

WHY JERUSALEM MEASURES UP

Praying For the peace of Jerusalem is NOT an option!

Imperative prayer...what is it? The imperative of a verb is the command tense. In other words, when the imperative is used, action is demanded. Such is the case with God's imperative prayer in Scripture. Interestingly, only a handful of instances of imperative prayer can be found throughout the Bible. Their paucity gives pause to out intense study and dedicated obedience.

When God commands, "PRAY!" we must obey. In imperative prayer, God gets up close and personal. He gets in my face (i.e. face to face) and in your face and says, "[You] pray!"

In the Old Testament, the imperative of prayer is focused and specific. A few characteristics of imperative prayer are:

- **Demanding.** God demands and commands; He doesn't suggest or merely invite us to pray.
- **Obeying.** The responsibility is upon us to obey. The seriousness of prayerlessness far exceeds simple neglect or forgetfulness; it's outright disobedience and rebellion. The subject of imperative prayer is "You." That makes the command personal, direct and unremitting. So, I must think, "It's not others are or are not doing; I must pray.
- **On Going.** To pray once isn't enough. Imperative prayer has an unending requirement upon us to be vigilant and persistent in prayer.

The essence of imperative prayer is this: God commands; you obey. That's it! No questions, discussion or even dialogue. Imperative prayer in Scripture must be obeyed irregardless of feelings, circumstance or contrary opinions. Here it is: "Pray the Peace of Jerusalem." (Psalm 122:6)

Wait a minute. "What about the others?" Interestingly, there are no others in the Old Testament. In The New Testament, when properly clustered in synoptic form, there are only a few (eight) imperative prayer demands either on the lips of Jesus or from the Lord through the apostle Paul.

God's imperative on prayer in the OT is singular, specific and straightforward: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Once God demands prayer, He actually tells us what to pray (Ps. 122:6b-7 NASB): "May they prosper who love you [Jerusalem).

May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces."

God's uncompromising command means; No ifs. No buts. No excuses. No time off. No exceptions. So, are you praying? If not, when will you start? Will you be consistent, persistent, perseverant, and obedient in praying for Jerusalem's peace? I am under conviction, Are you?

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WHY JERUSALEM MEASURES UP. THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM WAS THE FIRST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER 2004. BY ROBERT STEARNS

Then the angel who was speaking to me, said, "Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity.

"Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the LORD Almighty.

“Proclaim further: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem (Zech. 1:14-17 NIV).

In the recent hit movie, “The Matrix”, Morpheus asks Neo which pill he wants to take—the red or the blue. One pill will allow his life to continue on as he has always known it, uninterrupted by the secret information that Morpheus has to share with him. The other pill will change Neo’s life forever. He will gain a new paradigm—a new understanding—and will never be able to return to the comfortable time BEFORE he had this information.

The deep questions he has been asking will not be answered immediately, but they will BEGIN to be answered. But in exchange for embarking on this process of revelation, Neo will have no choice but to live with the information he receives. He cannot un-know it. It will change him forever.

Jerusalem is like the red pill. Once you have deeply considered the implications of the mystery of Jerusalem, it becomes a never-ending journey into the heart of spirituality, and the heart of God Himself.

Why Jerusalem?

Jerusalem is the geographic center of the spiritual universe—a portal between heaven and earth—where all key spiritual experiences and values flow from, and where focus on God flow to.

Jerusalem. It’s where Abraham offered Isaac; where David built the Tabernacle; where Solomon built the Temple. Jerusalem is where Nehemiah rebuilt the walls; where Jesus offered His life, and where the Eastern Gate will open to welcome the Messiah!

From Jerusalem and the people who have loved her for three thousand years flowed the essence of the moral code of Western civilization. For Christians, it is the site of the purchase of our salvation, and Jews and Christians both look to Jerusalem as the ultimate site of global redemption, the place where the hope of the nations for peace will finally be realized.

More Than A Historical Site—A Focus Of Prayer

It is astonishing then, that so many Christians today see Israel as a site of historical interest, and have a vague sense of some future importance of the city, but little actual daily sense of their personal responsibility to be a part of the unfolding purposes of God for this city which is unique among the nations.

If we are praying “thy Kingdom come, thy will be done” we must realize that we are not just praying this in an abstract spiritual way, or just in their personal lives or geography. For God’s Kingdom to fully manifest in a place, and that place is Jerusalem. If we are serious about the coming of God’s Kingdom, then we must work in our own lives and communities to see His Kingdom come, but we should also, naturally, be focused on the ultimate place which is the final location for His kingdom to manifest.

