

# 'Eye-Popping' Number of Evangelicals Believe End Is Near

Amid the recent eruption of violence and the escalating threat of war in the Middle East, a new poll found 79 percent of evangelicals believe "unfolding violence across the Middle East is a sign that the end times are nearer."

In comparison, only 43 percent of non-evangelical Christians believe terrorism in the Middle East is a sign of the apocalypse.

The poll, conducted by the Brookings Institute's Center for Middle East Policy, also found that 63 percent of evangelicals believe that for the rapture or Second Coming to occur, it is essential for current-day Israel to "include all the land they believe was promised to Biblical Israel in the Old Testament."

"These numbers are very striking on the end of days theology that these respondents claim motivate them," *Politico* Editor Susan Glasser said during a discussion after the release of the poll at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"Some of these numbers are really stark. I mean, the percentage of American evangelicals, according to your survey, who believe the end of times is nigh, is kind of eye popping, at least for secular America or blue America."

The survey comes amid increasing tensions and violence in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian violence erupted in September, and shows no signs of abating. The latest wave of violence has killed 19 Israelis, mainly in Palestinian stabbings and shootings. At least 106 Palestinians, including 71 said by Israel to be attackers, have been killed. The remainder died in clashes with Israeli forces.

Israel has blamed the violence on incitement by Palestinian leaders and social media. The Palestinians say the attacks stem from a lack of hope of gaining independence after years of fruitless peace efforts.

Overall, the survey found that evangelicals tended to express a more pro-Israeli stance than non-evangelical Christians, with many relating the current, ongoing conflict to their religious beliefs.

Regarding the end of times and the return of Christ, 72 percent of Christians and 81 percent of evangelicals believed it would happen, but were unsure whether it would be “tomorrow or in a thousand years.”