

GNITN

#244

Saturday And Sunday People

Interrupting Christmas Tree Ceremonies

I don't know about you, but it seems like Pro-Hamas, Anti-Christian, and antisemitic protestors are targeting annual Christmas tree lighting ceremonies around America. While these protestors could easily just pick a public place like a park or other venues, why are they singling out places where people traditionally just celebrate Christmas? We saw it on Thanksgiving morning during the Macy's Day Parade this year where families take their children to watch floats and oversized cartoon character balloons, where protestors wore white clothing with fake blood on it and where some of them apparently glued their hands to the street. At another Christmas tree lighting in New York City, in Rockefeller Center Square on November 29th, hundreds of protestors violently protested chanting the phrase "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" which really means the extermination of the nation of Israel. Some protestors made signs with Nazi swastikas on them and comparing Jews to Nazis. If you think this is troubling, you are right. You see, while antisemitism is rising, so are protests of Christian events even if the Biblical connections aren't totally clear.

First The Jews Are Persecuted, Then The Christians: Syria

A brief look at history shows us that when Jewish people are driven out of a country, the Christians are driven out next. In 1947, there were around 15,000 Jews. Today there may only be 4. According to a recent report from *The Syrian Observer* (see <https://syrianobserver.com/news/80226/report-number-of-christians-in-syria-dropped-from-1-5-million-to-300000.html>) the number of Christians in Syria has dropped from 1.5 million to 300,000:

A report published by the Catholic charity, Aid to the Church in Need, revealed that Christians in Syria are suffering more repression and persecution now than when the Islamic State (ISIS) took control of large areas of the country in previous years... According to the report, the number of Christians in Syria has fallen in a decade from one and a half million (10 percent of the population) before 2011 to about 300,000 today (less than 2 percent of the population). Syrian Christians, like other segments of the Syrian people, have been subjected to several violations. The fate of some Christian clerics has been unknown for years, most notably the head of the Syriac Orthodox community, Youhanna Ibrahim, and the head of the Greek Orthodox community, Boulos Yazigi. The Syrian regime is accused of being behind their kidnapping. Christians in Syria have also been subjected to violence and discrimination by ISIS fighters during their control of large areas of the country. Their churches have been converted into military headquarters, and their property confiscated.

According to *Opens Doors Watch List*, Syria is now the 12 worst persecutor of Christians in the world now. First they persecuted the Jews, then they went for the Christians.

First The Jews Are Persecuted, Then The Christians: Iraq

According to an article in *The Washington Standby* by author *Lela Gilbert*, which I will quote from liberally, the same thing that happened in Syria is happening in Iraq. Here is how she describes it:

“Iraq’s Jewish Community Dwindles to Fewer than Five,” [France24](#) reported in 2021. While Iraqi Jews have all but disappeared, Iraq’s Christian community is also dwindling. Iraqi Christians date back to the church’s first centuries. As recently as early 2021, [The Associated Press](#) reported, “Iraq was estimated to have nearly 1.5 million Christians before the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.”

Today, “church officials estimate only a few hundred thousand, or even less, remain within Iraq’s borders.” More recently, violent assaults on clergy and other Christians have become an everyday occurrence, including bombings and church massacres.

Open Doors lists Iraq as the [18th worst persecutor](#) of Christians in the world.

First The Jews Are Persecuted, Then The Christians: Yemen

According to the Israel news site [Haaretz](#), the Jewish population in Yemen dropped from 50,000 to below ten. Gilbert goes on to tell us about the Yemeni Christian persecution since the Jews are pretty much gone there:

Unlike the Jews, Yemen’s Christians have experienced some toleration of their traditional churches. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church continue to exist, despite shrinking memberships. They are far less vulnerable to abuse than Christian converts from Islam.

In Yemen, it is illegal to leave Islam and embrace Christianity, which means that accurate numbers of Yemeni Christians are difficult, if not impossible, to find. A Google search result states that Yemeni believers, “live in fear of persecution or charges of apostasy and so rarely declare their religious identities publicly. Today, the number of Yemeni Christians is estimated to be between 2,000 - 4,000. Until recently, four churches remained in the Aden governorate from the British colonial period.”

Where does Yemen stand on the persecution list: third.

First The Jews Are Persecuted, Then The Christians: Libya, Lebanon

Sadly Jews were able to exist under the reign of Greeks, Romans, the Ottoman Empire, Italians, British, and even Arab rule, but now there are not Jews remaining there. And now Christians are being persecuted and even killed for their faith. Going back to *Gilbert’s* article we read this about Libya and believers:

*As for the safety and security of today’s Libyan Christians? In May 2023, six Libyans were sentenced to death for converting to Christianity. According to *The Guardian*, “The six Libyans have been charged for circulating views that aim to ‘alter fundamental constitutional principles, or the fundamental structures of the social order,’ or overthrow the state...”*

Open Doors explains that if Muslim background Libyans become Christians, “they are likely to face intense pressure and abuse from their family and the wider community to make them renounce their faith, or even be killed. Christians who publicly express their faith and try to share the gospel with others are likely to face arrest or retribution from extremist groups.”

Libya is the fifth worst persecutor of Christians in the world.

And what about Lebanon? Gilbert tells us this:

In 1948, there were 20,000 Jews living in Lebanon; as of 2020, only 29 Jews remained there.

*Brady Knox recently reported in the *Washington Examiner*, “In the mid-20th century, Lebanon was one of the wealthiest and most prosperous countries in the Middle East. Its capital, Beirut,*

was once known as the Paris of the Middle East. It was the only state in the Middle East where Christianity was dominant, at one point making up over 60% of the population.

But today, Lebanon's Christians are persecuted. Knox writes that "the country is in free fall. ... The more powerful and influential Hezbollah becomes in Lebanon, the less safe Lebanese Christians are."

First The Jews Are Persecuted, Then The Christians: America?

I started out talking about the antisemitism levels in the United States and then the incidences of protestors at Christmas events by the same protesting crowds. Are you seeing a trend? I'm sure you'll have to admit that it is there, but the question is why? The philosophy of eradicating Jews and then Christians is actually espoused in a phrase that is seen in graffiti across the globe: *"On Saturday we kill the Jews, on Sunday we kill the Christians."* In a recent video (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRzIADq1eFQ>) by Tony Perkins, Family Research Council's fourth and longest-serving president, Tony interviews Amir Tsarfati and Tsarfati said this:

"In fact, those terrorists always say, 'The Saturday people are first. The Sunday people are next.' They use those terms to identify Jews and Christians. They don't even hide it!"

Is America next? From the same interview, Perkins added this:

When I chaired the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, we were looking at this rise of anti-Semitism in Western Europe. And historically speaking, Israel is the 'canary in the coal mine.'

History gives us example after example as we read from all these sources. We would be naïve to not see this can and will happen in the United States. Going back to Gilbert, who wrote a book titled *"Saturday People, Sunday People"* she sounds the alarm this way:

However, Amir Tsarfati's concerns are particularly focused on the United States. Raging campus protests against Jews, and violent New York opposition to Christian holiday celebrations couldn't illustrate his fears more powerfully.

"Right now, America must wake up!" he told Perkins. "Your southern border is so open, and I can't even imagine how many Hezbollah and Hamas cells are already in your country right now. They're testing you. And look, they've waited and waited and deceived us and the whole world. And then boom, one day they will strike."

Stand for Israel today. Pray for them. Your support for them in the current war is not an option. In God's eyes, and really from histories patterns as well as Biblical admonitions we need to counter the voices cursing Israel.