

Jews and Arabs: Can't They Just Get Along?

This past week, I heard a man speak about a personal experience. I won't use his name other than he is a world-renowned man of God. The love of God oozes from this gentleman, after decades of faithful service.

He shared about an experience where he was standing in between an Arab and a Jew. With tears he said something like, "I just wanted to wrap one arm around each of them and pull them together with the love of God."

Again, if I can accomplish one percent of what this man has accomplished, I'll be doing good. However this is what we call a false equivalency, a false narrative, or maybe "Rodney King" Theology—*can't we all just get along*.

Let's simply stick to the facts. Muslims are committing atrocities against Jews and Christians. Israelis meanwhile are merely seeking to build a country. While women are being raped by Muslim extremists, Israel's sins are building a fence to protect our people and defending them when attacked by terrorists.

While I felt his heart, I was bothered by his perspective. Even now as I write, I am struggling to articulate my feelings into an intelligible stream of thought. This is not coming from an attitude of, "We (Jews) are better than you (Arabs)." It is coming from a sense of biblical order that is missing when you reduce the Israeli-Arab conflict to *if you two sides could just get along*.

It simply is not so simple. I have many Arab friends—many whom are leaders. I was with one last night as I entered the Empower21 event—the reason why we are in Jerusalem. He is a godly man, but we have major theological differences that at

times threaten the fragile unity between us—I don't mean *us* me and him, but *us* Messianic leaders in Israel and Arab pastors in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

You see, most Arab pastors believe that the Church has replaced Israel. Some of them believe that Palestinian Christians are the true descendants of Jacob—and people like me are imposters. The majority agrees that the nation of Israel is not a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, but a tragedy to the Arab World. Just this week they celebrated *Nakba Day*—the Day of Catastrophe. Ironically, we call that same day, albeit we use the Hebrew calendar, Independence Day.

It is no small challenge to embrace those who see what we believe as one of the greatest fulfillments of prophecy in history—God bringing back the Children of Israel from the nations of the world to be resettled in their own land—as a *catastrophe*. Just think how unlikely our survival was:

- Scattered on at least four occasions (721BC, 586BC, 70AD and 135AD).
- No nation separated from its geographical homeland for more than two generations has ever survived—yet Israel survived in the diaspora for nearly 2,000 years.
- Just mere years before Israel's rebirth, the demon-possessed Adolf Hitler wiped out a third of the world's Jews.
- Five Arab nations attacked Israel on May 15, 1948—her day of Independence, when there was a weapons embargo against Israel and our army was in its infancy, and somehow she miraculously defeated them.

The fact I am writing to you today from Mt. Zion—literally—as a Jew, is remarkable. And if I had the chance to explain the crux of the issue to the dear brother sharing his desire for Arabs and Jews to get along, I would explain that until the Arab world recognizes God's hand on the nation of Israel and

her rebirth, there is no hope for unity.

While Israel is not a perfect nation, the enemies of Zion are the enemies of God. What unity can I have with the enemies of God? Can I love them and pray for them?

Absolutely. But can I walk hand in hand with them? That's difficult—particularly when they would like to kill me. This is not about Israel's purity (*I live in Tel Aviv!*)—this is about God's order and purposes for the end times.

So many of the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the other prophets are about God's restoration of Israel (Jer. 30-33, Ez. 36-37). Ezekiel makes it clear—it is not because we are better, but for God's purposes.

Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone' (Ez. 36:22). The Jews returning to Israel to rebirth their nation is imperative to the coming of the Messiah. There is no Ezekiel 38-39 Gog and Magog war if there is no restored Israel. How can Yeshua return to the Mount of Olives to fight for Israel (Zech. 14:1-4) if there is no Israel to fight for?

This issue of the nations honoring Israel is so essential to the life of the Church that Paul uses the harshest language in Romans 11 when addressing believers who judge Israel: Do not be arrogant (against Israel), but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches (Israel), *he will not spare you* (Gentile believers) *either*.

Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness (towards Israel). *Otherwise, you also will be cut off.* (Romans 11:20-22)

Rejecting Israel can cut one off from the lifeblood of the

Messiah. (It is interesting that the church Paul wrote this to, the Romans, drifted off into Replacement Theology and a system of rote tradition and works righteousness.)

Again, this is NOT ABOUT WHO IS BETTER, but simply God's order.

At the conclusion of the meeting the gentleman who closed in prayer referred to Yeshua coming back to Jerusalem. The fellow sitting next to me, a respected Messianic teacher whispered to me in jest, "Jesus can't return to Jerusalem—that wouldn't be fair."

Clearly he was feeling what I was feeling. At the end of the day God is not running a democracy. He is fulfilling His purposes. Our job is to line up with His order. And when that happens, we will all be blessed, Arab and Jew, with His favor.

As Messianic Jews, we must strive for humility and never see ourselves as better than our Gentile brethren—we are One in Messiah. However, our Gentile brethren are called to honor Israel and stand against the anti-Israel sentiment in the world. And Arab pastors are called to love and stand with Israel.

The speaker did tell a story about an Arab Evangelist very close to him who grew up hating Jews. But God dealt with him about Israel. This Arab said that after God changed him regarding Israel, the next time he landed in Israel he had to constrain himself from hugging the first Israeli soldier he saw and telling him how much He loved him.

I have heard many testimonies like that from Arab believers. In Bethlehem Pastors Naim and Stephen Khoury reject replacement theology and as Palestinian Arabs, they love Israel. But sadly these testimonies are the exception. I have heard many more from those who think Israel is evil, not of God, imperialistic and racist.

It is NOT just a matter of Jews and Arabs getting along, but a matter of God's end-time kingdom order to make way for Messiah's return. My pray is for my Arab brethren to recognize the "irrevocable call" (Rom. 11:29) on Israel which will release God's blessing on them.

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