

U.S. to Move Embassy to Jerusalem!

Jerusalem, a Burdensome Stone

Once again, Jerusalem, Israel is in the news! President Donald Trump is already sending top advisers to Israel to find a site to relocate the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, Israel's eternal capital! Arab states are fuming. But true Christians and Jews are rejoicing and leaping for joy! Once again Jerusalem is taking the center stage of world history! This is another sign that the coming of the Messiah is imminent!

William F. Dankenbring

“The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: ‘Behold, I will make *Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness* to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. ³And it shall happen in that day that I will make *Jerusalem a very heavy stone* for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness’” (Zech.12:1-4).

Jerusalem is once again to become the center of world attention. According to a report by Israeli media, Donald Trump’s presidential team is already in Jerusalem scouting sites for the new building for the American Embassy in Israel.

When Donald Trump announced that he was committed to moving the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, many “talking heads” scoffed that he would never take this move. Before the Six-Day war, June 5-10, 1967, Israel's official capital was located in Tel Aviv; therefore, it made sense for the American government – under Democrat President Lyndon Johnson – to locate its Embassy in Tel Aviv.

However, Israel shocked the world by winning that war and capturing Jerusalem. Not too long afterward, the Israeli government relocated its capital to its “eternal city”, Jerusalem. However, the Americans from Johnson to Obama – a period of 49 years – consistently refused to move the American Embassy to Jerusalem, afraid of making the impotent Arab world furious.

Evidently, this campaign promise is going to be fulfilled quickly. Now, in year 50 after the Six-Day War, President Trump is going to relocate the American Embassy to Jerusalem!

The Jubilee Year

This time interval lines up with Israel's Jubilee Year. God commanded ancient Israel: "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years" (Leviticus 25:8).

The time period between the end of the Six-Day War (1967) and today (2016) when Trump made his campaign pledge is 49 years.

God went on adding: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession" (Leviticus 25:9-13).

The nascent Israeli Sanhedrin has already announced that 2017 is a Jubilee Year for Israel, so we should not be too surprised to learn that the numbers of this relocating of the American Embassy to Jerusalem would have Jubilee numbers associated with it. From 1967 to 2017 is precisely FIFTY YEARS – a "Jubilee cycle"!

I do not think that Donald Trump, nor any of his advisers, know any of these facts; therefore, I believe that the Holy Spirit of God has inspired him to take this momentous action!

The City of Jerusalem

There is no controversy like the controversy that surrounds the city of Jerusalem, the most divided city on the earth and the most coveted city on the earth.

The Bible predicted this more than 2,500 years ago, describing the day when Jerusalem would be a "a cup that brings dizziness to all the surrounding nations" (Zech. 12:2, NET), even declaring that one day, the whole would be in uproar over Jerusalem.

Stop and think about it for a moment.

Why does the whole world get so exercised over Jerusalem? Is there any other city on the planet that evokes such intense emotions and polar views?

And why does every nation put its embassies in the city that the host country identifies as its capital, except for the city of Jerusalem, identified as Israel's capital in 1950? Why do virtually all embassies remain in Tel Aviv?

There is something of spiritual significance to this ancient city that simply cannot be denied.

The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, "passed by overwhelming bipartisan majority in both the House and Senate," states that "Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel and the United States Embassy in Israel should be established in Jerusalem no later than May 31,1999."

Then why didn't presidents Clinton, Bush or Obama move the embassy? As explained by Rabbi Shraga Simmons, "since the congressional act allows the President to implement a waiver at six-month intervals, that's exactly what has happened every six months since 1995."

Now that Donald Trump has insisted that he will, in fact, relocate our embassy – in accordance with the 1995 act -the controversy is hitting the fan. In the words of Sheikh Ekrema Sabri, imam of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, moving the embassy would be as good as a “declaration of war .”

David Friedman

Consider the opposition to Trump's appointee for Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, a strong supporter of Israel who speaks of our embassy's imminent relocation.

As he said openly and proudly after his nomination, “I intend to work tirelessly to strengthen the unbreakable bond between our two countries and advance the cause of peace within the region, and look forward to doing this from the U.S. Embassy in Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem.”

According to a December 16 email from Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, known as “America's rabbi,” Friedman is a “brilliant choice for Ambassador to Israel. One of America's most respected and accomplished attorneys, David is regarded in the highest esteem by the New York Jewish community as an exemplar of the American and Jewish virtues of education, erudition, philanthropy, and communal commitment.”

He continued, “David has vast exposure to, and knowledge of, the Jewish State and its history and enjoys the confidence and respect of Israel's leaders. A man of humility and openness, he has a gift for listening, showing respect and deference to all whom he meets. “

In sharp contrast, as noted on the Elder of Ziyon website, last Friday's New York Times "had four articles against Donald Trump's choice to be the U.S. ambassador to Israel. Yes -four articles in one day. Two 'news' articles, one editorial, and one op-ed.”

As Noah Pollack reported in *The Washington Free Beacon*, “The NYT Is Having a Meltdown Over Trump's Israel Nominee.”

Pollack writes, “David Friedman is a prominent and successful attorney in New York who has spent 20 years representing Donald Trump, among other clients. He is also a proud Jew who holds unapologetic pro-Israel views that are heretical in Times-world, and he has also expressed acid disdain for the kind of Jewish anti-Israel activism regularly glorified in the pages of the Times. So he must be destroyed – and to destroy him he must be lied about. Which is what the Times did.”

