

Jack Hayford: Why Believers Must Stand With Israel

Aside from the hustling crowds and rush-hour traffic jams that define any international metropolis, Jerusalem astounds most of its tourists with how peaceful the city truly is. While the global media assaults readers with reports of nearby suicide bombings and young zealots throwing rocks across Jewish-Palestinian borders, those who live in Israel's capital city know a different story, a different reality. Theirs is one of surprising peace in a nation whose very existence symbolizes the dichotomy of "possessing the land" amid neighbors—both immediate and far away—who would rather see them dead.

To find the violent, conflict-filled story most incorrectly think is Israel's narrative, all you have to do is drive two or three hours toward virtually any nation surrounding the Holy Land today. Because although the West heralded the Arab Spring [Dec. 17, 2010] as the dawning of democracy in nations ruled by tyrannous dictators, the fruit of these ongoing political uprisings has been anything but freedom and stability. For Israel, it's simply increased the shared nightmare most Jews live with each day: that they are staring down the barrel of a gun, no matter which direction they turn.

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In Iran, antisemitic rhetoric flows from the mouths of its top leaders—whether current "moderate" President Hasan Rouhani, ousted madman Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—as they openly declare Israel to be a "cancerous tumor in the heart of the Islamic world" that "must be cleansed." Who can forget Ahmadinejad's defiant vow to the United Nations' General Assembly in September 2012 that Israel would be "eliminated"?

In Egypt and Iraq, the ongoing instability and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood—yes, even after former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi's ousting—have propelled Salafist jihadist military campaigns, which are also bent on Israel's total destruction, like never before.

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Meanwhile, the rise of other extremist Islamic forces in Syria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Libya and Yemen merely strengthens what has become a resounding cry to see Israel wiped off the map. And among the few neighboring countries with whom Israel had established peace treaties—namely, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey—these relations have been frayed to a thread.

As Christians, we have a different script to follow—one in which we know who will return to reign physically over this global focal point that has been dominated with strife and violence since the days of Abraham. Why, then, should believers be so concerned over such a tiny speck of land? What does it really matter?

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