



חַמָּס
HAMAS

HAMAS is a word that is familiar to people who keep up on the news about current events in Israel. Of all the anti-Israel Muslim terrorist organizations, Hamas is one of the most violent. The Hebrew word hamas, in fact, means “violence.” According to the Gesenius Hebrew lexicon, the Arabic cognate of the Hebrew word hamas means “warlike valour” (noun form) or “to be active, brave, constant” (verb form). I do not know Arabic, but I assume that this Arabic cognate of the Hebrew hamas is the word used by the terrorist group Hamas.

I knew that the Hebrew word hamas meant “violence” before all the recent anti-Israel terrorism. What I did not know was how many times the word hamas appears in the Hebrew Bible, and what the Bible says about the fate of those who carry out hamas/violence against the people of Israel. I recently read through The Twelve Prophets (Hosea through Malachi) in Hebrew, and I was surprised how often I kept running across the word hamas. This piqued my curiosity enough to do a study to find out more about hamas in the Scriptures. I looked at every passage where the word hamas appears (68 times, if my count is accurate). In view of what the Bible says about hamas, I would not want to be in the shoes of a Hamas terrorist.

Before I share some of the things the Bible says about hamas, let me first state that I am not anti-Arab. I am strongly opposed to the use of terrorism by any group, Arabic or non-Arabic, but I have no prejudice against Arabic people as an ethnic group. As a matter of fact, during my seven years of teaching English to foreign students, I often felt a much closer kinship to my Arabic Muslim students than I did to students from other cultures. This was probably due to a few factors. For one thing, my Muslim students took matters of faith seriously. Even though their faith was mis-directed, their interest in spiritual matters gave me some common ground with them. The fact that they are physical descendants of our Father Abraham also made it easier for me to relate to them. I also felt a kinship because their culture has preserved some of the ancient Mid-East customs that were practiced in Biblical times, and I could relate to those customs.

There are many elements in the Arabic culture that I love and admire, but Hamas is not one of them. My prayer for these children of Abraham is that they be delivered from the spirit of Islam which leads them to commit acts of hamas/violence against the children of Israel. According to the Bible, those who practice hamas/violence against the children of Israel will bring the fierce wrath of God down upon themselves.

The first place the word hamas appears in the Bible is in Genesis 6:11 & 13. “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence (hamas) ... And God said unto Noah, ‘The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence (hamas) through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’”

Here in the early chapters of the very first book of the Bible, God makes it clear that the fate of those who practice hamas is destruction. It was hamas that brought the Flood of God’s judgment on the earth. Right now Israel is “filled with Hamas.” It is possible that the entire earth may once again become filled with hamas by the terrorism of Hamas, bringing down world-wide destruction before the Messianic age.

Some theologians believe that the “anointed cherub” in Ezekiel 28 is a reference to Satan. If this view is correct, then according to Ezekiel 28:16, it was hamas in the midst of this cherub that caused the Lord to cast him out of the mountain of God.

The word hamas appears in the Psalms. Prayers are lifted up for deliverance from violent men, men of hamas. The enemies of God’s anointed are described in Psalms as people who “breathe out hamas [cruelty]” (Ps. 27:12). The habitations of hamas are called “the dark places of the earth” (Ps. 74:20). Psalm 11:5 plainly states that God hates those who love hamas: “...the wicked and him that loveth violence (hamas) His soul hateth.”

Two passages of Scripture that should serve as warnings to today’s Hamas terrorists are Obadiah 10 and Joel 3:19. These verses deal specifically with the hamas/violence perpetrated by Edom, another name for Esau, the ancestor of the Arabs, against Jacob and Judah, the ancestors of the Jewish people. According to Obadiah, the children of Edom “shall be cut off forever” because of their violence (hamas) against their brother Jacob. Joel says that “Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence (hamas) against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.”

So fierce is the wrath of God against the descendants of Esau who practice hamas that one of the commandments of

the Torah says, “Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek [grandson of Esau, and another ancestor of the Arabs] from under heaven” (Deut. 25:19). The Hertz Commentary makes a remark about this verse that is worth considering in view of today’s Hamas terrorism against Jews in Israel: “A people so devoid of natural religion as to kill non-combatants had forfeited all claim to mercy” (p. 856).

Eventually Israel’s prayers for deliverance from Hamas will be answered. Isaiah’s description of the Messianic Kingdom includes this promise: “Violence (Hamas) shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise” (Isa. 60:18). May the Lord speedily deliver Israel from the Hamas of Hamas. Amen. □

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