

James Goll: Why Should I Be a Watchman for Israel?

As followers of Jesus Christ, we serve as watchmen for the people of God, whoever they may be—even the ones who do not yet identify themselves as the people of God. God asks volunteer watchmen like you and me to shoulder a burden for the Jewish people and for all of the descendants of Abraham.

God's plan is to bring Jews alongside Gentiles (non-Jews) into full saving knowledge of Christ. He wants to win over Jews, Arabs, Chaldeans and all residents of the Middle East to His Son. The day will come—and we have a key part in hastening it—when “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas” (Hab. 2:14).

A Call to Intercede

Did you know that Jerusalem is the *only* city named in the Bible that we are supposed to pray for? It is true.

“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).

For decades, I have been heavily involved in prayer for Israel and the Jewish people. Millennia of history, biblical prophecies fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled, historical conflicts between people groups in the Middle East that continue to boil over to this day. . .

Above, I quoted from Psalm 122 because I believe those words capture the heart of God toward the Jewish people (whom He called “the apple of His eye” in Zech. 2:8), as well as toward Jerusalem, the beleaguered capital city of the nation of

Israel. It may be hard to believe, but God wants peace to prevail in that beautiful and battle-weary city.

Jerusalem and the nation of Israel are like God's ticking clock; we can set our watchmen's timers by what we observe there. What is God doing with His people now? Why has this latest conflict erupted? Is nobody safe? Who can discern the right path? How can we pray as we watch?

Discerning the Times

As watchmen-intercessors, we must dedicate ourselves to seeking God's heart and mind so that we can pray according to His will. We do not hide our heads in the sand and ignore the troubling issues of the times we live in.

In the Old Testament we read about the sons of Issachar, who were "men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (1 Chr. 12:32b, NASB). The sons of Issachar have come to represent all people who seek to discern the times they live in and who make their decisions based on the discerning wisdom God gives them.

When praying for the Jewish people, we must understand what God is saying from three perspectives:

–His promise to save all of Israel and bring it into His fullness (see Zech. 12:10-11; , 15, 26).

–The fact that the Jewish people have a temporary "spirit of blindness" regarding Jesus as the Messiah (see -15, Rom. 11:7-10, 25-28).

–The promise that this spirit of blindness will be removed when "the fullness of the Gentiles" occurs (see Luke 21:24, Rom. 11:25-26).

The Jewish people will be won over by the love of the Gentile church (see Matt. 25:40). Because we "wild olives" have been grafted into the original tree, we have no excuse for

arrogance (see Rom. 11:17-22).

Now Satan is not ignorant of this plan; it has been announced by prophets and proclaimed in public places for millennia. Thus he stirs up anti-Semitism and causes destruction. The enemy figures that if he can eliminate the people of Israel from the face of the earth, he will win.

As watchmen, we must be careful not to take all of our cues from the daily news or from political sources. The ever-shifting situation mirrors the malicious advances of Satan's unseen forces. In the midst of the confusion, only watchmen with spiritual discernment can see well enough in the dark to sound the right alarm at the correct time.

The Church as Watchmen

The apostle Paul (Jewish from birth) wrote to the Roman church (which was almost entirely Gentile) to explain much of God's plan for the people of Israel. He wanted them (and us) to know that, even though the Jewish people have refused to acknowledge one of their own, Jesus, as the Son of God and Messiah, there is still hope—and it lies with the Gentiles. As he explained, evidently the Jewish Messiah embraced the Gentiles in part to make the Jews "jealous" (see Rom. 11:11, MEV). The Gentiles, who have been "grafted" into God's family tree, need to know that God wants to graft the natural branches back into His family tree; He wants "all Israel to be saved" (Rom. 11:26; see Rom. 11:24).

Consequently, the Gentile church has a call to fulfill. The worldwide church must intercede for God's purposes to be accomplished in Israel and wherever else Jewish people are found. The Gentile church must support the people of Israel with compassion and energy, embracing them as brothers. The Jewish prophet Isaiah wrote: "The Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, Yet I will gather others to them besides those who already are gathered to him" (Isa. 56:8).

The body of Christ on the earth are watchman on the walls as depicted in Isaiah 62:6-7. Historically, the church has failed to fulfill this mission. Just think of the relatively recent horrors of the Holocaust of World War II. In retrospect, we deplore the Spanish Inquisition, but the church still has the bloodstains on her hands. Anti-Semitism still influences critical decisions and derails efforts to introduce the people of God to their Savior. While Jesus is known as the Prince of Peace, the church has too often demonstrated the opposite spirit, trampling on unbelievers in every generation.

Where is our love? Where is our wisdom? What has happened to the grace and mercy of God? Can we rise to the challenge of turning our own body around even as we begin to do a better job of looking out for our Jewish brethren?

Overcoming the Spirit of Haman—Mordecai's Needed

It is as if the evil spirit of Haman never left the earth when he met his rightful end on the gallows of King Artaxerxes. We may well be destined to relive the story of Esther in our own generation. So I want to urge all of you as Mordecai-watchmen to watch carefully and then to act wisely.

You will remember the story as it is told in the book of Esther. Esther's strategic victory is celebrated to this day by the Jewish people in the feast of Purim. But she would not have been able to do anything without the sage advice of her guardian Mordecai, who was her spiritual authority. He watched in the gate, discovered a plot against the Jews and told Esther about it. In other words, without Mordecai, there would be no book of Esther. An entire population of Jews would have been annihilated.

Mordecai intercepted the intelligence about Haman's evil scheme, and he revealed it wisely to the right parties. Esther employed all of her courage and charm. God made sure the king read the right document in the middle of the night. And all

was saved.

The connections with current events are clear: The anti-Semitic Haman spirit still roves around, seeking to annihilate the Jews. The church (Esther) may or may not be ready. We need the Mordecai-watchmen to step up with the right words at the right time. Only Mordecai could spot the danger, and only Mordecai-watchmen can inform the church before it is too late for the Jewish people.

Together, Mordecai and Esther are their only hope. Jews today rightly celebrate Purim as a mighty historic victory, but the genocidal anti-Semitic Haman spirit has actually returned—bringing reinforcements. It is time for a corporate Esther to arise for such a time as this.

Watching Together

Most of us are Gentiles—grafted in as non-Jewish believers. But we can still be watchmen and women on the walls of Jerusalem, praying in conjunction with the “gatekeepers,” those who have the authority to act for good or for evil. No intercessor can tackle this assignment solo. You must watch together with like-minded others, and you must be quick to identify for the leaders on the ground what you see from the top of the wall.

We are living in a time of awakening and activation. Some of us will pray and fast. Some of us will find ourselves engaged in direct evangelism. Others will be tested socially or financially when we decide to identify more fully with our Jewish brethren. But we *all* must pray without ceasing and proclaim that the ancient prophetic promises will find their fulfillment within our lifetimes.

Remember that the power of prayer does not come from the power of the individual who is praying, but rather from the one who hears the prayers and acts. His power is immeasurable—and it is directed entirely toward good ends. “Righteousness and

justice are the foundation of [His] throne. Unfailing love and truth walk before [Him] as attendants" (Ps. 89:14, NLT). Our part is to pray and obey, because "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16, NIV).

God has chosen watchmen for different purposes and positions on His wall. Where are you in God's purposes as a sacrificial watchman? Will you be found watching for the apple of God's eye? {eoa}

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