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Public Lecture: Jerusalem- Jewish or Palestinian Capital?

Apparently we have no visitors with us, but I'm going to depend upon our excellent doorkeepers at the back, to warn us if anyone does arrive, and so if you notice a change to my tone or style, it might be an indication that we have a visitor present amongst us.

So perhaps rather than taking the format of a standard lecture, I'm going to adopt a slightly more relaxed style tonight, perhaps more what we might call 'seminar style', but we're still going to cover the material because we think it's actually extremely interesting and beneficial, of course, for ourselves, to see what's going on as far as the signs of the times are concerned.

Now, the area then of Palestine, which is really this piece of territory that borders the Mediterranean coast has, of course, in it, one of the most famous seas in the world, known as the Dead Sea, because it is the lowest part of the earth, and the river Jordan that comes down from the Sea of Galilee in the north and this region on both sides of the Jordan River, has come to be known for a considerable period of time now, as the Land of Palestine.

It's probably the most controversial place on earth; it's the centre, of course, of an ancient hostility between the Jew and the Arab, and currently this particular area forms the locale for two states that are suppose to exist side by side, an Israeli state and a supposed Palestinian state. So we're going to talk about that controversy, what controversy that generates in the area, in terms of what we're going to say tonight.

So the subject then is, particularly this evening, concerning Jerusalem which is to be found in the middle of that Palestinian territory. Of course, the greatest unresolved question between the Jew and the Arab, apart from anything else is the **future status of Jerusalem**, because you see, it's uniquely difficult the problem of the city of Jerusalem. Firstly, because of its geographical proximity to both the Jewish and the Palestinian areas. They're both close, in fact, they are contiguous to that particular city. Secondly, because the city of Jerusalem is of supreme political significance as a globally famous city, there are tremendous emotional and political overtones to the question of the status of Jerusalem. Thirdly, of course, because of the religious importance of the city, because to the Jew, the city of Jerusalem is their most revered place; here is the wailing wall, the foundation remnants of their temple from worship of an earlier age. To the Muslim, the place of Jerusalem is famous because of the Haram Al-Sharif area and the Al-Aksa mosque and dome that sits on the top of that area where

the Moslems worship in the city of Jerusalem. To the Christian, the Via del Rosa and Gethsemane and Golgotha are important sites related to the work and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. So everyone's got a stake, you see, in Jerusalem.

Now the opening position of both sides on this particular story is somewhat provocative! It doesn't bode well in terms of a resolution. Here's the Jewish side, so the Jewish position concerning the state is really expressed in what was known as the **Jerusalem Law** that was passed in 1980, and that said that 'Jerusalem is the eternal and undivided capital of the Jewish state'. But on the other side we have the Palestinian position which says, 'Soon the Palestinian flag will fly on the walls, the minarets and the cathedrals of Jerusalem' as Yasir Arafat said in 1993. So we really have an impasse, we have both sides, the Jewish and the Palestinian sides both claiming that Jerusalem is the rightful place for the capital of their state. It's really one of those military and political impasses that no one seems to know how, in fact, to resolve!

Well, in fact, the issue, of course, is interesting from a political perspective but our position, of course, tonight is that we are **not geo-political commentators**, we're not strategic intelligence experts, we're not military analysts, our interest in the matter is from the perspective of a biblical answer to this particular problem. We come before you as a biblically based community and we're interested in what the bible has to say, not just about the resolution of this conflict, but what we can also take from the bible concerning the resolution of a much wider issue that, in fact, fills the entire world.

So the bible, of course, speaks about the Jewish people, it has a lot to say about the Jewish people, but what you might find interesting to know, is that the bible also speaks of Palestine, and of Palestinians, that these are terms that are drawn from a Hebrew word in the Old Testament. In fact, the word for Palestine and Palestinian is the Hebrew word, Pelesheth (6429) and the word means 'rolling or migratory' and in the AV, the standard version of the bible, the word is translated as both, Palestina and as Palestine and also as Philistia and as Philistine. It's all the same word in the Hebrew. Well, let me give you an illustration of that and how relevant it is perhaps, to our subject tonight. In the book of Exodus and chapter 15, we have the story of the children of Israel, as they came marching out of captivity from where they'd been in Egypt for over 400 years, and they came marching up into the Land of promise, and in Exodus 15, we're told this, in terms of what happened. Exodus 15 says and we're going to take it up from the 13th verse; it says and this is the words of Moses, the leader of the Jewish people of the day, he says, 'Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. The people shall hear and be afraid, sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of well! Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them, by the greatness of thy arm, they shall be as still as a stone till thy people pass over, O LORD. Till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O LORD which thy hands

have established'.

