breyer of the *Interfaith Center*, who sees the purpose of marriage as "mutual joy". One priest offers the thought that "Jesus does not want people to be lonely and sad". The author sums up her case, arguing that, "If we are all God's children, made in his likeness and image, then to deny access to any sacrament based on sexuality is exactly the same thing as denying it based on skin color".<sup>18</sup> Again Lisa Miller, the writer of the piece, makes a critical error. While attempting to place a Scriptural cloak of approval on these actions, she ignores the clear teaching found in the Gospel of John. It's true that in Genesis 1:26 **"God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'"**. However John 1:12-13, explicitly teaches that God's children are only those that put their faith and belief in Christ's name, and are born again. Believing in His name encompasses His entire identity; - who He is and what He stands for. Here's the passage: **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."** But this attempt to build the case for gay inclusionism must be seen in its proper light. It is but part and parcel of the creeping drift toward a common universalistic theology that signals to everyone that they are, - no matter the perversion, - OK, - so long as one does not take the exclusive claims of Jesus too seriously. So many of us in the Christian Church today want to be so loving and tolerant and accepting, - that we're willing to let our fellow human beings march straight to hell rather than offend them by pointing out sin. But Christ's message was simple: **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel"**. (Mk 1:15)

### The Facts of The Case

You see, the Truth of the Scripture is uncompromising. God has provided a way, - but it's His way. The facts of the matter are these: Despite what any professing Christian might believe, Jesus Himself made it very plain. There is only one path to God. We may want to be *nice* and say that everyone can get in. And in a sense that's true;- so long as they accept God's Anointed One, Jesus the Messiah as their personal savior. The invitation is for all. But there is a single way for all to take. Christ put it this way in Matthew 7:13-14. **"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."**

It is easy to see that now we are entering a time of deception. The world would have us water down the exclusivity of the Gospel. It must never be so. We live on the cusp of the rise of the lawless one. But Paul tells us that **"the mystery of lawlessness is already at work"**. It is not our 'religion' that separates us, one from another, but our love for the truth. God's offer is sufficient. But men will choose to ignore that offer of grace. Is it fair that God makes belief in His Son the only requirement of salvation? Indeed it is! For those that reject Him will do so precisely **"because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness"**. (2Thesslonians 2:7, 10-12)

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- <sup>1</sup> This number is large and confusing due to the nature of the material and various claims on what constitutes ‘against’. However a body of documented evidence exists. I looked at three websites: A list of UN Resolutions against "Israel"-[uscrusade.com](#), List of United Nations resolutions concerning Israel – [Wikipedia](#), U.S. Vetoes of UN Resolutions Critical of Israel – [Wikipedia](#). All monitored on January 6, 2009
- <sup>2</sup> Bush clears way for Israeli ground operation, [DEBKAFfile](#), January 3, 2009
- <sup>3</sup> Israel embarks on ground operation in Gaza, [DEBKAFfile](#), January 3, 2009
- <sup>4</sup> Israeli tanks, troops cut off Gaza City, [LA Times](#), January 5, 2009
- <sup>5</sup> Saaed Bannoura, Palestinians Storm Gaza Egypt Border, [International Middle East Media Center](#), December 29, 2008
- <sup>6</sup> In Gaza, the real enemy is Iran, [LA Times](#), January 4, 2009
- <sup>7</sup> Iran: We have 70,000 suicide bombers ready to strike Israel, [Haaretz](#), January 5, 2009
- <sup>8</sup> Many Americans Say Other Faiths Can Lead to Eternal Life, [Pew Research Center](#), December 18, 2008
- <sup>9</sup> Many beliefs, many paths to heaven?, [USA Today](#), December 18, 2008
- <sup>10</sup> Anglicans Add Hindu Snowmen, Chinese Dragon to Christmas Displays, [Christian Post](#), December 15, 2008
- <sup>11</sup> Obama: Speaking in Church and Taking Fire in Print, [Beliefnet](#), June 16, 2008
- <sup>12</sup> Steve Rabey, Oprah’s ‘gospel’, [Christian Examiner](#), May 8, 2002
- <sup>13</sup> Daniel Pipes, Is Allah God?, [New York Sun](#), June 28, 2005
- <sup>14</sup> Lisa Miller, Our Mutual Joy, [Newsweek](#), December 15, 2008
- <sup>15</sup> Emergent church leader says ‘gay’ can be biblical lifestyle, [World Net Daily](#), November 23, 2008
- <sup>16</sup> Tony Jones, How I Went from There to Here, [Beliefnet](#), November 19, 2008
- <sup>17</sup> Media Misconceptions on Bible, Homosexuality, [Christian Post](#), December 9, 2008
- <sup>18</sup> Lisa Miller, Our Mutual Joy, [Newsweek](#), December 15, 2008