

Who Are Those Israeli Settlers?

With the current heavy pressure on Israel to freeze all building permits for Jews in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), we need to once again ask the question why. Why is Israel, the Jewish state, the only country that, in a most unusual paradox, is expected to discriminate against Jews?

The fact is that the Jews in Judea and Samaria are known to the world as settlers and the term “Israeli settler” has often sparked controversy. When spoken by Israel’s enemies, it is used as a pejorative phrase, denoting all Jewish settlement in Israel.

It’s no accident that the Arab nations, as well as the quasi-governmental Palestinian Authority, use textbooks with maps that do not show an existing state of Israel. For them, there is no acceptable Jewish community anywhere in Israel, and the freezing of Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria is but a first step toward the expulsion of all Jews from their entire land.

Setting aside those uncomfortable facts, which prove the hypocrisy of Israel’s adversaries, let’s examine Israel’s claim to Judea and Samaria. In order to do so, it’s instructive to focus on the historical record, which, in Middle Eastern terms, brings us back to biblical times.

“How long will you wait before coming to take possession of the land that the Lord, God of your fathers, has given to you?” (Josh. 18:3).

That commandment to take possession of the land of Israel, then known as the land of Canaan, was given at the tabernacle site in Shiloh, in the heart of Samaria. The roots of Israel are in the hills of Samaria, north of Jerusalem. Those roots

are deep, and any talk of forcing Israel to surrender this region is anti-biblical and denies historical precedent.

“And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelled in the plains of Mamre which are in Hebron; and he built there an altar to God” (Gen. 13:18).

So, too, the ancient city of Hebron in the hills of Judea, along with Bethlehem and other sites in that region just south of Jerusalem, prove the historical roots of Israel in those areas.

When we talk about the so-called West Bank, we are talking about the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria, the cradle of Western civilization. These areas were recaptured by Israel in the miraculous Six-Day War in 1967. Any talk of giving those areas over to a Palestinian Authority comprised of terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, Fatah and Islamic jihad is irresponsible at best, and treasonous as well.

Yet the worst thing about such a surrender would be the implicit refusal to say “thank You” to the Almighty God who brought us back from our forced exile of almost 2,000 years and replanted us in our land. May we be worthy of protecting and cherishing that divine inheritance.

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