Now we need to just see what's being told us in Exodus 15. We're told that the children of Israel were going to come up from the land of Egypt from the south, and they were going to come moving up into the area known as Palestine, and Exodus 15 says that when Israel arrived in that place; well, you see what it says, verse 14, 'Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina, the dukes of Edom shall be amazed. The mighty men of Moab shall tremble and the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.' The reason, my dear friends, why all of those nations were going to be so troubled at the coming of Israel into this land, is because this was the land which had already been promised to Israel through their father Abraham. By the way, I think that the nations of verses 14 and 15 are deliberately mentioned because, you see, Palestina was here on the west, and the dukes of Edom were to the south and the inhabitants of Moab were to the east and the people of Canaan were to the north. So what we're being told in Exodus 15 verses 14 and 15 is that the **whole of the inhabitants of the land of Palestine would be deeply worried**, because this land was promised to the children of Israel and **now they've come to settle!** says Exodus 15, and not just anywhere in the land but did you notice what it said in verse 13? It said, 'that God would guide them into **His (thy) holy habitation**'. Where might that be? well, verse 17 says, 'Thou shalt plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance', the mountain of thine inheritance, that's interesting!

Now what does that mean? or what does that tell us? Well, the mountain of God's inheritance just happens to be Mount Zion in the city of Jerusalem. We're told in fact, that Mount Zion, the mountain of God's holiness in Psalm 48 verses 1 and 2 it says, 'that Zion is the place where there is the city of the great King'. But our Lord Jesus Christ makes exactly the same statement in Matthew 5 verse 35 and says, 'Jerusalem is the city of the great King'; now by the way, Jerusalem is just about here, it's almost equal with the top end of the Dead Sea, but inland up on the Judean mountains, and the city of Jerusalem and the holy mountain of Zion are inexplicably linked together in God's purpose. You see, what Exodus 15 says is that choosing Jerusalem wasn't the decision of the Jewish people, it was **God's decision!** Did you notice that? You see, it says in verse 13, **Thy holy habitation**, and it says in verse 17, 'the mountain of **thine inheritance**'. So God's already made choice in the matter concerning Jerusalem and the holy mountain of Zion to which the Jewish people would come. **This is His place, He's chosen it already!** and as you know, Israel did settle in that land as Moses had said, and one of their very first kings took the castle of Zion on the holy mountain of Jerusalem and turned it into the capital of the Jewish people.

Not only did Jerusalem become the capital of the Jewish people but it also became their spiritual centre where their religious festivals and where their national worship was conducted and many of the poets and prophets of the bible revered this holy city because it's essential to the Jewish people and to their Jewish life.

Now what is interesting is that although they came into the land, Israel never ever did quite manage to conquer the territory of the Philistines, and they remained as a pricking

brier or a thorn in Israel's sides for many generations; and if we were to look at the controversy between the people of Philistina of Exodus 15 and verse 14 and the Jewish people, we find that they are totally at enmity with one another down through time. There was endless controversy between the two! In fact, Israel never enjoyed peace unless the Philistines or the Palestinians of the day (because it's exactly the same Hebrew word) were subdued.

Let me give you two illustrations of what life was like in biblical times as far as the relationship between the Jewish people and the Palestinian people of the day. Now you need two hands for this one, so in your right hand (isn't it a wonderful thing that we have two hands available) in the right hand you need Psalm 108 and in your left hand you need 1 Chronicles 18. So here we're at the time of David; well, who's David? David's one of the early kings of the nation, and of course, he's reigning in Jerusalem, a Jewish king in Jerusalem, but still in controversy with the Palestinians of the day, the Pelesheth (6429), the Philistines. Well, see what David says in Psalm 108 verse 7 says, 'God hath spoken in His Holiness' (do you know what that's a reference to, by the way? God hath spoken in His Holiness, do you know that that's a reference to the covenant promise that God gives to David in 2 Samuel 7. God had promised that David would receive relief from all his enemies roundabout because this land was promised to the Jewish people, and so he says in verse 7, 'I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, (that's on the one side of the river Jordan), and mete out the valley of Succoth (that's on the other side of the river Jordan). Gilead is mine, says David, (that's on one side of Jordan), and Manasseh is mine, (that's on the other side of Jordan)'. You see, what David is saying is that God had promised to the Jewish people **all the land of Palestine, both sides of the river Jordan!** As a result of that, says David, he was quite confident in verse 9, he said, 'Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; and over Palestina (it's the same word in Hebrew) over the Palestinians will I triumph'.

