

# JERUSALEM: CAPITAL CITY

**Why the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is significant for the Jewish people, the church and the world**



## BY RON CANTOR

**D**ec. 6, 2017, was a historic day for the nation of Israel. On that day, Donald Trump fulfilled a significant campaign promise he made as a presidential candidate in March 2016 at an AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee) conference.

“When I become president, the days of treating Israel like a second-class citizen will end on Day One,” Trump said. “... We will move the American embassy to the eternal capital of the Jewish people, Jerusalem.”

And the world went crazy.

What could unite Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, Iran, Hezbollah and even ISIS? What could cause even America’s closest allies to turn against the U.S. and Israel? What earth-shaking event could cause the United Nations to bite the hand that feeds it by voting 128-9 to condemn the United States? In a word: Jerusalem!

But how do we as believers respond? Prolific writer Shira Sorko-Ram of Maoz Israel, who is celebrating her 50th year of ministry in the Holy Land, told me, “Christians have the choice of listening to the U.N., the European Union, the mainstream media and almost all of the 193 nations of the world which say Jerusalem does not belong to the Jewish people. Or they can take a leap of faith in the Word of God and say, ‘If the Bible says it 170 times, it must be what God meant!’”

### Jerusalem’s Role in Bible Prophecy

If you need any more proof that the God of the Bible is real, look to Jerusalem. The Old City is no bigger than a large shopping mall and yet remains the center of world uproar 2,500 years after the prophets of Israel predicted its comeback.

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, author of several best-sellers, including *The Paradigm*, believes this recognition is crucial. “America’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is monumental and prophetic,” Cahn says. “The Scriptures foretell that in the last days, the Jewish people will return to the land of Israel and to the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will then become the focal point of world controversy.”

Cahn is referring to Zechariah 12:2-3 (NIV): “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. ... On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.”

Parallel to the restoration of Israel is the rejection of Jerusalem from the nations. Psalm 2 says the nations will rage against God and His Messiah (vv. 1-2). They will be united against Him. God will laugh at their hubris and then judge them in His anger (vv. 4-5). The issue is over the Messiah and His city, Jerusalem, also known as Zion. The Lord makes it clear that the only opinion on Jerusalem that matters is His: “I have installed My king on Zion, My holy hill” (Ps. 2:6, MEV).

It should be no surprise that Jerusalem is on the front page of every major newspaper. Asher Intrater, one of the founders of Tikkun International, an Israel-based Messianic



congregational network, reflected on the president's declaration.

"Political events in the Middle East sometimes reflect spiritual issues behind the scenes," Intrater says. "President Trump's declaration about Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the subsequent U.N. reaction show an ever-increasing focus on this city that plays a central role in biblical prophecies. According to end-times prophecies, Jerusalem will be the center of conflict in world politics."

The prophets spoke of her restoration 2,500 years ago, and God has watched over His Word. As kingdoms conquer the city and its Jewish inhabitants were exiled and murdered, God never forgot His promise. This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, and with great wrath I am jealous for her. Thus says the Lord: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem" (Zech. 8:2b-3a).

Rabbi Cahn sees this as impossible without someone behind the scenes, guiding world history.

"The mere fact that the ancient city still exists and is still in the news is amazing enough," Cahn says. "But that in the 21st century, it is the center of global controversy is beyond amazing and against all odds."

Three thousand years ago, David asked, "Why do the nations rage?" (see Ps. 2:1). And the Arab nations used the same word after the Trump recognition, calling for "days of rage."

## God's Master Plan for Israel

Jerusalem became Israel's capital when King David decided to unite the tribes of Israel. He left Hebron, deep inside his own tribal land of Judah, and captured the Jebusite stronghold next to Mount Moriah, where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac. It borders Benjamin. It was under Jewish rule until the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. The exiles returned when Cyrus, king of Persia sought to restore Jerusalem.

In the first Jewish revolt, General Titus utterly destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. The historian Josephus reported, "Jerusalem ... was so thoroughly razed to the ground by those that demolished it to its



foundations, that nothing was left that could ever persuade visitors that it had once been a place of habitation." This was a far cry from the city's destiny to be "the praise of all the earth" (Isa. 62:7b, NIV).

However, in 130 A.D., Emperor Hadrian decided to rebuild the city and thought it would be a nice gift for the Jewish people. But then he was advised that rebuilding the temple would fuel subversion, and instead, he rebuilt the city as a Roman colony and renamed it after Jupiter—ironically causing the very subversion he feared.

Hadrian crushed the subsequent Jewish revolt and became obsessed with ridding the territory from any Jewish influence. He changed the name of the region from Judea to Palestine. In fact, it should be noted that the word "Palestine" goes back to Rome, not to any Arab entity. There has never been an Arab nation called Palestine, and Jerusalem was never the capital of any Arab nation.

Through Hadrian, the rage of the enemy against the Jewish people was unleashed. Jews were forbidden to enter their holy city under threat of death. They were exiled, and the goal was clear: Destroy the Jewish people completely through assimilation, exile and death.

And if you didn't think God has His hand over history, watch this: The number for life in Hebrew is 18. The time between Hadrian's renaming of Jerusalem until Israel became a nation again was 1,818 years!

