

I don't personally know anybody who died at Bondi this week,, but I wept for them...

I wept:

- for mothers and fathers, whose children were murdered;
- for children, who have lost a mother or father;
- for the Jewish people who apparently, not even in Australia, can celebrate YHWH God without being in perilous danger...
- for the hatred; and lies that **amplify** the hatred – a hatred that has always been directed toward God's people...

And I have been deeply saddened and even angry, that since 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the hatred of Jews right across the world, has not only increased – it has become **fashionable**, and seen as a virtue of “the enlightened”, to hate the Jews...

I cannot understand this:

How:

On the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 6000 Gazans (filled with hatred) invaded Israel. Their aim? To kill the Jews they hate. They mostly killed unarmed civilians. The defenceless – men; women; children; old; young; infant; geriatric...

- Over 1200 people were murdered;
- 250 were taken as hostages;
- Women were sexually abused; and
- The hostages were held and starved for years.

But when Israel did what every nation should do – responded with force to free their people, the world wagged its finger at Israel and said “Tut; Tut; You naughty country...”

When the news of October 7<sup>th</sup> was heard, there was celebration in our land, and the call went out, “kill the Jews” – “gas the Jews”. “Get em..”...

I’m pretty sure my record shows, “I rarely get political from the Pulpit, but prepare yourselves: We cannot help but be political, today.” ...

Our Federal Labor Government (who very heavily depend upon the Muslim vote of Western Sydney) are too scared to address antisemitism (hatred of Jews), because they might lose votes that they need, to win the next election.

And in the capital cities of Australia, antisemitism has been rife.

It’s been evident:

- in the streets, where every week, there have been protests; marches; rallies...
- At universities, Jewish students and lecturers have been under attack.
- Companies linked to Israel have been shunned;
- Jewish artists and performers have been “cancelled”;

Antisemitism has gone unchecked. No – worse than that – it has been rewarded. How?

- Every time an attack is made on the Jews, our Government has barely condemned the centuries old hatred that lies behind the evil – And then they warn against “Islamophobia” as if the Muslims – the ones who are doing the hating and violence are the ones who are in danger...
- Following the October 7 attack on Israel, the Labor Government opened the gates to allow Palestinians to flood into our country, bringing with them, their support of the death-cult, Hamas (whom they voted in), and their seething hatred of the Jews.
- And on the 21<sup>st</sup> September this year, our Labour Government rescinded the long held bi-partisan position on Israel, and rewarded the October 7<sup>th</sup> atrocities by recognising Palestine as being its own Nation State (even though no such nation state exists)...

And as I wrote this, The death toll of the Bondi Islamic attack on Jews stands at 15 (maybe more). And many have severe injuries.

And once again, our Labor government, being very afraid of losing the Muslim vote in Western Sydney, have deflected, from the **real issue** of antisemitism and the death-cult ways of Islam. – They have been saying almost **nothing** on what is the key issue (Islamic terrorism). Instead, they deflect to side-issues...

I am deeply, deeply ashamed of our country, and of the cowardice that silences truth, for the sake of political survival...

Meanwhile, the mindless hate-filled protests of “the woke” against all things Jewish, say “*It’s not our fault. We condemn all violence.*”... It makes me want to vomit, when week after week, they pat each other on their self-righteous backs, for being able to spew so much bitter hatred into our streets...

So there you go: I’ve had my rant. And I’ll tell you why.

We’re currently following the Lectionary readings, and the Bible reading for today, is Psalm 80. It is a song of collective lament, sung by the people of Israel. It’s a song of bitter sadness, because it feels like God has deserted them...

I’ll tell you what it’s about. We’re in the period of the divided Kingdom. The 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin, form a Kingdom in the South (Judah), and the other 10 tribes in the north (Israel/Ephraim).

And Israel in the North, has been defeated by Assyria, and the people have been taken away in captivity...

And Judah in the South mourn for their brothers. And they’re worried that they’re going to be next...

Let me read it to you:

Psalm 80, and think about it, in the light of what happened last week:

**Psalm 80** TO THE CHOIRMASTER:  
ACCORDING TO LILIES. A TESTIMONY.  
OF ASAPH, A PSALM.

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
You who lead Joseph like a flock.  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

<sup>2</sup> Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,  
stir up Your might  
and come to save us!

