

Former US Ambassador to Israel Shares Spiritual Journey of Rediscovering Biblical Landmarks

In an exclusive interview with Charisma News, David Friedman, former US ambassador to Israel during the Trump administration, unveiled his personal journey of breaking through diplomatic norms to connect with the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria.

Friedman's insights resonate deeply with Christian supporters of Israel who view the Jewish people as God's chosen nation.

Friedman, who took office as US ambassador in early 2017, was the first diplomat appointed during the Trump administration. Reflecting on his tenure, he revealed his initial shock upon discovering a State Department rule that prohibited US ambassadors to Israel from visiting places in Judea and Samaria—territories often referred to as the West Bank.

In an emotional account, Friedman highlighted the significance of these areas, which hold deep spiritual importance to both Jews and Christians alike. With more than 500,000 Israeli citizens living there, he emphasized their vital role in the modern state of Israel. Additionally, Friedman expressed his dismay that these biblical sites, rich with history and faith, were being overlooked by many.

"This is some of the most biblically significant territory in all of Israel," says Friedman. "Places that you and I have studied and learned about since the days we began our Bible education. Maybe even more importantly, it is a place values brought our country to life, where they came from. Where the great messages, the great thoughts, the great prayers came

from.”

One of Friedman’s most striking revelations is his decision to challenge the State Department’s rule and personally visit these sacred lands. Undeterred by potential obstacles, he recounted his determination to break free from bureaucratic restrictions, allowing him to personally experience the inspiration these places hold. He referred to his visit to Bethel, where the story of Jacob’s Ladder unfolded, as a poignant example of the spiritual depth found in the heart of Israel.

Friedman’s passion for fostering a deeper understanding between the Jewish and Christian communities fueled his ambition to create lasting change. Over his four years of service in Israel, he grew increasingly convinced that experiencing these sacred places was crucial to promoting understanding and unity.

“People that have been [to Israel] to Tel Aviv into Haifa, which are great places and important places to visit, haven’t been to Shiloh Bethel, Bethlehem, Hebron, Rachel’s Tomb,” explains Friedman.

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“They just haven’t been there, and they haven’t been able to make the essential connection between these places and the incredible biblical heroes who lived their lives there.”

To achieve this goal, Friedman collaborated with TBN and his friend Matt Crouch to produce a documentary. The documentary would feature a route stretching from Nazareth to Beersheba, encompassing the core biblical landmarks that hold immense spiritual significance. Joined by former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the documentary aimed to bridge the gap between the Jewish and Christian perspectives on these sacred sites.

The collaboration was met with enthusiasm, and the result is a breathtaking and thought-provoking documentary that showcases the beauty and spiritual resonance of these often-neglected areas. Friedman commended TBN's commitment to the project, highlighting the extraordinary resources dedicated to capturing the awe-inspiring landscapes and the essence of the biblical heroes who once walked those paths.

"We had a film crew at every place. We had five or six cameras on every shot. The scenery is breathtaking, and that's how this came about," says Friedman.

Friedman's account also touched on the personal impact these visits had on him, including a moving connection to Rachel's Tomb. He shared the story of his granddaughter's birth, which coincided with the observance of the day Rachel passed away, a poignant moment of joy amidst the tomb's history of tragedy. He also recounted the heart-wrenching tale of a bride-to-be whose life was cut short by a suicide bombing, leading her family to drape Rachel's Tomb with her unworn wedding dress as a tribute.

"It's a wedding that never happened," Friedman soberly recounted. "My cousin's fiancé, the night before her wedding, was sitting with her at a café in Jerusalem. [A] suicide bomber blew up and killed everybody inside, including the bride and her father. ...The family decided that they would use her wedding dress that was never worn, and make it the curtain over Rachel's Tomb, it continues to sit there to this day."

In sharing his experiences, Friedman underscored the importance of building a connection between the biblical heritage of these lands and the hearts of those who hold faith in high regard. His journey offers Christian supporters of Israel a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of the land and its spiritual significance, fostering greater unity and appreciation between these communities. {eoa}

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