

Jerusalem

'Melchizedek king of (Jeru)Salem brought out bread and wine. He was Priest of God Most High. He blessed Abram and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all he had' (Genesis 14:18 to 20).

This verse is the first time Jerusalem was mentioned in the Bible. Salem means 'Peace' and was the original name for the city. Jerusalem means 'House of Peace'. It is the only place on earth where the Bible says the Lord dwells and has His Tabernacle. 'In Judah, God is known. His name is great in Israel. His Tabernacle is in (Jeru)Salem. His dwelling place is in Zion' (Psalm 76:1 & 2). 'There is a river, the streams of which make the City of God glad, the Holy Place of the Tents (Tabernacle) of the Most High. God is in her (Jerusalem's) midst. She will not be moved' (Psalm 46:4 & 5). These verses tell us Jerusalem will remain in the same place where the Lord first founded it. Some ancient cities were forced to relocate due to weather conditions, wars or natural events. Some cities vanished or became ruins when people left. Other cities disappeared under water or were swallowed up by volcanic activity. Babylon and Nineveh are just ruins. Atlantis was swallowed up by water. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by being covered in brimstone, sulphur, chunks of salt and huge rocks. None of those things will ever happen to Jerusalem. It will never move, disappear, vanish or be swallowed up. The heart of the Lord is in Jerusalem so it will always be His city.

Other names for Jerusalem are the Stronghold of Zion and the City of David (2 Samuel 5:7). Zion is a hill on the southwest side of Jerusalem and the name Zion is sometimes used to represent Jerusalem. Zion was once the central mountain of worship in Jerusalem. 'Out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion those who will escape. The zeal of God will perform this' (2 Kings 19:31). 'I (God) have set My King (Jesus) on My holy hill of Zion' (Psalm 2:6). Jerusalem is also called 'The Faithful City' (Isaiah 1:21); 'City of Righteousness' and the 'Faithful Town' (Isaiah 1:26); 'A Joyous Town' (Isaiah 22:2); 'Ariel, the City where David stayed' (Isaiah 29:1); 'City of my Fathers' Tombs' (Nehemiah 2:5); 'City of the Great King (Jesus)' (Psalm 48:2; Matthew 5:35); 'City of God' 'City of our God' 'City of my God, the New Jerusalem' 'City of the Living God' (Psalm 87:3; 48:1; Revelation 3:12; Hebrews 12:22); 'City of Judah' (2 Chronicles 25:28); 'Heavenly Jerusalem' (Hebrews 12:22); 'City of the Lord of Hosts' (Psalm 48:8); 'City which the Lord has chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His Name there' (1 Kings 14:21); 'Daughter of Zion' ... 'City not forsaken' (Isaiah 62:11 & 12); 'Rejoice greatly daughter of Zion! Shout daughter of Jerusalem! (Zechariah 9:9); 'Holy Mountain of My God' (Daniel 9:20); 'Zion, My Holy Mountain' (Joel 3:17); 'Holy City' (Isaiah 48:2); 'High Places of Judah' (Micah 1:5); 'Mount Moriah' (2 Chronicles 3:1); 'My City' says the Lord of Hosts (Isaiah 45:11 & 13); 'My Holy Hill of Zion' (Psalm 2:6); 'Zion, the Perfection of Beauty' (Psalm 50:2); 'Jerusalem, the Throne of God' (Jeremiah 3:17) and is the one and only Eternal City. Rome is not and never will be the eternal city. The population of Jerusalem has changed dramatically several times and it has had many rulers but the location is where God chose for the purpose of having a home base for His chosen people, the descendants of Abraham. The Lord God chose Jerusalem and Israel to bring forth our Messiah Jesus, or in Hebrew His name is Yeshua.

The Lord called Abraham out of the Ur of Chaldee's in Mesopotamia and told him to go to the land He would show him. 'God said to Abram, "Get out of your country, away from your relatives and from your father's house to the land I will show you. I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you. In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed." So Abram went as God told him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. Abram took Sarai his wife ... and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan' (Genesis 12:1 to 5). The land at that time was called Canaan and was inhabited by pagans (Genesis 12:6) but Jerusalem was called Salem and was already established by the righteous, Godly, King Melchizedek. Jerusalem is vitally important in the entire plan of salvation. Salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22) and the Jewish people originated from Abraham, confirming God's promise to Abraham, through him all families on earth would be blessed.

