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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Calm in the Midst of Lawlessness and Deceit

Jonathan Brentner raptureready.com Sept 11

Have you ever experienced a feeling deep inside your soul that something was terribly wrong? That's what I feel at the moment.

Perhaps it's a case of deep sadness as I look at the state of my country and the world. My president abandoned hundreds if not many more of American citizens in Afghanistan. He gave the Taliban a list of the Afghans who helped the U.S. forces while stationed there – a kill list if you will. The Taliban have already begun brutally and sadistically murdering these former allies of America. I shudder to think of the fate of Americans left behind in that nation.

It gets worse. The Biden administration has gifted the Taliban, ISIS, and Al Qaeda with a treasure trove of weapons beyond their wildest dreams. Don't let anyone deceive you; these three groups are interchangeable and fully support each other. These demonic killers will most certainly use these weapons to murder many more innocent civilians and Bible-believing Christians in Afghanistan. How long before they export such terror?

Lara Logan from Sixty Minutes recently stated that everything Biden and his cohorts have told us and continue to tell us about the situation in Afghanistan is a total lie. Back in July, Biden told the president of Afghanistan to deceive the world about the insurgent strength of the Taliban. Biden knew well in advance that his plan would lead to the disaster we saw take place and the horrors that remain for those still there. Everything that happened after that was and is *intentional*.

How do we as redeemed saints avoid anger when we look at the deceit and great lawlessness afoot in our world? I believe the Lord inspired Psalm 37 to calm His followers during times such as this.

Do Not Fret

Psalm 37 tells us not to “fret” (vv. 1, 7-8) at the evil we see all around us. The word in the Hebrew signifies a deeper passion than what one might expect; it depicts a person burning with anger, furious at the evil he or she sees. It accurately depicts how we often react to the out-of-control lawlessness in our world, does it not?

The Lord knew the sight of evil people succeeding in their “wicked devices” would kindle anger inside us (v. 7). At the end of verse 8, He tells us why we must not continue in such a state. “It tends only to evil.”

He also provides us with a reason to remain calm in times such as these; it comes through contemplating the end of those promoting violence and immoral behavior in our world.

In verse 9 of Psalm 37, the Lord tells us that “evildoers will be cut off.” Verses 12-17 assure us that the Lord will judge the wicked and the violent. Those who murder innocent children in the womb, engage in sex trafficking, and promote the myriad of evil and violence we see all around us will surely pay a terrible price, both in the coming Tribulation period and in eternity.

Psalm 94:21-23 adds this about the end of those who “condemn the innocent to death.” In verse 23, the Psalmist writes, “He will bring back on them their iniquity / and wipe them out for their wickedness; / The Lord our God will wipe them out.” Although God does not immediately punish evil, we know that He will certainly do so. That time is ever so close at hand.

The phrase “condemn the innocent to death” literally refers to condemning the shedding of innocent blood, which certainly refers to abortion. Amid the fury of the Biden administration to overturn the Texas prohibition regarding abortion after six weeks, we know that the Lord’s judgment will certainly fall on all those promoting this horrendous murder of the most innocent among us.

Trust, Trust, Trust!

Though the instruction to “trust” the Lord (vv. 3, 5) only occurs twice in Psalm 37, it’s really the theme of the entire Psalm. God remains sovereignly in control of all things; the events of 2021 are working out exactly as God anticipated thousands of years ago. We can have confidence in His plan even though, at the moment, we do not see Him intervening to stop the bloodshed in our world.

The Bible also tells us that those working to create a tyrannical world order will succeed for a while in enslaving all nations under their Marxist state. Although this kingdom will prosper for a short while, Jesus will utterly destroy the Antichrist and his realm at His Second Coming (Daniel 2:44-45; Revelation 18-19).

It’s difficult to wait, which just so happens to be another key theme of Psalm 37.

Wait Patiently

In verse 7, David writes, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him...” We know that God will judge the wickedness of this world, but we do not know when. In the meantime, we wait and seek to put aside our desire that the Lord act now to destroy the wicked.

