

P06-a_The Ultimate Deal.

Since the birth of the modern nation of Israel in 1948, thousands of negotiating hours have been spent in an attempt to achieve a peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis. To this point, every attempt has utterly failed. Presidents Carter, Clinton, Bush and Obama have used the political capital and influence of the mightiest nation on earth to bring about a Middle East peace agreement. These efforts have all ended in frustration.

By Irvin Baxter.

While campaigning for the office of the presidency, candidate Barack Obama promised that he would not wait until the last year of his presidency to attempt a Middle East peace agreement. True to his word, the day after his first inauguration Obama appointed George Mitchell to be his special envoy to the Middle East. Mitchell had negotiated a peace deal between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, which was considered the most intractable conflict of the time. It was believed that if anyone could bring Israelis and Palestinians together, Mitchell could do it. However, after two years of intense effort, Mitchell resigned in disgust.

Obama ordered US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, to abstain from voting "no" to the Resolution 2334 at the UN Security Council.

For the rest of his first term, President Obama placed the Israeli-Palestinian issue on the back burner of his administration. Once elected for his second term, Obama appointed John Kerry as his Secretary of State. Kerry poured himself into the Middle East conflict with unprecedented zeal. For nine months, Kerry spent the lion's share of his time between Jerusalem and Ramallah attempting to bring Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Chairman Mahmoud Abbas together. In the end, all of Kerry's efforts came unraveled, and, like all others before him, he returned to Washington in defeat.

President Obama believed he knew what had to happen in order to reach a peace agreement. He believed Israel must withdraw to 1967 borders, with possible land swaps, and must surrender east Jerusalem to the Palestinians for their capital.

Netanyahu strongly disagreed. He contended that 1967 borders were not defensible since they would leave the nation of Israel nine miles wide at the waist. He also refused to consider the re-division of the city of Jerusalem, contending that it had been Israel's capital for 3,000 years and had never served as the capital for any other nation. The disagreement between Obama and Netanyahu grew more and more contentious throughout Obama's eight-year term. Because Netanyahu would not bow to their wishes, President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry in the end blamed Netanyahu for the failure of their peace efforts.

After the disintegration of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in 2014, the US State Department issued a warning to Netanyahu. They threatened that if Netanyahu did not move quickly to achieve a two-state solution with the Palestinians, he could not assume America would continue to protect Israel at the UN with its veto, as the U.S. had always done before.

As President Obama's term in office drew to a close, rumors circulated that Obama would get revenge on Netanyahu, especially if Hillary Clinton lost the election. It was believed that Obama would collaborate with the UN Security Council to pass a resolution condemning Israel. Obama knew this

would be very unpopular with the American people. However, once the election was over, he could do what he wanted, since he no longer faced re-election.

On December 23, 2016 Resolution 2334 was presented before the UN Security Council. The resolution stated that Israel's presence in all territories east of the 1967 borders, including east Jerusalem, was a flagrant violation of international law. The resolution was adopted 14-0 with one abstention. A simple "no" vote by the U.S. would have vetoed the entire resolution. Instead, Obama ordered US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power to abstain.

The passage of this resolution means that Israel is now in violation of international law and could therefore be placed under economic sanctions or even be subjected to military invasion by the International Community. Obama ruthlessly stabbed Israel, one of the United States' best friends, in the back. Obama's true feelings toward Israel were now laid bare for all to see!

The Election of Donald Trump.

Candidate Donald Trump promised, under his administration, America would never attempt to impose a peace agreement upon Israel. He also vowed he would move America's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, thus recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Though Netanyahu was careful to not take sides during the election, it was obvious that he was anxious to see a U.S. president that would be a true friend to Israel.

Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States on January 20, 2017. Very quickly, a visit to Washington, DC by Netanyahu was scheduled. On February 15, he was warmly received at the White House.

Because the goal of establishing two states side by side in the Holy Land appeared impossible after so many years of failure, pressure was building inside Israel to consider a one-state solution. Many members of Netanyahu's ruling coalition opposed the two-state solution contending that Israel should not give away the land promised to her by God. Because of Trump's reputation for thinking outside the box, everyone was speculating as to whether he would endorse the two-state solution as others before him had done. World leaders almost unanimously agreed the two-state solution was the only viable answer to the Palestinian-Israeli problem.

After the Trump-Netanyahu meeting, a brief press conference was held. It was obvious the relationship between the two leaders was very warm, which was quite a contrast to the tensions that had prevailed throughout the Obama administration. One of the journalists present, quickly asked the inevitable question of President Trump. Do you favor the two-state solution for solving the Middle East conflict?

Trump replied that a two-state or a one-state solution would be okay with him. He explained that whatever the two parties agreed on and whatever they were happy with, would be fine with him.

This was a classic negotiating maneuver by Trump. While locked in to the two-state solution, Israel had no leverage. As soon as Trump floated the possibility that a one-state solution could be implemented, immediately, notice was served that, if the Palestinians did not agree to a reasonable two-state solution, Israel had choices. If Israel couldn't get a satisfactory two-state solution, then it might be forced to implement a one-state solution unilaterally. If this were done with U.S. agreement, there would be

nothing the United Nations could do about it since the U.S. could veto any UN action taken against Israel.

What should Happen?

Four thousand years ago, God defined what Israel's borders should be. In Genesis 15:18 God's promise is recorded:

"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

In other places in the Bible, the area of the Promised Land is described even more definitively.

Israel regained much of the land that God promised during the 1967 War. God had restored Israel to its Promised Land. However, Israel's leaders were afraid of world opinion and the International Community, so they did not annex the land as they should have. Instead, they attempted to make peace with the people of the land.