<sup>3</sup> *Restore us, O God;  
let Your face shine, that we may be saved!*

<sup>4</sup> O YHWH God of hosts,  
how long will You be angry with Your people's prayers?

<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the bread of tears  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.

<sup>6</sup> You make us an object of contention for our neighbours,  
and our enemies laugh among themselves.

<sup>7</sup> *Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let Your face shine, that we may be saved!*

<sup>8</sup> You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
You drove out the nations and planted it.

<sup>9</sup> You cleared the ground for it;  
it took deep root and filled the land.

<sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered with its shade,  
the mighty cedars with its branches.

<sup>11</sup> It sent out its branches to the sea  
and its shoots to the River.

<sup>12</sup> Why then have you broken down its walls,  
so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?

<sup>13</sup> The boar from the forest ravages it,  
and all that move in the field feed on it.

<sup>14</sup> Turn again, O God of hosts!  
Look down from heaven, and see;  
have regard for this vine,

<sup>15</sup> the stock that Your right hand planted,  
and for the son whom You made strong for Yourself.

<sup>16</sup> They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down;  
may they perish at the rebuke of Your face!

<sup>17</sup> But let Your hand be on the Man of Your right hand,  
the Son of Man whom You have made strong for Yourself!

<sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn back from You;  
give us life, and we will call upon Your Name!

<sup>19</sup> *Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts!*  
*Let Your face shine, that we may be saved!*

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The nation of Israel, has just about always, been surrounded  
by its enemies.

Today it has:

- Lebanon to the North;
- Syria in the North East;
- Jordan to the East;

- Egypt to the South; and
- Worst of all, Greta Thunberg coming in from the sea...

The chant, which has been taken up world-wide (over the last couple of years), is “From the River to the Sea”... “Palestine will be free”...

And many naively repeat that chant, believing that it’s some kind of call for peace. It is nothing of the sort.

It is a **battle cry**; It is a call to **genocide**. It is a call for every Jew to be gone, from the Jordan River, through to Mediterranean Sea. They want to wipe Israel off of the map.

And the battle, is for a district which has for more than 1000 years, been known as “Palestine”...

Now, we are at a point, where I am going to have to stop using the word “Palestine”, how I’ve used it in the past. You see, in the past, I have sometimes referred to the region in which Jesus ministered, as “First Century Palestine”... because “Palestine” has **never** referred to a kingdom/country/nation-state – it has **always** referred to a region. It originally came from the word “Philistia” (that’s where the Philistines lived)....

But I cannot use the phrase “First-century Palestine” any longer, because “Palestine” has now become a modern construct of something that doesn’t even exist – a nation state.

So, what is this piece of land, that Jews in Australia, are being killed over?

Well, the people who call themselves “Palestinians” claim that all of Israel, is their natural homeland, and Israel pushed them out...

The problem with that claim, is “It’s not true.” They were in the region long before they were.

BTW, it’s not only Palestinians who hate Jews – just about every Muslim does.

But the claim that it’s always been their land, doesn’t stack up.

Yes, when they lost WW I, the Balfour Declaration, set up an intent for a homeland for the Jews – a place where Jew and Palestinian could dwell together. And following WW2, the nation-state of Israel was recognised. But it continued to be a place for Jew and Palestinian together.

But over the years, the Muslims refuse to live in peace with the Jews.

But the Muslims weren’t the first ones there anyway. The reason the location was chosen for the modern State of Israel, is because it is the Land God had gave His people, thousands of years earlier.

Psalm 80 paints the picture for us. God is the Shepherd. And He led the People of Israel out of Egypt (like a Shepherd leads

his flock), to the Promised Land. And it uses the image of Israel being “a vine”.

- God brought the vine out of Egypt;
- He cleared the ground – He drove out the nations that were already there;
- And He planted the vine.
- It took deep root, it grew, and
- it filled the land.

And Psalm 80 recalls the glory days of Israel, under King David and King Solomon.

The vine spread:

- to the mighty cedars (Mountains of Lebanon in the North)
- it sent branches to the sea (Mediterranean Sea in the West); and
- it sent shoots to the river (Euphrates River in the East)

The footprint of Israel, was much bigger than it is today. **That** is the land that God gave to his people... Don't you believe for a minute, that the Palestinians have a greater right to the land.

The trouble is, the People of Israel did not remain faithful to YHWH God. And so time and time again, God would hand them over to foreign powers, to teach them a lesson – to try and get them to turn their hearts toward Him.

