

Jentezen Franklin: The Biblical Significance of Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's Capital

On Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2017, there was a significant spiritual shift in the universe as the US President Donald Trump reaffirmed and formally declared that the U.S. will recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This is the first and most necessary step toward another major milestone, moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

While it has been the practice of some to insist on international determination over this topic, it is Israel's right to decide the location of her capital as was spiritually declared by King David and then legally documented in 1950 when the Israeli Knesset passed the Jerusalem Law, and declared Jerusalem to be the eternal, undivided capital of the state of Israel. Declaring Jerusalem to be Israel's capital would not itself mark a change in American law. In 1995, Democrat President Bill Clinton signed a statute declaring, "Since 1950, the city of Jerusalem has been the capital of the state of Israel."

Naming the city of Jerusalem the capital of Israel is not just a political right of Israel, it is also of great theological importance to Christians world-wide, and certainly to the churches I pastor. Christianity begins in Jerusalem serving as the context for Jesus' life and earthly ministry. Jerusalem is the city where Jesus was crucified on a cross, laid in a tomb, rose from the grave and showed Himself to many others over a 40-day period. It is the city where many believe Abraham brought Isaac up Mt. Moriah and passed God's test of faith and the city where King Solomon built the magnificent temple,

declaring it a house of prayer for all nations. It is also the city Isaiah envisioned as the world's center where the nations would beat their swords into plowshares and learn war no more. It is the city where Jesus wept.

The significance of Jerusalem to Christians, however, cannot be separated from the significance of Jerusalem to the Jewish people. Their history is our history. We are intertwined through our Old Testament Scriptures and spiritual legacy. Their biblical examples are our biblical examples and we share this heritage in Jerusalem as our spiritual capital while Israel also legally proclaims it as her national capital. Their national history has become our spiritual history.

We pray for the peace of Jerusalem, as Scripture implores us to do, and we trust her peace and prosperity, not to man-made institutions and international efforts, but to the God of all Peace, and to the greatest Jew to have ever lived, Jesus Christ.

There is a strong possibility that many in our congregations will have seen this story as breaking news and be left to themselves to try to understand what it means to the evangelical church. Below is a brief, easy to understand fact sheet that you can use to help your congregation understand the significance of this major announcement.

Naming Jerusalem the Capital of Israel Fact Sheet:

Historical Significance:

- The history of Israel dates back to Genesis and the story of Abram who would become Abraham.
- Abraham was promised a land by God (the promised land), and that land was Canaan and would later become Israel (Genesis 12—fulfilled when descendant Joshua takes the land in Joshua 6 when the walls come down).
- David declared Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel (City of David- 2 Sam. 5).

Political Significance:

- Legally documented in 1950, the Jerusalem Law was passed by the Israel Knesset, declaring Jerusalem to be the eternal, undivided capital of the state of Israel.
- In 1995, Democrat President Bill Clinton signed a statute stating, "Since 1950, the city of Jerusalem has been the capital of the state of Israel."

Theological Importance:

- Christianity begins in Jerusalem serving as the context for Jesus' life and earthly ministry
- The city where Jesus was crucified on a cross
- The city where He was laid in a tomb
- The city where He rose from the grave
- The city where He showed Himself to many others over a forty-day period
- The city where many believe Abraham brought Isaac up Mt. Moriah and passed God's test of faith
- The city where King Solomon built the magnificent Temple, declaring it a house of prayer for all nations
- The city Isaiah envisioned as the world's center where the nations would beat their swords into plowshares, and learn war no more
- The city where Jesus wept

Shared Significance with Orthodox Jews:

- The significance of Jerusalem to Christians cannot be separated from the significance of Jerusalem to the Jewish people
- Their history is our history
- We are intertwined through our Old Testament scriptures and spiritual legacy. Their biblical examples are our biblical examples and we share this heritage in Jerusalem as our spiritual capital while Israel also

legally proclaims it as her national capital. Their national history has become our spiritual history

Final Thoughts

Naming the city of Jerusalem the capital of Israel is not just a political right of Israel, it is the right of all nations. It is also of great theological importance to Christians world-wide, and certainly to the churches I pastor. Please join me in praying for the peace of Jerusalem, as Scripture implores us to do, and we trust her peace and prosperity, not to man-made institutions and international efforts, but to the God of all Peace, and to the greatest Jew to have ever lived, Jesus Christ. {eo}

Jentezen Franklin is the senior pastor of Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia, with five campuses nationwide. He is the author of New York Times best-sellers Right People, Right Place, Right Plan and Fasting. His ministry extends internationally through the televised broadcast, Kingdom Connection, which is seen on multiple television networks