Well, you know, that's exactly what happened, because if you come to 1 Chronicles 18 (in the left hand), we are told in verse 1, immediately after the covenant promises given to David, why the very first battle that takes place, in 1 Chronicles 18 verse 1 it says, 'Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines'. Over Palestina will I triumph, said David in Psalm 108, and promptly went out and smote the Philistines, immediately after in 1 Chronicles 18. So there was controversy between the Jew and the Palestinian, concerning the matter of the territory of the land.

Now we come to a much later king in the history of the nation of Israel. Another Jewish king still sits upon the throne in Jerusalem, but now we're towards the end of the reign of the Jewish kings. This king's name is Hezekiah: now again you need two hands, so this time we need in the right hand Isaiah 14, and in the left hand 2 Kings 18. So now we're at the time of good king Hezekiah, now in Isaiah 14 verse 28 it says, 'In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden:' and the burden is that which is going to follow from verse 29 to verse 32. Now by the way, do you know who king Ahaz was? he was the father of, why, Hezekiah, he's the father of Hezekiah and this is what the burden

was that was uttered in the year that king Ahaz died. So verse 29 says, 'Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken (Ahaz was dead); for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety, **but, but** O Palestina, I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant'. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath found Zion, and the poor of His people shall flee for protection to that place'. Howl, O Palestina for thou art dissolved, for out of the serpent's roots says verse 29, shall come forth a cockatrice, and the warning of the prophet Isaiah to the Palestinians was, 'don't you think because Ahaz is dead that there will be a cessation of hostilities, because out of him who died will come forth a son who will also be a fiery flying serpent against you.

Now look at the other reference in 2 Kings 18 verse 1. It says, 'Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign'. Why that must be the very year of Isaiah 14! in the year that king Ahaz died was this burden, and this is the year that Hezekiah takes the throne and where does he reign? Well, in verse 2 it says he's reigning in Jerusalem. So what did Hezekiah do? well, verse 8 of 2 Kings 18 says, 'He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city'. Although Ahaz was dead, Palestina discovered that his son would still be against them in controversy and in battle, because he smote the Philistines just like David had in a previous time. The only periods of time that Israel ever knew peace where under the reign of kings such as David and Hezekiah, when they had successfully subdued the Philistines or the Palestinians in their day.

In fact, what ultimately happened is that God decreed judgment against the Philistines because of their perpetual hatred against the Jewish people. I can think of at least 4 prophecies that tell us about the decline, the imminent decline of the Philistines. Jeremiah 47 says they would be overthrown and that prophecy was fulfilled by the power of Egypt. Ezekiel 25 said that the Philistines would be overthrown and that prophecy was fulfilled by the Babylonians; Zechariah 9 said that the Philistines would be overthrown and that prophecy would be fulfilled by Greece; and Zephaniah 2 said that Philistines would be overthrown and that prophecy was fulfilled by Israel themselves in the days of the Maccabees, when they totally destroyed the territory and people of the Philistines. So by the time we come to the New Testament era, in the days of Jesus Christ, the Philistines, the Palestinians, those of Palestina, have completely disappeared from the record; **they are gone!**

Now what's interesting about that though is this, that during that entire period of time, the conflict of the Old Testament between the Jew and the Palestinian, never once, were the Palestinians successful in laying a siege against Jerusalem or in overthrowing it! **Never once!** in fact, one authority says that there are 27 recorded successful sieges against Jerusalem by various powers; 27, 27 recorded sieges against the city of

Jerusalem, not one of them was executed by the Palestinians or the Philistines. They were at best, they were at most, simply an **auxiliary force of the real power of the day, that sought to overthrow God's holy mountain!** but as a people themselves, they never lead a siege, they never dislodged Israel from the land, and they never captured Jerusalem, which remained a Jewish capital of a Jewish state, for virtually 1,000 years from the days of king David.

