

Peace Developments

It is not wise to constantly look for direct end-time significance in current events, although they have historically provided ample fodder for book writers and whippers-up of hysteria and conjecture. However, there have been several announcements recently in the news which should interest believers.

1. Early in his presidency, President Trump moved our embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This was promised by many previous presidents but none of them would actually do it. He said he would and he did, with the predictable outrage from Palestinians and leftists.
2. Guatemala then agreed to move their embassy to Jerusalem.
3. In the 1990's Yugoslavia had a bloody breakup into several new nations, one of which was Serbia. Serbia (mainly Orthodox Christian) led a bloody campaign against ethnic Albanians (muslim) in Kosovo. Kosovo eventually declared independence, but it was not recognized by Serbia, Russia, or China. This month Serbia and Kosovo have established economic normalization with each other, including travel between the two.
4. Serbia will move its Israel embassy to Jerusalem.
5. Kosovo has moved to normalize ties with Israel, including embassies. Their Israel embassy will be in Jerusalem, the first for a majority-Muslim nation.
6. The "Abraham Accords" – President Trump has brokered a deal between Israel and the Arab nations U.A.E. and Bahrain. These muslim nations will recognize Israel, and they will all establish embassies, exchange ambassadors, and establish economic relations.
7. Saudi Arabia is allowing Israeli commercial flights over their country.
8. President Trump says there are 5 or 6 other arab nations that are willing to make peace with Israel.
9. Talks are also going on to get all our troops out of Afghanistan.

These developments are very surprising since most people have considered the Arab-Israel conflict to be unsolvable, all earlier efforts being stifled by the Palestinians' intransigence. Embassy moves to Jerusalem were previously neglected because the Palestinians (falsely) claim Jerusalem as their own.

President Obama made a nuclear deal with Iran, bypassing the existing economic sanctions, and sent them 1.7 billion dollars in cold hard cash, which would be used for their worldwide terrorist activities. The nuclear deal was designedly unverifiable, and they never had any intention of adhering to it. In 2018, President Trump wisely withdrew from that nuclear "deal".

The new developments are apparently a combination of President Trump's willingness to bypass the Palestinians, and the Arab nations' fears of Iranian threats and trouble-making in the region.

Is all this good news, or what? It seems obvious that these are all good developments for the present. If the Palestinians and Democrats and European Union are against it, and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and President Trump are for it, it must be good. However, we must not think this means permanent peace is just around the corner. A peace agreement between nations is only good while both sides hold to it.

Periods of peace and prosperity are notorious for lulling people into a false sense of ease, and carelessness. e.g., the roaring 20's, the UK before WW 2, Venezuela or Cuba before the communist takeovers, our own economy before the Chinese virus was used for economic and political sabotage, etc.

The most obvious warning is in 1 Thess. 5:2-3, where it says "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. **For when they shall say, Peace and safety;** then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

Here are some warnings about “peace, safety, and abundance”:

1. Our current daily life

- Just because things are going well now with job, home, and general prosperity doesn’t guarantee that it will continue. Riches make themselves wings, and it is possible to lose everything (home, savings, property, even life and family) at a stroke.
- We need to be trusting God from day to day, and developing faith in God to preserve us.
- We should be preparing for the evil day, by saving, and by storing up reasonable stockpiles.
- We should be learning contentment with what we have. Great physical or personal loss should not be devastating, or make life not worth living.
- We need to refuse an “entitlement mentality”.

2. National judgments

Jer. 6:13-14 sounds similar to “peace and safety”, but it is in a different context – “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, **saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.**” Around 600 BC, false prophets were giving the people of Judah prophecies of peace, that Jerusalem would not fall, or that the Babylonian captivity would only be for two years instead of 70. They were preventing the people from seeing the seriousness of their sin and the anger of the Lord. “Everything is OK, nothing bad will happen, ...”

Ps. 9:17 – “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

Isa. 48:22 – “There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked.”

3. The coming of Christ to gather his overcoming saints (the “rapture”)

Even before the Second Coming in judgment, we have many warnings to be ready for Jesus to come and catch up his saints to be with him.

I Thess 5:3 (“when they shall say peace and safety”) is preceded by 4:14-18, describing Jesus’ coming to catch up the saints. Also 1 Cor. 15:51-52.

Mt. 24:36 – 25:13 – “as in the days of Noah”, “two in the field, but one taken”, the “thief in the night”, “faithful vs. evil servants”, the parable of the ten virgins – all these are describing Jesus going away and coming back at an unexpected time. See 24:42, 44, and 25:13.

4. The future rise and misrule of the Antichrist

Dan. 8:25 – (of the “king of fierce countenance”, known to us as the Antichrist) “And through his **policy** also he shall cause **craft** to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, **and by peace shall destroy many**; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes: but he shall be broken without hand.”

By “policy” it means “cunning”. The word “craft” does not refer to handiwork, the crafts, guilds, labor unions, etc., but to “craftiness”. It would be better translated as “treachery” or “deceit”.

Furthermore, the word “peace” refers to prosperity or abundance, and living at ease, as in

Prov. 1:32 – “... the **prosperity** of fools shall destroy them”

Ezek. 16:49 – “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and **abundance** of idleness ...”

So Dan. 8:25 speaks of a time when the Antichrist cunningly succeeds in bringing temporary peace and prosperity, but then through treacherous deceit, that very prosperity will be used to magnify himself, to destroy people, and to stand up against Christ. See also Dan. 9:26-27 (where the Antichrist confirms but then breaks a covenant concerning the people of Israel for seven years). See also Zech. 12:2-3, 9 and 14:1-9, and Rev. 19-20.

5. Satan’s final rebellion will be at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20) and it refers to Gog and Magog. This time is also described in Ezek. 37-39, when they see the people of Israel dwelling in peace and unwallled cities, and make an ill-fated attack.