

Israel Today

On the morning of October 7th, Hamas militants launched a land, sea, and assault on Israel from the Gaza Strip. This assault caught Israel off guard and resulted in the deadliest day for the Jews since the Holocaust. Israel retaliated strongly. Their response has resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent Palestinians.

This conflict has led to many questions from religious people.

- Are the Jews still God's chosen people?
- Should Christians be supporting Israel?
- Do the Jews still have a biblical right to the land of Israel?
- Is this conflict between Israel and Hamas a sign that Jesus is about to return?

Let's find some Bible answers to these important questions.

Remembering the Past

- God promised Abraham to build from him a great nation (Genesis 12:2).
 - This nation would be given a great land (Canaan), and through them, someone (Jesus) would come into the world and bless all nations.
 - This nation would be Israel (the Jews). In the Old Testament, we learn about their history and dealings with other nations.
- In 722 B.C., the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and took many of the people into captivity. They also dumped a bunch of people from other nations into Samaria. The remaining Jews intermarried with these people, giving birth to a new nation (the Samaritans). The Jews and Samaritans would always have hatred for one another (John 4:9).
- In 605 B.C., the Babylonians began invading the southern kingdom of Judah, taking many people into captivity. This captivity would last for about 70 years.
- In 536 B.C., King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their land. Many would, but most would not.
- In 1948, following WWII and the Holocaust, many Jews began moving to Israel (Palestine). Once British rule expired, much of Israel was given to the Jews, and it was divided into an Israel state and an Arab state.
 - Since they had already been living there for a long time, this decision did not please the Palestinian people. They did not take kindly to being forced out of their homes and moved to designated areas.
 - This has led to hatred, conflicts, acts of terrorism, and wars between the two nations over decades. It is directly tied to the conflict going on today!

Key Questions

- Are the Jews still God's people?
 - Under the Old Covenant, they were (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6).
 - Under the New Covenant, anyone who obeys the gospel can be part of a special and holy people unto God (John 3:3-5; Acts 10:34-35; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 2:11-13).
 - Christians are today's true "Israel" (Galatians 3:25-29; 6:15-16).
- Do the Jews still have a biblical right to the land of Israel?
 - God kept every promise to Old Covenant Israel (Joshua 21:43-45).
 - The land promise was conditional (Joshua 23:15-16).
 - There is nothing special and holy about the land of Israel today. Christians prioritize heavenly citizenship and dwelling in the spiritual Promised Land (Philippians 3:20).
- Is this conflict a sign that Jesus is about to return?

- o Some believe this conflict is a sign that Jesus will soon return. Some even believe He will return to Jerusalem, establish an earthly kingdom, and reign for 1,000 years.
- o The Scriptures do not teach this! When Jesus returns, there will be no signs to give us a heads up (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-3). When He returns, the world will be destroyed with fire (2 Peter 3:9-11). He does not need to establish a kingdom in Jerusalem because He is already reigning a king over a spiritual kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

How should we respond?

- Pray for a peaceful resolution.
- Don't lose focus on the journey to the spiritual Promised Land.
- Promote and practice love for all people.
- Take advantage of opportunities to share the gospel (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:13).

Conclusion:

We can't be sure if or how this conflict in the Middle East will be resolved. We can be sure that those who obey the gospel can be part of God's Israel today.

- Shawn Jeffries