

Unholy Discrimination on the Temple Mount

Read Time: 6 Minutes 4 Seconds

This week, much of the world got uptight over the visit of a Jewish man to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Jordanian, Palestinian and other Arab leaders and entities referred to it as the “storming of Al-Aksa” and “violating its sanctity.” Itamar Ben-Gvir is a newly installed cabinet member of the Israeli government, however its not the first time that he’s visited the site, and it’s not the first time that a minister in Israel’s government has done so.

So why all the fuss now?

After reuniting Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War, Israel restored custodianship of the Temple Mount and the Islamic holy site (Al-Aksa mosque) to the control of Jordan. In retrospect, while this was arguably a mistake, there were many reasons to do so.

First, in the wake of its sweeping military victory, Israel did not want to create wider problems with the Arab and Moslem world. Second, Israel held to the naïve belief that in doing so, and also offering to return territory conquered by Israel to Jordan, Egypt and Syria respectively, there would be peace. Third was that Jordan’s Hashemite King Hussein staked a large part of his legitimacy on being the custodian of the Al-Aksa mosque.

In a country where the Hashemite minority rules over an ethnic Palestinian Arab majority, removing that pillar of Hussein’s legitimacy could have undermined his rule and brought a Palestinian Arab terror state.

What’s happened since is that the Temple Mount has been

governed by the Jordanian backed Islamic Wakf under what's known as the "status quo." The status quo is a biased model, discriminating against billions of Jews and Christians. It's a wonder that any liberal western country would back, much less outright support such a policy.

The status quo says that Jews and Christians have no legitimacy and cannot pray on the Temple Mount. Considering that Jerusalem and the Temple are the cornerstones of Judaism and Christianity, to say that's absurd is absurdly polite.

But since 1967 when "status quo" was established, the Wakf and the Palestinian Authority have competed in their blatant disregard of that, while competing for influence against one another.

In general, they have widened their influence over the entire Temple Mount, hijacking the entire 35 acres as holy Al-Aksa, while desecrating it themselves. In fact, it is only the Al-Aksa mosque that is their third holiest site, yet not holy enough to be mentioned in the Quran. The more magnificent seventh-century Dome of the Rock is not a holy site. But by divine miracle, now, the whole Temple Mount is holy to Islam.

Generally, they have tried to erase Jewish history in Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount in specific. They accuse Israel of trying to "Judaize" Jerusalem. This is in direct violation of good faith, and of anyone whose faith is rooted in the Bible. It is a direct contradiction to the Wakf itself publishing a document 100 years ago, recognizing the Temple Mount as the site of Solomon's Temple. Now, that is not only nowhere to be found, but the Wakf and Islamists worldwide deny it to be true.

If denying it on paper and in their propaganda is not bad enough, they not only violated the status quo by excavating under the Temple Mount to expand infrastructure for one of their mosques, but in doing so committed an archeological

crime by carting off truckloads of layers of artifacts from temple-times, and dumping it as if to dump biblical history with it.

At the same time, they accuse Israel of trying to dig under the Temple Mount to rebuild the Temple. When they do so, they neglect to realize that “rebuilding” the Temple affirms that it was once there, even though they deny it. They not only can’t get their history and lies straight, but see no contradiction in the contradiction of their lies. Anything goes when it comes to blaming Israel for things that are not happening.

What about that status quo? What about the world’s outcry of creeping Islamist encroachment on the sanctity of the Temple Mount, and the lies and subterfuge to cover that up? Does nobody see it? Does nobody care?

The fact is that many do care. The past two years have seen record numbers of Jew and Christians ascending to the Temple Mount, albeit under close scrutiny by the Wakf, and Israeli security that control access through the one gate to the Temple Mount through which non-Muslims are allowed to pass.

While there is no prayer allowed, and certainly no place for an unobtrusive prayer service, some do pray silently. Yet the actual status quo is abusively discriminatory against Jews and Christians, a modern application of Jim Crow laws and apartheid on the Temple Mount, where only Muslims have free access and freedom to worship.

There was once a day where Jim Crow, apartheid and human slavery were status quo. The world changed as did the societies in which they were commonplace. Why is it only the “status quo” in Jerusalem that’s sacred, where one side can violate it with impunity, and the other side accused of violating it because of the visit of one person?

Inside the US embassy in Jerusalem there’s a sign expressing

US policy against female genital mutilation, something still practiced in the Arab and Islamic world. Because it's inside, phones and cameras are not allowed, so I have no picture. In some parts of the world, it is still a practice that is "status quo." But the United States has rightly taken a position against it. It's interesting that the sign is only in English and Arabic, because albeit at the US embassy to Israel, the US knows that the problem is not among Jews.

Standards that impact any status quo are not static. One can make the case why these terms were agreed to in 1967, but times and reality have changed. After the US moved its embassy to Jerusalem, there were not only not riots on the Arab street, but shortly after, four Arab countries embraced reality and made peace with Israel.

Despite threats of rockets from Hamas, bloodshed and other violence to "confront the (Jewish) raids into Al-Aksa," the Arab street did not ignite in flames this week. Not from this one visit, and not from the tens of thousands of others who visited in 2022 alone. There should be no reason for unimpeded Jewish and Christian visits to the Temple Mount, or that security precautions (and checking for offensive materials and weapons) should be limited to only non-Muslims.

There should be no reason why Christians and Jews cannot pray on the Temple Mount openly, not to get in the way of, obstruct or deny Muslims their right to pray. But just to be able to do so.

Many Western countries, allies of Israel, denounced this week's visit and (France) committed to "absolute attachment to preservation of the status quo," even if that status quo is obscenely discriminatory. The visit by one Jewish man this week, no matter who he is, is not by definition a provocation, nor a breach of the status quo. By sounding off and making it seem like it is, regardless of whether the status quo is wrong, these western allies give fuel to the fire of the

Islamist lies about what is really holy on the Temple Mount, and who it is holy to.

Denial of truth is not unique in Islam. In fact, it's even a legitimate tactic. *Taqiyya* is when Moslems are sanctioned to deceive unbelievers (Jews, Christians and other non-Moslems) for the greater good of Islam.

So, if the Islamic custodian of the Temple Mount 100 years ago (before there was a country called Jordan) said that yes, the Temple Mount is the site of the Temple of Solomon, and thus holy to Jews and Christians, and now it isn't, which lie are we to believe? {eoa}

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He is president of the Genesis 123 Foundation, which builds bridges between Jews and Christians. Hear and understand more about this subject, including the backstory on the *Inspiration from Zion* podcast.