However, God had admonished Israel to "make no covenant" with the inhabitants of the land once He placed it in their hands. God instructed Israel to tear down the high places of the inhabitants of the land, to destroy all of their idols and to utterly drive them out. After the 1967 War, Israel didn't obey God, instead they did it their way. God told Israel that if they did not utterly drive out the inhabitants of the land, they would become pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides. We have watched this warning by God play out since 1967.

Israel should not give any of the Promised Land away. If Israel would simply obey God, God would fight for her regardless of what the International Community might say or do.

Since the birth of the modern nation of Israel in 1948, thousands of negotiating hours have been spent in an attempt to achieve a peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis.

Where are We Right Now?

President Trump is wasting no time in his effort to negotiate a Palestinian-Israeli peace deal. As we go to press, he has met with King Abdullah II of Jordan, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, he has talked on the phone with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and has now invited Abbas to come to the White House. He also has met with the Deputy Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammad bin Salman. In the meantime, Trump's personal envoy Jason Greenblatt has met with both Netan- yahu and Abbas in Israel.

As is his usual style, Trump has this project on fast track. Trump and Netanyahu have agreed that the best path to peace might be a regional agreement, not just an agreement between Israelis and the Palestinians. The regional peace agreement would include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Israel.

This type of regional agreement has now become possible because these Sunni Arab nations fear the emerging dominance of Shia Iran. They know that if they ally with Israel, this will bring the military might of both Israel and the United States onto their side. President Trump has now called for a regional peace conference to be held in Jordan or in Egypt.

There's one more factor in the timing of these moves by President Trump. During his campaign, he boldly promised he would move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This would be in conformity to the U.S. Embassy Act passed by the US Congress in 1995. The US Embassy Act stated that the U.S. had to move its embassy to Jerusalem by 1999. However, lawmakers included a clause in the act that said, if the moving of the embassy would endanger national security, the president could sign a waiver and submit it to Congress every six months. Every president since 1995 has signed the waiver every six months in order to avoid moving the embassy to Jerusalem. Obama signed it again in November of 2016. This means that President Trump will either have to initiate the move of the embassy to Jerusalem or sign another waiver in May 2017. Because of his promise to the American people and because he prides himself in keeping his promises, many people believe Trump will not sign the waiver.

However, moving the embassy unilaterally will certainly inflame the anger of the Arab nations and of most of the world. It is obvious that Trump would like to have a peace deal completed by May so that he could move the embassy as part of the agreement. Will that happen? We don't know yet, but we will soon!

What will Happen?

The Bible prophesies what is ultimately going to happen:

1.

Israel's leaders will sign a peace agreement with the Palestinians, disobeying what God has explicitly instructed them to do. The prophecy stating this is given in Daniel 9:27. The passage prophesies the confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant by the Antichrist. The Abrahamic Covenant is the promise of God to Abraham that the Promised Land will belong to him and his descendants forever.

2.

The prophecy states that this agreement will be a 7-year agreement, which confirms Israel's right to exist in the Promised Land. It will be a 7-year agreement instead of a permanent agreement because one major issue will be left unresolved.

3.

A Palestinian state will be created in the West Bank—the area referred to in the Bible as Judea-Samaria.

4.

There are presently 400 to 500 thousand Jews living in the area that will become the new Palestinian state. Those Jews will be allowed to continue to live in the Palestinian state as a Jewish minority. The logic will be that there are 1.6 million Arab's living as an Arab minority in the Jewish state, so why shouldn't Jews be allowed to live in the Palestinian state?

5.

The hot dispute over control of the Temple Mount will be settled by placing it under a sharing arrangement. Both Muslims and Jews will be allowed to worship there. A law has already been introduced in the Israeli Knesset calling for placing the Temple Mount under a sharing arrangement. Revelation 11:1-2 confirms this sharing arrangement will be implemented in the times just ahead. John was told to measure the temple and those that worship therein, but the outer court of the temple to

leave out because it would remain under the control of the Gentiles. The outer court is where the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque are located.

6.

This prophecy indicates the Jews will build their temple on their portion of the Temple Mount since you obviously can't measure a temple if there's no temple to measure.

7.

The oversight of this sharing arrangement on the Temple Mount will be placed under international supervision – probably overseen by the United Nations.

8.

The status of the city of Jerusalem will be left unresolved under this agreement. The Palestinians say there will be no permanent peace agreement unless they have east Jerusalem as their capital, but the Israelis vow they will never surrender Jerusalem or divide it. When all other issues have been negotiated and only this one last issue remains, an agreement will be struck to implement those things that have been successfully negotiated, but to postpone negotiations concerning the final status of Jerusalem for a period of 7 years.

All of the above factors of the peace agreement can be clearly understood from the prophecies given in the scriptures.

The Ultimate Deal will Become the Armageddon Deal.

When the 7-year agreement expires, the Palestinians will insist that east Jerusalem be given to them as their capital. However, Israel will steadfastly resist. The United Nations will side with the Palestinians against Israel. Still Israel will not agree. Finally, the UN will deliver an ultimatum to Israel, but Israel will not submit. The UN will then authorize the invasion of Israel by the World Community. Zechariah 14:2 prophesies the invasion:

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”

Israel will fight valiantly against the armies of the World Community; however, Israel will slowly be driven back before the superior forces of the UN. Finally, Israel will make her last stand on Jerusalem, yet half of Jerusalem will fall into the hands of the world government. It will appear that Israel is on the brink of annihilation.

At this critical time, Israel will cry for her Messiah to come and save her. Zechariah 14:3-4 describes what happens next:

“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

Jesus will return to earth at this strategic time. He will defeat the armies of the world, and will establish His promised Kingdom of God upon earth. This will begin 1,000 years of peace on earth, goodwill toward men!