Now, Israel lies on a major crossroads of world trade routes.

So, throughout history, it has been held by world super-powers passing through.

- The Assyrians;
- The Babylonians;
- Macedonian Empire
- The Greeks (Alexander the Great)
- The Roman Empire;
- There have been various Islamic caliphates,,,

And in more recent times, the Ottoman empire (based in Turkey) ruled a massive tract of land: At one time, it had:

- North Africa;
- The Middle East;
- into the Balkan states;
  - Bulgaria;
  - Serbia;
  - Bosnia;
- Hungary;
- Greece

And the Ottoman empire (Turks) still held Israel in 1914 when WW I began. And the Turks joined Germany, and that's why Australia ended up fighting in Israel, and we should be proud, that Australians were instrumental at the Battle of Beersheba, when the charge of the Australian Light Horse won the day, and that made it possible for the capture of Jerusalem, 6 weeks later.

We should be proud of that in our history...

Anyway, Psalm 80 is a cry of lament. They had been unfaithful, and so God allowed Assyria to conquer them; and upend them. And it seems like everyone is against them (just like today).

And to an extent, it's a very honest Psalm. It recognises that YHWH is the Lord God almighty. He is **YHWH God of Hosts**. That means "heavenly armies of angels are at His command". He can easily step in and overthrow their oppressors... And the refrain of the song is for Him to do exactly that:

*<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts!*

*Let Your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Yet, at the same time, it recognises that God has allowed it – He is angry with them. **God** is the one who broke down their walls, so that all who pass by, take what they like, and their land is vacant; destitute; fallen...

And so, it's a very honest Psalm in that regard. But even in this Psalm, it makes promises, that Israel did not keep.

Towards the end, it puts forward a hope – a hope for a Messiah:

V17 says:

**<sup>17</sup> But let Your hand be on the Man of Your right hand,**  
(Who sits at the right hand of God? Jesus – the Messiah.)  
**the Son of Man whom You have made strong for Yourself!**

(Jesus called Himself the Son of Man)

And then it makes a promise: If you do this, then we will do this.

**<sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn back from You;  
give us life, and we will call upon Your Name!**

*<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts!  
Let Your face shine, that we may be saved!*

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He stopped and looked down at the city, and he wept. And He said:

**Luke 19:42-44 (ESV)**

**<sup>42</sup> ... "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup> and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

You see, the Son of Man, that in Psalm 80, they promised they would receive,, He came, and they did not receive Him... And because they missed their messiah, the prophecy of Jesus came true, in AD70, when Jerusalem was under siege, and it

fell... The Temple was totally destroyed; And they have not had peace since.

Even today, Israel have largely not turned back to God. It is predominantly, a secular country...

But they **are** God's people.

*<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts!*

*Let Your face shine, that we may be saved!*

The light of the world (Jesus Christ), is the shining face of God, who comes to save.

The second reading for today, is Romans 1:1-7. It says:

**1** Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Although Jesus was largely rejected by His countrymen, the Gospel message has been preached throughout the world – including here. For the sake of His Name, He has called many, from among all the nations, to this thing called “obedience of faith”.

The Messiah, came not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles – You and me...

And if we were to read further into Romans, we would get to chapters 10 and 11. These chapters reveal the wonderful news, that God has **not** rejected the Jews – He holds His hands out to them, all day long...

And Paul uses the image of the Olive Tree, to explain, that we the Gentiles, have been grafted in to the olive tree. We’re the grafted-in bits. The tree, is the People of God, and we’ve been grafted in. We don’t support the root – the root supports us...

Do you understand what that’s saying? By faith, God grafts us in, to His chosen people...

And Paul’s concern/prayer/great hope, is that the Jews would **also** come to faith, and receive their Messiah – that the natural branches, would be grafted back in.

So, let us lovingly stand by God’s people, the Jews. Let us love them, and share Christ with them, for we have been grafted in where they naturally belong.

Let us pray for them... Let us pray the prayer of Psalm 80:

***19 Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts!  
Let Your face shine, that we may be saved!***

And let us pray for them:

***19 Restore [our Jewish Brothers and Sisters], O YHWH God  
of hosts!***

***Let Your face shine, that [they] may be saved!***

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

When we come to our prayers for others, we will pray at greater length, for those who grieve.