The realization of the Lord’s patience with me during my life helps me put this into perspective. If He had judged me immediately for my sins, I would no longer be alive, deserving of a fate worse than death. How can I gripe about His longsuffering with the world in light of the steadfast love and mercy he continues to show me every morning of my life? (Lamentations 3:22-24)

Furthermore, as New Testament saints, we are not waiting for God’s wrath to fall upon the world, such as will happen during the seven-year Tribulation. We are waiting for the Lord’s appearing when He will take us to the place that He’s now preparing for us (John 14:1-3).

In Philippians 3:20-21, Paul wrote, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." In the Greek, the word for "wait" denotes an eager anticipation of something.

So many believers today think it's fashionable to ignore the Rapture or even ridicule our hope. However, this confident expectation helps us remain calm as we watch lawlessness and deceit grow exponentially in our world. I'm not sure how I'd cope without this joyous anticipation.

Focus on Your Eternal Inheritance

We have a huge advantage over King David in that we have the New Testament, and with it, many more details of our future in eternity. For the Jews in about 1000 BC, their heritage was the Land, which the Bible says they will fully enjoy during the millennium. I believe this explains the emphasis on the Land as the "heritage" of believers in Psalm 37.

For us, Ephesians 1:11-14 speaks to our inheritance as New Testament saints, which includes our immortal bodies that we receive at the time of the Rapture, our reign with Jesus for a thousand years, and our eternal home in the New Jerusalem with a new earth to forever enjoy. These things make up our inheritance, the paradise Jesus promises to us as New Testament Saints.

If we tend to live with the perspective that this life is all we have (and most believers today have such an earthbound outlook), the violence, wickedness, and grief inherent in his world will either kindle burning rage inside us or cause doubt and despair to grow inside us as we fear what might lie ahead. The only other alternative is to believe the mainstream media lie that "we can do this," that life can and will return to normal someday.

At the moment, lawlessness proceeds unchecked across the world. The most ruthless and demonic killers of our time now have an incredible stash of high-tech weapons. The perilous times in which we live will grow darker in the weeks and months to come (although the Rapture might happen at any moment).

1 Corinthians 15:19 says, "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied." While all those in Christ will agree with the Apostle Paul, most do not live as though his words in this verse are true. They believe in eternal life but place all their hopes in earthly outcomes.

Those with such a perspective often state their faith in spiritual-sounding words that impress many, but they fail to express any hope beyond the grave. Though genuine saints, they walk as though eternity does not exist, which makes them prime candidates for doubt or despair when they watch tragedy unfold in the world or even in their lives.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 sums up the perspective we must have for such a time as this. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

It's when one takes paradise out of eternity that his or her fondest hopes become those with earthly outcomes. Why focus on life ever after if it's not that much different from today?

On the other hand, when we set our fondest hopes on the realization that this vale of tears might end at any moment with the Rapture, we find that an unexplainable hope and calmness invades our hearts.

We know the Lord will deal justly with this world after He takes us to the place that He's preparing for us in His Father's house.

So yes, I feel sad at the great deception and lawlessness overtaking my country. However, there remains a crazy, unexplained peace deep in my soul that soon returns even when I briefly give in to fretting over what I see.

Jonathan Brentner

Israel braces for escalation, with major attack said foiled in recent days

Public security minister warns country in 'a very sensitive situation' and anything could set off the area; police on high alert with 2,000 officers deployed in Jerusalem

Times of Israel

Sept 13



Israeli police officers gather outside the site of a stabbing attack, in Jerusalem on September 13, 2021. (AHMAD GHARABLI / AFP)

Israeli security forces foiled a major attack this week, as Palestinian terror groups sought to step up violence in solidarity with six escaped prisoners, Hebrew media reported Monday.

The Shin Bet security service and police foiled a number of attacks, Channel 12 and 13 reported, without giving details on the major attack prevented. Meanwhile, police were going on high alert, fearing further violence over the Yom Kippur holiday, particularly in Jerusalem.

