

Why Some Evangelicals Don't Support Trump's Jerusalem Decision

In his book *Trump Aftershock*, best-selling author Stephen E. Strang discusses the shockwaves that spread across the globe after President Trump stated that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel.

When he announced that the U.S. Embassy would relocate to Jerusalem, Trump set himself apart from his predecessors. Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama all delayed this move. Although Trump also signed waivers, he eventually relented with the statement:

"While previous presidents have made this a major campaign promise, they failed to deliver. Today, I am delivering. I've judged this course of action to be in the best interests of the United States of America and the pursuit of peace between Israel and the Palestinians. This is a long-overdue step to advance the peace process and to work towards a lasting agreement."

According to a poll by the Brookings Institution, 53 percent of American evangelicals supported the president's decision.

"It would be hard to say who was more ecstatic, the Israelis who had long hoped for America to take this monumental action or evangelicals and Christian Zionists for whom this was a top priority," Strang writes.

However, despite the majority, there are still groups that are critical of the move. Left-leaning evangelicals advocate for a two-state solution. Others believe the move will inflame tensions in the region and undo decades of U.S. foreign policy that aimed to secure peace.

But it's not just about political bias that divides American evangelicals. It's also about Bible bias. And the debate boils down to one question: Who is Israel?

For pro-Israel evangelicals, the answer is simple: Israel.

"Hard-line conservatives and evangelical Christian Zionists believe God gave the land to the Jews, and that's the end of the equation," Strang writes.

In the Bible, God blesses the nation of Israel when he addresses Abraham:

"I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless them who bless you and curse him who curses you, and in you all families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

God made a covenant promise to Abraham that is referenced many times throughout Scripture. There is also passionate encouragement in the Bible to pray for Jerusalem.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!' For my brothers and companions' sake, I will now say, 'Peace be within you.' Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good" (Ps. 122:6-9).

But for Christians who do not ascribe value to the Jewish State, their answer is that Israel is Jesus.

Since the Messiah fulfilled all that the nation could not—such as, God's law—He then becomes the means that Christians experience the blessings and promises of God. Through Jesus, all are made heirs to the covenant promise God made to Abraham (Gal. 3:29). While majority of evangelical Christians agree with this, there is still disagreement over how this applies to today.

Does being "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28) mean that the

promises made to Abraham need not apply to the modern Israeli state?

For Strang, the dismissal of Israel as important “misrepresents the reality of the Middle East today.” He writes in *Trump Aftershock*, “The doctrine may have made some sense before the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, but it is clearly incompatible with Scripture.”

Needless to say, now that Jerusalem has been recognized as Israel’s capital, evangelicals are in hot debate as to how the Bible should inform their responses. With the move continuing to expose theological clashes, one thing is for certain: support for Israel is not just about politics. It’s about the Bible. {eo}

*This article is based on Trump Aftershock (Frontline, 2018) by **Stephen E. Strang**. Strang is the best-selling author of God and Donald Trump, which was brandished by the president during his appearance at Davos World Economic Forum in 2017. The CEO and founder of Charisma Media, Strang was voted by Time magazine as one of the most influential evangelicals in America. He has traveled to more than 50 countries, interviewed four U.S. presidents and has been featured on Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, CBN, Family Talk With Dr. Dobson and The .*