

A Pilgrimage to Secure Boundaries by Jack Hayford

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Scripture: Genesis 13:14b-18; 17:7-8; 26:3-5; 35:10-14

Introduction/Background

For most Christians, making a positive practical difference in the conflict centered in the Middle East seems a stretch too far to reach. Yet, considering the spiritual nature of the world, praying and acting strategically and according to God's word can make a significant impact in the spiritual realm. Praying for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) can involve more than simply mumbling a few best wishes. Believers can follow the model of an epic journey of prayer made to Israel wherein altars were built and prayers lifted without leaving their own homes.

Key Points

1. **Engage in prophetic activity as a way to claim God's blessing for ourselves and Israel** – In the above referenced scriptures from Genesis, God promises the land and its continuing possession to Abraham and his offspring:
 - a. The land is re-confirmed in promise to Isaac and Jacob as well. Thus, three generations are promised the land through the initial promise of God to Abraham. This establishes the legitimate lineage of inheritance for the land itself and solidly confirms the Jewish people (not Ishmael and his descendants) are the rightful heirs to the promise.
 - b. This is significant because Galatians 3:29 (and other scriptures) link Christ's followers to Abraham, describing us as "heirs to the promise" through faith. We have solid grounds for claiming the promises of Abraham and affirming our own understanding of the promised land, and Jerusalem, to Israel as spiritually significant. Praying for the peace of Jerusalem and the land is part of our inherited right and duty.
2. **Establish altars to declare the Ancient Landmarks** – In Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10-11 "ancient landmarks" are referred to specifically. Ancient landmarks were often created of stone, many times stones piled in the form of an altar like boundary markers. Further, the Bible speaks of prophetic action as functioning as a kind of foreshadowing action announcing God's future fulfillments.
 - a. Establishing "altars" of practiced values like Truth, Life, Worship and Praise in one's own life and on behalf of the lives of those in Israel today is one way to declare the ancient landmarks of God's eternal promise.
 - b. Affirming God's redemptive activity in the world today, in the nation Israel and in our own lives is a perpetually appropriate response for believers to make to world events and regional strife.

3. **Build altars in the Spirit as a way to realize the fullness of God's presence** – Establishing altars by prayer and even practical work so as to declare and respond in faith to God's ancient landmarks of promise can be centered on these 4 Kingdom values:
- a. An altar of Truth: Psalm 119:165 states: "Great peace have those who love your Law, O God." Ezekiel 36 instructs us to: "Write God's Word on our hearts." Authentic spiritual living and the reception of God's promise to Abraham for our lives involves resting our existence on the truth of his Word.
 - b. An altar of Life: Ezekiel 37:9, 14 declare the prophetic power of God's promise to his people to "put you in your own land." God has a specific time and place for all of us, just like he has for Israel. Claiming that time and place for ourselves and inviting God's powerful presence is key to receiving the fullness of his ancient promises.
 - c. An altar of Worship: Dryness is often associated in the Bible with false worship. Rain and drought relief are associated with authentic worship. Worshipping the one true God faithfully and regularly is foundational to posturing ourselves in a place of reception.
 - d. An altar of Praise: Psalm 113 commands "Praise the name of the Lord." This is unique from worship in that we extol God's name and reputation specifically before and to others. This, too, affirms our place as sons and daughters of the promise.

Conclusion

Praying and acting strategically and according to God's word can make a significant impact in the spiritual realm. Praying for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) must involve more than simply mumbling a few best wishes. "Building altars" of Truth, Life, Worship and Praise involves regularly practicing these values and in doing so, regularly affirming our role as inheritors of the promise and blessing of father Abraham.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture verses are from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

Notable Quote: "Jesus did not come to birth Christianity as a religion. He came to bring people to the Father in heaven."