

Israel and Palestine: Here We Go Again

Israel and the Palestinian Authority were back in Washington last week as the long-dormant peace talks resumed, prompting some observers to ask, “Why are these peace talks different from any other peace talks?”

I think it can be fairly stated that no people have spoken about peace so often, written about it so extensively, but experienced so little of it in recent history. Israel’s intense thirst for peace coupled with the Jewish state’s lack of it is indeed one of the great paradoxes of modern times.

Peace is, at its core, an essentially biblical concept, deeply rooted in the ancient religious texts of Israel. The word *shalom* is found 376 times in the Torah, or the Tanach—the Jewish Bible, known to most of the world as the Old Testament.

The word is used in many different contexts with a variety of meanings. However, the sheer number of times the word *shalom* appears in the Bible makes it abundantly clear that peace is a central biblical and universal value that all nations are advised to pursue, but specifically the nation of Israel, who presented the Torah’s lofty concepts to the entire world.

“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (Ps. 34:14, NIV).

With the return to the peace table, Israel seems to be acting according to its biblical instructions by seeking peace. The problem with this perception is that the biblical guidelines don’t encourage peace negotiations that are based on faulty premises, such as handing over Israel’s God-given land to an armed band of terrorists.

Secretary of State John Kerry has called for Israel to accept

the establishment of an additional Arab (primarily Muslim) state based on the indefensible pre-1967 borders, which would place Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport easily within range of enemy missiles.

According to this proposal, in exchange for freeing terrorists now and eventually surrendering its high elevations, the mountains of Samaria and the Judean hills (often referred to as the West Bank), Israel would receive written promises of peace from the Palestinian Authority, backed by the Obama administration.

This "land for peace" formula has been the standard for some 40 years of summits, talks, negotiations and shuttles that seem to go nowhere and have only increased the ravenous appetite of Israel's enemies, resulting in a sharp increase in terrorism and the frequency of war.

The new talks are destined for a similar fate, despite the promotion and despite the hype. Apparently, we will continue to play this dangerous game for a few more years, until we start listening to the following words that were spoken long ago in anticipation of today's events:

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace'—when there is no peace" (Jer. 8:11, NKJV).

"Peace is that brief glorious moment in history when everybody stands around reloading." —Thomas Jefferson

David Rubin, former Mayor of Shiloh, Israel, is founder and president of the Shiloh Israel Children's Fund, , established after he and his 3-year-old son were wounded in a terrorist shooting attack. He is the author of three books, including his new book, *Peace for Peace: Israel in the New Middle East*, available on or at .