Johnny Enlow, author, speaker and co-leader of Restore7, posted a prophetic word more than a year ago that predicted Trump's recognition of Jerusalem.

"There is a reason Jerusalem and its destruction is the desire of every principality," Enlow wrote. "Destruction of Jerusalem destroys the master plan, and it is the master plan of our God that will guarantee Jerusalem's future."

Here we are nearly 2,000 years later, with Israel restored and Jerusalem as her capital. You have to be somewhat blind to believe replacement theology—that God is finished with Israel, and the church has replaced the nation. That would mean that by massive coincidence, Israel was reborn in 1948; Jerusalem was restored through the miraculous victory in the Six-Day War; millions of Jewish exiles came back to Zion just as the prophets predicted; and this all occurred while the most persecuted people in history suffered 52 attempted genocides. No nation has ever lost its geographical homeland for more than a short time and remained an identifiable people. Israel wandered for two millennia and survived! Only God could have done that.

## Signpost for the Second Coming

And yet, I've seen many believers fret over President Trump's announcement, saying it is irresponsible, dangerous, racist toward Palestinians, inconsequential or an impediment to

peace, completely missing its spiritual significance. Intrater points to this in his new book, *Alignment*: “The biblical nickname for Jerusalem is Zion, *Tsiyon*. The word ‘Zion’ means ‘signpost.’ A signpost points to something. It is a sign; it has sign-ificance. What is the reestablishment of the Jerusalem pointing to?”

Intrater goes on to state that Jerusalem had to be there for the first coming—Yeshua died and rose from the dead in Jerusalem, and the Holy Spirit birthed the first Messianic community there. But for the past 2,000 years, as the gospel spread, there was no need for a specific location.

“The starting line and the finish line is Jerusalem,” he writes. Jerusalem’s reunification is a signpost (Zion) that the countdown to the Second Coming has begun.

Cahn also sees the significance of Trump’s announcement.

“The Trump recognition was another critical step in the unfolding of God’s prophetic purposes on the road to the return of the Messiah—in the city of Jerusalem,” he says.

## Restoration of the Nation

When Yeshua’s disciples asked Him after His resurrection, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6b). He did not rebuke them for asking a stupid question. For any student of the prophets, that would have been the most logical thing to ask.

A plethora of passages speak to the restoration of Israel in the Old Covenant, so that would be the first, obvious question from His Jewish disciples. And look at Yeshua’s response: “He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the dates, which the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 1:7-8).

Yeshua clearly indicates that the Father has set the time and date for Israel’s restoration. The issue wasn’t if but when. The newly Spirit-filled Peter prophesies that Jesus must remain in

heaven “until the time of restoring what God spoke through all His holy prophets” (Acts 3:21b). This was what he didn’t understand in Chapter 1. But when it is time for the restoration

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of all things, Israel will be restored with Jerusalem as her capital. And we are the generation that has seen it come to pass.

## President Trump’s Cyrus Call

Many prophetic voices shared before the election that President Trump was a type of Cyrus. Who was Cyrus? He was the Persian king about whom Isaiah prophesied by name 100 years before Cyrus appeared on the scene. The prophecy, recorded in Isaiah 44-45, says Cyrus will:

- » rebuild Jerusalem (Isa. 44:28, 45:13)
- » allow the Jews to return (45:13)
- » not know God at first (45:4)
- » eventually come to believe (45:3)

The passage even says the people will argue with God about His choice (Isa. 45:9-10).

At this point, it should be clear that the president is called to be a king like Cyrus. Trump is an unlikely choice, but he has favored Zion more than any other U.S. president. There has been much talk about whether or not he is a born-again believer, but we can all agree that he needs us to pray for him.

## Benefits of Blessing Israel

Any student of history can tell you that those who bless Israel will be blessed, even as God told Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Rabbi Jonathan Bernis, the host of *Jewish Voice*, told me, “President Trump’s recent decision to honor a 23-year-old commitment made by the U.S. to move our embassy to Jerusalem will result in unprecedented blessings for America. God’s decree to bless those who bless Israel is still in force and is true for both individuals and nations. I applaud his bold decision to align our nation with

God’s Word.”

In the aforementioned prophecy from more than a year ago, Enlow declared: “Donald Trump as president will be the best friend to Israel that

they have ever had. He will attempt to be fair to the Palestinians and try to negotiate a reasonable peace treaty, and the plight of the Palestinians is very important. However ... he will discover that those who represent the Palestinian people are driven by the unreasonable hatred of a demonic principality and have no real desire for peace or compromise.

“President Trump will then expose their hypocrisy and severely turn on them. ... No country on the earth has been more unfairly and unjustly treated by the nations over the last couple of decades than Israel, and there is a now a larger spiritual bill to pay. The nations that have unjustly judged Israel are presently under limited grace for terrorism and the ones that just voted against Israel have just caused another decrease in grace over their nations.”

This is exactly what has happened.

God has a plan for Israel, and we don’t want to be on the wrong side. Soroko-Ram has a question for Christians who may be on the fence regarding Jerusalem: “When the Lord returns, the book of Acts says He will touch down on the Mount of Olives. Who is going to meet Jesus there? It is the Jewish people who say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord?’ (Matt. 23:39b). He returns to a Jerusalem in Jewish hands. Not to the capital of a Muslim state called Palestine.”<sup>4</sup>

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