Abraham met Melchizedek in Jerusalem over four thousand years ago. By doing some calculations we can work out Abraham was born 1,949 years after Adam was created and was seventy-five years old when God first spoke to him and that comes to 2,024 BC so these two great men of God, Abraham and Melchizedek, met during this time in history. That means for over four thousand years, Jerusalem has been the Lord's chosen city. That is a very long time. God was in the midst of Jerusalem before most other cities around the world were ever founded! About 250 years later, God changed the name of Abraham's grandson Jacob to Israel. 'God appeared to Jacob when he came from Paddan Aram and blessed him. God said to him, "Your name is Jacob (meaning supplanter or usurper). Your name will not be Jacob any more but your name will be Israel (meaning 'God fights')." God named him Israel. God said to him, "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a commonwealth of nations will come from you, and kings will come out of your body.

The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you and to your descendents after you” (Genesis 35:9 to 12). That is the Land of Israel (the nation), the land of the twelve tribes (the commonwealth) who came from the body of Jacob/Israel. Since that time, Jacob’s descendents have had spiritual and moral sovereignty over the Land of Israel, even when they were forced off the land. It was and still is their rightful home. God never revoked the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Jerusalem is at the heart of the land of God. It is in Jerusalem, God’s promises to Abraham would be fulfilled. Jerusalem was given to Abraham’s descendents forever. Mount Moriah, one of Jerusalem’s hills is where Abraham came close to sacrificing Isaac but was stopped. Abraham was prepared to give Isaac, his son of promise to God as a symbol of God giving His only Son Jesus as our sacrifice. The near sacrifice of Isaac was played out in the heart of Melchizedek’s land. At the last moment God provided a ram (a male sheep) as a sacrifice, just like Jesus was the Male Lamb of God (John 1:36) given as a sacrifice for us. Approximately 1,000 years later Solomon built the first Temple on that exact same site. Approximately 1,000 years after the first Temple was built, Jesus was sacrificed – near that site. God calls Jerusalem His Holy Mountain and His Holy City (Psalm 48:1). Jerusalem is God’s only earthly address anywhere in the world. ‘The God of Israel has given rest to His people. He dwells in Jerusalem forever’ (1 Chronicles 23:25). Jerusalem is the capital city of God’s presence on earth and is earth’s only eternal city. When Jesus returns, He will rule the world from Jerusalem.

Initially, Jerusalem was a small city built on the South East Hill by Melchizedek. Next to Melchizedek’s city on the Central East Hill, Mount Moriah was integrated. The city grew larger during the reigns of King David and Solomon and when Jesus came to earth, Jerusalem was a large, thriving, vibrant city of Jewish people. Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel and has been since King David established it as such during his reign about three thousand years ago. Jerusalem is situated at 31.76 degrees Latitude and 35.21 degrees Longitude at 2,500 feet above sea level on the Judean mountain summit. Four deep valleys divide the elevated plateau where Jerusalem is situated, causing each quarter of the city to stand on a hill or small mountain. Jerusalem is protected on the western side by mountains, on the southern side by desert and on the eastern side by the Jordan Gorge. The city is close to the Coastal Highway where ancient civilisations met and is well placed to be the chief seat of power for God’s work among mankind. The main part of the city once stood on the South East Hill due to its naturally impregnable location, with the Gihon Spring of fresh water making it perfect for a walled city. The Spring of Kidron also supplies the area with natural fresh water. There are several cisterns to store water and conduits, channels and aqueducts to supply the city with flowing water. During Hezekiah’s reign a tunnel was cut through solid rock where a pool and a conduit were built to carry water from the Gihon Spring into Jerusalem (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:30) and to the Pool of Siloam, giving Jerusalem enough water even during sieges and wartime. There is enough water to irrigate farmland and grow crops. The pool of Siloam was where people would completely immerse and purify themselves before attending the Temple (Leviticus 16:4), which was the precursor to baptism. One reservoir is just beyond Bethlehem. The ‘Well of Job’ is south of Jerusalem. This is where Melchizedek reigned.

