

Rising anti-Semitism

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The events of the Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK on 27 January and the rising levels of anti-Semitism in the world are considered in this article in order to encourage our confidence in Christ's return.

A REPORT has recently been published by the Coordination Forum for Countering Anti-Semitism (CFCA).¹ Its 2009 Summary stated that there were more anti-Semitic attacks in 2009 than in any year since World War II. The CFCA's research also indicated there were more incidents of anti-Semitism in the first quarter of 2009 than in all of 2008. In France there were 600 anti-Jewish incidents in the first half of 2009, compared with fewer than 500 in all of 2008. Similar ratios were also found in Britain. The incidents were notable as well for being more serious, according to the report, with hundreds being considered extremely violent. Eight murders were attributed to anti-Semitism.

Until recently, Greece had gone a long time without violent anti-Semitism.² However, the Gaza war a year ago inflamed passions against Jews and set off a series of anti-Semitic incidents. The latest was the torching in January of the Etz Hayim synagogue on the Greek island of Crete. Even more disturbing to Jews than the attack itself was the lack of government condemnation. Not only the government but also the press, political parties and the Greek Orthodox Church were silent. A report from Holland said that "In 2009, the number of anti-Semite incidents in Amsterdam doubled compared to the year before. The Jewish community feels under siege".³

This widespread rise in anti-Semitism has been boosted by Israel's attack on Gaza at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009. A UN mission headed by Judge Richard Goldstone was established in April 2009 and produced a report in September 2009, accusing both Palestinian militants and Israeli Defence Forces of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity, and recommending bringing those responsible to justice. In October 2009 the UN human Rights Council endorsed the report by twenty-five votes for, six against and sixteen abstentions/failures to vote.

Against Goldstone's recommendations, the Council singled out Israel exclusively for reprimand, without any mention of Hamas.⁴

A consequence of the covenant

Anti-Semitism has been a feature of Jewish life for millennia. It is the direct outcome of the covenant that the nation entered into with God at Sinai. Moses was careful to spell out to the nation the implications of their covenant status. They had a choice between abundant blessing and terrible curses. These words of Moses from Deuteronomy 28 contrast the choices: either, "if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day . . . the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee . . ." (vv. 1,2); or, "if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day . . . all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee . . ." (v. 15). That this is still true is eloquent testimony to the truth of God's Word recorded in Scripture.

The most notable example of anti-Semitism that has occurred in recent years is commemorated in the Holocaust Memorial Day.^{5,6} It has been held each year since 2001 on 27 January, the day in 1945 that the Auschwitz/Birkenau concentration camp was liberated. It is a reminder that there have been too many incidents of racial hatred, resulting in the genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur as well as those of World War II. We truly live in a world where violence continues unabated and is bringing about a situation as in Noah's day, when "The earth . . . was corrupt before God, and . . . filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11).

1. <http://www.energypublisher.com/article.asp?id=26338>
2. http://www.jewishjournal.org/index.php/story/news_features/
3. <http://www.nrc.nl/international/article2468489.eco>
4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8316770.stm>
5. <http://www.hmd.org.uk/>
6. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust_Memorial_Day_\(UK\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust_Memorial_Day_(UK))



Sculpture depicting the suffering of victims of the Holocaust at the Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, Israel.

Picture: HolyLandPhotos.org

Jesus spoke of a similar situation arising at the time of his coming to set up the Kingdom of God: “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Lk. 17:26,27).

Surviving witnesses

Over 300 years ago King Louis XIV of France asked Blaise Pascal, the great French philosopher, to give him proof of the supernatural. Pascal answered, “Why, the Jews, your Majesty—the Jews”. We do not have to speculate what Pascal meant when he gave this answer, because he took the trouble to spell it out (see *Pensées*, para. 620, p. 285). Pascal said that the fact that the Jewish people survived until the seventeenth century—to the time period when he was living—was nothing short of a supernatural phenomenon. The prophet Jeremiah predicted that this would be so: “For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have

“This people are . . . singular by their duration, which has always continued from their origin till now. For, whereas the nations of Greece and of Italy, of Lacedaemon, of Athens and of Rome . . . have long since perished, these ever remain, and in spite of the endeavours of many powerful kings . . . they have nevertheless been preserved (and this preservation has been foretold).”

Pascal, *Pensées*, para. 620

scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (30:11).

The complete outworking of this prophecy awaits fulfilment. But the continuing opposition to the existence of Israel in the Land is also in fulfilment of Psalm 83:4: “They [nations surrounding Israel] have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance”. This, coupled with the rising anti-Semitism in the world, makes the scenarios given by Zechariah and Joel seem imminent.

Zechariah wrote: “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (14:2). Joel wrote: “For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land” (3:1,2).

The believer today looks with expectation for the outworking of God’s purpose with Israel, because the Apostle Paul instructs us, “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. 11:25,26).