

The Two State Solution: What Does the Bible Say About It?

On January 26, 2013, I read an article on a popular Israeli news website entitled, “US: Two-State Solution Cannot Wait”. The topic of this article was regarding the most likely scenario that as soon as the new Israeli Government will be formed, the US will start to put pressure on Israel and the Palestinians to get back into “Peace Talks” which will ultimately result in the two state solution.

Just a few days before I read this article, I had a conversation with someone about the Israeli elections. During our conversation, I mentioned that I couldn’t vote for anyone who would give up more land for “Peace”, and that I don’t believe in the Two State “solution”. The person I spoke with has lived in Israel since before 1948; he has fought in many wars, has seen friends, loved ones, and others pay the very heavy price of war, and is ready to make any concession for peace. He believes that only a two state solution, where Israel and Palestine will co-exist side by side, is the only possibility for bringing true peace to this region. He tried to convince me of this, and even wanted me to read a book that speaks about the peace process. I told him that I fully understand his position, that I, too, have paid the heavy price of losing people whom I loved to war, and in fact, am still paying the price of that reality. In fact, before I became a follower of the Messiah – before I believed in the Word of the Living God – I thought that in order to achieve true peace, Israel would need to pay any price necessary. However, I told him that now I base my opinions on God and His Word alone, and that a Two State “solution” is actually very much *against* Scripture.

This morning, when I asked my staff to pray for me before I began writing this article, they asked me if it was going to be a political article. I smiled because it is very difficult to talk about Israel without being political! But I told them that, no, it would not be political but rather Biblical. I am aware that some of you who are reading this now may think that I am talking about politics; if that is you, then I am asking you to take a moment to pray that you would approach it with a clear and objective mind. This is a very sensitive issue; no doubt, men and women greater than I have been dealing with this difficult issue for years, with no resolution. It is a conflict that has cost the people on both sides dearly; people have lost their homes, their livelihood, have been treated poorly & unjustly, and have even lost their very lives. It is something that I understand very well, and am very sensitive to. In fact, I don’t blame those who believe that a two state solution is the only solution, as once I also believed that. I understand very well the difficult struggle of both Israelis and Palestinians every day. Let me say, however, that despite this, nothing can compare to what we will endure if we take stances that oppose the Word of God! That is my primary concern, and the reason I have chosen to address this issue here.

In one of my blog entries, I wrote, “As people who identify ourselves as followers of the Messiah, let me suggest that we are to base our opinions on what is written in God’s Word. While our feelings and perspectives may be important, they are not unbiased or pure. We need to set them aside and make our stand on the core values

of the Word; this is indeed God's standard by which we are to live." So let's see what His Word has to say about the issue of the Land.

Before entering this issue, there are two basic, foundational facts that we must agree upon. The first is from the Book of Beginnings (Genesis): "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Gen 1:1 God is the creator of the universe; this world belongs to Him and Him alone. He is sovereign – there is none above Him – and He is able to do whatever He desires with this world. With that, I would like to remind us all that God is in control over all, even if at times it may not seem that way. The second fact we must agree on is that the Bible (Genesis to Revelation) is the Word of the Living God, and that we are to use it as our road map for life, thus influencing everything that we think and do. If we can't agree on these first two points, it may be impossible to reach an understanding of the issue at hand.

So, what does the Bible have to say about this issue? Does God indeed care about the Land, or only for people and their souls as some may argue? I believe that we need to take the fullness of God's Word and not pick and choose according to our likes and dislikes, or what is comfortable for us; there is a direct connection which we cannot ignore regarding the people, the Land, and God's plan of salvation and judgment for the entire world.

Let's begin with the Book of Beginnings, which is the foundational book of the entire Word of God. God makes an *unconditional* covenant with Abraham and his descendants:

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the **land** which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Gen 12:1-3

Please note that God chose Abram; He was the one who promised to bless him and make his name great. Note also that it was God who appointed Abram to go to a specific land, which God had ordained:

"And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him." Gen 12:7

What is important to understand is that God also made it clear that this land that He gave to Abram was also to be kept for his descendants. We see this as God confirms His promise again in Gen 15:8:

"On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and

the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”

Indeed, the boundaries of the land God promised to Abram reach far beyond present-day Israel!