Well, of those 27 sieges, the 7th was considered to be Sennacherib the Assyrian. The 14th was Antiochus Epiphanes the Seleucid, and the 21st was Titus the Roman; and the bible mentions all of these sieges and others besides. In fact, when the Romans came, they dealt with Jerusalem twice; once in AD.70 and again in (can anyone tell me the date?) and again in AD.135, absolutely right! and both of those occasions were, in fact, the subject of biblical prophecy.

Just moving to the second one which is the matter of interest to us for the moment, is that in AD.135 Hadrian ploughed Jerusalem and sowed it with salt, and he laid out the plans for a completely new Roman city on the site of the old Jerusalem of the Jews. In fact, he passed a law that the Jews were not allowed to even step on God's holy mountain on pain of death. The city was renamed Aelia Capitolina and the land was called (wait for it!) Sigia Palestina or the land of Palestine or 'of the Philistines'. Now that was a terrible, terrible offence to the Jewish people for it named the whole of this territory after their ancient Old Testament enemies; and you know since the days of Hadrian, that land has been called Palestine ever since; it was Hadrian that so named it in AD. 135. Yet what's interesting is that very event of the sowing of Jerusalem by Hadrian was a fulfilment of bible prophecy because the prophet Micah had said, 'therefore shall Zion for your sake, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest'. Even the Jewish people had to realize that their privileged position before God was subject to their obedience to His laws and that national unfaithfulness lead to their scattering to all parts of the world.

As a result of that scattering, Jerusalem as a city came under a time of domination by others, Gentile domination, 'when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies', our Lord Jesus Christ had warned and from the time of the Romans onwards, the city of Jerusalem now came under the control of many powers down through time; the Romans, the Muslims, the Seljuk Turks, the Crusaders, the Muslims again, the Crusaders again, the Khawarizmian Turks, the Mongols, the Mamelukes, the Ottoman Turks, the British and finally the Jordanians. Right through to 1967, in fact, what happened is that although the Jewish state was dissolved, of course, in AD.70, you might be interested to know that although Jews fled out of Jerusalem after Hadrian, there were always Jewish people in the region of Palestine **continuously** from that time ever since. There has never been a time when a Jewish presence wasn't to be found in the land of Palestine, despite the fact that it bore now the hateful name of their Old Testament enemies. From all four corners of the world, the Jews have now returned to their ancient land, and they created in 1948, a new state, the state of Israel which now

is existing in the world again, as if the Jews had come back with life from the dead.

Now what's interesting about that is this, that not only have the Jewish people returned, and not only have they created another state in the land, but they came in fulfillment of bible prophecy which predicted the beginning of a Jewish settlement in the land, as a prelude to the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth, and of course, that's why we're interested in these particular things. In fact, the prophecy of Zechariah says in one place, which I'm just going to read to you; it says this and I think this is the spirit of what's been happening in the nation. 'Thus saith the LORD, I am returned unto Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth and the mountain of the LORD of hosts shall be called **the holy mountain**', and Zechariah reminds us that although the Jews were scattered that God's purpose with this place and with this city and with His holy mountain has never, in fact, ceased down through time. In fact, it's interesting that when the Lord in Luke 21 said, 'that they shall fall by the edge of the sword and be carried away captive; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles', said our Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 21, that there does appear to be an allusion to an ancient prophecy in the book of Daniel because Daniel spoke about the sanctuary (which is Jerusalem) being trodden **under foot**, and that phrase 'trodden under foot' appears to be what the Lord refers to in Luke 21. The question of Daniel was, how long shall the treading down be? and the answer came back, 'unto two thousand and three hundred days'. We believe that's a prophecy, you see, a prophecy not just of days but of years; and so what's interesting is that the vision of Daniel 8 begins with the battle of Alexander against the Persians in BC. 334 and 333 and 2,300 years from that, takes us to 1967, and in that year the Jewish people took control again of the city of Jerusalem. You see, they're back in the land, we believe, in accordance with bible prophecy and Jerusalem is now again, the capital of a Jewish state with Jewish people returned to that place!

