

Two State Solution: Just and Loving or Human Folly?

By: Sharona

Last week, Moran wrote an article about the Two State solution from a biblical perspective. Many of our readers would agree with much of what was said but do not know much about the arguments of those in favor of two states, Israel and Palestine. Hence, we are going to address this with a couple of articles about the positions in favor of the two state solution, and where they fall short in light of God's Word.

In doing this, I would like everyone reading to keep in mind that we all see and know "in part" (I Corinthians 13:9-12) and thankfully we have a gracious God who holds us responsible only for what we know. So, regardless of where anyone stands regarding this issue, we are likely all only seeing part of the picture and will mainly be held responsible for what we know of God and what His Word says.

However, none of this is to say that God does not care what we believe or how we live. Unfortunately, one of the biggest lies that has entered the Body of Messiah, especially among my generation of young adults, is that it is legalistic to stand for one Truth or to take the Bible too literally (Relativism and Legalism). I believe that this arose as an opposition to the often legalistic elements within the Body – those who show no love to the sinners and mainly define themselves by what they are against and never reflect what they are for. So, an imbalance has grown within the Body between these legalistic elements and those who do not stand for anything and treat God's grace as cheap, to be used as an excuse for any lifestyle rather than a catalyst for changing lives. It is often this humanistic view of God that has led to many supporting worldly political solutions rather than believing in God's promises. This is not the only group that supports a "two state solution" but is the one that I will address in this article.

Often those in the trendy, humanistic Christianity line of thought say that God is too gracious and loving to choose Israelis over Palestinians and He would never support the injustices that occur against Palestinians. Well, I would agree! God IS gracious and does not consider Israelis or Jews to be inherently better than Palestinians. In fact, Israelis do commit injustices and there are racist Israelis who mistreat Palestinians, just as the same goes for racist Palestinians who commit injustice. Those Israelis who commit injustice will be held accountable before God for their actions, just as anyone will. Israel is a nation that is not collectively following God and, just as with any other nation, there are good people and there are those who are doing very wrong things.

The problem is the exaggerated portrayals of Israel that many receive by watching the media. Israel is not perfect but it is not, in fact, anywhere comparable to an "apartheid state" such as occurred in South Africa. Keep in mind that it is this same western media who only a short time back portrayed the Assads as progressive and Asma al-Assad as "an element of light in a country full of shadow zones" (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/11/world/middleeast/syrian-conflict-cracks-carefully-polished-image-of-assad.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) Now they have quickly changed their tune.

Regarding God's grace and His fairness, we must also trust that He is God and has a more complete picture than we do. Perhaps, it is the most gracious and fair thing that Israelis and Palestinians live together in the land and that this will lead to the restoration of Israel and a massive revival among Palestinians rather than separate and divide the land almost like a bitter divorce. Perhaps there is something much greater that God wants to do and we have to trust Him and not the world for this. We have to trust that His unconditional promises will be achieved and it will be GOOD, just as He is good! If He does not stand by His promises over Israel, how can any believer trust that He will be faithful to His Bride, the Body of Messiah, either? If He is gracious, can He not be gracious to Israel and redeem her as He said he would? These promises include that once God allows the Jewish people and Israel to return, they will never be uprooted again (Amos 9:15) and that those who divide the physical land will be judged (Joel 3:2). These are hard to interpret in any other way than Israel's return to the land, unless the Bible is not to be taken literally.

These promises do NOT include racism against Palestinians or a justification for Israelis or the Israeli government to get away with any and all actions, just as promises over the Body of Messiah do not mean that members within will not be held accountable for the ways in which they were not acting as a light or in which they abused others. However, the promises over the Body of Messiah still stand just as the promises over Israel also do. If we treat these as mutually exclusive we are limiting God to our own intelligence.

Even in the New Testament (Romans 11), Paul gives a very clear teaching on Israel's future salvation and how it will mean "life from the dead" (11:12-15) to the world and that the promises over Israel still stand. He goes on to say that these things are a "mystery" (11:25) and further praises God, saying "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments...Who has known the mind of the Lord?" (11:33-36). Paul is clearly speaking against trying to figure it all out with humanistic wisdom.

Now this does not permit us to mindlessly accept anything that Israel does without criticism. There are some Christian Zionists who see any criticism of an Israeli's actions as anti-Zionist or even anti truth. If we know for a fact that someone committed an injustice, then criticize. But also think critically of what the media feeds the public and do not criticize something you do not know.

While we truly appreciate the support of Christian Zionists and the majority of these supporters of Israel are very solid in their walk with the Lord, there are a few who have tarnished the reputation of Christian Zionism to those who are skeptical. For instance, there is a segment of Christian Zionists who have the tendency to mindlessly give support to all that the secular Israeli government does or to worship Israel and Israelis, causing non-Zionistic believers to steer clear of any support of Israel. There are even some in Christian Zionism who believe that Jews and Israelis do not need Yeshua as their Messiah as they have their own track to salvation! This clearly is against Scripture, as Yeshua is the only path to salvation for Jew and Gentile alike.

Furthermore, all believers who support Israel should be pointing people to God and who He is and not to His imperfect creation-Israel. Those who see an unrelenting support of all things

Jewish and all things Israeli in certain believers often rightfully criticize this. The problem is that they go on to throw the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak.

In sum, as believers, we need to be grounded in truth and be seeking God's justice, not humanistic justice. God IS gracious and He has a beautiful, redemptive plan for this region that will be the most loving thing for all groups of people. However, because of the power of His plan, the enemy is using the world to try and prevent this by all means possible, and to divide His land up. Being against this division of land is not unloving or unjust if we are grounded in the love of God and desire His plan for reconciliation rather than the world's. Living here, I know that things are far less clear than both certain Christian Zionists or humanistic Christians would make it, especially if they have never been to Israel. So let's keep our eyes on the God who will somehow use this region to do something absolutely amazing, not because the region itself is supremely important, but rather because the enemy has so ravished the area that God wants to show that He can take the most damaged and disputed place (and people) and make it whole.

At the end of a Psalm that is interestingly about the forgiveness of Israel's sins (Psalm 85:10-13), the Psalmist says in Hebrew "*chesed ve emet niphgeshu, tzedek ve shalom nashku.*" When translated literally, this reads, "*grace and truth have met, justice (or righteousness) and peace have embraced/kissed.*" It is a beautiful picture of the complexity of God and of His plan for this land. We can't limit Him with our human wisdom but what He does will be good, because He is good! The NIV reading of this passage reads:

"Love and faithfulness meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the Earth, righteousness looks down from Heaven. The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest. Righteousness goes before Him, and prepares a way for His steps."