The Mount of Olives is where King David mourned (2 Samuel 15:30) where Jesus frequently went and where He will stand on His return to the earth, causing a massive earthquake. ‘His (Jesus’) feet will stand, on that day (the day of His return) on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, making a very great valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north and half of it toward the south’ (Zechariah 14:4). ‘I (Apostle John) saw and behold, the Lamb (Jesus) standing on Mount Zion’ (Revelation 14:1). ‘Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the north sides the city of the great King (Jesus)’ (Psalm 48:2). ‘Thus says the Lord God, “I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called ‘The City of Truth’, and ‘The Mountain of the Lord God of Heavenly Armies’, ‘The Holy Mountain’” (Zechariah 8:3). ‘You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to innumerable multitudes of angels’ (Hebrews 12:22). King David reigned from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:5) and is buried there (Acts 2:29). The Ark of the Covenant was taken to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:16). Jerusalem was kept from the pestilence that plagued the rest of Israel (2 Samuel 24:16). Jesus was dedicated to the Lord in Jerusalem (Luke 2:21 & 22). Jesus lamented over Jerusalem (Luke 13:34). Jesus was in Jerusalem when He foretold the Temple’s destruction (Matthew 24:2). Jesus fulfilled prophecy with His public entrance into Jerusalem riding on a colt (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:2 to 5). The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit while waiting in Jerusalem as commanded by Jesus (Acts 1:4 & 2:3 & 4). A New Jerusalem will be created and will come down from heaven (Revelation 3:12 & 21:2).

The earth below the old part of Jerusalem is the most archaeologically excavated site on earth. The City of David is the heart of Jerusalem. It is where Jerusalem as a city began. It is the place where the Southern Kingdom of Judah was, where the Hasmonean King Herod enlarged the second Temple. The name ‘City of David’ appears in the Bible over 40 times. The foundations in the original ancient city lie where the Jebusite and Canaanites were, which David captured in 1 Chronicles 11:4 to 9, where Joab entered the city through a

shaft in its waterway and opened the city gates to allow David's army entry. It was already an ancient city inhabited for over two thousand years (see references to Melchizedek). When David took the city from the Jebusites it was unattached to any Israelite tribe. It has towering heights and deep valleys. Mount Moriah was the site of the first and second Temples (2 Chronicles 3:1) now called the Temple Mount and was chosen by David to be his seat of power. David bought a threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite for fifty shekels of silver and set up an altar to the Lord (2 Samuel 24:16 to 25).

Following the conquest of Jerusalem, David transformed it from a small ancient city of only about 12 acres, to the Israelite capital city where all the tribes would one day gather to worship God during His holy feasts (Luke 2:41). Jerusalem is the only earthly throne of God (Jeremiah 3:17). Jerusalem was the administrative centre of royal rule for the united monarchy under David and Solomon and the population grew significantly before Israel broke into two kingdoms. Jerusalem is the place where the priests could not stand up to minister because the glory of the Holy Spirit was too powerful (1 Kings 8:10). Jerusalem would represent the covenant between God and the Hebrews since Abraham. God dwelt amongst His people after they left Egypt and empowered His chosen royal dynasty who ruled over His nation from the promise to Abraham through to Jesus, and we know Jesus' reign will never end. The size of Jerusalem grew further under the rule of Herod. In Herod's time a street named the Pilgrim's Way was an open pedestrian highway leading up from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple where hundreds of thousands people walked. The Pilgrim's Way is now a pedestrian tunnel where people can walk on the same ancient pathway stones where Jesus and the apostles walked. Part of modern Jerusalem lies above Pilgrim's Way tunnel which has a stone ceiling supported by steel pillars to protect the modern street above.

Jewish wars against Rome began in 66 AD. Emperor Titus with the Roman army arrived at the walls of Jerusalem on Passover in 70 AD. Banks of earth were built, battering rams were prepared and the siege began. The Roman army had 30,000 soldiers while the Jewish army had 24,000 soldiers who joined the fight. Jerusalem was filled with Passover visitors numbering about 600,000. After five months of constant siege, the walls of Jerusalem were battered down, the Temple was burned and the city left in ruins. All that was left were Herod's three great towers at the northwest corner, left as a memorial of the massive strength of the fortifications Titus had demolished. Altogether, over one million Jews in Jerusalem and Israel were slaughtered while many escaped, and many thousands of Christians were either killed or fled. Ninety five thousand Jews were captured as slaves. In 135 AD, Barcocheba took Jerusalem back for the Jews and tried to rebuild the Temple. The Roman army then killed five hundred and eighty thousand more Jews in and around the area and any remaining Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem or they would also be killed. Several Jews somehow managed to stay there because Jerusalem has been constantly inhabited by Hebrew speaking Jews for thousands of years. On the Temple site, the Romans erected their own temple for their false god Jupiter. In 326 AD Constantine had the false temple removed and built the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Jerusalem became a holy city for Jews and Christians once again. In 637 AD, Jerusalem was taken by the Muslims and remained under their control for hundreds of years. During the Crusades and for about one hundred years, the church controlled Jerusalem until Muslims took it again, only to lose it in 1917 when the Australian Light Horsemen conquered Bathsheba, opening the way for the Jews and Zionists to rebuild their homeland Israel, and their capital city, Jerusalem again.

