

## A Palestinian state?

1)

In recent times, the topic of a "Palestinian state" has become topical again. What is our position as Christians? Should we even take a stand on such political issues? Some Christians say: "I'm definitely in favor of Israel, but when it comes to issues related to the state, things get too political for me, so I prefer to stay out of it." Some responses to this:

- Let us remember that even in the time of the Old Testament, the Israelites repeatedly had to make political decisions: who they should appoint as leaders, whether and with whom they should form alliances, when to wage war, etc.
- The Lord Jesus deliberately stated that we are "in the world," spoke of taxes to the state, and had to refer to wars. And the letters of the New Testament address our relationship with secular authorities.
- GOD is the LORD of history. And because HE essentially determines history with Israel, in Israel, and for Israel, we cannot read the Bible without considering current events in the Jewish state. Jesus specifically calls us to pray for Israel and for Jerusalem.

2)

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has granted His beloved people—and no other people—a very specific land ( Numbers 34; Deuteronomy 11:24; Joshua 1:2-4; Ezekiel 47:13 ff.). The Lord had already promised Abram: "All the land that you see, I will give it to you and your descendants forever." (Genesis 13:14).

Even if the biblically mentioned national borders are partly different because they concern different temporal epochs - one thing is clear with regard to the current situation: Judea & Samaria (J&S, called "West Bank" in political discussions) and the Gaza Strip belong to the land promised to Israel.

3)

Now, more than 140 of the 193 UN member states have recognized a "Palestinian state," recently joined by Slovenia, Norway, Ireland, and Spain (which, incidentally, brusquely rejects recognition of Catalan independence). And other European nations are considering such a step.

The governments of these nations are thus consciously or unconsciously ignoring the fact that the recognition of a Palestinian state is tantamount to a reward for the barbaric acts of terrorism.

Interestingly, the same UN that allows so many states to recognize a Palestinian state (albeit without binding force) grants the "Palestinians" permanent refugee status. The special UN agency UNRWA deliberately perpetuates this status. One would think: either refugee camp or state...

What actually constitutes a state? Defined borders and a unified leadership with the authority to govern the country. What about this in the supposed Palestinian state? Neither is present!

By the way—and this is very important — the "Palestinians" are not an independent people with their own culture, language, or religion; they are Arabs like everyone else. (That's why I put the term in quotation marks.) The term was first coined in the 1960s by the terrorist Y. Arafat.

“Palestinians” live both in the Gaza Strip and in J&S.

Since the Oslo Accords, IJ&S has been divided into three political control zones. Zones A and B are home to only "Palestinians." In Zone A, they exercise civil administration and are also responsible for security. In Zone B, they must ensure public safety together with Israel. Zone C, where Jews and "Palestinians" live, is controlled by the Israeli military. A glance at the map reveals a patchwork. This alone raises the question: how could a Palestinian state be governable if it were to cover this territory?

And if such a state also includes the Gaza Strip, it should be remembered that the two territories are far apart – not just geographically, but also politically: The terrorist organization Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) under Fatah leader Abbas, which governs the J&S zones, may pursue the same goal of eliminating the Jewish state, but they pursue different strategies and are at times bitterly hostile to each other. For years, Abbas was barred from entering the 40% of the territory he supposedly represented as "president" at the UN (Gaza) , and for over 19 years he has avoided presidential elections out of fear of losing to Hamas.

4)

The nations promoting a Palestinian state seem to have the best interests of the "Palestinians." But couldn't their leaders have long ago used the massive influx of international aid for the benefit of the population instead of filling their own pockets and building terror tunnels and weapons arsenals? Corruption is

widespread, and the World Bank recently warned of fiscal collapse in the PA. If Hamas and Fatah have failed to establish a functioning community for decades or have deliberately prevented it, what would be expected of a Palestinian state?

And do the “Palestinians” actually want such a state themselves?

This is related to the issue of the “two-state solution.”

5)

The "two-state solution" is an American import, as George W. Bush was the first to propose it in 2002, and it was included in the so-called Road Map in 2003. Since then, it has been considered the solution to the Middle East conflict: a state "on the side of Israel." The basic idea is the formula "land for peace."

The proponents ignore some important points:

- "Land for peace" has never led to peace; quite the opposite: After Israel surrendered the Sinai (which it had won in the war) under international pressure, ISIS took hold there. When Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah gained a foothold there. The surrender of parts of J&S and the complete withdrawal from Gaza led to years of hostile attacks.
- Arafat had already rejected an offer from Ehud Barak for 97% of J&S, and Abbas had rejected the offer of 93% from Ehud Olmert in 2008.
- The new state would not be "alongside" Israel, but in its center, in the biblical primeval land Judea & Samaria. The distance from the west of J&S to the metropolitan area of Tel Aviv is barely 20 kilometers, a springboard for hostile attacks.
- The new state would have to be demilitarized. The "Palestinians" are not prepared to do this.
- The “Palestinians” claim the entire territory of Israel from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea (“ from the river to the sea “).

What position does the EU take? It also pushes for the implementation of the "two-state solution" (although the German government e.g. repeatedly emphasizes that Israel's security is part of the Federal Republic's "raison d'état"). Are the above-mentioned facts simply ignored? Would this security be guaranteed, given that the "Palestinians" are raised from childhood to hate Jews and kill them in order to become martyrs?

6)

If, as stated at the beginning, we cannot separate the developments in and around Israel from appreciating the Word of God, what does the Bible show us?

- J&S is biblical heartland. In Hebron, part of Judea, Abraham deliberately purchased a burial plot for himself, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah, even though it had been offered to him as a gift.
- In Judah, in Bethlehem, our Savior was born.
- The LORD JESUS worked in J&S (see e.g. John 4:4 ff, where the grave of Joseph in Samaria is also mentioned).
- For almost 400 years, the tabernacle (predecessor of the temple) stood in Shiloh, a city in Samaria.
- When the Bible speaks of the “mountains of Israel,” it refers to J&S (a look at topographical maps also shows this).  
In Ezek. 36:8-10, the Lord promises: "But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people... And I will multiply men in you." Ezek. 37:22: "And behold, I will make them (the sons of Israel) one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel."
- Regarding Gaza, we read that it belonged to the inheritance of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:47). King Solomon's kingdom included Gaza (1 Kings 5:4).
- In Obadiah 19, “the lowland ( Shefelah = the coastal strip between Jaffa and Gaza), the territory of the Philistines” is mentioned as one of the regions that will ultimately belong to Israel
- Ultimately, according to God's plan, the Gaza Strip is to be reserved for the Jewish people. For we read about the "Day of the LORD's wrath," that is, the end times, in Zeph 2:5ff: "Woe to the inhabitants of the land of the sea... ! The word of the LORD concerning you is: 'Canaan, land of the Philistines, I will destroy you.... It will be a land for the remnant of the house of Judah ...'"
- Although the Creator God, of course, owns the entire universe, He explicitly refers to the land allotted to the Jewish people—and only to this— as " My land." "The land belongs to Me" (Deut. 11:12).
- "The Lord was jealous for His land" (Joel 2:18). Therefore, He proclaims that He will one day gather the nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. "And there I will enter into judgment with them for My people and My heritage Israel, whom they scattered among the nations, and they divided My land..." (Joel 3:2).

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