But just as the Jewish people have returned back to the land of Palestine, what's interesting is, that side by side with their re-emergence, is the appearance again, of their ancient enemies to yet confront them in the latter days. Now I should just make it clear that the Arabs today that are called '**Palestinians**', well, perhaps I should make it clear that I'm not even sure that most of them, in fact, are not even Palestinians. So just by way of digression, I don't know if you know the background and the circumstances to the definition of a Palestinian refugee! But you see, what happened was, that in the years leading up to the declaration of the state of Israel, there was, in fact, a net emigration of Arab people out of the land of Palestine because there was no employment. For a long time there was no employment, there was no business, there was nothing that could be done; the land was desolate and as the influx of Jewish people began to increase, they created jobs and businesses and factories and companies, and all of a sudden there were employment opportunities in the land of Palestine. So Arab people started to come because of the work opportunities that Palestine created, but the Arabs came from all over the Arab world. They came from Morocco, from Tunisia, from Syria, from Lebanon, from Jordan, and they came to Palestine.

Well, in 1948 when the state of Israel was declared and certain Arabs fled on the recommendation of Arab radio which insisted that it would be good for them to leave while they drove the Jewish people into the sea; when the United Nations stepped in to try and deal with the Palestinian refugee problem, lots of people put up their hand and said, 'I'm a Palestinian refugee', so of course, the United Nations had to decide on a definition. Do you know what the definition was? the definition was that as long as you had been resident in Palestine for **24 months**, you qualified as a Palestinian. So a lot of the people who were in Palestine at the time, had nothing to do with Palestine, they weren't Palestinians, in fact, there was no such thing as a Palestinian Arab, because there never was a Palestinian Arab state, and many of the so-called Palestinians were in fact, Arabs from Morocco, from Tunisia, from Lebanon who had come there for work. Been there all of 2 years and now have been cruelly taken from their ancient homeland! Yesss! We're not sure about the legitimacy of the Palestinian claim at all, it's not to say that some people weren't living there, of course, there were and there were some people who were displaced, in fact, do you know how many Arabs were displaced in the crisis of the 1948 war of independence? The answer is about 600,000 and you'd never guess how many Jewish people were displaced from the surrounding Arab nations during those same years of controversy and turmoil? Why, about 600,000!! I'd say they're pretty square, personally.

Now the Palestinians of today, are not Philistines. They're not descended in any way from Philistine stock; they don't have Philistine blood pumping in their hearts, but they do surprisingly occupy the same territory and they share the same name and they show the same spirit, and we believe, that biblically they'll share the same fate. Because scripture indicates that there will be a latter day controversy between these two, just as there was in biblical times, because the bible speaks of another siege of Jerusalem yet to come, another overthrow of Jerusalem yet to come, and we believe, that the Palestinians may well be involved in the matter. Oh, they're not the great invading power, the bible doesn't signal out the Palestinians of the latter days as the great invading power; they never were in Old Testament times, all they ever did was throw their lot in with whichever power was coming against Jerusalem at the time.

But we do believe that there could be some Palestinian intrigue in the matter of the controversy of Jerusalem at the time of the end. Now let me just read one passage to you first, and then we're going to look up two scriptural quotes. 'Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city'. You see, Zechariah 14 verses 1 to 3 tells us that there's going to be another siege of Jerusalem; just like all those 27 sieges of the past, there's going to be another one. Jerusalem is not safely in control of the Jewish people, not yet; and Zechariah says that when that siege takes place, not only will the city be overthrown but it says that half the city will go forth into captivity, did you notice that? it'll go forth into captivity, says Zechariah. Well, I think I know who helps in

that process of deporting Jewish people out of the Land in the time of that great final siege. If you come to the prophecy of Joel and the 3rd chapter, I believe that the battle of Joel 3 and of Zechariah 14 is one and the same. Just as Zechariah says that 'half the people shall go forth into captivity, well, let's see what Joel says; Joel says that the circumstances of this battle and of this controversy is, 'Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and My heritage Israel whom they have scattered amongst the nations, and parted My land'. So Joel 3 tells us of a great controversy in the land, in fact, associated with the city of Jerusalem.

In fact, do you see how the controversy ends? the controversy ends with these words in the 16th verse; it says 'The LORD shall also roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem: and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God **dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain**: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more'. You see, God's always looking after His holy mountain! and when this controversy comes, this invasion, this siege comes against Jerusalem, we're told that God will ultimately deliver His people and roar that He might be the strength of His people and that His holy mountain might be protected, the holy mountain of Zion. Oh, do you know what happens in the middle of that battle?

