

Jentezen Franklin Shares Prophetic Burden: 5 Reasons American Pastors Must Stand With Israel

Recently, I have had the dreadful privilege of standing just feet away from the Gaza Strip in Israel as I spoke to mothers and children's workers about the horrors of weekly bombings in that region. I actually stood near one of the recently discovered tunnels from the Gaza side to the Israel side, built to terrorize the Israelis in the region. I learned that over 90% of the children in that region suffer from PTSD due to the weekly sirens and sprints to the bomb shelter, with just 15 seconds to go from certain death to safety.

While the things I have learned the last few months in Israel were chilling, those fears don't begin to compare with the prophetic heaviness I feel for the Christian leaders here in the U.S., especially those with younger congregations and large social media platforms. I believe the Lord has told me to ask three questions and issue a commission.

As it relates to Israel and the people of Israel:

1. Where are your voices?
2. Where is your concern?
3. Where is your influence?

I pastor a local church, and I understand that there are gospel mandates for the church to preach the gospel and to be salt and light in local communities—but there are also promises and covenants for leaders that can propel your ministries to the next level. These have nothing to do with your backyard or your local reach. These have to do with God's global mandate when He declared, "My house will be called a

house of prayer for all nations” (Isa. 56:7b, NIV).

Enter Israel. Your support for Israel and your mandate to bless that sacred nation are as old as the story of Abraham and as relevant today as they have ever been. Where is your voice? Where is your concern? Where is your influence?

Genesis 12:2-3 still stands as a covenant between God and Abram, and involves both you and me.

*I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;
I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I
will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

First, let me be clear: If you are not actively and substantively blessing Israel, you are missing out on a move of the Holy Spirit in your ministry you cannot imagine. There are no words to describe the things the Lord has done for our church and for me personally that are directly related to our commitment to blessing Israel—and we are just scratching the surface.

We aren’t evangelizing with words or services, but wherever we go, we carry Him in our hearts, and we express His love through our lives. We have no ulterior motive or agenda other than to bless the people of Israel and pray for the peace of Jerusalem. When we go, the Lord opens door after door to help the people and connect with both history and prophecy in ways I could have never imagined—and He will do the same for you. Back home at our campuses, we are seeing growth and salvations in record numbers. We are experiencing “pressed down, shaken together and running over” every week.

Second, the nation of Israel is currently under attack physically, spiritually and politically, and it’s time for the U.S. pastors to get back to teaching and preaching the

importance of standing with Israel. Any other nation would have buckled under by now, and many throughout history have done just that—especially those who have oppressed or wounded the Jews. Babylon was especially cruel, as was Rome. Both are gone—Israel stands. Hitler mounted the greatest attack in history, killing over 6 million Jews while American pastors never so much as lifted a hand of protest before millions had been slaughtered. Only a nation sustained by God could have survived all that and yet enjoy the international standing and the national resolve that Israel has today.

God is calling us to come out from the safety of our buildings and church communities and stand with Israel in ways no previous generation ever could have. These are extraordinary times, and the hand of God is with us in extraordinary ways. But it's a different kind of carnal that turns a deaf ear to the very people it owes for its salvation. The Bible that we declare as essential for living was written entirely by Jews. The one we call Savior and Lord—Jesus Christ—was a Jew. Our entire Christian heritage was forged through God's chosen people: the Jews.

We live as though God has cast aside the Jews and Israel, acting as if we have replaced the people God called originally (replacement theology). But what a tragic and misguided theology that is. A simple reading of Romans 11 makes it clear that God is not done with the Jewish people.

It's Time

I believe God is raising up spiritual leaders to speak into the lives of men and women and rulers, but that is going to take stepping out of comfort zones and asking God to show you where He wants you to go—and then going. It's going to require hearing God's voice as you go in indelible images, experiences and in ways that are undeniable. Never before have we experienced the level of support we have seen with the Trump administration, and a window of opportunity to affect history

is within our grasp.

On a recent visit, I heard the Lord's voice in my spirit as clearly as I have ever heard it, and this is what He said: "If you will bless what I am blessing, I will bless everything you are doing." It's not something I want to keep to myself because we couldn't possibly do all that is needed. God is calling all of us to bless His people, to comfort His people and to stand up for His people.

God can still steer the hearts of kings and rulers the way he has for thousands of years. The courage of Esther saved an entire nation, the wisdom of Joseph helped feed nations during one of the most severe famines in the history of Egypt, and the obedience of Moses resulted in the deliverance of God's people from 400 years of slavery and oppression.

I have been reminded again and again that even presidents have souls, and that the Holy Spirit can move in the life of *any* man or woman. I recently met the prime minister of Israel and other Israeli dignitaries, and I was reminded again that God can use a simple pastor from Georgia to speak life and encouragement into the lives of world leaders. I sense very strongly that He is raising up leaders who are willing to be shaped and molded for such a time as this. All that is required is a simple hand raised in private prayer saying those powerful six words that echo down through the corridors of time: "Here am I, Lord. Send me."

Israel has survived as a people and as a nation against all odds. The nation has suffered unprovoked wars, genocide, slavery and every physical and rhetorical attack imaginable. The reasons for standing with Israel are clear and overwhelming, but in case there's any doubt, here are the five most important ones:

First, God has promised to bless those who bless Israel. In Genesis 12:3, the Lord says of Israel, "I will bless those who

bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." I firmly believe this promise from God is as true today as it was centuries ago.

Second, Israel is a strategic ally—helping them helps us. Israel is our strongest ally in the Middle East—militarily, economically and technologically. This cannot be overstated.

Third, Israel shares our democratic values. The government of Israel adheres to the rule of law and treats its citizens fairly and equally under the law. As such, they are a role model.

Fourth, Israel's enemies are daily plotting their destruction. The nation of Israel reemerged over 70 years ago from the ashes of the largest, most appalling genocide ever endured by any people group in history: the Holocaust. One would hope that the memory of this darkest moment in history would forever serve as a reminder to stand side by side with the descendants of David as they resist the forces of death and destruction assembled against them. Yet hardly a day goes by without a rogue leader or violent insurgent group proclaiming, "Death to Israel!"

Fifth, God gave the promised land to the Jewish people as their eternal home. Every other nation was founded by an act of human will, but Israel is unique in that it was established by an act of God. It was promised to Abraham by God in an eternal covenant found in Genesis 17:8.

These are but a few of the many reasons we must stand with our friends in Israel. They need us now more than ever—and we need them. Join me, then, as we are instructed in Psalm 122:6-7 (MEV): "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!"