

Would Jesus **Concur** or **Weep**?

by Tom Compton

Looking at the photo of an innocent, dead, Palestinian child, I want to weep. It appears that the child is a girl of around 3 years old. Her parents are probably Muslims because the population of Gaza is predominantly Muslim. However, there are Christians peaceably living there, side by side with the Muslims. So, there is a small possibility that this little girl's parents are Christians. Of course, it doesn't make any difference whether her parents are Muslims, Christians, or Jews. If her parents are alive, they would still be grieving. And, we as Christians should be grieving.

Americans and our Congress have overwhelmingly supported the actions by the Israelis against the Palestinians in Gaza in the first few weeks of January, 2009. Probably hundreds of young children, as the girl pictured here, were killed.

Typically, a large percentage of Americans view the loss of such young lives as "collateral damage." This is an euphemism used by our military to sooth the American public. We've all heard about the collateral damage in Iraq and Afghanistan. It wouldn't be nice if it were called what it really is: **murder**. One group in the United States that religiously and fervently supports Israel, no matter how it conducts itself against the Palestinians that reside in Israel, are Christian Zionists. They believe that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of Old Testament, Biblical prophecy.¹

In a nutshell, Christian Zionists believe unconditional love must be bestowed upon Israel; not doing so would result in condemnations and curses from God. The idea that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy is a debate topic that can be carried on between Christians of different viewpoints. As Christians, our first and most important allegiance must be to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus or any writer require that a belief in a physical state of Israel is necessary for salvation. Jesus' kingdom is based in the spiritual realm.

Here are some thoughts by Ericka Moore² from **Israel, The New American Idol**:

The mantra of "We will always support Israel" is disturbing enough coming from the President, the Congress, and our media,

but when Christian Evangelical Churches across America are the loudest voices in the chorus, it's time to investigate.

The most-quoted "proof text" referenced universally by Christians who believe we must unconditionally "bless" the modern day state of Israel is as follows:

"The LORD had said to Abram,...

'I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you.

I will make your name great and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,



When you look at this photo of a young Palestinian child killed in Gaza by an Israeli air strike do you want to:

1. **Concur?** or 2. **Weep?**

And whoever curses you I will curse;

And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen. 12:1-3)

Assuming that scripture interprets scripture and that the New Testament writers often quote, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, explain the meaning of Old Testament passages, let's take a look at the New Testament book of Galatians.

In Galatians 3:8, Paul quotes a portion of this same scripture: "The scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced **the gospel** in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."

And, what is **the gospel message** that God is proclaiming to Abram in advance? Is it the recently gathered, political state of Israel that will be a blessing to all nations?

Paul goes on to explain further in verse 16, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed. The scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but

'to your Seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ."

When we take the verse from Genesis 12:3 and apply it to the present day state of Israel, we are distorting the very gospel itself. Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, is the Seed through whom "all nations will be blessed." That is, and always has been, the only gospel message of both the Old and New Testament.

Paul closes Galatians 3:26-29 with these profound words: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We are all equal in the sight of God. He displays no favoritism based on race, social status, or gender. Jesus Christ gave his life out of love, not to save a tiny plot of land or a favored ethnicity, but for all mankind. Not for inanimate shrines and places, as much as we may love what they represent to us, but for the forgiveness of sins and salvation of all who will receive Him. His sacrifice was to make us "living stones" in **one** glorious temple, not built by human hands, but by a living God who wants relationship with us. That is the gospel.

The question for the American church today is simple: What gospel are we believing and preaching?

The only real question for Christians should be: "What would Jesus say about the photo of the dead child?" Would He concur that she is collateral damage needed for the state of Israel or would He weep? Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have to choose one or the other. As for me, I know my Jesus would weep.

¹ Refer to our video, **The Roots of Christian Zionism: How Scofield Sowed Seeds of Apostasy** at: <http://eshop.whtt.org/eshop.php?id=22>

² Ericka Moore is a home school mother of four who is a prayer group leader in her local evangelical, Community Church. Read her complete article, **Israel, The New American Idol** at: <http://whtt.org/index.php?ews=2&id=2831>

When I wrote my story for the **Palestine Chronicle**, "Would Jesus Concur or Weep"¹, I knew that people would probably respond in one of three ways:

1. They would weep at the picture of the innocent Palestinian child killed by the Israeli attacks on Gaza in January, 2009.
2. They would be ambivalent and not care one way or the other.
3. They would violently disapprove and say this child got what she deserved because she stood in the way of the preservation of the State of Israel.

I never heard from any of the "Type 2" readers but did from the "1 & 2" types. So what do Alan, Bob and Henry have to do with my reflections on my story? These three Jewish men represent three different and divergent opinions on questions related to the state of Israel. The "Alan" in my rhetorical question is Alan Dershowitz, well known Harvard Law professor and ardent Zionist who has appeared on TV news broadcasts, numerous times, as a legal expert. "Bob" is Bob Simon of **CBS News** & the **60 Minutes** show. And, "Henry" is Henry Herskovitz of **Jewish Witnesses for Peace & Friends**² a very active, anti-Zionist. Granted, Henry Herskovitz, is not a well known Jewish personality outside of his home town of Ann Arbor, Michigan as the first two gentlemen.