When I pray for the peace of Jerusalem, I am affirming that God’s kingdom is not simply an abstract reality that is governed by my subjective reality. When I recognize that God’s kingdom involves a physical place, I am inviting the reality of God’s Kingdom into the reality of my life

“JERUSALEM MEASURES US, AS A PLUMB LINE, BECAUSE IT FORCES US TO CONFRONT WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE VERY NATURE OF OUR GOD.”

So Jerusalem becomes the center of focus and pressure for those who are God-believers. Let me ask you;

- *What do you believe about God?
- *What do you believe about His Covenants?
- *What do you believe about His Character?
- *What do you believe about His relationship with the Jewish people?
- *What do you believe about His relationship with the nations?
- *What do you believe about His future appearing?

A Divine Plumb Line

Jerusalem measures us, as a plumb line, because it forces us to confront what we believe about the very nature of God. Do we believe that He would be displeased with the people of His covenant choosing in such a way that He would cut them off completely and forever, essentially ending His relationship with them and starting over? If so, what about us? How secure is our covenant with God? Have we Christians as a people really been much better in our fidelity to God and the covenant than the Jews? Could the Mormons not perhaps be correct in saying that God has “replaced” the Church with their new expression and Scripture?

If we do believe that God has maintained some level of faithfulness to the Jewish people, some level of continuation of the Covenant, then how are we to relate to the Jewish people? What is our calling, as part of the Church, to these people whose ancestors are the root of the blessing we enjoy?

Truly contemplating Jerusalem measures us, and takes us on a spiritual journey that is ever unfolding and growing.

All of these questions begin to be raised when we confront the reality of Jerusalem in a clear and focused way. When we go deeper than causal observance and truly ponder all she represents, Jerusalem demands that we ask questions and begin the search for answers.

WE PRAY FOR JERUSALEM BECAUSE SHE IS A FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH.

Abraham left his father’s house, and journeyed until he came to the area later known as Jerusalem, where he offered up Isaac. This supreme act of obedience to God was “accounted to him for righteousness” and God knew He had finally found a friend through whom He could bring forth His purposes.

Just as God formed Jerusalem out of Abraham’s faith in Him, God desires to use the essence of the Holy City as the foundational element of our relationship with Him.

WE PRAY FOR JERUSALEM BECAUSE SHE IS THE WORSHIP CAPITOL OF THE WORLD.

King David set up His Tabernacle and ministered to the presence of the Lord day and night on Mount Zion. From David’s passionate heart, the Psalms were established that have brought hope and help to people around the world for thousands of years. David said “If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning and let my tongue cleave to my mouth.”

WE PRAY FOR JERUSALEM BECAUSE SHE IS THE ALTAR WHERE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE WAS MADE.

Jesus laid down His life in the ultimate act of love and obedience. His blood was spilled on the soil of this City. Again, many times the story of the Cross becomes almost myth to us in all of our Easter pageants and re-enactments. But Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” has reminded us of the stark reality of the Cross in one way. And Jerusalem reminds us in another way. Jesus died in a place. “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Hebrews 13:12). He was anchored in time and space, and this act of sacrifice took place in a specific place and time as the continuation of God’s redemptive story that He has been telling since Adam.

WE PRAY FOR JERUSALEM BECAUSE SHE IS IN TERRIBLE PAIN

Jeremiah 31:15 declares, ‘This is what the LORD says: A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more. Jerusalem bleeds daily; and the blood of her slain cry out from her streets for justice. We are to weep over Jerusalem as Jesus did and pour out our lives as drink offerings for her peace. It is this identification with God’s love for His people that allows us to experience the Father’s comfort in our own lives.

**“WE ARE TO WEEP OVER JERUSALEM AS JESUS DID
AND POUR OUR LIVES AS DRINK OFFERINGS FOR HER PEACE.”**

WE PRAY FOR JERUSALEM BECAUSE SHE IS THE ULTIMATE PLACE OF OUR REDEMPTION AND PEACE FOR THE WORLD.

“And many peoples will come and say, “Come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). Just as Jerusalem was here the story of salvation began, it will also serve to herald the culmination of all things. As the gospel was preached first in Jerusalem, redemption will continue to emanate from the Holy Land until it reaches the ends of the earth. Without peace in Jerusalem, there could be no peace in any other place. So, as we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we are also blessing every other nation, including our own. **K**