

PRAYER: Waging Spiritual Warfare Over Israel

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Iran has publicly declared its intent to wipe Israel off the map. Universities, church pension funds and major corporations are divesting rather than investing in Israel. The rise of international anti-Semitism—whether from Islamists or extreme leftists and rightists—reveals dark angelic powers are catalyzing concerted attacks to destroy God’s chosen people. At the same time, the ongoing restoration process of the Jewish people to their homeland is a clear end-times marker.

These are a few of the reasons Psalm 122:6 commands us to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Indeed, if there were ever a time to pray for the peace of Jerusalem—to cry out for the nation of Israel—the time is now. Israel is the apple of God’s eye (Zech. 2:8). God blesses those who bless Israel (Gen. 12:2-3). Jesus Himself wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). And a growing number of intercessors are weeping over the Holy Land in these last days.

“Israel’s enemies are trying to force it to give up land. According to Joel 3:2, this single sin will usher in judgment on the nations,” says Sid Roth, a former account executive for Merrill Lynch who was raised in a Jewish home before accepting Messiah, and host of *It’s Supernatural*. “Simultaneously, God is about to pour out His Spirit worldwide. The devil wants to abort this great harvest by releasing judgment on the nations too early!”

Exploring the End-Times Connection

Avner Boskey, an Israeli Messianic writer, teacher and theologian, makes a clear end-times connection between the return of our Messiah and the Jewish people.

“The majority of major eschatological events in the Bible are connected to the Jewish people: the Second Coming revealed in Matthew 23:37-39; the restoration of all things and the times of refreshing referenced in Acts 3:19-21; much greater riches for the Gentiles from Romans 11:12 and world revival mentioned in Romans 11:15—a strategic prayer priority as well as a matter very close to God’s own heart,” says Boskey, executive director of Final Frontier Ministries in Israel and author of *Israel: The Key to World Revival*.

Human rights lawyer Irwin Cotler told the Israeli Knesset, the legislative branch of the Israeli government, that Jewish people are experiencing a “new, escalating, global, sophisticated, virulent and even lethal anti-Semitism” that discriminates against and assaults Israel’s right to “live as an equal member of the family of nations, in fact, the right even to live.”

Some theologians point to the rise of anti-Semitism as the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy about the end times:

“And at that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who shall be found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, but others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who turn the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:1-3).

Jewish scholars believe this “time of trouble” is a last-days oppression of Israel by Ishmael’s descendants (read: the Arab

terrorist attacks against the nation of Israel). *The Telegraph* highlighted what few in secular media are willing to admit with a headline, “Why is the world ignoring a wave of terror in Israel?” and concluded, “Such acts of pitiless slaughter are the direct result of a pervasive Palestinian infrastructure.”

“Anti-Semitism will continue to rise, based on the principle, ‘Whatever God chooses to love, Satan chooses to hate,’” Boskey says. “Revelation 12:1, 13 reveals that Satan’s Last Days strategies—like in Moses’ day in Exodus 1:16-22—involves a targeted genocidal attack against the sons and daughters of Jacob. Hitler’s murderous exploits are a precursor to where current events are leading. Surveys and analyses of anti-Semitic attacks across the world show a verifiable increase in such activity. Europe still leads the pack in this regard.”

Robert Stearns, founder and executive director of Eagles’ Wings—a movement of churches, ministries and leaders—also sees anti-Semitism on the rise at college campuses, in political spheres, in the streets of American cities—and even in our churches.

“We are living in an hour of ideological warfare against the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and against His people, and a pervasiveness of a volatile hatred toward the Jews that can no longer be ignored,” Stearns says. “For Christians, our ability to speak accurately to the issues of our day will be connected to how we respond to matters surrounding the Jewish people.”

Why More Christians Don’t Pray

With so much turmoil in our own nation, most Americans are not praying for the peace of Jerusalem. Even many Christians are not interceding for God’s chosen people. Roth points out the blessings of praying for Israel. Genesis 12:3 promises blessings in all areas of life.

“God promises in Psalm 122:6, if we pray for the peace of

Jerusalem, we will prosper,” Roth says. “The word ‘prosper’ in Hebrew means something money can’t buy. It means ‘heart peace.’ When you pray for the peace of Jerusalem, you are praying for the salvation of Jews and Arabs. It’s not an accident that the letters USA are in the center of the name Jerusalem. As long as we are a friend of Israel, the USA will be blessed.”

Stearns points to tradition and formalism in the Western church as two reasons more Christians don’t commit to standing in the gap for Israel. He also blames biblical illiteracy and a media that propagates social viewpoints promoting anti-Semitism.

“The issue of Israel in particular carries with it an especially pronounced vulnerability to misinterpretation, which I believe is connected also to the spiritual battle that is being fought against Israel and the Jewish people since the days of the Old Testament,” Stearns says. “That’s evidenced by such biblical accounts as Haman’s evil plots in the days of Esther.”

Releasing Intercession for Israel

So how, then, do we make intercession for Israel? Where do we start? Boskey suggests a three-point prayer request list: (1) physical protection and restoration to the land in light of the rise of anti-Semitism; (2) spiritual revelation among Jewish people about Messiah Yeshua as per Zechariah 12:10; and (3) the Jewish people to enter fully into their prophetic calling as a light and servant to the nations (Is. 49:5-6; Acts 13:47) and a mighty end-times Spirit-filled army (Ezek. 37:9-11; Zech. 12:1-9; Ps. 110:1-3).

“We also must pray against distortion in the media, against radical Islam and jihad, and against anti-Semitism not only in Israel but around the world,” Stearns says. “Lastly, we must pray diligently for the peace of Jerusalem. By praying

faithfully for Israel, we also receive understanding and insights into what God is doing in the world today, so that we can serve God's purposes with clarity and courage."

Despite the horrific terror attacks—and despite the reality that Israel is surrounded by enemies—Roth is convinced that God is about to pour out His Spirit on Israel.

"Pray that many Israelis are saved and discipled," Roth says. "The Jew was called by God to evangelize the world. Watch what happens when Jews are red-hot for Jesus and start evangelizing the nations one more time!"

Jennifer LeClaire was senior editor of Charisma magazine, is director of the Awakening House of Prayer and author of The Next Great Move of God. Visit her online at . Her new book, Vindicated: Keys to Seeing God's Justice in Every Area of Your Life, releases in October, and is available now for pre-sale on .