

Has the Zechariah 12 Battle Already Begun?

On May 14, 1948, Zionist pioneer David Ben-Gurion delivered Israel's Declaration of Independence and declared the establishment of a Jewish state. Jews and evangelical Christians around the world rejoiced. But while crowds danced in the streets, the esteemed Ben-Gurion stayed in his office. There, he pored over maps showing the array of Arab forces poised to imminently attack the Jews.

That night, Israel's founding father wrote in his diary: "I feel like a mourner at a wedding." Ben-Gurion's words describe well my reaction to President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. I believe President Trump did the right thing under difficult circumstances. I am not, however, giddily happy about it. At least not yet.

Admittedly, my judgment is clouded by my perspective as a Jewish, dual American-Israeli citizen, Zionist, Bible believer, attorney, author-commentator on Israeli affairs, resident of Jerusalem and dedicated intercessor who loves the Lord. As such, I've learned that realities pertaining to Israel are highly nuanced and complex. Therefore, I am strongly urging believers to consider some of the less discussed implications of Trump's announcement for the critical purposes of prayer. Like Ben-Gurion, I see a battle map, but in the Spirit.

And like our Zionist forbear, I believe God will be with us in the fight.

Now is the time for Israel-loving believers to mobilize, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph.

6:12). I believe eight key issues emerge as vital prayer points after Trump's announcement. Eight happens to be the number symbolic in Scripture of new beginnings, and U.S. recognition of Jerusalem is certainly a new, good beginning.

1. President Trump has courageously aligned the United States with God's Word concerning Jerusalem—to a limited but significant degree. Breaking with fruitless precedent, he recognizes honest realities on the ground, together with Jewish historical and moral claims to Jerusalem. Hindsight will reveal the wisdom of Trump's timing. Meanwhile, only God knows his true motives; we should be quick neither to attribute all to political posturing on one hand, nor fervent faith on the other. In any case, we should pray for the release of God's blessings on President Trump and the U.S. for aligning with His Word. Pray that other nations take note of this blessing and shift their alignments, too (Gen. 12:3).

2. The text of Trump's announcement is silent on the issue of Jerusalem's borders. Nothing in the speech rules out dividing the city. A Muslim capital in East Jerusalem, with the al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock perched atop the Temple Mount, is still possible. We must continue to pray that Jerusalem not be divided, especially at the future behest of the United States. Pray that Trump's recognition will not be used to deceive Israel into any future compromise of God's purposes for Jerusalem or the land (Joel 3:2)

3. Trump has merely refused to repeat the nonproductive fallacy of previous U.S. administrations that waived congressional laws regarding the capital of Israel. Rather than change the law, he is the first president bold enough to adhere to American law. Pray for his protection. Ask God to give him divine wisdom and godly counsel in coming days, months and years (1 Tim. 2:2, Jer. 29:7).

4. As I write, the U.N. is scheduled to convene and possibly condemn Trump's recognition of Jerusalem. U.N. and other

international outrage over the Trump decree exposes and betrays the existence of a globalist agenda, if any doubt remained as to whether one existed. Back in 2011, and due to “administrative error,” I attended a private debriefing on the so-called peace process at U.N. headquarters in Jerusalem. The highest-ranking U.N. official at the time was Special Coordinator Robert Serry. At that meeting, Mr. Serry plainly stated (or reiterated) in no uncertain terms, that the U.N. had a long-standing plan for Jerusalem. He insisted this plan would be implemented, one way or another. “Everyone knows it,” he said matter-of-factly. In the future, Jerusalem would be neither Israeli nor Palestinian, but internationally controlled. The Israelis and Palestinians could kill each other over the city, even build respective capitals there, but in the end Jerusalem would come under global jurisdiction. Problem is, President Trump has just thumbed his nose at their plan, and now they’re outraged. In my perception, the root issue is not Palestinian intransigence, but “deep state” like powers and principalities in heavenly realms. Pray for nations and their leaders to waken to the fear of God and His Word, and to surrender to His saving love during this season of shifting and turning. Ask God to raise up righteous leaders and voices at the U.N. and before heads of states (Ps. 2, Eph. 6:12). Pray for exposure and dismantling of hidden schemes and traps set for leaders of nations, especially Trump and Netanyahu (Ps. 141:10)

