

Israeli announces 10 month halt to settlement construction

Written by Chris Perver

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Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu announced yesterday that Israel was planning to cease settlement construction in Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem for a [10 month period](#), following pressure from the US government. Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority broke down following Israel's skirmish with Hamas at the beginning of the year. Elections both in Israel and the United States had also hindered progress in recommencing the talks. In an attempt to redress the past 'mistakes' of the Bush administration, US President Obama wanted to be 'seen' by the Islamic world to be exerting pressure on Israel to make peace with the Palestinians. This desire translated into a change in foreign policy from the previous administration, and both Secretary of State Clinton and Obama demanded that Israel [halt](#)

all settlement construction beyond the green line. That call was repeated by politicians from the European Union,

[Britain](#)

,
[France](#)

and many other countries. But the Israeli government was reluctant to implement any plan which would result in them relinquishing sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem. Talks with Washington continued and eventually Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to curtail settlement construction in Judea and Samaria, in an effort to bring the Palestinians back to the negotiating table. That despite the fact that no objection was made to settlement construction even while the negotiations were being carried out with the previous government, and that it only became an issue as soon as President Obama brought it up. But the Palestinian Authority objected, and now Netanyahu is under pressure to agree to a complete freeze in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, excluding construction work currently underway.

Quote: *"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the freeze 'not a simple step, not an easy one, which has much more advantages than disadvantages.' 'Under the international circumstances that have been created, this move advances the broader national interests of Israel,' said Netanyahu. 'It allows us to present the world with a simple truth: the Israeli government wants to enter negotiations with the Palestinians, is taking practical steps in order to do so, and is very serious in its intentions of promoting peace.'"*

Of course the latest offer has also been rejected by the Palestinian Authority. And as Netanyahu says, it is a very difficult step. On the one hand, Israel risks undermining its legitimacy in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, by agreeing a halt to the construction. The demand to halt the settlements is based on a premise of the international community that Israel has no right to be there in the first place, and they will interpret Israel's tacit agreement as an acknowledgment of that 'fact'. On the other hand perhaps Netanyahu calculated the risks, and he is seeking to carry favour with the American administration ahead of a planned Iranian strike, while knowing that the Palestinians would not accept the offer and Israel would not be obliged to make it permanent. But looking at it from a Scriptural perspective, I believe that this halt in settlement construction in Israel's Biblical heartland represents yet another stepping stone towards the dividing of the land and the city of Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah foretold that the status of Jerusalem would become such a hotly contested issue before the return of

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Christ, that all the nations of the world would literally be falling over themselves to try and resolve it (Zechariah 12:2-3). But it won't be resolved, and for two reasons. Firstly, because the Bible states that it will be the Antichrist who will divide the land for gain (Daniel 11:39, Revelation 11:2). That is why Israel has been unable to make peace with the Arab world for the past 60 years. And secondly, it is Christ who will resolve it (Zechariah 14:2-3). This situation has been allowed by God for a purpose, to turn the nation of Israel back to Himself (Luke 13:35), and to bring judgement to the nations (Revelation 19:15). That is why this so-called 'peace process' will run and run. As Christians, we don't have to despair. God is in complete control of world events, and He is working everything out for His glory. As Joseph said to his brethren, what man meant for evil, God meant for good. Not that God is the author of evil, but that He is able to bring good out of it, because He knows the end from the beginning (Revelation 1:8).

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

The Bible says of Joseph, that God sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant (Psalm 115:17). The life of Joseph was a miniature picture of what God would ultimately do in sending His only Son into this world. Men thought evil against Him and nailed Him to a cross. But God meant it unto good, to save much people alive. Don't despair at the events that are taking place in this world today. But recognize that God has a plan in all of it, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today. He is the only one who can forgive sins, as He alone paid the price on Calvary. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

Hebrews 2:9-10

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Source [YNet News](#)