Pollack does not specifically mention Friedman's strong support for relocating our embassy, since there are other, controversial pro-Israel positions that Friedman supports, including the building of settlements in territories under Palestinian control and skepticism about a two-state solution.

But you can be assured that a big part of the ruckus over Friedman's appointment is his affirmation that the American embassy will be moved. That's why a headline on the Independent discussing Friedman's nomination ‘declaration of war’”.

And that's why New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman stated to Chris Cuomo on CNN that “moving the American embassy – and this is an evergreen, everyone running for President tosses this out, no one actually does it – moving the embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, in the absence of an agreed upon solution between Israelis and Palestinians, I would call that the ‘Full Employment for Iran Act.’”

According to Friedman, it would also alienate the Sunni Arab regimes, meaning that this move would provoke the Shiite Muslims in Iran and the Sunni Muslims in countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Jerusalem, the city of controversy indeed!

Thomas Friedman then reiterated to Cuomo and co-host Alisyn Camerota: “This is such madness that it’s – it’s just – I can’t believe we’re talking about it.”

Yet Kellyanne Conway, Trump's senior adviser, has reiterated that the incoming president really does plan to make this move, calling it a “big priority” for him.

How revealing that Thomas Friedman noted that “everyone running for President tosses this out” but “no one actually does it,” whereas Trump is threatening actually to do it.

This is the very reason many people voted for him: They expect him to be a doer, not just a talker.

Joy in Israel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could have been excused for dancing a jig in Friday morning's wee hours when U.S. President-elect Donald Trump announced his long-time bankruptcy lawyer David Friedman as nominee for Washington's next ambassador to Israel. Friedman is the anti-Martin Indyk, the anti-Daniel Kurtzer, two former Jewish ambassadors to Israel who often obsessed about the settlements.

Kurtzer and Indyk – when they served as ambassadors and when they left to take other positions – saw construction anywhere beyond the Green Line as the main hurdle to Mideast peace.

Friedman – the president of American Friends of Bet El Institutions – takes a completely opposing view.

Current Ambassador Dan Shapiro has faithfully toed the Obama administration's line opposing the settlements, but never with the same degree of vehemence as Kurtzer, or especially as Indyk. And Indyk was no bit-player in the administration's Mideast policy. He served as John Kerry's special envoy in 2013 and 2014 when the US secretary of state launched his failed attempt to solve the Mideast conflict in nine months.

During that period, and after, Indyk – who was ambassador here twice, once when Netanyahu was prime minister from 1995 to 1997, and again briefly during the reigns of Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon from 2000 to 2001 – never hid his distaste for Netanyahu and his policies.

Now comes Friedman, a man who questions whether a two-state solution is realistic, who favors construction in the settlements, who wants to move the US embassy to Jerusalem and who detests J Street. Going from Indyk as a central interlocutor to Friedman, Netanyahu must feel as if he has died and gone to heaven.

It is not that Friedman will be setting policy. There is a big difference between the power to set policy – which is Trump's – and influence. But Friedman will definitely have influence.

As Trump's trusted bankruptcy lawyer, Friedman is undeniably close to the president- elect and will be able to whisper into his ear. And what he will whisper is sure to be quite different from what some veteran hands in the State Department will be saying.

The left-wing J Street lobbying organization, predictably, decried the nomination, with its president Jeremy Ben-Ami posting on Twitter that Friedman “is anathema to values that underlie [the] US-Israel relationship,” and that the group will “fight this with all we've got.”

His anger is understandable, since Friedman wrote during the summer that J Street was worse than kapos, the Jews who turned fellow Jews over to the Nazis.

Writing on the Arutz Sheva website, Friedman said: “The kapos faced extraordinary cruelty, and who knows what any of us would have done under those circumstances to save a loved one? But J Street? They are just smug advocates of Israel's destruction delivered from the comfort of their secure American sofas -it's hard to imagine anyone worse.”

J Street's influence and power over the last eight years flowed in large part from its closeness and access to US President Barack Obama and his advisers. That access will now be cut off, and the next president will hear more from people like Friedman than from people like Ben-Ami.

An argument has been made that Friedman's appointment might make political life difficult for Netanyahu because, with a US ambassador to his right -closer to the worldview of Bayit Yehudi head Naftali Bennett than to his own -he will no longer be able to make excuses to the Right as to why he is not building more in the settlements.

But given a choice between an ambassador who takes issue with any home built in any Jewish community beyond the Green Line – be it east Jerusalem, Gush Etzion or Yitzhar – and one who will not send cables to Washington advocating a harsh State Department response for every new home, it is safe to assume that Netanyahu prefers the latter.

It is easier for a prime minister to deal with domestic political problems than with full-blown international condemnation supported by Washington.

What will happen if President Trump succeeds in relocating our embassy to Jerusalem?

With all the pent-up left wing animosity directed at Donald Trump, both during and after his campaign for the presidency, and even assassination threats and attempts, no doubt the Jew hating masses will foam at the mouth. All hell will break loose against Donald Trump. There will be constant, worldwide controversy over the move, with the United Nations raging against him and Israel.

The word of God declares, “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision . . .” (Psalm 2:1-4).

However, on the positive side, no doubt God will bless President Trump for his courage and boldness for showing honor and respect for God’s people and nation of Israel. And God will bless America if we stand by Israel, our foremost ally in the Middle East.

God promised Abraham, the progenitor of Israel, “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.” (Gen.12:2-3). May God bless Israel and America, as they stand together in unity and righteousness!