After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem on 70 AD, a few Hebrew-speaking Jewish people remained there. A young, dedicated Lutheran Christian moved to Jerusalem in 1846. He worked at an industrial house teaching carpentry skills to Jewish boys, then as an architect he helped design and build hospitals, schools, guest houses, churches and designed the layout of Jewish neighbourhoods. Many of his buildings are still there, although some are used for different purposes. Other Christians have gone to Jerusalem to help build dwellings, hospitals, an orphanage and they cared for the children, they laid gardens, planted trees, provided food and did what could to build a better Jerusalem. During the Ottoman Empire, Jerusalem was a small town. After the horrible war that took the lives of millions of innocent Jewish people, the British Mandatory Administration also helped build up Jerusalem. Many Christians spent time in Israel to help rebuild the entire country. They lived on and built up the dusty, barren landscape that was left of Jerusalem. They were trying to make up for the terrible atrocities done to the Jewish people and even built a Jewish Bible College.

Never in the history of the world has a nation been separated from their homeland for thousands of years and been able to return to live within their own ancient borders with their bloodline, culture, language and religious identity as strong and as intact as when they left. The Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world but kept their identity even when it cost some of them their livelihood and sometimes their lives. The miracle of the Jews' return to Israel can only be of God and the fact Jerusalem is still their capital proves the Bible prophecies are accurate. Never before has a nation been scattered around the world yet continued to yearn for their homeland and more so their capital, Jerusalem. For two thousand years the heart-felt cry from the Jewish people everywhere was, 'Next year in Jerusalem'. 'Remember Lord, against the children of Edom,

the day of Jerusalem who said, "Raze it! Raze it to its foundation!" (Psalm 137:7). "Come," they say, "Let us destroy them as a nation so the name of Israel may be remembered no more" (Psalm 83:4).

The enemies of Israel are still saying, 'Raze Israel to the ground' and they still want to destroy Israel. Even so, the Jews have clung to the promises given to them by the Lord, He would bring His people back to Israel, He would restore their nation and He would make Jerusalem their capital once again. He said their land would flourish with food, flowers would grow in the deserts and that is exactly what has happened. God has pardoned the Jewish people for any sin they may have committed many years ago (Isaiah 40:2) and He wants them in Israel for when Jesus returns to earth. Jerusalem is the cultural and economic centre of Israel. When King Solomon built the first Temple, Jerusalem was confirmed to be the religious and spiritual capital of the Jewish people. From Solomon's reign, every year Jewish people would travel from around the known world to visit the Temple right up until it was destroyed in 70 AD. Jerusalem was a, 'Cup of reeling' (Zechariah 12:2), or a stumbling block to its neighbours and to countries around the world and still is.

Circa 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem by burning it to the ground then the Chaldeans tore down the walls after eighteen months of siege, then many thousands of innocent Jews were forced into slavery, their goods stolen (Jeremiah 52:4 to 14). The Jewish people in Babylon mourned for their lost city. 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down. Yes, we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows in its midst we hung up our harps for there, those who led us captive asked us for songs. Those who tormented us demanded songs of joy. "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you Jerusalem, let my right hand wither and let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy' (Psalm 137:1 to 6). Wars were fought in Jerusalem (1 Kings 14:25 to 28; 2 Kings 14:13 & 14). Jerusalem has been attacked, captured, conquered, overcome and set free about fifty times by Egypt, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Ottoman Turks and various other occupying armies.

