

Revealed: Israel Agreed To Forfeit Temple Mount

Documents detail ex-Israeli leader's deal handing Judaism's holiest site to Yasser Arafat

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Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: Although the nations are plotting against the Lord and His anointed to take over the Temple Mount, nothing will prevent the fulfillment of scripture prophecy, which requires that another Jewish Temple be built on the Temple Mount ([Rebuilding the Jewish Temple – Pt 1](#), [Rebuilding the Jewish Temple – Pt 2](#)).

. . . Since it would seem impossible for the Jews to rebuild a temple, especially since their current government is trying to forever give away the Temple Mount, radical changes must be coming soon to the Middle East.



Temple Mount

JERUSALEM – In spite of longstanding denials by top officials here, the Israeli government in 2000 agreed to relinquish the Temple Mount – Judaism's holiest site – to the Palestinians during U.S.-backed negotiations, according to declassified documents made public today.

The information comes as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert earlier this month denied talks started at November's Annapolis summit would lead to Israel giving up its sovereignty over the Temple Mount, while chief Palestinian negotiators tell WND the Jewish state already agreed to forfeit Judaism's holiest site to a coalition of Arab countries.

According to declassified Israeli government documents published today by Israel's Haaretz newspaper, during U.S.-led negotiations in 2000 at Camp David, [Ehud Barak](#), then prime minister, agreed sovereignty over the Temple Mount would be either "ambiguous" or

control would be determined based on the bond of each party to the site. The Palestinians would therefore control the upper sections of the Mount, which houses the Al Aqsa Mosque and also is the site of the First and Second Jewish Temples.

The 2000 negotiations fell through after Palestinian President Yasser Arafat rejected an offer of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and eastern sections of Jerusalem.

Barak at times denied he offered the Temple Mount to the Palestinians, but he also indicated during interviews he was willing to compromise over the site.

Haaretz published excerpts from a 26-page document it obtained, signed by Barak's negotiator Gilad Sher and said to be summaries of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The document was titled "The Status of the Diplomatic Process with the Palestinians Points to Update the Incoming Prime Minister."

Sher also wrote in his book published after the 2000 negotiations, titled "Beyond Reach," that President [Bill Clinton](#) floated a plan that called for the Temple Mount to become Palestinian sovereign territory, while the Western Wall below and its complex would fall under Israeli sovereignty.

Barak was said to have initially rejected that plan, but according to participants at the negotiations summit, he was ultimately willing to forfeit the Temple Mount.

The 26-page document published by Haaretz also said Barak was willing to give up most of the West Bank and split Jerusalem into two capitals, one called Jerusalem and another Al-Quds. Negotiations would have seen Arab sections of Jerusalem being turned over to the Palestinians.

The release of the document follows last month's Annapolis summit at which Olmert committed to aim at creating a Palestinian state before the end of next year, handing strategic territory to Palestinian Authority President [Mahmoud Abbas](#).

In a briefing to reporters upon returning to Israel from Annapolis, Olmert claimed Israel's sovereignty over the Temple Mount is not up for discussion. He said negotiations started at this week's Annapolis

summit had no bearing on the situation on the Temple Mount.

But a chief Palestinian negotiator, speaking to WND on condition of anonymity, said Olmert's denials were "false."

"What Olmert said (regarding the Mount) is absolutely false. I think he's not yet ready to tell the Israeli public and is waiting for the right time, and he fears his coalition with religious extremists will fall apart if he announces it now," said the negotiator.

Olmert's maintains a government coalition with the religious Shas party and [Russian](#) Yisroel Beiteinu party, but if those two bolt, the prime minister could create a new coalition with leftist parties.

The chief Palestinian negotiator said that in the months leading up to Annapolis, the Palestinian team was "surprised" by Olmert's willingness to give up the Mount.

"We had intense debates on many topics, which remain open and unsettled, but the Harem Al-Sharif (Temple Mount) is not a sticking point. The Israelis didn't argue with us. We were pleasantly surprised Olmert didn't debate about giving the lower section of the [Mount] either, which was a sticking point in the past."

According to the negotiator, Olmert agreed to evacuate the Mount but not to turn it over to the Palestinians alone. The negotiator said both sides agreed, the Temple Mount would be given to joint Egypt, Jordan and Palestinian Authority control.

He said the Israeli government felt an umbrella group of several Arab countries controlling the holy site instead of only the PA would help ease Israeli domestic opposition to giving up the Temple Mount, since Egypt and Jordan are considered by Israeli policy to be moderate countries.

The Palestinian negotiator pointed out Israeli prime ministers previously denied withdrawal plans only to later carry them out. Former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, elected on a platform against evacuating territory, denied for his first year in office he would retreat from the Gaza Strip, but in 2005 he carried out a Gaza withdrawal.

Israel bars Jews, Christians from praying on Mount

The Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism. Muslims say it is their third holiest site.

The First Jewish Temple was built by King Solomon in the 10th century B.C. It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Second Temple was rebuilt in 515 B.C. after Jerusalem was freed from Babylonian captivity. That temple was destroyed by the Roman Empire in A.D. 70. Each temple stood for a period of about four centuries.

The Jewish Temple was the center of religious Jewish worship. It housed the Holy of Holies, which contained the Ark of the Covenant and was said to be the area upon which God's "presence" dwelt. The Al Aqsa Mosque now sits on the site.

The Temple served as the primary location for the offering of sacrifices and was the main gathering place in Israel during Jewish holidays.

The Temple Mount compound has remained a focal point for Jewish services over the millennia. Prayers for a return to Jerusalem have been uttered by Jews since the Second Temple was destroyed, according to Jewish tradition. Jews worldwide pray facing toward the Western Wall, a portion of an outer courtyard of the Temple left intact.

The Al Aqsa Mosque was constructed around A.D. 709 to serve as a shrine near another shrine, the Dome of the Rock, which was built by an Islamic caliph. Al Aqsa was meant to mark where Muslims came to believe Muhammad, the founder of Islam, ascended to heaven.

Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Quran. Islamic tradition states Muhammad took a journey in a single night from "a sacred mosque" - believed to be in Mecca in southern Saudi Arabia - to "the farthest mosque" and from a rock there ascended to heaven. The farthest mosque later became associated with the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

Currently under Israeli control, Jews and Christians are barred from praying on the Mount.

The Temple Mount was opened to the general public until September 2000, when the Palestinians started their intifada by throwing stones

at Jewish worshipers after then-candidate for prime minister Ariel Sharon visited the area.

Following the onset of violence, the new Sharon government closed the Mount to non-Muslims, using checkpoints to control all pedestrian traffic for fear of further clashes with the Palestinians.

The Temple Mount was reopened to non-Muslims in August 2003. It still is open but only Sundays through Thursdays, 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., and not on any Christian, Jewish or Muslim holidays or other days considered "sensitive" by the Waqf.

During "open" days, Jews and Christian are allowed to ascend the Mount, usually through organized tours and only if they conform first to a strict set of guidelines, which includes demands that they not pray or bring any "holy objects" to the site. Visitors are banned from entering any of the mosques without direct Waqf permission. Rules are enforced by Waqf agents, who watch tours closely and alert nearby Israeli police to any breaking of their guidelines.