Well, come back and have a look at verse 4, it says, 'Yea, and what have ye to do with Me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and **all the coasts of Palestina?**' that's the same word in the Hebrew. All the coasts of Palestina, 'will ye render Me a recompense? and if ye recompense Me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head; Because ye have taken My silver and My gold, and ye have carried into your temples My goodly pleasant things; The children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have **ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border**'. You see, I believe that the deportation of the Jewish people, who will be sent forth into captivity from the city of Jerusalem, that Zechariah tells us about, will be off the coasts of Palestine where the Palestinians live, and that they will assist the great invading army in the deportation of the Jews to other parts, out of the Land in that controversy of Jerusalem in that day. So, is there going to be a latter day Jewish-Palestinian controversy? Yes, I think so, absolutely, but the warning of Joel is that spirit of enmity with Israel and against Israel will be recompensed by God, in the same way that He recompensed the Palestinians of Old Testament times.

So here's the resolution of the story then, Isaiah 11, because do you see what Isaiah 11 says, this is what is going to happen as a consequence. Isaiah 11 speaks of a time, well verse 9 says, 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.' So there it is again, you see, it's **God's holy mountain**, it's under the control of the Jewish people, because the man of the tribe or of the stem of Jesse of verse 1, is a Jewish man; that's a

reference to the royal house of David, the Jewish kings of Old Testament times, they are back in the land and God's holy mountain is now safe again. They shall not hurt or destroy in My holy mountain, says verse 9. Then Isaiah the prophet goes on to say this in verse 12, 'He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Do you know that some of those who are dispersed in Isaiah 11 verse 12, are the very ones who've been sent forth into captivity in Zechariah chapter 14 verses 1 to 3. Some of those who are dispersed on this occasion are the ones who've been deported at the siege of Jerusalem, in Isaiah 1. Where do they come from? says Joel, why, from the coasts of the Palestinians, which by the way, is where they dwelt in Old Testament times, on the sea coast.

Well, when the Jews come back, and they're in control of God's holy mountain, verse 13 of Isaiah 11 says, 'The envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall **fly upon the shoulders of the Palestinians to the west**'. Did you notice that in Isaiah 11 verse 14, 'they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Palestinians to the west, which by the way, would presumably therefore argue that there must be some Philistines in the west to fly upon! in the latter days. So they shall, and the promise of Isaiah 11 is that the Jewish people will conquer and subjugate the Palestinians of the latter days in just the way that David and Hezekiah did in Old Testament times. They're not the main story of the bible, they've never been the main story, they've only ever been a thorn in Israel's side, but the day will come when the thorn will finally be removed; and that's the promise of Isaiah 11, that finally the Palestinians will be subjugated by the Jewish people back in the Land at that time and Jerusalem will be safe.

You see, it is not on the agenda of scripture for Jerusalem to ever be a Palestinian capital; the Palestinians are fighting against destiny marked out by God and we've got to be careful, of course, we can't say with 100% certainty, that the Palestinians might not take the city of Jerusalem! But what we can say with biblical certainty is firstly, it is very unlikely, and secondly, we can say with absolute certainty that they cannot, they will not, they shall not **retain the city, because it's marked out by God already, to be a Jewish capital of the Jewish people**, that shall return in the last days. It's been promised by God to the Jewish people, and of course, He's got plans beyond the Jewish people. God's got plans with Jerusalem beyond just the Jewish people, in fact, come back to Isaiah 2 which was our reading. It's always good before one finishes a lecture to get finally to the reading that the chairman has read, and in Isaiah 2, it says in verse 1, 'The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house (why that's mountain Zion, that's God's holy mountain, this is the mountain that He chose all the way back in Exodus 15, God's got plans for that place, always has), the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up the mountain of the LORD, to the house of

the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: **for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and word of the LORD from Jerusalem.** And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD'. What Isaiah promises is that Jerusalem in the mountain of God's house, isn't just going to be a **capital for a Jewish kingdom, Jerusalem is going to be the capital of the world**, says Isaiah 2.