Jesus said, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then know its desolation is at hand. Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let those who are in the midst of her depart. Let those who are in the country not enter the city. These are days of vengeance so all things that are written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who nurse infants in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath to this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled" (Luke 21:20 to 24). In 70 AD the Romans ripped the heart and soul out of the nation of Israel, the spiritual centre of the Jewish people. Jerusalem was burned to the ground and the land lay desolate for centuries, empty of everything except the promise of hope of the Jewish people. A few Jews remained living there but in difficult circumstances. This started in 70 AD and the 'times of the Gentiles' having occupation of Jerusalem is over and it has been restored to the Jews once again. Throughout all of the years of being dispersed (the Diaspora) the Jews' heart-felt connection to Israel has remained unshaken. Throughout the centuries, Jerusalem was a lot of things to many people but it was never the capital city or hub of life for anyone but the Jewish people. The hapless Jews were driven away from Jerusalem, restored, driven away, slaughtered, captured and dispersed yet they clung to the hope their eventual restoration would be permanent and this time it is. They will never be driven out of Israel again no matter how hard their enemies try. God is with them and He will make very sure they stay in their land this time.

In the 19th century the name Zionism described the Jewish movement to re-establish Israel for its ancestral people and Jerusalem as the capital as the prophets foretold. In 1948, Israel became an independent nation. In 1949, just over one year after the creation of the State of Israel, Jerusalem was once again their capital. Of course the United Nations objected because they wanted Jerusalem be an international city that did not come under Jewish Sovereignty. The then Jewish Prime Minister David Ben Gurion told the UN, "We do not judge the UN which did nothing when nations, who were members of the UN declared war on its own resolution of 29 November 1947, trying to prevent the establishment of Israel by force, to annihilate the Jewish population and destroy Jerusalem. Had we not been able to withstand the aggressors who rebelled against the UN, Jewish Jerusalem would have been wiped off the face of the earth, the Jewish population would have been eradicated and the State of Israel would not have arisen. Thus we are no longer morally bound by the UN resolution of November 29 since the UN was unable to implement it. In our opinion the decision of November 29 regarding Jerusalem is null and void." Jerusalem remained divided until Israel's miraculous victory in the six-day war in 1967. Truly, God was on their side. Finally after two thousand years, the Jewish people regained full sovereignty of the entire city of Jerusalem. Soon afterwards, Jerusalem was declared to be the eternal, united, undivided capital of the State of Israel. All three political branches have their headquarters in Jerusalem. Jerusalem won a great victory and is finally free to be ruled by the Jewish Government and occupied by the Jewish people returning from all over the world.

Jews are returning to their homeland in droves. They have tilled the ground, planted crops, built towns that have grown into cities, they reclaimed the desert and irrigated the land until Israel has again become the land filled with milk and honey. Jerusalem was resurrected. It is no more a dusty ruin but a vibrant, bustling, energetic place with ancient building relics restored to become part of the multifaceted city approaching one million inhabitants. The speed in which Israel has been populated with Jews from all over the world makes it hard to keep up with the infrastructure. Israel is the human face of God. The Jewish people are the ones who set Jerusalem and Israel apart from any other place on earth. Jerusalem is the 'eternal capital' of Israel. Israel with the Jewish people is the only Messianic nation on earth. Of all the twelve tribes that make up Israel, Judah is the only royal Messianic tribe (Genesis 49:10) and is the tribe Joseph was born into (Matthew 1:16; Hebrews 7:14). Jesus' mother Mary came from the tribe of Levi and the tribe of Judah (Luke 1:5, 32 & 36). Levi was the priestly tribe while Judah was the royal tribe and Jesus came from both. From those two tribes, the Lord has narrowed this down to Joseph and Mary joined by marriage, who were chosen to be the single Messianic family on earth to bring forth our Messiah. The Lord decided thousands of years ago, the way the Hebrew nation, founded by Abraham would bless the world, would be through Judah and Levi's bloodline. It is from Jerusalem where we get the Blood of the New Covenant through Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:25) confirmed at the Last Supper (Luke 22:20). That is how important Jerusalem is to the Jewish people and to Gentiles who accept and receive Jesus and to the Lord God Who originally organised salvation. In founding the Hebrew nation and creating a home base, God's ultimate plan was to bring the Messiah into the world to teach all peoples from that home base. In this world of idolatry, God's plan was to establish a holy background for the Messiah and to teach the world there is only one true God.

