

# Understanding the Present Time

Pastors Perspective Column by Pastor Tim White  
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The headline read: “The “most Jews murdered in a single day since the end of the Holocaust.” Over 1,400 Jews were massacred on Saturday, October 7 – most of them civilians who posed no threat to the murderous monsters of Hamas. These evil zealots intentionally entered peaceful neighborhoods (a “kibbutz”) to abuse, torture, rape, set afire, and kill women, children, babies, and the elderly, fueled with a hate-filled rage that rivals the atrocities of ISIS.

It is no secret that the terrorist organizations of Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon are mere proxies for Iran – the number one sponsor of terrorism today. Iran, a Shiite Muslim-led government, promotes the chant “Death to Israel, Death to America.” The first part of this chant aligns with the Preamble of the 1988 “Covenant of Hamas,” which includes the following:

“Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”

Before I go any further, I want to state that it would be unfair and inaccurate for people to equate all followers of Islam with these anti-Semitic regimes in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran.

For context to what I want to get to, let us first ask, “Whose land is it?”

About 4,000 years ago, Jehovah God promised the land to Abraham (Gen. 12:7), and about 3,400 years ago, Joshua led the Israelites in their campaign to take the land from multiple Canaanite kings, including the Philistines; the latter people group lived in the region of present-day Gaza (story unfolds in the book of Joshua). It is important to note that these people groups no longer exist.

The current residents of Gaza are Arabs who are primarily descended from Ishmael, the half-brother of Isaac – both were sons of Abraham. Some may be the descendants of Esau, Jacob’s fraternal twin, and Isaac’s sons – the latter of which was renamed “Israel” in Gen. 32:28.

The ancestors of today’s Arabs were given the lands south and east of Israel for their inheritance (Gen. 25:1-18; 36:8-43). Today, Ishmael and Esau’s descendants live in their forefathers’ lands and beyond. So, for the record, it is the Arabs living in Gaza, Lebanon, and the West Bank who are the “occupiers” of Israel’s rightful land, not the other way around.

As I watch what is happening in our world, some verses come to mind. First is in Romans 13:11, “And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” Those of us preachers and our congregations cannot afford to not be awake to what is happening in our world, or we will be caught off guard when the next tragedy strikes within our borders.

On October 7, the Israeli government and military were caught off guard, as was America on September 11, 2001. These failures were primarily due to not “understanding the present time.” In both cases, intel, activity, and movements that were evident were either misinterpreted or dismissed. Consequently, thousands died because the nation’s leaders were as one slumbering. They are awake now, but what a costly way to wake up.

On the first day that the current resident of the White House took power, he removed all of the successful safety measures along our southern border. Millions of illegals have walked right into our country. Some days have seen as many as 10,000 illegals come across our southern border in 24 hours, and most of them were single young military-aged men from countries who hate America. There is a severe lack of “understanding of the times” in the White House.

These illegals received various free things and a ticket to whatever city in the USA they desired. Experts in international affairs agree that our president has likely (unintentionally) facilitated the staffing of “ sleeper cells” of terrorists all across America by his irrational open boarder policy and his refusal enforce the border and immigration laws on the books. It is no longer “if” but “when” we have a terrorist attack (or attacks) in America.

Ultimately, we American Christians must awake to the reality that we are not, nor have we ever been, in a political battle but a spiritual one.

America was founded on biblical principles that “thundered” from the pulpits throughout the colonies in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries before she was born. Today, due to many decades of silent, disengaged, and intimidated pulpits, our nation is at significant risk of extinction. But all is not lost because of promises like 2 Chron. 7:14, where God promises His people that if we will humble ourselves, pray, and turn from our wicked ways, He will hear from Heaven, forgive our sins, and heal our land.

The cry of the regimes aligned with Iran shouts, “Death to Israel and death to America.” They mean what they say – but so does our God (in the Bible). Like the Apostle Peter’s words: “...Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” (1Pet. 3:14b). Jesus told us, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

There is a “cry” that Christ’s followers must declare, and it is this: “Life to Israel, Life to America, Life to whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord” (John 10:10; Acts 2:21). These militant Islamists are willing to pay whatever price necessary to accomplish their goal for their god, Allah. Do we possess this same passion for the “Good News” of Christ?

We must wake up from slumbering in our pretty sanctuaries and stand up in the marketplace, city hall, and the schoolhouse for Truth to be the standard and for the Holy Spirit to fill His Church once again. Troubling times are ahead of America, but those who know their God will overcome and be able to point others to the only One who can save them in this life and give them eternal life (John 3:16-17).