

Cry Out for Israel

I was privileged to sit beside him on a flight home from Israel last year—that is, with the obligatory empty seat separating us. Jewish tradition holds that a rabbi is forbidden to sit next to a woman. I asked him his name. He smiled and answered, “Gavriel.”

What a passionate young rabbi he was! We freely discussed the Scriptures from our different perspectives as well as the promised redemption of Israel and the coming of Messiah.

Three months later, Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg, 29, and his young, pregnant wife, Rivka, 28, were dead, savagely tortured in the Chabad House in Mumbai, India, by Islamic extremists.

I cannot adequately express my initial disbelief on hearing the news and my subsequent grief and outrage. Those few hours together on the plane with Gavriel had marked me.

This was not an isolated incident. Every day across Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world, Jewish schools and synagogues are firebombed and cemeteries desecrated. Jewish people, regardless of age or sex, are beaten by neo-Nazi and Islamic extremists.

Now a virulent anti-Semitism is fomenting in the United States. Last December, a coalition of far-left Muslim and Arab groups organized demonstrations in 30 U.S. cities to denounce the Gaza War. More rallies were held in January. The participating groups touted the events as a response to Israel’s “massacre of Palestinians.” Speeches and placards were rife with slogans such as “Death to the Jews and the State of Israel.”

Given the upsurge of Islam in the U.S., a biased, liberal media, and a president who courts Israel’s enemies and surrounds himself with anti-Israel cabinet members and

advisers, it is only a matter of time until Israel's friend, the United States, joins the infamous ranks of all nations that Zechariah prophesied would stand against the Jewish nation (see Zech. 12:3; 14:2).

As Isaiah the prophet foresaw, Jewish immigrants are flooding home to Israel in record numbers. Soon we will hear his words pronounced in our day: "This place is too small for me; give me a place where I may dwell"(Is. 49:20, NKJV).

Those in the body of Christ who think they understand the times and seasons and yet do not actively stand with Israel and the Jewish people grieve me. They tend to ignore what the Spirit is saying to the church regarding Israel: "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" (Is. 40:1).

Now is not the time for the church to become apathetic. Old Testament prophets clearly foretold this end-time regathering of the Jews and the church's responsibility to them. Isaiah prophesied that we are to cry out to God day and night until Jerusalem becomes a praise in the earth; that we are to remove the stones and prepare a highway for God's people to return to Him; to declare to them the words of hope, "Surely your Salvation is coming!" (see Is. 62:1,10-11).

The end-time church is to be engaged in extending our Lord's heart and hands to His Jewish brethren: proclaiming good news, healing the brokenhearted, setting captives free, comforting those who mourn, declaring the coming of Messiah to a weary and despised people (see Is. 61:1-3).

Today I plead with pastors: Adopt a ministry in Israel. Partner with a ministry run by those who live among the Jewish people and know individual families' needs.

I beseech Christians: Give to anointed ministries in Israel that are the Lord's hands extended to His people. No longer give offerings indiscriminately to every cause that has "Israel" or "Jewish" attached to it. Connect directly with the

land today!

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