Before 1967, Muslims made no claim on Jerusalem or any part of Israel and it is not mentioned in their so-called 'holy' book even once. Their holy cities are Mecca and Medina. The two mosques built in Jerusalem by the Ottoman Turks had never been significant to the Muslims any more than mosques built in other Western countries. Jerusalem had never been seen as their religious centre. The Muslim's claim to Jerusalem as a city holy to them is a very recent claim. Originally, the Muslims refuted any claim to Jerusalem or indeed anywhere in Israel but like the evil liars they are, they have written a new false 'history' regarding Jerusalem. In a massive untrue propaganda campaign, the Palestinians called Jerusalem, 'the eternal and undivided capital of the state of Palestine'. They have written a previously non-existent connection to Jerusalem, denying there ever were two Temples on Mount Moriah despite thousands of archaeological proofs and historical records, the Jewish Temples were there and the remains of the second Temple is still in use today. The Palestinians have even gone so far as trying to stop the entire world's media from using the phrase, 'The Temple Mount'. They claim it is inaccurate. Denying the Temples ever existed is just one evil tool aimed at detaching the Jewish people from Jerusalem. Their claim helps fuel the fires of hatred by denying the Jews have any rights to Jerusalem and makes the constant attacks legitimate in the eyes of the enemies of Israel. The Temple Mount remains under Israeli control. The Muslims do the most shocking things to the Jews, killing and maiming them however and whenever they can. Muslims claim to the land is due to their two mosques and they erroneously think that gives them some legitimacy. The Muslims are solely responsible for the current skirmishes in Israel. If they would leave the Israeli's alone, there would not be any trouble. The UN currently continues to deny the Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem and many countries wrongly agree with them. The fact is, it does not matter what the UN believes, what other countries believe or what other religions believe, what really matters is the opinion of the Lord God of the universe Who created Israel and Jerusalem for His chosen people to dwell. He has restored Israel and they will never be uprooted again. The Bible makes it very clear ... the Land of Israel and Jerusalem is God's land, and His people, the Jews, are the beloved 'apple of His eye' (Deuteronomy 32:10). Here is a dire warning to anyone who touches, persecutes or steals from the Jewish people. 'Thus says the Lord of Heavenly Armies, "Anyone who touches you (the Jewish people) touches the apple of His eye"' (Zechariah 2:8).

The battle for Jerusalem continues. It has been the centre of wars and conflict for centuries. Some of the world's strongest armies have fought over Jerusalem even though the aggressors change from century to century. The Arabs and Muslims are just the most recent aggressors. The violence towards Israel has a spiritual basis caused by jealousy of the 'cousins' dating back thousands of years. Isaac was the chosen son and the only legitimate child of Abraham but there were ten other sons and nephews who were all rejected by the Lord from inheriting the land and the Messianic bloodline. No illegitimate son could inherit such an important role as an ancestor of the Messiah. Isaac's seven illegitimate half-brothers, Ishmael born to Abraham's first concubine (mistress) Hagar (Genesis 16:15), and the six sons of Abraham's second concubine (mistress) Keturah (1 Chronicles 1:32) were all rejected. Abraham's grandson Esau was rejected because of his wickedness. Abraham's nephew Lot's two illegitimate sons Ben Ammi and Moab were rejected. All of these males were Hebrews because Abraham was Hebrew (Genesis 14:13). Generations later, only King David's son Solomon's bloodline from the tribe of Judah was chosen although David had several other sons by other wives. This jealousy ignited hatred that has been taught to their descendents, generation after generation throughout the centuries. Millions of Muslims could possibly be Hebrews descended from the above mentioned men but they are definitely not Jews. The Muslims believe some of

them are descended from Ishmael and are the chosen people and their religion is the right one, however, if they cared to study accurate history, they would see the Lord was active in the lives of the Hebrews, later called the Jews, centuries before the false prophet Mohammed started his false religion. Israel struggles on as a Jewish state, a democratic state, and with Jerusalem as their capital, a state following the Laws of Moses, the Torah and with the orthodox Jews, their deeply religious conscience, but always constantly under bombardment from their enemies.

