

Chuck and Karen Cohen bring a perspective on the news from an Israeli believer's viewpoint – December 2020 (edited)

Watchmen from Jerusalem **A Biblical Perspective on the News**

Shalom from Jerusalem,

2020 can easily be described as a year of great uncertainty – even for believers. For example, our God reigns (Psa. 24:1; 96:10; 103:19, et al), and He allowed the coronavirus to plague the world. Any believer thinking Satan did this, needs to reread the Scriptures from the beginning. The Adversary is not free to do whatever he wants, so why did God allow this plague at this time?

Also, the extension of Israeli sovereignty over 30% of Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley was suspended in favor of peace treaties with various Arab Muslim nations. God does want to see Israel possess its possessions (Obad. 1:17), so why did He permit this to happen? Is it because for the first time since modern Israel has been restored there was a genuine hand of peace not just from Arab leaders, but their people as well? We're not sure, but one blessing from these treaties is the demise of the "land-for-peace" paradigm along with the lie that there cannot be peace until the Palestinian issue is resolved. And while the EU and UN still hold to this, America under Trump and many Arab nations do not.

Why is Israel judged so harshly by believers?

This is not just a 2020 issue, but one existing at least since 1967. It's silly, but many believers expect Israel to act like the only "Christian" nation in the world! Many criticized Israel for suspending the extension of its sovereignty, yet polls consistently show that most Israelis prefer peace treaties to extension of sovereignty. Who can blame them for that?

How many believers know what it is like to send off each of their sons and daughters to serve in the army, and each time they hug one good-bye they don't know if they will ever see them again? How many sat under falling Scud missiles day and night while a US President restrained Israel from responding? Or if families take a bus or go out to eat, how often have they prayed for God to prevent any terrorist from blowing them up? That is why this nation is willing to try almost anything for peace.

Most Jews are not really familiar with the Old Testament (the *Tanach*). If religious they follow the rabbinic traditions which are basically humanistic concepts overlaid on God's Word, and they do not see how precious Israel's land and people are to God.

We agree that we should not trade God's land for peace, yet to accuse Israel of betraying God when it doesn't even know Him yet is an indication of Christian arrogance against the "natural branches" (Rom. 11:24). Most Israelis are not yet born-again. It would be wisdom to judge them in that reality and not to expect them to live lives totally sold out to God – which most believers struggle to do *after* salvation.

Obviously, we would prefer real peace *as well as* the extension of sovereignty, but at this time a real, warm peace is being offered from both UAE and Bahrain, which also means that Saudi Arabia is behind this, and it is no surprise that most Israelis prefer the peace offered now.

Confess past sins – but do not forget present sins

Ministering in Germany and the UK, I have seen many German and British Christians who focus on confessing and asking forgiveness for the Holocaust and the betrayal of the Palestinian Mandate, yet seem ignorant of the current sins of their anti-Israel governments. The devil has trapped them in guilt for ancestral

sins so that they often have no time or energy to plead with God about their current governments' actions in voting against Israel at the UN, increasing business dealings with Iran, pushing for the creation of a Palestinian State, and repeatedly rejecting Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Also, intercession is needed for how most British and German churches deal with Israel and the Jews today.

God's judgments on nations today are not only based on past, but also on current, sins (Isa. 60:12; Joel 3:1-2). Today's actions against Israel draw God's ire. Confessing past national sins against the Jewish people and Israel must be done, but if it ends there, leaving your nation without spiritual covering for its current actions against Israel, consider changing your focus and standing in the gap for your nation's acts today (Ezek. 22:30-31).

"Sanctify them through Your truth; Your Word is truth."

(John 17:17)

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