

Jerusalem: A Prophetic Challenge

Exactly seventy years before the opening of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem, President Harry Truman was among the first heads of state to recognize the newly established state of Israel. Sanctioned by a vote by the United Nations in 1947, this new nation was to be a sanctuary, of sorts, for mostly European Jews who were seeking refuge from centuries of government sanctioned persecution in their European homelands.



*Jerusalem, Israel – view of the Mosque.
Jewish worshipers pray at the Wailing Wall,
Friday evening starting Shabbat in the
sunset, Old City of Jerusalem.*

The historical record provides a morbid picture of Christendom's England, France, Portugal, Spain, Poland and Russia carrying out terrible atrocities against their Jewish neighbors. This seemingly coordinated genocidal quest culminated with Adolph Hitler's dreaded Holocaust that claimed an estimated six million Jewish lives!

Forgetting "Never Forget"

Gripped by global guilt, the Europeans that controlled the United Nations thought they were righting a wrong when they voted to carve out more than fifty-percent of the land of Palestine and gift it to the mostly immigrant Jewish population. They were totally oblivious to the fact that the creation of this new "state" would mean that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians would be immediately colonized and disenfranchised. This callous insensibility was undoubtedly based on the fact that the very governments that sanctioned the partition of Palestine were themselves colonizers over nations and islands in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Caribbean. When the newly created "Jewish" Palestine became "Israel" in 1948, the "Israelis" officially aligned to the colonial quest of their European counterparts. Sanctioned, equipped, protected and trained by their former oppressors, this new "nation" fashioned a society after Jim Crow America and Apartheid South Africa—a society in which the Palestinians were the "negros." While screaming "Never Forget" to their western compatriots whose shameful

inaction had almost led to Jewish extermination, these survivors of the cruel concentration camps had themselves “forgotten” what it meant to be victimized.

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Ignoring—and sometimes embracing—the overtly racist concept of a “Jewish” state, American Evangelicals have been firm in their support of the State of Israel. As far as they are concerned, God had masterminded the 1947 vote in the United Nations. They are steadfast in their conviction that the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob personally commandeered the return of His dispersed people to their ancestral homeland in fulfillment of select biblical prophecies. Evangelicals throughout North America proudly profess their love for the so-called “Holy Land” and its people.

A Triple Irony

Ironically, Evangelical “support” for Israel is not as pure as it appears. As far as they are concerned, the “return” of Jews to Palestine is a necessary chapter in their prophetic book. As a number of Evangelical influenced apocalyptic movies have recently demonstrated, the next chapter in the scenario features the catastrophic Battle of Armageddon that will take place in that very region and end in the deaths of many of the very Jews they now claim to love! In no uncertain terms, their support of Israel is based on theological selfishness. Unless the Jews maintain political control of Israel, they reason, Jesus cannot execute the secret rapture that leads to the Millennium.

The bigger irony lies in the fact that the Evangelical scenario is eerily similar to the same Islamic Salafi apocalyptic interpretation that has inspired ISIS and Al Qaeda. They too expect a final battle in the region when the Mahdi (the “rightly guided” Caliph) is confronted by the Dajjal (false Christ) and the forces of Gog and Magog. The disastrous war can only end when Jesus the Christ, the Son of Mary intervenes and defeats the forces of evil. The irony behind the Evangelical and Jihadi extremist support is trumped by the irony behind Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech at the Embassy opening. The entire world watched as the jubilant Zionist leader lauded praise on President Donald Trump for his defiant violation of international law. Bolstered by words from the prophet Zechariah, Netanyahu interpreted Trump’s rogue decision as an undeniable fulfillment of prophecy.

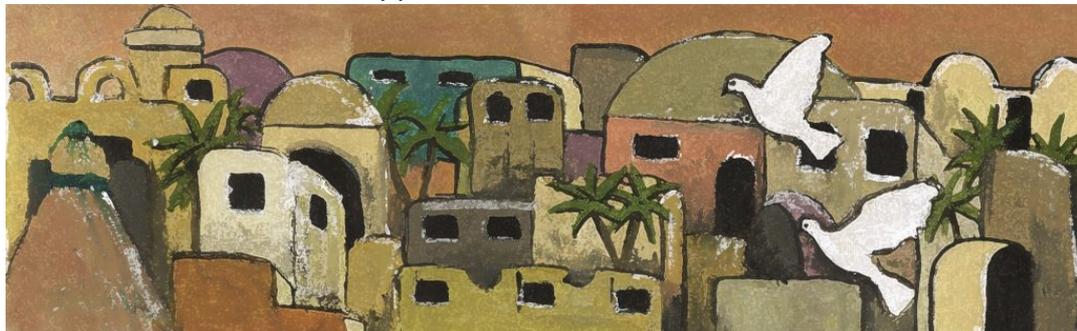
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Even as he delivered his speech with the intonations of a Baptist preacher, Netanyahu was undoubtedly aware that the Christian ministers who accompanied him on the dais embraced a completely different interpretation of the events that day. He was well aware that both John Hagee and Robert Jeffress viewed this as the beginning of the end for the Jewish state. However, his eschatology tells a different story. His vision of the future sees the appearance of a Messiah who would establish the global supremacy of Israel. In his mind, this is a sophisticated game of chess, and Trump was the essential piece on the board that had placed the Evangelicals in check mate and had consequentially immobilized the Salafi jihadists.

Not A Game

The opening of the Embassy in Jerusalem may seem like an apocalyptic chess

game to those Christians, Jews and Muslims who view themselves as the exclusive beneficiaries of Divine favor. However, real people are being seriously harmed by these theologically based political decisions. Even as Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump posed for photos and sipped champagne with their ideological counterparts, the Israeli Defense Force was engaging in yet another massacre of oppressed Palestinians.



True believers in the God of peace will not see this as an opportunity to celebrate the fulfillment of a chapter in their prophetic timeline. Even if they are correct, what is there to celebrate when this audacious act will only lead to the shedding of more innocent blood and the fomenting of more unrest in the region? If anything, this event highlights the need for a renewed understanding of prophecy. Not prophecy in the sense of foretelling the future, but the type of prophecy where men and women of God confront societal injustice.

As the recently deceased Dr. James Cone recognized, Divine justice always sides with the oppressed. Those who claim submission to God's will have no choice but to be God's channels of love to those who need it most. As you ponder these words, never forget that a tree is known by its fruit.