Within the past week, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have promised to recommence peace negotiations following a five year impasse, but hopes of a breakthrough remain slim.

President Obama has tasked US Senator John Kerry with finding a solution to the impasse. Israeli President Binyamin Netanyahu has agreed to a limited ' building freeze ' in Judea and Samaria, and also to the release of 82 Palestinian terrorists, a so-called 'good-will gesture' to the Palestinian Authority. The PA has also been demanding various financial incentives for agreeing to return to the talks, including the right to build an airport in Ramallah and hotels along the shores of the Dead Sea. They are also seeking rights for natural gas exploration off the shore of the Gaza Strip. But Hamas is unlikely to permit that, and has already vehemently stated its opposition to the resumption of any talks, claiming that the PA does not speak for them...

Quote: *""Hamas rejects Kerry's announcement of a return to talks and considers the Palestinian Authority's return to negotiations with the occupation to be at odds with the national consensus," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told AFP. He said that West Bank-based Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas had no legitimate right to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people.*

The EU has also been making waves in the Middle East this past week. Last Friday the European Commission published a new directive stipulating that all future agreements between the EU and Israel must contain a clause specifically excluding their application to Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem. Although official EU policy has never recognized Israeli sovereignty in these places, this is the first time the bloc has passed a law expressly forbidding economic co-operation in the territories. The EU is also looking at labelling Israeli products that are produced in the Palestinian territories. Israel has reacted angrily to the EU directive, freezing co-operation with the EU in these areas.

Quote: *“Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office MK Ofir Akunis said in response that "it's a wrong and regrettable decision. Such steps – even before the Palestinians announced they are even ready to return to the negotiation table – are pushing the peace talks away, not drawing them closer. "Let them know even in Europe – Judea and Samaria are not 'occupied,' they're the homeland of the Jewish nation."*

Historically Judea and Samaria are the homeland of the Jewish nation. And they remain part of the land that God has given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their descendants, for an everlasting possession (Genesis 48:4). Judea and Samaria are of course the proper Biblical names for what is now termed the 'West Bank'. The Bible states that in the last days, Israel's enemies would be in siege against Judah and Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2). The Bible also states that immediately prior to the return of Christ, all nations will be gathered together to do battle against Jerusalem, and half of the city will be taken (Zechariah 14:2, Revelation 11:2). Today those battle lines are being drawn. The fact that the EU is now legislating on this issue shows us how close the fulfilment of these prophecies are.

But we do need to recognize that this Middle East conflict is merely a skirmish in a much greater spiritual conflict that is being waged behind the scenes, a war that has been raging now for over six thousand years. Satan's rebellion against God has only brought this world misery and death. It has always been God's plan to redeem mankind, even before the world was created (1st Peter 1:20). But Satan has opposed God at every step of the way, trying to prevent His promised Deliverer from coming into the world and saving mankind (Genesis 3:15). He has done this by trying to destroy the people through whom the Deliverer would come. He sought to wipe out the children of Israel in Egypt before Moses could lead them out of slavery. He had Haman conspire their destruction in Babylon. And on many occasions he sought to kill the Lord Jesus Christ Himself before He could go to the cross. He has failed to prevent the Lord Jesus Christ from coming into this world and bringing salvation to all people through His sacrifice on the cross. Now he is trying to prevent His return to earth to reign over His people Israel. He tried to get Hitler to destroy them before the nation of Israel could be reborn. He tried to get the Arab armies to defeat them when they came back into the land. And he is still trying to wrest control of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount from the Jewish people, the place where Christ is to reign from in a coming day. One day he will place his false messiah on the Temple Mount. And his armies will make war with the Lamb as He returns out of heaven (Revelation 19:19). Praise God this too will fail.

As you can see, the time of Christ's return is near. He is coming soon, first of all, for those who have trusted in Him for salvation, that they may be with Him where He is (John 14:3). And then He will return to reign over His people Israel forever (Luke 1:32). Are you ready to meet Him? Is

He coming for you? Don't wait until it's too late. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

2nd Corinthians 6:2
Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation

Source Haaretz , YNet News , A l Arabiya , YNet News , YNet News