

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

August 2014

## The Body of Christ is in Pain

by: Chris Johnson



Sometimes when I find a Psalm I'm honestly shocked at the tone with which the author addresses God Himself.

Take this example from Psalm 44, for example:

**11 *You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations.***

**12 *You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them...***

**17 *All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten you, and we have not been false to your covenant.***

**18 *Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way;***

**19 *yet you have broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death.***

How does the Psalmist dare to speak to God like that? Does he really think that Israel has lived up to God's law? How does he dare to question the Justice of God? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

Yet, God included this heart cry - which almost seems to smack of disrespect - in His Word to us, verifying that we do have the right to express our deepest, ugliest doubts to Him.

Still this Psalm doesn't quite fit our situation. We aren't being slaughtered or scattered here in the United States and so this passage just doesn't mean as much to us as it did to Christians in a different time and place - or at least in a different place.

This is a Psalm that I would imagine is very near to the heart of Iraqi Christians in Mosul - Iraq's second largest city now under

control of ISIS, the army of Islamic extremists that has been ravaging Iraq.

According to a recent Christian Post article, "ISIS gave Christians until noon Saturday to choose between the three options. 'After this date, read the ISIS declaration, 'the only thing between us and them is the sword.' The New York Times reports that, while a few Christians may remain in hiding after this weekend, Mosul's once diverse Christian community has likely come to a 'real end.'

The \$250 poll tax ISIS imposed, prohibitively expensive for many Christians, sent more than 200 families fleeing Mosul even as ISIS militants confiscated their belongings, including cars, money, medicine, and food. Some journeyed 42 miles to Kurdish Tel Afar on foot, reports the Assyrian International News Agency (AINA), while some of the families went to Kurdish-held Irbil, or Dohuk, which is 87

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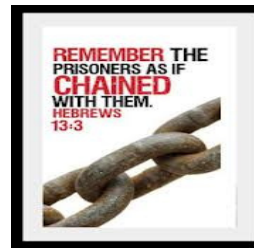
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HOW CAN WE REMAIN SILENT WHILE  
**CHRISTIANS ARE  
BEING PERSECUTED?**

[Continued from page 1]

*miles north of Mosul, reports CNN.*

Other reports have noted that even as the Christians are fleeing Mosul, ISIS terrorists are robbing them of the few possessions they could carry with them.

***“This is truly a living nightmare that’s not going away,” stated a spokesman for the group, Ending Genocide in Iraq. “Day-by-day, it’s getting worse and worse. More children are being beheaded; mothers are being raped and killed; fathers are being hung. Right now, 300,000 Christians are fleeing ...***

***The world hasn’t seen an evil like this for generations.”***

Atrocities are being committed against our brothers and sisters, and all we can do about it is pray.

That is to say, all we can

do about it is to speak to the God who created and sustains the universe. All we can do about it is to bend the ear of He who singlehandedly drowned the greatest army on earth to protect His people in Exodus, or who again dealt with the pinnacle of military might with a sickness when Israel was ruled by Hezekiah. All we can do is to commit our persecuted brethren to the God which Psalm 46 describes,

*“He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.*

*‘Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!’*

*The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. “*

Here in the safety of the United States, we may find it easy to forget and hard to imagine that people actually suffer for their faith in Christ, but Hebrews 13:3 demands that we, ***“Remember... those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.”***

It is interesting that the author of Hebrews uses that argument to convince us to pray - “since you also are in the body.” It is one thing to read horror stories of persecution and shudder at what some far away strangers are going through, but it is another thing to feel the pain of our brothers and sisters in the way that the whole body feels pain when you bash your toe on the door jam.

When pain like that happens, the body’s natural response is for the eyes to look at it and the hands to reach for it and the mouth to curse for it; you don’t just keep walking and go make yourself a sandwich.

**The body of Christ is in pain; are we doing what we are called to do to comfort it?**

***Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.***  
**Hebrews 13:3**

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