Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

**Title**: Happy Are You, O Israel

**Text**: Leviticus 9; 10:1-11; Revelation 20:9; Deuteronomy 33:26-29; 1 Samuel 1; 15:22, 23

**Use**: July 30, 2011

The people of Norway are not very happy this week. Not since World War II have they experienced such devastating violence in their peaceful country.

“The 2011 Norway attacks were a series of twin terrorist attacks against the civilian population, the government and a political summer camp in Norway on Friday, 22 July 2011. The first was a bomb explosion in Regjeringskvartalet, the executive government quarter of Oslo, at 15:22 (CEST), outside the office of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and other government buildings. The explosion killed eight people and wounded several others. The second attack occurred less than two hours later at a youth camp organized by the youth organization (AUF) of the Norwegian Labour Party (AP) on the island of Utøya in Tyrifjorden, Buskerud. A gunman disguised as a policeman opened fire at the campers, killing 68 attendees, including personal friends of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and the stepbrother of Norway's crown princess Mette-Marit, in what is believed to be the deadliest mass shooting by a single gunman in history.”^1

A 32-year-old man, Anders Behring Breivik, was arrested and charged with both the mass shootings and the bombing. Breivik sees himself as a crusader for anti-immigration and anti-cultural movements to protect his country against the “infiltration of Muslims”. Many refer to him as a right-wing-extremist and an Islamophobe. Discussions and political rhetoric about immigration are nothing new in many Scandinavian countries. Public anxiety over mass immigrations have given some parties traction to speak out, but many are back-peddling and distancing themselves from Breivik. It’s a difficult line for politicians to walk—speaking out against Muslims but not wanting to encourage violence. Breivik’s anti-Muslim views led him to call the attacks “atrocious” but “necessary” against liberal immigration policies and the spread of Islam. Rather than seeking to avoid the public, Breivik wants an open court hearing.

This week’s Sabbath school lesson discusses God’s clear guidelines for worship along with a couple of stories of those who failed to follow those perimeters. The first is about Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, offering “unauthorized fire” before the Lord. They lost their lives as an example of doing worship “their own way.” It appears the text points to alcohol as a contributing factor. Saul also disobeyed God’s commands to completely destroy the Amalekites and exhibited one of the greatest examples of “blame and avoidance” in attempting to excuse his actions with Samuel.

“I will do it my way.” It’s a dangerous path to take. Cain took this pathway and it led to murder. Anders Behring Breivik insisted that his brutal murdering was “atrocious, but necessary.” That’s where self-centered worship leads.

^1 Wikipedia

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Thanks so much,

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