

How should the church in America respond to the recent atrocities by the terrorist organization Hamas against the nation of Israel? This is my suggested response.

First, we must have moral clarity. Videos and images of mass killings of a single day are horrific. Reports of women and children taken hostage are devastating. We dare not defend the indefensible.

God's law requires care for the poor, the orphan, and the widow (Ex. 22:22). The Lord hates the wicked and the one who loves violence (Ps. 11:5). He hates hands that shed innocent blood, the heart that devised evil plans, and the feet that run to evil (Prov. 6:17-18).

In Scripture we encounter stories of wickedness. One example is the Amalekites. The Amalekites were a nation at war with Israel going as far back as Exodus (Ex. 17:8). They attacked the Israelites when they were at their weakest, and they attacked the weakest Israelites (Deut. 25:17-19). Elsewhere, the Amalekites attacked the women and children of Israel when king David and his men were absent (1 Sam. 30:2-3). In the book of Esther, Haman is the main antagonist. He is an Amalekite who sets out to annihilate the Israelites (3:9).

But do not be deceived by thinking that wickedness only runs in one direction. Old Testament prophets repeatedly condemn Israelite kings for abusing the weak and poor (Is. 1:17; Jer. 7:6). Wickedness runs in both directions because defilement comes from the heart (Matt. 15:19).

Now, this is not to morally equivocate the actions between the terrorists Hamas and Israel. While Israel can wrongfully mimic their enemies in retaliation, Scripture is clear that moral clarity is the duty of the church (1 Cor. 5).

Second, we pray. We pray for God to frustrate the plans of terrorists who feed upon the weak (Ps. 33:10). We pray for justice upon all who love violence and hate mercy (Ps. 72:4). We pray for the protection and healing of the weak (Ps. 82:3). We pray for repentance of the nations (Jonah 3:10). We also pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer, such as those Christians from various nations in the middle East (1 Pet. 5:9).

Third, we faithfully make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19). Jesus charged us with the responsibility to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only remedy for the wicked heart. We disciple in our home, our churches, and the nations.

Fourth, we look forward. There is no separate plan of redemption for Israel apart from the church because the wall of hostility has been broken in the crucified body of Jesus (Ephesians 2). Nevertheless, God's redemptive plan is for Israel to be engrafted into the true vine, Jesus (Romans 11). The day will come when all of God's people from every tongue and nation will gather before the throne of the true and righteous king, Jesus Christ (Ps. 72:11; Eph. 1:20-21).

In Christ, Judson Marvel

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