You see, the world's gone mad! The world's out of control! The promise of God is that one day, God will intervene and He'll step in, and He will create a society that's based on truly global principles; and the essential position of that global strategy will be the city of Jerusalem, and out from Jerusalem, verse 3 says, 'shall come the law of God, and people will walk in it'. There will be not just the laws of God but people will learn to walk in the paths of those laws and Jerusalem will become an **international capital** so that the kingdom of God on earth might be established and the world might be transformed and brought to a position of happiness and peace! of purity, of cleanness and of righteousness. Of course, that's just what the bible says, you know, how can you be sure? different people have different views, some people think that we'll all get together somehow by holding hands and lighting Christian candles. This is simply what the bible says, that one day Jerusalem might be some great world capital, but then that's just one opinion of many, is it not? Ah, but you see, the different thing about the promises of the bible is that **God always guarantees His promises**, you see, because they're so important!

Have a look at this! Did you realize that everything that's ever happened about the city of Jerusalem in terms of all the conflicts it's ever faced, everything that happens about this city is always a testimony to the fact that we can rely on God's promises for the future! You know, in the bible we're told in 2 Kings 19, that the Assyrian would come against Jerusalem. Now, by the way, all the way through this overhead for some reason, I must have been feeling slightly French or something, so I think that 'siege' is spelt incorrectly, and yes, I have noticed that just in case you have as well. So we're told in 2 Kings 19 that when the Assyrians came against Jerusalem, the prophecy was that they wouldn't even manage to cast a bank against Jerusalem, and they would not get into the city; that was a prophecy. You know, when you make prophecies, my dear friends, things can go terribly wrong, prophecies either happen or they don't! A prophecy that says they will not throw up a bank and they will not get into the city is, in fact, rather specific; of course, you realize what happened! there was a tremendous disaster in the Assyrian camp and as a result of that they never did get into the city because on the very day, on the eve of the very morning they were going to attack, the whole army was wiped out by a virulent plague, 185,000 dead men. The king escaped with dishonour back to his own land, never, ever got in to the city of Jerusalem, and the prophecy of 2 Kings 19 came to pass **exactly as the bible had said**. Interesting!

When the Babylonians came against Jerusalem in one of the later sieges, Jeremiah 33 predicted that the Babylonians would not only breach the walls of Jerusalem with

mounts but they would successfully burn it with fire; you know, that **exactly what happened!** They threw up their mounts and their battering rams and they got into the walls and they were one of the first powers that ever managed to successfully burn Jerusalem with fire! and a Jewish prophet of the bible prophesied that it would be so, how did he know? How did he know really that it would happen? but it came to pass exactly as the prophet had said, because you see, everything that God says about this city always does come to pass!

In Luke 19 we're told that the Roman siege would encircle Jerusalem with a bank and would leave no stone unturned; of course, you could have guessed the bank business, because that's what Romans did, they always built banks around the cities that they were besieging, but how did they know about the stones being turned over? In fact, do you know what really happened? In the siege of Jerusalem which happened under the general or leader called Titus, he gave express orders that the temple of Jerusalem, the Jewish temple of Jerusalem was to be left totally untouched, under the express orders of the leader of the Roman army. What happened is, in the general confusion of the battle, when they finally got into the walls of Jerusalem after a terrible siege and a terrible length of time, and a terrible lose of life, the Jewish people who had all thrown themselves on the altar in the temple, that in the general confusion of what happened, a Roman soldier fired one flaming burning arrow through the window of the temple, and although Titus the commander, shouted out to 'stop', they could never hear the words of the commander; and by the stroke of sheer accident, the temple of Jerusalem was burnt to a cinder. Because the gold of the vessels of the temple were also in there, and had also melted in the building, they tore it apart stone by stone. The bible said that would happen! How did the bible know that? because everything that God says about this city, always comes to pass!

Now we put it to you, that if that's true, then this final siege of Zechariah 14 and the final prophecy of Isaiah 2, that Jerusalem will recover from the sieges of her conquerors, to become the international capital of a worldwide government, we could trust that promise because God's always guaranteed whatever He's said about this place. If #1 and #2 and #3 have already occurred, why wouldn't you believe that #4 and #5 shall? Oh, I think they will, you see, and that we're living on the very eve of this happening, because what's interesting about this conflict is that the bible said that when the Jew and the Palestinian are joined together again in conflict in the Land, then the scene is set for the return of Christ and the establishment of God's kingdom. It's coming soon, my dear friends, we really think it's coming soon, and what the bible helps us to do, is to be enthused about the reality of God's promises and to prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the time that He will establish a kingdom that will be truly global in its reach and in its power and in its influence! and when Jerusalem shall be no longer merely a Jewish capital, most certainly not a Palestinian capital, but the capital of the whole world!