Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has unveiled plans for a partial disengagement from Judea and Samaria to US Middle East Envoy Senator George Mitchell, as President Barack Obama steps up efforts to consolidate progress since the Annapolis peace summit in November 2007. The US senator, who's report was used as the foundation for the Good Friday peace agreement in my own country, was sent by Obama to the Middle East shortly after he took office. On Wednesday he met the Israeli Prime Minister to discuss the progress of the talks which were originally intended to bring about the establishment of a Palestinian state by the end of last year. Olmert had publicly stated following his deposition from the leadership of Kadima that he believed Israel
must withdraw
from almost all territory liberated during the Six Day War if the nation is to find peace with their neighbours. Shortly before the talks broke down, due to his ongoing political scandal and the looming Israeli elections, the Israeli Premier is said to have offered Abbas a deal. 60,000 Israelis would be evacuated from Judea and Samaria, and Arab neighbourhoods in east Jerusalem would be transferred to the Palestinian Authority. Israel would keep some areas in east Jerusalem in return for land in the south of Israel, which would be used for a land bridge between Gaza and the West Bank. Control over the holy sites would be transferred to an international authority. The revelations have caused consternation in the political arena, with former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu promising to keep Jerusalem united under his leadership, and Kadima leader
Tzipi Livni
publicly distancing herself from Olmert's stance.

Quote: *"Tel Aviv - Outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to transfer the Arab neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty and evacuate some 60,000 Jewish settlers from the West Bank, an Israeli newspaper reported Thursday. Yediot Ahronot said Olmert detailed the concessions he offered to Abbas to US President Barack Obama's newly appointed envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell. Mitchell, due to meet Abbas in Ramallah Thursday, is on his first trip to the region since his appointment last week and met Olmert over lunch Wednesday. The daily said Olmert also offered Abbas to withdraw from most of the occupied territories along the lines of before the 1967 Arab- Israeli war, in which Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan and the Gaza Strip from Egypt.*

Of course it's not the first time Olmert has advocated that Israel withdraw from Judea, Samaria and parts of east Jerusalem. Nor is it the first time Israel has offered the Arabs land for the establishment of a 'Palestinian' state. But the fact that this is being talked about openly is proof that we are now living in the last days. People talk about the 'siege of Gaza' when mentioning the embargo that has placed upon the Hamas movement that has taken control of the territory. But the Bible talks about the siege of Judea and Samaria. For Zechariah 12:2 states that in the last days, the nations of the world will be in "in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem ".
Today the Palestinian terrorist organizations are fighting to take control of the West Bank, a modern phrase that Western journalists now use to describe that precise territory mentioned in

the Bible so long ago. And the Bible also records the result of that siege. East Jerusalem will be taken, and trampled under foot by the Gentiles for a three and a half year period (Zechariah 14:2, Revelation 11:2). Whether a state is created or not, I don't know. But Israel will be forced out of that territory one way or another.

How this comes about is another story. There are two distinct views. One view is that the Antichrist strengthens an agreement for a period of seven years, whereby Israel can retain control of the Temple Mount and east Jerusalem. The Temple is rebuilt and the sacrificial system recommences. In the middle of this seven year period the agreement is broken, which results in the land being divided between Jew and Arab, with the Arabs taking Judea and east Jerusalem. The sacrificial system is halted and the Temple is subsequently defiled by the Antichrist, heralding the three and a half year period of great tribulation that the Jewish people will endure prior to the return of Christ. Another view is that the Antichrist's agreement is not broken, but that it is his strengthening of the covenant that eventually produces the division of the land. Which view is right, I don't know. There are some who believe we may now be living in Daniel's seventieth week, and that this covenant already exists in the form of the European Neighbourhood Policy. I was once of that opinion. But look again at Daniel 9:27. If the first view is correct and the Antichrist's agreement is broken in the middle of the week, then by looking at what happens as a result of that we should be able to work out what the agreement actually was. The sacrifices cease and the Temple is desecrated. At the same time that this occurs, the Arabs take control of east Jerusalem (Revelation 11:2). So in my understanding the agreement must be specifically linked to the status of Jerusalem. It must guarantee Israel sovereignty over east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. And it must grant them permission to rebuild the Temple in accordance with Revelation 11:1-2. This view is supported by the prophecies of Zechariah, which state that it is specifically Jerusalem which is perceived to be a cup of trembling and a burdensome stone for all nations (Zechariah 12:2-3).

So you can see that these prophesies are nearing their fulfilment. Of course the end could be some way off yet. We could still be years away from any agreement being made. But today's news proves that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, and that it can be trusted implicitly. And not only that, but its Author can be trusted too. Have you trusted Him for salvation? Don't wait until you see all these things begin to come to pass. It may be too late. Now is the accepted time (2nd Corinthians 6:2). Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved (Acts 16:31).

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