Channel 13 reported that some 2,000 police would be stationed in the city.

This week saw several stabbing attempts, with both Israel and Palestinian terror groups saying the violence was inspired by the prison escape.

"I don't know if we are on the verge of an escalation," Public Security Minister Omer Barlev told the Kan public broadcaster. "But we are definitely in a very sensitive period — the recent attacks, the escape of the terrorists from the prison and the two who have not yet been caught, alongside our problems with Hamas.

“Any incident could set off the entire area, so we are preparing for an escalation in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and Gaza,” he said, referring to the West Bank by its biblical names. However, Barlev said none of the sides had a real interest in “igniting this barrel of gunpowder.”

Kan also reported that police were concerned that the stabber in Monday’s attack in Jerusalem, a 17-year-old youth from near Hebron in the southern West Bank, may have had accomplices.

The assailant was named in media reports as Basil Shawamra, a resident of the town of Deir al-Asal al-Fauqa. He was hospitalized in serious condition after being shot by a border police officer.

His two victims were hospitalized in moderate conditions, with stab wounds to the upper body.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad also attributed the recent surge in attacks to the prisoners’ escape.

“The escalation of stabbings in occupied Jerusalem, the shootings, the increasing clashes of popular anger in the West Bank and the demonstrations in Gaza, come within the framework of the freedom uprising launched by our Palestinian people in solidarity with the heroic prisoners and confronting the arrogance of the occupation against them,” said Hamas spokesman Abdelatif al-Qanou.

“Sustaining the clash with the Zionist occupation and escalating the pace of operations by various means is the best option to confront the Zionist occupation,” he said, praising Monday’s stabbing attack in Jerusalem.

“Acts of resistance are the legitimate right of the Palestinian people, and we bless and support this jihadist act,” said Islamic Jihad spokesperson Daoud Shehab. Tensions have been running high across the West Bank over the past week, following the dramatic escape of the Palestinian prisoners from the high-security Gilboa Prison last Monday. Four of the six prisoners were recaptured by police over the weekend, but two remain at large, and security officials believe they may be hiding out in the West Bank and receiving assistance from Palestinians there.

Among the Palestinians, the fugitives have been widely hailed as “heroes” who succeeded in freeing themselves from multiple life sentences. In the Gaza Strip as well as in the West Bank, Palestinians organized sit-ins and joyful gatherings to celebrate the prison break. Five of the six are Islamic Jihad members and the sixth is a Fatah terror kingpin; four of the six were serving life terms for murder or attempted murder.

News about the capture of four of the fugitives sparked several violent protests and a flurry of bitter social media posts expressing disappointment and shock.

There has been an increase in the number of violent incidents since the escape.

Monday's attack, during which a suspected terrorist stabbed two people outside the Central Bus Station in Jerusalem before being shot by a police officer, came hours after an attempted attack in the West Bank, in which a Palestinian man tried to stab two IDF soldiers at a hitchhiking station, but was shot before he could inflict harm.

On Sunday, heavy gunfire was heard in the Jenin region in the northern West Bank, as Israeli security forces reportedly came under fire during the manhunt for the remaining two escaped prisoners.

Overnight Sunday, terrorists in the Gaza Strip fired two rockets at Israel, which were intercepted by the Gaza Strip, marking a third consecutive night of rocket fire from Gaza.

Separately, on Friday afternoon, an assailant was shot as he attempted to stab police officers in Jerusalem's Old City, and later died of his wounds, police and hospital officials said.

Remote Work Has Led To Rapid Increase Of Employer Surveillance Programs



As waves of Covid-19 continue to dictate working (or not working) habits for millions of Americans, employers have been turning to digital surveillance platforms to monitor their at-home workers, according to The Guardian.