As we continue with our study, we will see a very interesting and crucial development in Scripture, as God specifies which of Abram descendants He will establish with Covenant through:

“And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!” But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. “And as for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”

Gen 17:18-21

God makes it very clear that the original blessing, which also included the Land, continues with Isaac. That does not mean that God has neglected Ishmael and his descendants, however! God promised to bless them, which we can clearly see today; the Arab nations have been blessed with tremendous wealth not only in the amount of land, oil, and affluence, but also in the fact that many of them are returning to the God of Israel in great numbers through faith in His Son, Yeshua. However, once again, we can't ignore the fact that God made the original covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

“Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name.” Thus He called him Israel. God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you. “And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you.” Gen 35:9-12

Here, three very interesting things happen:

1. God Himself appears to Jacob, who was Isaac's son, and blesses him as well as giving him a new name “Israel”.
2. God tells Jacob (Israel) that a nation and “company of nations” will be born from him.

3. God affirms to Jacob (Israel) that the original covenant, which was and is an **unconditional** covenant, will continue through him and his descendants, i.e. the nation of Israel today.

One of the primary sources of the disagreement within the Body of Messiah (Jew and Gentile alike) regarding the Land is the debate over conditional vs. unconditional covenants. Yes, after the Abrahamic Covenant, which was, as we saw, an **unconditional** covenant came the Mosaic covenant, which was and still is **conditional**. However, one needs to understand both in order to see the Mosaic within its purpose and context. The Mosaic Covenant was, and I believe still is, intended to lead people to recognize their need for redemption (Galatians 3:24). God is holy and He demands holiness; our holiness can only be obtained in perfection through the perfect, spotless Lamb Yeshua. I am not going to enter into the debate about the "law" since this is not the time nor the place, but the fact is that the Mosaic Covenant was conditional, and because Israel broke it, she was sent into exile.

The glorious reality, however, is that while mankind is not able to uphold our end of the covenant (because of sin), God does! He keeps His promises and stays true to His covenant to the very end. Israel is a prime example of God's faithfulness. The **only** reason that Israel exists today is because God is faithful and true; He kept His original promise to Israel's forefathers, and He has a plan of salvation *through* Israel *for* the entire world. God cannot rescind His promises, because that is simply not who He is:

"Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day, And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: "if this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever." Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD." Jeremiah 31:35-37

To further expand on God's faithfulness, one cannot ignore the many prophecies about the re-gathering of Israel back to the **Land** that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

"Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I shall gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I shall give you the land of Israel." Ezekiel 11:17

"Therefore behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the and

of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.” Jeremiah 16:14-15

“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once?” Isaiah 66:8

These are just a few examples among many scriptures that speak directly to the re-establishment of Israel as a direct fulfillment of prophecy. This brings up a very important choice of words that many people (believers included) use to refer to Israel: “occupiers”. Not only does this reveal a deep contempt some people hold towards Israel and the Jewish people, but it also reveals their ignorance of the fact that Israel today is actually fulfilling its inheritance of the Land, which God had promised thousands of years ago.

Now we get to the issue of “Two States” – Israel and Palestine. Everything up to this point has been to establish what God’s Word says about the Land of Israel. All of the above is the reason why I personally don’t believe in the Two State Solution, and what’s more, the reason that I believe that we are, in fact, to stand firmly *against* it.

The sad reality is that humanism – the elevation of man above all – has pervaded the Body of Messiah throughout the world, which partially explains why so many followers of Yeshua really struggle to take a stand on this issue. Yes, as I stated in the opening of this article, there has been much suffering on both sides of the “fence”. Yes, people have lost homes that have been in families for generations, and many people have been displaced from their land. Yes, innocent people have been harshly and unjustly treated. Yet, we fail to recognize that the issue of the Land is not one of “right and wrong” from a human perspective; it is about what God has decided should be done with this Land. Period.

So, what then, are we to do? Where do we draw the line? Let’s go back to our foundation, His Word. He gives a very clear warning to those who seek to divide the Land that essentially belongs to Him:

“For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations, And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.”

Joel 3:1-2

According to this prophecy, the nations will put pressure on Israel to divide the Land. And they will pay heavily for it. The reality is that whether or not there will be a Palestine on God’s Land, those who are responsible will pay dearly. God promises to enter into judgment with them, which is a terribly frightening consequence. It is not my intention to suggest the solution to this crisis, but rather

to clearly state that a “Two State Solution” will only bring further chaos and bloodshed to this part of the world. His Word will not return void!

It is easy to despair in these times. My hope rests on other promises of God in His Word, promises that will be fulfilled, such as Isaiah 19, which speaks of a day that Egypt, Assyria and Israel will all worship the God of Israel together in peace; promises of the day when we will no longer hear the sound of weeping in the streets of Jerusalem. What a glorious day that will be!

In closing, anyone who thinks that man-made peace will prevail is wrong. The reality is that there is no easy solution, and definitely not one that will bring **true peace** to this hostile and unsettled region. The anti-messiah may force a temporary false peace, but it will ultimately be upon our Messiah’s return to Jerusalem that we will finally know true peace in the world.

Praying for His Return!