5. Related to the point above is the allegation that America has violated international law in declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel. This charge traces to U.N. Resolution 181, aka the Partition Plan of 1947. (The Partition Plan divided territory set aside for a Jewish homeland into two sectors, one Jewish and one Arab. The sector offered the Jews became the state of Israel. The sector offered the Arabs was rejected by them because they wanted all the land.) According to Resolution 181, Jerusalem was to be governed internationally. But here’s how God intervened:

After the Jews accepted the Partition Plan and declared statehood, the Arabs started a war. When that happened, a confused and militarily impotent UN essentially fled the scene. Israel was left by herself to defend the Holy City. (Actually, all of Jerusalem had been set aside for the Jews in 1922, but that is another story.) So while Trump's announcement does violate international policy, it does not violate international law—if the term “international law” is used justly, fairly and with integrity. Pray against premature works by spirits of antichrist and lawlessness seeking to change laws and seasons. (Dan. 2:21, 2 Thess. 2:1-12). Pray for justice at the U.N., which means a revival of fair and honest interpretation and administration of righteous, traditionally based laws. Pray for more and more nations to opt out of any wrongful global agendas and recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

6. The Palestinians have declared another *intifada* (violent uprising) against Israel. They are backed, to varying degrees, by much of the Arab world and Palestinian sympathizers in the nations. Sadly, if history repeats itself, their true intentions toward Israel will once more be exposed through another wave of murderous terror. In the end, some Israelis (and Palestinians) will likely pay for America's announcement with their lives. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and all Israel. Pray for the protection of soldiers and excellent intelligence operations. Ask God to give opportunity to all who will perish in the violence to turn to Him. Pray that for the sake of the kingdom, He would mercifully raise up righteous Palestinian leaders who genuinely desire peace and will issue calls for calm. Declare life everlasting against the spirit of death in our region (Ps. 122:6).

7. Iran is a far more serious threat to Israel than the location of nations' embassies. And only America, apart from the miraculous, seems capable of spearheading effective opposition to Iran. Unfortunately, Trump's announcement has

upset every state in the region, excepting Israel. Some Israelis are concerned the US could lose its influence in the Middle East due to backlash over Jerusalem. As it is, Russia is currently the regional power broker. (This resulted from Obama's neglect of the Middle East, Trump's political inexperience, and President Putin's passion to restore Russia to superpower status.) Today, Israel's relationship with Russia is tenuously good. But Russia has had no love affair with the Jews. Moreover, she is a-or the-prime supporter of Iran, still hell-bent on Israel's destruction. Iran's empire-caliphate is now set to extend to the Mediterranean Sea through its proxy terror groups, positioned but a few miles from Israel.

Mr. Putin, who is almost certain to be reelected in March, and Mr. Trump do not get along. The Jerusalem announcement is likely only to increase hostilities between these two superpowers. This could leave Israel torn between its most critical allies. It seems the alignment of nations described in Ezekiel 38 could be cementing even as I write. Pray that if Trump's announcement tilts us in the direction of war, that such a war will take place only with God's permission and in His timing. Pray that it will be contained, causing the minimal amount of harm necessary in order to achieve God's purposes. Pray that recognition of Jerusalem releases not war but peace, truth, freedom and salvation in the Middle East.

8. Despite all the above, you and I should be encouraged! President Trump has done something right. By recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital (and planning to relocate America's embassy there) he has withstood those who oppose God's purposes in the earth. We should not be surprised that strong resistance follows. Upsetting the kingdom of darkness can be messy at best. At worst, many lives can be tragically lost or destroyed. Therefore, now is the time to pray for God's strategies to be released concerning Jerusalem!

Pray that vacuums and upsets in the spirit and natural realms

be filled quickly by God's appointed ones. Pray for voices of truth and reason to quickly arise (and be protected) within the U.N., before many heads of state and new, godly counselors to advise them. For you and I are called not only to tear down works of evil, but to replace them with righteousness. "See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10).

Today, kingdoms are being shaken. As evil is challenged, a global harvest awaits. Let's do our part in prayer and strategic initiative to welcome the glory God desires to pour out, fulfill the Great Commission, and prepare Jerusalem for her king.

"Then I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication, when they will look toward Me whom they have pierced. They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son and grieve bitterly for him. ... In that day a spring will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (Zech. 12:10, 13:1 TLV). {eo}

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