

Christians and Jews Now Compare Trump to Persian King Cyrus – Will He Build the Third Temple?

Like Cyrus 2,500 years ago, Trump is seen as an instrument of God. And the plan: to build the Third Temple on the Temple Mount – where the Al-Aqsa Mosque currently stands

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Dec 16, 2017 11:16 PM

Political junkies and Middle East analysts have had to bone up on their conservative Christian theology to properly understand why Donald Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital was so important to the evangelicals who lobbied hard for it and have been lauding it all week.

Trump was already a hero to a wide swath of evangelicals for his efforts to fight abortion, keep transgender kids out of the wrong bathrooms and fill the U.S. courts with die-hard conservative judges. But the role he's playing in what many believe is the fulfillment of divine prophecy has gotten him promoted to king for some of them – an ancient Persian king to be precise.

For his willingness to confront conventional diplomatic wisdom, shrug off dire warnings of triggering Middle East unrest and declare Jerusalem Israel's capital, Trump is increasingly being compared by evangelicals – and Jews on the religious right – to Persia's King Cyrus II, also known as Cyrus the Great. "Trump in his generation, as Cyrus in his", [tweeted](#) Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked. The bolder have gone so far as to suggest that Trump doesn't just merely resemble the Persian king, [he's Cyrus reincarnated](#).

It's not a new concept. Trump-Cyrus comparisons have been batted around on the religious right since the New York businessman's presidential campaign, particularly as he began to aggressively court evangelicals. But since the Jerusalem declaration, such comparisons are appearing more frequently and intensely than ever in sectarian media and on social networks.

The King who allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the 2nd Temple was Cyrus the "Great", he lived until 70. Donald Trump got elected on a platform of "Let's make America Great again". Trump took office at the age of 70. [#MAGA](#)

Who exactly was King Cyrus? The Persian conqueror lived between 590 and 529 B.C.E. and is immortalized in the Bible's Book of Isaiah, where he is called Koresh, the heroic pagan ruler who liberated the Jews from captivity in Babylonia and brought them back to their homeland to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Even though Cyrus would have been unfamiliar with the Jewish deity, it was prophesied that he would bring down the Babylonian Empire, be the leader to facilitate the building of the Second Temple and restore Jerusalem to her former glory. And these events indeed came to pass, according to the Bible. After Cyrus conquered and ruled over ancient Babylon, he decreed that the Temple should be rebuilt and the exiled Jews could return to Jerusalem to rebuild it. Thus the

Persian king is often described as something of a holy instrument who was delivered by God to help restore the Jewish people in their homeland.

Trump, his religious supporters argue, is perfectly cast in the role of a powerful historical figure who is neither a God nor a messiah nor even a believer himself. Like Cyrus, they say, he is a tough leader fighting on the side of the righteous, an instrument used by God to serve His master plan. And the plan as they see it: to build the Third Temple on the Temple Mount – where the Al-Aqsa Mosque currently stands.

Cyrus in a White House statement

Initial comparisons of Trump and Cyrus date back to early 2016, when the tough-talking GOP candidate's popularity among evangelicals initially split evangelical leaders, some of whom hesitated to support a man whose life choices haven't exactly exemplified family values. In a Christian Broadcasting Network interview in April 2016, evangelical leader and author Lance Wallnau argued for Christian support for the candidate, [contending that "Trump has the Cyrus anointing"](#) and so, in a dangerous world, "with Trump, I believe we have a Cyrus to navigate through the storm." [Such comparisons have surfaced periodically](#) in the Christian media ever since.

"Could it be that Trump, like Cyrus, clearly does not know the Lord in a real and personal way but could still be used by God to accomplish His purposes?" asked Charisma News columnist Michael Brown. "Is Donald Trump a modern-day Cyrus?"

In what was seen as [a shout-out to those who viewed him as having Cyrus-like qualities](#), Trump actually quoted the ancient king in March to mark the Persian New Year. As the White House statement read: "Cyrus the Great, a leader of the ancient Persian Empire, famously said that 'freedom, dignity, and wealth together constitute the greatest happiness of humanity. If you bequeath all three to your people, their love for you will never die.'"

Following the Jerusalem declaration, many evangelicals posted videos of sermons making the case for Trump as Cyrus. One shows a pastor explaining that Trump's penchant for saber rattling stems from God's anointing Trump to do battle in the same way Cyrus did. "God has anointed him" against "the forces of hell," she said. "You have to see Trump through a spiritual lens."

But it's not only Christians who have embraced the comparison; ideological right-wing religious Jews have as well. Likud Knesset member Yehudah Glick, Israel's most famous advocate of Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount, [invoked the comparison at a Trump inauguration interfaith prayer ceremony](#), saying that if Trump moved the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, "He will be the latter-day Cyrus!"

Different goals, actually

Tamar Yonah is a West Bank settler whose radio show also appears on the website Jewish Press. Since the Jerusalem declaration, her social media feed has been buzzing with the issue of whether Trump might even be the reincarnation of Cyrus.

The similarities were striking, she said. “There are a lot of people who hate [Trump], but, then you can imagine that Cyrus when he was going to let the Jewish people go back to Jerusalem and build the Jewish Temple must have had [a lot of enemies as well who didn’t want to see this done](#),” she said.

Asaf Fried, spokesman for the United Temple Movement, a group that takes Temple Mount activism beyond the push for Jews to pray there and seeks the actual building of a Third Temple, has been making the media rounds. He has been praising Trump for taking an “enormous step” toward making a rebuilt Third Temple a reality. The move, he said, “necessarily had to come from a non-Jew in order to bring them into the process, so they will be able to take their part in the Temple.”

While some of these extreme religious Jews may be joining their Christian brothers and sisters in celebrating Trump’s bold move and sharing hopes that the building of the Temple is imminent, they prefer to ignore that the Christians and Jews want this to happen with very different goals in mind.

Jews who want to rebuild the Temple believe that [realizing this dream will revive a more complete and authentic practice](#) of Judaism including ancient rituals such as animal sacrifices, as well as the judicial, legislative and executive authority of Jewish society from centuries past. While these Jews don’t preach that this will lead directly to the coming of the messiah, presumably they hope that on some level it will help.

Their efforts are viewed as deeply controversial and even dangerous – the vast majority of mainstream Orthodox-Jewish rabbis believe that messianic redemption has to precede the building of the Temple. And, obviously, the idea of displacing Islam from one of its holiest sites, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, whether by man or God, is deeply offensive to Muslims and politically explosive, to put it mildly.

The Christian imagining of a Third Temple rebuilt by the Jews is the beginning of the end of the Jewish religion, according to this theology. Such Christians see the rebuilding of the Temple as the match that sets the world ablaze with the Battle of Armageddon. Saved from the battle will be those who accept Jesus, including the Jews, who will see the light and convert to Christianity.

They will be spared and all others destroyed, Jesus will return and a golden age of glory and peace will begin, its center Jerusalem. At that point, presumably, it won’t matter whose capital city it is or where anyone’s embassy is located.