Israel is a thriving democracy. The Muslims and Arabs who live in Israel full time have equal rights with every other person from other countries who live there. They enjoy full citizenship with voting rights. All minorities are protected with complete equality of social and political rights irrespective of race, religion language or culture. Israeli Arabs work in diplomatic, government, military and justice positions. It is illegal for any employer to discriminate against anyone and all citizens enjoy fair employment practices and medical care. Jewish and Arab students study together in schools and universities. Arab teachers and professors teach freely among the educational institutions. Being a Jewish state simply means the majority of residents are Jewish. It does not mean anyone is discriminated against and non-Jewish citizens have equal rights to express their differences of religion or culture. Although Jews and Arabs often choose to live separately because of religious differences, that is complete freedom of choice not forced segregation. During their everyday lives such as in doctor's clinics, parks, walking tracks, shopping centres, restaurants, markets and many other situations, Jews and Arabs live and work side by side. The disputed territories are another matter. The Jewish Israeli's surrendered the Gaza and parts of the West Bank in return for peace but all they got was more hatred, more rockets and more killings. If the Palestinians there were given citizenship it would be considered annexation and would end any hope of peace. From Gaza and the Palestinian section of the West Bank, terrorism thrives and Israel was forced to build the massive walls to curb the violence and protect their people. Further to this, the Arab citizens have said they prefer to live in Israel as citizens rather than live in Palestinian controlled areas because of the extreme oppression of the Islamic religion and their rulers.

We are called to pray for peace in Jerusalem. 'I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Our feet are standing within your gates, Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city compact together where the tribes go up, even Yah's tribes according to an ordinance for Israel to give thanks to the name of the Lord ... Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Those who love you will prosper. Peace be within your walls and prosperity within your palaces. For my brothers' and companions' sakes I will now say, "Peace be within you." For the sake of the house of our God, I will seek your good' (Psalm 122:1 to 9). There is a holy peace that descends on Jerusalem every Sabbath from Friday afternoon to Saturday evening and the city becomes quiet as the people celebrate. People dress in good clothes. Many men buy flowers for their wives or mothers. People hurry to be home with their families before sundown. Scriptures are taught. Hymns are sung. Parents bless their children. Men bless their wife. One Jewish politician said when asked if he believed Jesus is the Messiah, "I will seek an appointment with the Messiah and ask Him, "Sir, have you ever been here before?" Until our Messiah rules the world from Jerusalem we should bless Israel, bless the Jewish people and pray daily for peace and protection for all Israeli's.

The following comments regarding Jerusalem were spoken by Muslim leaders with the foolish opinion, their false god could possibly win the battle over God's holy City of Jerusalem. That will never happen! Muslims are deluded because they are being lied to by the devil. "The terror campaign being waged in Jerusalem today, I think is the final chapter after which our banners will be raised with the aid of the one exalted and omnipotent Allah (the evil false god of Islam) over the towers of the man who sings the Muslim call to prayer in Jerusalem, over the Christian churches in Jerusalem, over the domes in Jerusalem, over the hills, mountains, alleys and houses." "Israel thinks it will have the last word in the fairy tale of Jewish Jerusalem." "No Muslim will ever accept non-Muslim sovereignty over even a millimetre of Jerusalem." "Israel's claim on the Temple Mount is empty and false, a falsification of the history we all know." "Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount is a 'red line' we cannot possibly accept." "I congratulate the Muslims for their steadfastness in defending Jerusalem for which we are all ready to sacrifice ourselves." How wicked is their opinion? It is obvious they do not worship the true God of Abraham because the Lord God wants to restore Israel and Jerusalem for the Jewish people but the Muslims want to destroy them. They stand at opposite ends of the spectrum. The Jews are for God, for good, for holiness and for righteousness but the Muslims are for only evil continually.

Jerusalem was designed to be God's throne on earth, however an evil usurper has taken hold of the place of God's throne and that evil usurper is the wicked false god of Islam, the terrible and evil religion of the Muslims. The evil god calls himself almighty but he is mightily wicked. His so-called glory is not love but hatred, not life but death, not freedom but slavery, not light but only evil darkness. This god rejects the truth of Jerusalem for a lie and false history. All that evil god wants, is to destroy the Jews not restore them. That god makes claim to Jerusalem, a city that is not his to claim. He has made the Temple Mount his home but it never will be. He is like an intruder who has broken into the home of the Jews and is squatting there illegally.

He has wreaked havoc in that area and continues to do so. The evil god's time is limited. He will be removed by the breath of the true God of the Jews when He is ready. Jesus is coming to rule the world and will rule from Jerusalem, and nothing and no one will be able to stop Him for He is the true and Almighty God, ruler of heaven and earth.