Let's look at what Professor Alan Dershowitz had to say about my article. Here's an email exchange with Professor Dershowitz:

From: "Alan Dershowitz"
To: ccarlson
Date: Wed, 4 Feb 2009 23:52:24
Subject: Re: Would Jesus Concur or Weep?

These deaths were not collateral. They were deliberately intended by Hamas by its wilfull (sic) use of human shields. Anyone (sic) who supports Hamas is complicit in the death of these babies-you included!

From: Tom Compton
Date: Tue, 10 Feb 2009 12:13:06 -0800 (PST)
To: Alan Dershowitz
Subject: Would Jesus Concur or Weep?

Professor Dershowitz,

...There may be only one key question that we can mutually agree upon: "Is the modern state of Israel the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy?" My answer is "No", although many Christians would give an "Amen" or "Yes". From your Jewish perspective, Professor, what would your answer be?
Sincerely, Tom Compton

From: Alan Dershowitz
To: Tom Compton
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 1:27:25 PM
Subject: Re: Would Jesus Concur or Weep?
I couldnt care less.

It's clear from this short exchange that Professor Dershowitz fervently believes that Israel's use of excessive force against the people of Gaza is necessary and proper. And further, that people like me are to blame, too. First of all, I didn't even mention the word "Hamas" in my article. However, Hamas was the duly elected government in Palestine. Our former President, Jimmy Carter, was there to verify the honesty of the election. Professor Dershowitz and his fellow Zionists are desperate to come up with reasons to justify the atrocities committed by Israel against the innocent, murdered people in Gaza. And, I must confess that I have some duplicity in the matter, because I am an American citizen and taxpayer. My tax dollars have been and are being sent to the tune of billions of dollars to countries like Israel and Egypt, who shares responsibility because they are working with Israel to starve the Palestinians in Gaza by blockading their border with Gaza. It is interesting that Professor Dershowitz would respond to my story that was addressed to Christians. His response came into our office as a result of an email from **We Hold These Truths** that was sent to subscribers. That email referenced the article that appeared in the **Palestine Chronicle**. We discovered that Professor Dershowitz had subscribed to our email newsletter over a year ago, and, had received at least 40 emails from us without asking to be removed or commenting on them up until now. The question I keep pondering is, "Why would my story motivate the Professor to send his comments?"

I've had no such interaction with Bob Simon of **CBS News**. However, I was fascinated by two shows that Mr. Simon appeared on that revealed the gamut of Jewish opinion in Israel on the Palestinian question. Mr. Simon was interviewed on the **Charlie Rose Program**³ on PBS, aired on January 7, 2009 as the Israelis were carrying out their deadly attacks on Gaza. In the program, Mr. Simon described the Gaza strip as "the world's largest prison". He expressed the opinion that the "Two State Solution" was not possible because of the large areas of land taken by Jewish settlers from the Palestinians in the West Bank to create settlements with over 280,000 Jewish settlers. Mr. Simon thought that the only realistic solution left would be "apartheid" which is what is, in effect, Israel has been doing for some time. As we know, apartheid governments don't fare too well. Recall South Af-

rica. Mr. Simon's piece on the **CBS 60 Minutes** show entitled, "Time Running Out For A Two-State Solution?"⁴, aired on January 25, 2009, showed in detail the dilemma facing Israelis with the huge number of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Henry Herskovitz's views may not represent a majority of his Jewish brethren, but they are valid and should be considered. Henry is against Zionism, a political not religious, ideology. Some of the signs Henry and his supporters carry in front the synagogue he used to attend tell his side of the story: "The Former Victims Have Become the Victimized", "Is Ethnic Cleansing a Judaic Value", and "End The Israeli Occupation".



Henry Herskovitz and the **Jewish Witnesses For Peace & Friends** regularly let their synagogue know how they feel about Zionism

The Jewish world is no more unified on the question of what Israel should do with the Palestinians then are Christians of the traditional or Zionist flavor. It's hard to accept this when the United States government, including Congress, and the American media have overwhelmingly supported Israel's actions against the Palestinians during January, 2009. So, if you have a differing view, whether you're Jewish, Christian or Muslim, it appears your views don't really count much. But that's no reason not to try your best to show you care about those innocent Palestinian children who were killed by the "Might Makes Right" crowd. Remember, it was Jesus who said, "...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31)

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¹(http://www.palestinechronicle.com/view_article_details.php?id=14761)

²(<http://www.a2vigil.org/>),

³(<http://www.charlirose.com/view/interview/9900>)

⁴(<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/01/23/60minutes/main4749723.shtml>)