David, 23, admits that he felt a twinge of relief when the first wave of Covid-19 shut down his Arlington, Virginia, office. A recent college graduate, he was new to the job and struggled to click with his teammates. Maybe, he thought, this would be a nice break from "the

face-to-face stuff": the office politics and small talk. (His name has been changed for this story. "I couldn't have been more wrong," David says. That's because, within their first week of remote work, David and his team were introduced to a digital surveillance platform called Sneek. -The Guardian

Sneek captures live photos of people every minute or so via their laptop webcams - which are then displayed across a wall of a 'digital conference room' that everyone else on the team can see. If caught not working, other workers can forward the offending photos to bosses via Sneak Slack chat. "We know lots of people will find it an invasion of privacy, we 100% get that, and it's not the solution for those folks," said Sneek co-founder Del Currie. "But there's also lots of teams out there who are good friends and want to stay connected when they're working together."

David, however, wasn't having it and quit after less than three weeks on the job thanks to the digital nanny. "I signed up to manage their digital marketing," he said, "not to livestream my living room."

According to the report, such "tattleware" or "bossware" was more or less a niche market pre-covid; however, in March 2020 that all changed - as employers scrambled to implement new rules surrounding the work-from-home movement due to the pandemic. Last April, for example, Google searches for "remote monitoring" rose 212% y/y. By April of this year, queries surged another 243%.

One of the major players in the industry, ActivTrak, reports that during March 2020 alone, the firm scaled up from 50 client companies to 800. Over the course of the pandemic, the company has maintained that growth, today boasting 9,000 customers - or, as it claims, more than 250,000 individual users. Time Doctor, Teramind, and Hubstaff - which, together with ActivTrak, make up the bulk of the market - have all seen similar growth from prospective customers.

These software programs give bosses a mix of options for monitoring workers' online activity and assessing their productivity: from screenshotting employees' screens to logging their keystrokes and tracking their browsing. But in the fast-growing bossware market, each platform potentially brings something new to the table. There's FlexiSpy, which offers call-tapping; Spytech, which is known for mobile device access; and NetVizor, which has a remote takeover feature. -The Guardian

Employers aren't just using tattleware either - and have reportedly been using in-house IT departments to also monitor emails for phrases such as "recruiter," or "salary," in order to sniff out who's looking to make a jump to greener pastures (we would note that spying on employees is hardly a recent phenomenon).

In April, 2020, Zoom quickly canned a short-lived "attention tracking" setting which alerted call hosts if a participant was away from the camera for more than 30 seconds. In December, Microsoft anonymized a "productivity score" feature for its 365 suite which rated workers on various metrics - including email use and how long they've been connected to the network. The tool still exists, users are no longer identified by name.

"There's no real sign of this trend slowing down," says digital researcher and privacy advocate, Juan Carloz, with the University of Melbourne. "No sign of legislative change in any jurisdiction I can name, and no sign of pushback from employees, even when they're aware of it happening."

Does it work?

UCSD professor of management Elizabeth Lyons says it does.

"A study we conducted found people doing data collection work out of the office were more productive when they were made aware they were being monitored, compared to their colleagues who weren't told they were being tracked," said Lyons, who noted that remote employees 'appreciate signals that their performance is integral to the organization.'

That said, Lyons admits that employee morale can take a hit if monitoring is too Orwellian.

"In other studies we've looked at, the workers were essentially saying, 'If the manager is going to watch everything I do, then I'm not going to do anything above and beyond what they expect of me'," she said.

Carloz, meanwhile, expressed concern that the tattleware has created an unfair dynamic in favor of the employer.

"Prior to the pandemic, the line between work and play was clearer - surveillance, in other words, stopped at the door," he said.

But the rise of tattleware changes the game. If an employee uses a spy-enabled, work-sponsored computer outside of hours, their employer could easily access their personal data, down to internet banking passwords and Facebook messages.

Carloz concedes that most employers are probably not interested in collecting their workers' personal information. They want to know what websites employees are on, and what tasks they're dividing their time on, during the workday. However, if a boss does feel like snooping around off-hours, Carloz points out, there are "essentially no legal protections afforded to those employees in most western nations". - Guardian

"But since, rightly or wrongly, surveillance software is being framed as a trade-off for remote work, many are all too content to let it slide," he added.