

From Our Pastor

April 14, 2018

Hearty Sabbath greetings to everyone!

The March of Living takes place each year on Holocaust Remembrance Day, a national day of commemorating the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. Participants from all over the world join in the 3-kilometer walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau. The March of the Living has completed 29 marches since its founding and has included more than 260,000 participants from 52 states and countries.

Holocaust Remembrance Day begins at sunset on the 27th of the month of Nisan and ends the following evening in accordance with Jewish calendar. The March of Living 2018 walk took place last Thursday as part of Holocaust Remembrance Day. Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, led a delegation of UN envoys on a tour of historic synagogues and institutions in the old Jewish quarter of Krakow. The delegation, which includes ambassadors from Europe, Latin America and Africa, was also scheduled to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps in Poland.

Auschwitz is known as the largest work and extermination camp operated by the Nazis from 1940-1945. Located near the Polish town of Oświęcim, Auschwitz at its peak in 1944 covered 40 square kilometers and was connected to about 40 sub camps. While the main camp at Auschwitz was officially listed as a "work camp," prisoners were denied food and other basics of life so died by the thousands. Birkenau was an extermination camp where Jews and others were sent to be immediately murdered. The real numbers of victims will never be known, but most historians agree that over 2 million innocent men, women, and children were put to death at Auschwitz.

Horrific as it was, are we now slowly forgetting this blackness in history? On Remembrance Day The Jerusalem Post reported the results of a comprehensive national survey of Holocaust awareness and knowledge among US adults. It revealed that forty-one percent of Americans don't know what Auschwitz was, and found that there are critical gaps in Americans' awareness of basic facts and knowledge of the Holocaust. The awareness and knowledge deteriorate in the younger generations. JP stated, "Two-thirds of Millennials interviewed, between the ages of 18 and 34, could not identify what Auschwitz is. The study found that 11% of US adults and over one-fifth of Millennials (22%) hadn't heard, or were not sure if they had heard, of the Holocaust.

While approximately six million Jews were exterminated in the Holocaust, nearly one-third of all Americans (31%) and over four in every 10 Millennials (41%) believed that two million Jews or less were killed during the Holocaust. Almost half of US adults (45%) and Millennials (49%) could not name one of the over 40,000 concentration camps and ghettos in Europe during the Holocaust."

Perhaps the most startling finding was the growing apathy. "A significant majority, 70%, of American adults, believed that, today, fewer people care about the Holocaust, and

more than half of Americans, 58%, believed that "something like the Holocaust could happen again."

The observation that it could happen again is perhaps as prescient as it is alarming. While we should be teaching the younger generations to be doing everything possible to assure that mass murder and attempts to exterminate a class of people never happen again, it appears that apathy may be preparing the way for another holocaust.

The next holocaust, when it comes, will likely not be just against people descended from one of Jacob's sons named Judah. It will include many more peoples and nations. Speaking of the time just before the Day of the Lord, the prophet Jeremiah said, " Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. ...that day is great, there is none like it....It is the time of Jacob's trouble.'" (Jeremiah 30: 4-7)

Israel had twelve sons, so Judah had eleven brothers. The millions of descendants of those brothers have, almost completely, lost the knowledge of their identity. While there is ample record in the written history of England that the English speaking peoples are descended from Joseph, very few even publish that knowledge today. But it is vital knowledge if those nations are going to repent and turn back to God before the prophesied punishment comes.

The March of the Living should not only remind us of the horrors of the last century, but also stir us to turn our hearts to the true God so that another horror for mankind can be prevented in the future.

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