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THERE WILL BE PEACE – AS LONG AS ISRAEL IS NOT JEWISH

There is a story that a king in the Middle Ages was struggling over the existence of God. So he asked an advisor to explain in one word the existence of God. The advisor answered, “Jews.”

Yes, the existence of the Jewish people is a constant reminder that God is still in charge. Thus Satan, who wants to be in charge, is constantly trying to destroy the Jewish people and deny them their homeland.

While many of us believe present-day Israel and the West Bank including Jerusalem belong to the Jewish people, Satan is trying to prevent them from occupying the land. How is he doing this? He gets the world to see the issue as two people groups fighting over a piece of land both have lived in. Thus a two-state solution seems like the only answer even though it has been tried before.

The impression we receive from the media and our government leaders is, if the Israelis and the Palestinians can come to an agreement on borders and how to divide Jerusalem, there will be peace. Sadly, this will not bring peace for the issue runs much deeper and it's spiritual.

The root issue is Israel being a Jewish nation. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 1997 demanded that the Palestinians accept Israel's permanent existence as a Jewish state. The reaction from the Palestinian leadership was clear. An example is Saeb Erekat, head of the PLO Negotiations Department, who said, “The Palestinians will never acknowledge Israel's Jewish identity...There is no country in the world where religious and national identities are intertwined.” His comments are interesting in light of Muslim countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Binyamin Netanyahu has reiterated Olmert's point in his diplomacy.

The “Jewish nation” stand held by today's Israeli leadership at first glance looks like a new demand on the part of the Israelis, yet this position has actually been part of International Law for some time. It was made so by earlier rulings by the League of Nations and then later the United Nations.

At the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was divided up into mandates by the League of Nations. At the San Remo (Italy) Conference, the victorious allies on April 24, 1920, with the approval of the United States, awarded mandates over Palestine and Iraq to Britain and mandates over Syria and Lebanon to France. This meant these nations held trusteeship over these mandated areas for the League of Nations until the areas could become self-supporting and self-governing. The Council of the League of Nations put the agreed-upon mandates into operation in September 1923.

The Palestine Mandate was very specific in its purpose which included “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

After receiving the Palestinian Mandate, the British encountered nothing but trouble with the rising Jewish immigration into the Mandate, and with Arab riots and the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. These events forced the British to express their desire to place the problems of Palestine Mandate before the newly-founded United Nations. The Transjordan, east of the river Jordan, portion of the Mandate was already viewed as a separate nation; thus Jordan was declared an independent nation on May 25, 1946. The land west of the Jordan River now became the center of debate for the U.N. The

issue was over whether this land should be partitioned between Jews and Arabs or whether it should all belong to the Jews.

The result was U.N. Resolution #181 adopted by the General Assembly on November 27, 1947. The resolution recommended the division of the British Mandate of Palestine (west of the Jordan River) into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area being under special international protection, belonging to neither of the two states. The resolution sought to give partial satisfaction to two competing nationalist movements, Zionism (Jewish nationalism) and Arab nationalism, as well as to resolve the plight of Jews displaced as a result of the Holocaust. A transitional period under United Nations auspices was to begin with the adoption of the resolution, and was scheduled to last until the two states were established.

The proposed plan was accepted by the leaders of the Jewish community in Palestine. However, the plan was rejected by leaders of the Arab community. The following May 14, 1948, the Jews living in the area declared the State of Israel as an independent nation in the land set aside for them by the U.N. This resulted in an attack on the newly founded nation by its Arab neighbors. While Israel survived the attack, what is called today the West Bank and the City of Jerusalem came under the control of Jordan. Thus Israel's eternal capital was no longer accessible to the Jews.

Not satisfied with the West Bank and Jerusalem, the Arab neighbors tried to destroy Israel and take all of the land of the Palestinian Mandate and not leave any of it for a Jewish homeland. The "Six-day War" of 1967 had the opposite result - all of the land of the British Mandate west of the Jordan River came under Israeli control.

While the leaders of world see West Bank settlements and Jerusalem as the key roadblocks to peace, the real issue is Israel being a Jewish state.

Further, the issue of a Jewish state brings into question legitimacy of several other Middle East countries. If the treaty creating a "homeland for the Jews" is not applicable for today, then Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq are not legal nations either as they came into existence under the same policy of the League of Nations.

The scriptures are very precise about how Israel will be central to all that happens in the world in the Last Days. It seems like the words of Zechariah 12:3, "*I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples*" are coming true today. So we can see Israel's existence as a Jewish state is what Satan is trying to prevent.

-Larry Jaffrey

FUEL FOR ISRAEL

Secular Israelis have long complained that Moses led his people to the only spot in the Middle East that didn't have oil. Bible scholars have countered by saying the oil just hadn't been found yet based on Duet. 33:24 "*And of Asher he said: "Let him be favored by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil."*

Last year, just hours after a cease-fire began in the Gaza Strip, Israel announced the discovery of a major natural gas field off its northern Mediterranean coast. The reports said there was enough natural gas to meet Israel's needs for the near future. Interestingly, the find was just off the coast where the tribe of Asher had settled.

Then, just this past month, the U.S. Geological Survey published a report estimating that in the same area mentioned above, there is a reserve "mean of 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and a mean of 122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas." If these estimates hold true, this could mean Israel has access to of the largest petroleum reserves in the world.

Maybe this is the "spoil" or "plunder" that Gog desires to take in his invasion of Israel.

Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: "You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.'"" (Ezekiel 38:10-12 NKJV)

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