

Any Hope of Peace?

According to the vast majority of mainstream media reports on the Gaza war the death toll is grossly disproportional. Presently, the figures are: 1650 Gazans and 65 Israelis. These reports state or by far the majority of the Gaza victims are civilians, while highlighting that many are women and children. But how accurate is this picture? The fact is: 78% of the dead are male according to data published by Al Jazeera. An article titled, *Gaza Massacre Scam Exposed* shows there is more to these statistics than meets the eye. Furthermore, it is claimed that Hamas deliberately embeds its fighters, tunnel entrances and caches of rockets close to civilian homes, hospitals and mosques, causing civilians to suffer in the cross fire. The truth of this is gradually becoming clearer, so much so, that King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia made a stunning statement accusing Hamas of causing a “collective massacre.”

Speaking of proportionality, one wonders why scant attention is given to the far greater numbers of Muslim civilians killed in other conflicts, particularly by resurgent radical Muslim groups like Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Islamic State and Boko Haram. There have been countless protests on behalf of the 1100+ Gazan victims. But what about the 1700 killed in Syria in one week during the middle of July 2014 or the 1300+ Iraqi civilians who were killed in Iraq during July? And what about the horrific execution of 13 Sunni clerics in Mosul June 12th -14th? (Note: The Islamic State is not just slaughtering Shias, they are also terrorizing fellow Sunnis who won't toe the line.) Also, what about the 8450 Muslims across the world who died at the hands of fellow Muslims during Ramadan? If we give proportional weight to these figures it is clear that the Gaza death toll pales in comparison. Why then are Muslims around the world not protesting and marching against these atrocities? Bear this in mind: It is one thing for Muslims to be killed by Israelis, but it is something else when Muslims kill each other!

Some readers may be surprised to learn that the death toll from Muslim-on-Muslim violence during the month of Ramadan 2014 was so high – 8450. Why do I say this is surprising? First, Muslim leaders and mainstream media pay little attention to these details. Secondly, Muslims believe the Devil is chained during this holy month which leads them to expect that evil deeds would decrease, especially the worst evil, homicide. You can read more in the article, *Escalating Ramadan Death Toll*.

Don't misunderstand me: regardless which side one may sympathize with in the Gaza war, it is tragic that Gazans are dying. I'm reminded how Jesus

wept as he foresaw a terrible impending judgement. Luke 19:41-44 gives a preview of Jerusalem's devastation in AD 70 when the Romans invaded and slaughtered 135,000 Jews. “*As Jesus came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. 'How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not accept your opportunity for salvation.'*” (emphasis mine)

It is no coincidence that Jesus mentions peace twice. As Messiah, Christ is the Prince of Peace. When Israel rejected him they missed the opportunity to find peace. But Jews are not the only ones who miss out. Peace is also “hidden from the eyes” of Muslims. Although they accept Jesus as Al Masih (Messiah) they emphatically deny that he died on the cross.

If Jesus was on earth today, I think his heart would be heavy at seeing how most Israelis are still refusing to accept him as their Messiah. I also think he would grieve at seeing the terrible bloodshed in Gaza. In one sense, he wouldn't take sides. He would speak the whole truth, including words of rebuke to both Jews and Gazans. Also he would remind them that he already “*broke down the barrier of the dividing wall*” (Ephesians 2:14, NASB) and invite them to be reconciled to God and each other. Is this not the stance all God-fearing people should take?

It is important for Jews and Muslims to understand that the prophets foretold the Messiah will die for our sins in order to bring us peace. “*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*” (Isaiah 53:6, NIV) The New Testament explains this in more detail, saying that Christ reconciled all things to God, “*making peace by the blood of his cross.*” (Colossians 1:19-20; Ephesians 2:11-22) [All Bible quotes are from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.]

If you want to read more about how Jesus can bring you peace, I suggest reading, *Converging Destinies: Jerusalem, Peace and the Messiah*. I welcome your comments or questions: rolandclarke1139@yahoo.com

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