



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
**Volume 18 Number 45**  
**December 6, 20223**

**When Antisemitism Is Different from Antisemitism**

By Freddy Davis

As we look at what is happening in the world today, one of the big stories in the news is the virulent antisemitism that is prominent on many college campuses and in major cities. This is manifested by huge protest rallies, defacing of public property, attacks on Jewish synagogues and businesses, and even attacks on individual Jews. In many places, this also includes attacks against those who support the nation of Israel in their retaliation against those who perpetrated the terrorist attack that killed approximately 1,200 people.

It would be easy, at this point, to go into a defense of the Israeli actions or make an attack on those who would justify terrorist tactics to accomplish their goals. But here we are going to look at something a little different. As it turns out, there are actually different kinds of antisemitism, and it is important to understand the differences if you really want to know what is going on in the country. If you ever get into a discussion with someone about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and don't know how to distinguish the different types, you will either get people mad at you for accusing them of believing things they don't believe, or they will have no idea what you are talking about. While it would seem logical for there to be only one reason for antisemitism, there are actually two main ones – religious hatred and racism.

The matter that has brought this all to a head started with the Hamas terror attack into Israel in which approximately 1,200 Israelis were killed. After the attack, Israel declared war on Hamas

and determined to eradicate it. To do this, they have surrounded Gaza, where Hamas is quartered, and are making an all out attack. In this attack, Israel is destroying massive amounts of property and killing very large numbers of people.

Those who sympathize with the Palestinians are now trying to apply pressure on Israel to stop, which Israel refuses to do. This has led to worldwide protests and riots. But the participants in these actions are comprised to two different groups with completely different motivations. Anyone who wishes to interact with people in these different groups, or those who wish to work to end the hostilities, must understand these different motivations.

**Religious Hatred**

One faction of anti-Semites are those who are motivated by their religious beliefs. From its very inception, Islam has had a strong hatred of both Jews and Christians. When Muhammad was beginning his new religion, he tried to gain acceptance from both Jews and Christians, but they rejected him outright. Because of that, an animosity has developed between Jews and Muslims that, in some instances, has actually led to terrorism and war.

But the animosity even predates the beginning of Islam. Both the Jews and Muslims trace their ancestry back to Abraham in the Old Testament. Abraham was the father of both the Jews and the Arabs. Until Muhammad started Islam, the Arabs mostly followed animistic religions and there was not the kind of animosity that exists today. With the advent of Islam and its rejection of Judaism and Christianity, the seeds of hostility were sown.

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From its inception, Islam was an evangelistic religion, and most of its evangelism took place by the sword – convert or else. A lot, though not all, of the people who were conquered were Christians or Jews who outright rejected Islam. The Arab peoples who were conquered were more easily assimilated as their animistic beliefs were not as exclusive.

One other factor that is in play is the admonition in the Koran to overcome those who are considered Kafir. This word is often translated as infidel, but can also mean unbeliever, disbeliever, or atheist. One of the difficulties we run into as we deal with this topic is that different groups of Muslims have different views on how this applies.

What we are seeing play out in the more radical elements of Islam are groups that look at non-Muslims as infidels who must be subdued. Even many of those who might not normally be radicalized, still identify with the Muslim side, and thus with Hamas, in their fight against Israel. The result is, the Muslims who are demonstrating and rioting in various locations around the world are expressing their antisemitism based on religious beliefs.

### **Racist Hatred**

Another faction of anti-Semites are people who are motivated by racial hatred. These people can generally be identified in two different groups.

One group contains the Nazis and Neo-Nazis. Historically, this kind of hatred was demonstrated by the Nazis during WWII. More recently, post WWII Neo-Nazi groups have formed that have continued this legacy. We will not deal with this faction here, as they tend to equally hate both Muslims and Jews, so have not been actively involved in the current anti-Semitic riots and demonstrations that are going on around the world.

The other group is comprised of people who are motivated by Marxist ideology. Not all of these people will self-identify as Marxists, and many may not even realize their beliefs are based on Marxism, but it is, none the same.

The most prominent concept that plays into the current anti-Semitic thinking is the dividing of the world into two classes of people – those who are oppressors vs. those who are the oppressed. In Marxist ideology, the oppressed are always the good guys, and the oppressors are bad. The idea is based on their philosophy of dialectal materialism. This is the belief that there is always an oppressor and an oppressed, and eventually the oppressed rise up to overcome the oppressor, who then, over time, become the new oppressor until they are overcome by a new group of oppressed. This process is understood to end only when society finally evolves to a perfect Communist state where everyone is equal.

Until that perfect human utopia is achieved, one must always side with the oppressed to be morally in the right place. There is, of course, no objective standard for designating groups as one or the other, as no transcendent standard is recognized to exist. The judgment is based purely upon the personal point of view and preferences of those who are making the designation.

We have seen this played out in many different arenas. In the "women's movement" of days gone by, women were designated the oppressed and men the oppressors. There are also various iterations of this in Liberation Theology. In Black Liberation Theology, white people are the oppressors and black people are the oppressed. In Native American Liberation Theology, Native Americans are the oppressed, and non-Native Americans are the oppressors. And there are others. In more recent times, Critical Race Theory has designated all white

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people as oppressors and people of color as the oppressed.

When it comes to the Israel-Hamas war, the Jews are designated as the oppressors and the Gazan Arabs are the oppressed. The reasoning behind this is that the Jews in Israel are in the power position, and are also looked at to be white, while the Gazans are looked at as the weaker side and as having been confined to their little patch of land and oppressed by the Jews. The actual historical situation is not even a consideration.

## What to Know

Our belief, as Christians, is that there are indeed two classes of people, but it is not the oppressed and the oppressor. Rather, it is those who know eternal life in Christ and those who don't. God is no respecter of persons, and views all people equally.

As Christians, one of our chief motivations should be to share Christ with all who don't know Him – this includes the Palestinians and those who support them.

But if we want to be effective in doing that, we must know their motivations and be able to speak to them in terms they will understand – we need to be able to speak their conceptual language. That is, we must learn to speak the truth of the gospel in terms that are understandable to Muslims when we are talking to them, and to atheistic Naturalists when dealing with them.

The key to that is to understand and

master worldview concepts. Worldview is not a theological position, but is a way of understanding how people's beliefs are structured and organized. When we understand these concepts, we know the way other people think about faith matters – which gives us a way to interact with them to more effectively share the gospel message.

You can't approach speaking to an Atheist in the same way you would a Muslim. They would not accept what you are saying, even if they understood you – which they very well may not.

Check out the resources at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org) to start getting a handle on this issue. It will put you in a position to be an increasingly more effective witness for our Lord Jesus Christ.

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