

Chaim Goldberg: Israel, We Have a Problem

Believe it or not, I learned one of the greatest lessons of my life from the movie *Apollo 13*. We all know the story; three astronauts in space; something goes horribly wrong. The world holds its breath for days, wondering if they'll ever make it back to earth.

The most powerful moment for me is when the three, while up in space, realize that something bad has happened. They instantly begin pointing fingers of blame at one another. Things begin to get very heated. That's when astronaut Jim Lovell stepped in:

"All right, we're not doing this, gentlemen. We are *not* going to do this. We're not going to go bouncing off the walls for 10 minutes, 'cause we're just going to end up back here with the same problems!"

A few simple words, but it's an incredibly powerful concept, if you really stop and think about it.

All Wars Eventually End

Extend this idea to concept of war. Someone gets mad at someone and they decide they can't handle it diplomatically, so they start fighting with one another. The fighting rages on and on and on until eventually, maybe after days, maybe after weeks, maybe after years, the war ends. And what do the two sides end up doing? Handling it diplomatically, of course.

The question is never, "will the war end?" The question is always "when will the war end."

Will the Japanese surrender before we drop the bomb on them, or after?

Will Saddam Hussein go peacefully or will we have to drag him out of a spider hole?

Will Osama bin Laden give himself up, or will we have to hunt him down in Pakistan?

All wars eventually end. It's one of the few sure things in life. And yet people (usually people deluded by power) never seem to learn this lesson. They prefer to bounce off the walls, forgetting that eventually they're going to have to come back to the same place, and figure out a real solution.

Propaganda

This week was an especially annoying and frustrating week in the long history of the conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.

Where to begin?

Shall we start with the Palestinian terrorists sitting in Israeli prisons who decided to go on hunger strikes? An effort, I suppose, to try to gain the world's sympathies.

Or perhaps with the people of the West Bank who began rioting in the streets, for exactly what reason I'm not sure. Perhaps it was, as they claimed, to show solidarity with their terrorist brothers in Israeli prisons. Or more likely, it was just a show in advance of President Obama's visit to the region. Like kids who act up just before daddy comes home from being away ... a childish tactic to get daddy's attention.

Or perhaps with the terrorist in Gaza who broke the ceasefire with Israel, this week, by firing a terror rocket into Israel. By God's grace it landed on an empty road in Ashkelon. No one was injured.

Or perhaps it was Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, speaking in Vienna at a U.N. summit on tolerance, who called Zionism a "crime against humanity."

Or perhaps it was the leaders of Iran, who met with representatives from the “six world powers” in Kazakhstan over the Iranian nuclear program. Another brilliant stalling tactic by the Iranians, pretending to be interested in resolving the issue peacefully, while simultaneously new satellite photos came out showing a heavy-water factory in operation at an Iranian nuclear plant, indicating the production of plutonium, which is an alternative to uranium used to build nuclear bombs.

And on, and on and on and on ... you get the point.

Pessimism

Yes, it's easy to be pessimistic in this part of the world. Were I not a believer in Yeshua, I honestly don't know how I'd survive, mentally or spiritually. Had I not read the Bible, and therefore got a sneak peek at how this all will end, I'd be consumed with despair.

The bottom line is, people will continue to sin, continue to hate, continue to make war ... until they're finally ready to stop. They will do it until they finally realize what Jim Lovell said, that there's no point to going round and round, when we're just going to end up in the same place, having to find a solution to the problem.

The late King Hussein of Jordan and the late President of Egypt Anwar Sadat are perfect examples of this. Both had made war against Israel numerous times; until one day they were both ready to stop. One day they both realized that war was fruitless and pointless and that peace was the better path.

Since those two historic peace agreements, Israel has stood waiting for more peace partners. Our hands have always been out-stretched. We've never said 'no' to a sincere offer for peace.

When the Jordanians were ready, we gladly said 'yes.' When the Egyptians were ready, we gladly said 'yes.' And so we wait—for

the Palestinians, for the Iranians, for the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists, for the Saudis, the Lebanese, and so on and so on. We wait.

Yes, this was a frustrating week for those of us who are tired of war, tired of childish games, tired of propaganda.

But yet, we hope, we persevere. What other choice do we have?

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