

P07-b_History of the Dispute Over Jerusalem.

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When David became king over Israel around 1000 BC, Israel's capital was located in Hebron, nineteen miles south of Jerusalem. After reigning from Hebron for seven years, David conquered the city of Jebus, home of the Jebusites, making it Israel's new capital.

He renamed the city—Jerusalem.

David's son, King Solomon, built Israel's First Temple on the Temple Mount, which David had purchased for a place of sacrifice from Araunah the Jebusite for 50 shekels of silver. (II Samuel 24:24) When the temple was completed in 968 BC, God made a pronouncement to Solomon that forever determined the course of history. It's recorded in I Kings 9:3,

“And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.”

In I Kings 11:36, God enlarged upon this promise to include the entire city of Jerusalem as the place where He would place His name:

“And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.”

When God announced that He would place His name in Jerusalem, Satan heard it and the struggle for control over Jerusalem began. There have been more wars fought over the city of Jerusalem than over any other city on earth. So, we see that the struggle over Jerusalem is more than a political conflict. It is a spiritual battle between God and Satan—between light and darkness.

Jerusalem remained the capital of Israel until 586 BC when God allowed Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, to carry the Jewish people into captivity because of their idolatry.

After seventy years of captivity in Babylon, God allowed the return of the Jews to Jerusalem—the city where God chose to place His name. Jerusalem then continued to be the capital of the Jewish people until 70 AD when Rome destroyed the city and the temple. The Roman Emperor Hadrian banished Jews from Jerusalem in 135 AD and, as an insult to the Jews, changed the name of the land of Israel to Palestine (the same word as Philistine). His intention was to eradicate the Jewish people once and for all.

For almost the next 2,000 years, the Jewish people were scattered throughout the nations. However, religious Jews prayed three times each day, with their faces toward Jerusalem, for the return to Jerusalem and the restoration of their temple there. For 2,000 years, the parting salutation of Jews to each other was “Next year in Jerusalem.”

After Hitler's horrible holocaust, during which six million Jews perished, the Jewish people began to return to the Promised Land in increasing numbers. Conflict between Jews and Arabs over the land escalated.

On November 29, 1947 the United Nations voted to partition the Promised Land, creating an Arab state and a Jewish state. They declared Jerusalem an open city under UN control.

The Jews, thrilled at having a homeland after 2,000 years of exile, accepted the partition plan even though the territory granted to them was only a small fraction of the Promised Land given to them by God's promise to Abraham. The Arabs rejected the partition, launching a war to destroy the newborn nation of Israel before it could breathe its first breath. The resulting conflict became known as Israel's War of Independence.

When a ceasefire was reached in 1949, temporarily ending the hostilities, Israel controlled the western part of Jerusalem, and Jordan, who had invaded in attempt to destroy Israel, controlled Judea-Samaria (the West Bank) and east Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount.

On January 23, 1950 the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution stating that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel.

By 1967, Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser felt like Egypt was strong enough to wipe Israel off the map. He signed mutual defense treaties with Jordan and Syria and prepared for the destruction of the state of Israel.

The war only lasted six days, from June 5 to June 10, 1967. To the world's amazement, Israel conquered the Golan Heights, the Sinai Desert, and the entire area of Judea-Samaria (the West Bank), including east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, in six short days.

On July 30, 1980 the Israeli Knesset passed the "Jerusalem Law", annexing east Jerusalem and declaring United Jerusalem to be the eternal, undivided capital of the state of Israel.

On August 20, 1980 the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 478 by 14 votes to none, with one abstention (United States), which declared the Jerusalem Law was "null and void" and "must be rescinded". This resolution called upon member states of the UN to withdraw their diplomatic missions from the city. Within weeks, 11 of the 13 states that had embassies in Jerusalem shut them down, and the last two were closed in 2006.

On November 15, 1988 Yasser Arafat issued the Palestinian Declaration of Independence on Palestinian territory, at the same time claiming Jerusalem as its capital.

Why did the Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital? Had it ever been their capital? No...not once throughout all history. Why then did they insist on Jerusalem as their capital when they knew it had been Israel's capital since 1000 BC?

The Palestinians understand that Jerusalem is "the heart and the soul" of Israel. If the Israelis agree to give up Jerusalem, they are saying that God's promises about placing His name in Jerusalem are nothing but 4,000-year-old myths. If God's promise concerning Jerusalem is not true, then God's promise concerning the Promised Land is not valid either; therefore, the founding of the nation of Israel in 1948 was illegitimate.