

I. EVERY TEACHER NEEDS A TEACHER. HERE IS ONE OF MINE.

Reflections on the Violence in Gaza and Biblical Interpretation

Let me begin by stating the obvious, the conflict on the Gaza Strip is mind-blowing in its magnitude. The scope of history and its origins, the intricacies and complexities of actions and reactions, the horrific and incalculable losses, and the global impact of this conflict are staggering. Many of us have witnessed the recent events in stunned silence not knowing what to say or where to begin. Others have jumped into the fray, only to add chaos by spouting ignorance and committing textual homicide through their (mis)reading and/or (mis)interpretation of Scripture. And while I recognize the limits of my understanding and education as it relates to the political, social, economic, and religious dimensions that affect the lives of the people who live in that region, I do know something about the Bible and biblical interpretation and that is what I would like to offer. Here are 5 things (along with a couple of references) that I think people of faith, specifically those of us who preach the gospel of and/or follow Jesus the Christ, a Palestinian Jew.

1. Who is God?

Beneath (or right on the surface) have been appeals and/or allusions to the book of Exodus, specifically the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and their conquest of the "Promised Land." Many groups have used this story as paradigmatic for their understanding of who God is and what God wills for them. In "**Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians,**" **Robert Allen**

Warrior ([canaanites cowboys and indians.pdf](#)) identifies two primary images of God that emerge: YHWH the Deliverer and YHWH the Conqueror. Enslaved Africans understood God to be their deliverer and believed that this God who set the Israelites free, would do the same for them. European settlers understood God as a conqueror and themselves as heirs to the same promise of land given to ancient Israelites. Thus, the slaughter of indigenous people in Americas was tantamount to the slaughter of "Canaanites" and "Amalekites."

Warrior writes:

As long as people believe in the Yahweh of deliverance, the world will not be safe from Yahweh the conqueror. But perhaps, if they are true to their struggle, people will be able to achieve what Yahweh's chosen people in the past have not: a society of people delivered from oppression, who are not so afraid of becoming victims again that they become oppressors themselves, a society, where the original inhabitants can become