The following comments spoken by Jewish leaders reveal their hope in the promises and prophecies regarding Jerusalem written in the Bible, which is the Word of God. "We are in a battle for Jerusalem, our eternal capital." "We often hear the Palestinians accuse Israel of Judaizing Jerusalem. That is like accusing America of Americanising Washington, or the British of Anglicising London. We are called Jews because we come from Judea." "We are called Israeli's because we come from Israel (Jacob)." "There are those who would like to uproot us from our capital. They will never achieve their aim." "The people of Israel are not occupiers and we are not settlers. Israel is our home and Jerusalem is the eternal capital of our sovereign state. Throughout history, Jerusalem has been the capital city for one people and one people only, the Jewish people. The Bible details 4,000 years of Jewish history in the Land of Israel. In the Bible we read about our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who travelled Jerusalem's rolling hills. We read about (Jewish) King David who laid the cornerstone of his palace over 3,000 years ago. In the Bible we read about (Jewish) King Solomon who constructed the first Temple. Jerusalem is a Divine promise to the Jewish people. The connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem cannot be denied. Nothing you can say can change that. Jerusalem is Mount Olivet, Mount Zion, Mount Moriah and the Temple Mount. To walk in this place is to walk in the footsteps of our forefathers and to feel the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people. Palestinians and others have had the audacity to accuse us of trying to alter the historic Jewish character of our ancient city. Really? The truth of the matter is Jerusalem had a Jewish character long before most cities around the world had any character at all. Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish people long before Homer composed the Iliad, before Romulus and Remus founded Rome, before Alexander the Great swept across the Middle East. Israel will strive for peace while fulfilling the Divine prophecies. Israel will never be silent. We will stand guard and we will safeguard Jerusalem, not just for the Jewish people but for people of all faiths. I issue this promise from the people of the Promised Land ... under our watch, Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people will remain a free and open city for all people and for all time." "Israel is the only place in the entire Middle East where Christians are safe. Christian citizens of Israel can give thanks for the rights and protection they have received in the Middle East's only democracy."

Jerusalem in the perfect 'jewel' in the Middle East and Israel is the only democracy but more than that, they follow the teachings of the One True Creator God, whereas the surrounding countries believe in and follow a false prophet and a false religion. Jerusalem has always been the most sacred and central location in history. It is the only holy city on earth where God has attached His name as a permanent reminder of His sovereignty. Jerusalem is His resting place (Psalm 132:8). Jerusalem is the birthplace of Christianity. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, died and was resurrected in Jerusalem and where the famous 'upper room' once was, which was the place where the disciples received the infilling of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Modern visitors to Jerusalem bring millions of Israel's Shkalim (shekels) into their economy. Three shekels = about \$120 Australian. Although it has been destroyed twice, Jerusalem is one of the oldest, continuous cities in the world.

What is the final word on Jerusalem? This is what the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has said. "It will happen in the latter days (in our day or very soon), the Mountain of God's House (Jerusalem) will be established on the top of the mountains and will be raised above the hills, and (people from) all nations will flow to it. Many peoples will say, 'Come, let us go up to the Mountain of God, to the House of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth out of Zion and the Word of God from Jerusalem. God will judge between the nations and will decide concerning many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against another nation nor will they learn war any more. House of Jacob (Jewish people) come and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:2 to 5).

The following passages of scripture reveal to us how important Jerusalem is to our Lord God. The following verses are the Lord speaking to, and blessing Jerusalem and Israel. 'For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The nations will see your righteousness, all kings your glory and you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of God will name. You will be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You will no more be considered Forsaken, nor will your land any more be considered Desolate, but you will be called Hephzibah (meaning My delight is in her) and your land Beulah (married to God), for the Lord delights in you ... Your God will rejoice over you. I have set watchmen on your walls Jerusalem. They will never hold their peace day or night. You who call on the Lord take no rest and give Him no rest until He establishes and until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth' (Isaiah 62:1 to 7). 'Thus says the Lord of Heavenly Armies, "I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy and I am jealous for

her with great wrath. I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called 'The City of Truth' and the mountain of the Lord of Armies, 'The Holy Mountain'. Old men and old women will again dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for old age. The streets of the City will be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. If it is marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvellous in My eyes? Behold, I will save My people from the east country and from the west country. I will bring them and they will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They will be My people and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness" (Zechariah 8:2 to 8). 'I (John) heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with people and He will dwell with them and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God"' (Revelation 21:3).

Amen and God bless you.

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