READING THE BIBLE CAREFULLY

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Category: Politics

> *It is time that we read our Bibles more and read them more carefully. Perhaps we could try and get some serious help in thinking about the circumstances of those to whom the Biblical messages were addressed, the people of the Bible. They were people who lived in a country which was always liable to invasion by ruthless and powerful enemies.(The history of Israel might be better compared to that of Poland in modern times rather than that of Britain or the United States.) They were people in exile ('By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept.'). They were living in a countryside by side with a permanent occupying force as was true in Jesus' day. They belonged to a 'minority religious group' like the Christians in the Roman Empire. There is hardly a book in the Bible which is not coloured by these massive political realities. Some like Daniel and the book of Revelation were written precisely to confront them. So how do we read the Bible? As if it had nothing to say about invasion, exile, occupation and resistance, about injustice and the abuse of power. Even more worryingly, what if we can see no connection between the Bible and the arms industry, Third World poverty and debt, neo-colonialism, and the plight of refugees. What if we could not even see the imperialistic forces of today despite the fact that the Bible provides a magnifying glass which displays, even to the partially sighted, the text of the Domination System.*

From Beyond Empire: Postcolonialism & Mission in a Global Context by Jonathan Ingleby (p. 231)