



## THE BATTLE FOR JERUSALEM - PART I I

*By Carol Rushton*



In 1922, the League of Nations came up with the Mandate for Palestine, which encompassed the area which now makes up the modern State of Israel and Jordan. This gave Great Britain the authority to encourage Jewish immigration to the Holy Land for the purposes of establishing a Jewish state in the ancient land of Israel. Jews from all over the world could now legally come to the area west of the Jordan River to live, develop the land, and start businesses.

Great Britain even allowed the Jews to form local government bodies after they immigrated. The Mandate for Palestine actually used the words, “the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine.”

However, Great Britain did not keep its promises to the Jews. In the early 1900s, oil companies from Great Britain and the U.S. started to become deeply involved in developing oil fields in Arab countries. This gave Arabs the leverage to pressure Great Britain into retracting their promises to Jews in the Diaspora concerning immigration and a future country in the Holy Land.

Great Britain issued the famous White Papers in 1930 and 1939, detailing their plan not only to restrict Jewish immigration to the British Mandate area in the Middle East but also to prevent as much as possible Jews buying land in that same area.

This caused much tension between the local Jewish government in the Holy Land, the Arabs, and Great Britain for almost the entire British Mandate period between the Balfour Declaration and the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948.

Although the Jews were thrilled about being allowed to return to Israel, Arabs were less so. Even though they had had possession of the land of Israel for hundreds of years but could not have cared less about it, now the Arabs decided they couldn't live without it. As more and more Jews came to reclaim and develop the land, the Arabs made sure they felt less than welcome. Over the following years Arabs would from time to time violently attack Jewish settlements and neighborhoods, killing as many as possible.

Just one example of what the Jews did to improve the land after they started returning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was at Megiddo in the Jezreel Valley. Megiddo was along the route known as Via Maris, or the Way of the Sea. After Jews were expelled or left in the centuries following the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. and the eventual Muslim rule over the regions, the Jezreel Valley deteriorated into a swampland infested with mosquitos and rocks.

In 1921, Jews finally were able to purchase the land and started clearing it. They had no farming or construction equipment at all so they had to remove the rocks and stones with their bare hands. Many of them contracted malaria

and died. Today when you stand on Tel Megiddo and look out over the Jezreel Valley farmland fills the view as far the eye can see.

According to the Jewish Virtual Library, the British set up their administrative offices for the entire country in Jerusalem. "During these years, Jerusalem began its transformation from the provincial town of Ottoman times to a modern administrative, political, religious and cultural center. Building activity began almost immediately and Jerusalem expanded to the north, south and west. The British determined municipal zones, commercial areas, density of construction, use of materials and height of buildings. Perhaps their most influential contribution to the character of architecture in Jerusalem was a municipal ordinance - which remains in effect to this day - requiring all new buildings to be faced with stone, giving a certain romantic quality to the buildings."

New neighborhoods sprang up, like Rehavia and Beit HaKerem, and hospitals were built. Hebrew University on Mount Scopus was established, as well as the famous King David Hotel.

## **THE U.N. PARTITION PLAN AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

When World War II ended and the full extent of the horrors that Nazi Germany had inflicted upon the Jews became known, worldwide opinion was very favorable toward the Jews. Considering what the Jews had gone through in the Holocaust, many Western nations were sympathetic concerning Jews having their own homeland in the Middle East.

Great Britain had actually floated the two-state solution in 1937 and 1939; one state for the Jews and one for the Arabs using the entire area of the Holy Land. Both times, Arabs rejected the idea outright, even though Great Britain caved to Arab pressure in severely limiting Jewish immigration to 75,000 over a five-year period and giving the Jews only 5,000 square kilometers while the Arabs would retain the remaining 21,700. Jews weren't thrilled with these proposals but tried to negotiate for better terms.

Great Britain continued to try to work out a solution between Arabs and Jews but because the British insisted upon the Arabs' complete approval of any deal, no plan could be finalized. The British finally realized that their efforts were futile and turned the problem over to the United Nations.

The U.N. formed a special committee which recommended the same plan Great Britain had proposed earlier. The Holy Land would be split into two states, one for Arabs and one for Jews. The Jews got the raw end of the deal, retaining a smaller land area with Jerusalem becoming an internationalized city. Even though the Jews viewed the plan as problematic for them, they indicated their willingness to work with the U.N. on the plan. The Arabs refused to consider the U.N. plan. The U.N. told the Arabs to go jump in the lake and adopted the two-state partition plan on November 29, 1947.

This put the Jews between a rock and a hard place. They really needed a larger territory in order to defend themselves from the Arab nations they knew would attack if they declared a state and to absorb new Jewish immigrants into the country. On the other hand, some land for a Jewish state was better than none. The U.N. partition plan was not a great deal, but at least it was a deal. What should they do?

The Jews decided that while they weren't completely happy with the terms of the partition plan, an imperfect plan was better than none. On May 14, 1948, the modern State of Israel came into existence. The Arab nations that surrounded Israel attacked the new Jewish state but were eventually defeated. However, East Jerusalem was captured by Jordan, who refused to allow Jews access to the Temple Mount and Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, turning that part of the city into a demilitarized zone. It wasn't until 1967 when the city was reunited during the 6-Day War that Jews regained access to these sites again.

## **THE 1967 SIX-DAY WAR AND THE REUNIFICATION OF JERUSALEM**

The situation in Jerusalem remained the same until June 1967. The surrounding Arab countries had been making very threatening statements and gestures concerning Israel for the previous two years. Syria used its position on the

Golan Heights to launch rocket attacks on Jewish settlements and towns. At the same time, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser ratcheted up his rants against Israel. "We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand; we shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood" and expressed the Arabs' goal as "the full restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people. In other words, we aim at the destruction of the state of Israel. The immediate aim: perfection of Arab military might. The national aim: the eradication of Israel."

In 1967, Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran, a blockade which prevented all import and export shipping from the Israeli city of Eilat on the Red Sea. Nasser dared Israel to attack Egypt almost every day.

By May 30, 1967, Nasser had reached agreements with Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon and felt confident enough to announce that their militaries "are poised on the borders of Israel . . . Today they will know that the Arabs are arranged for battle, the critical hour has arrived." According to the Jewish Virtual Library, about 465,000 troops, over 2,800 tanks, and 800 planes and jets surrounded Israel's borders, just waiting for the word to launch the attack to finally wipe Israel and the Jews off the map.

After being warned by Israeli military officials that if they waited for the Arabs to attack they would be at a disastrous disadvantage against the Arabs' joint military forces and faced certain defeat, Israel's political leaders finally decided to make a preemptive attack on the Arabs. Even though the U.S., joined by France, refused to help Israel while the Soviet Union was openly supplying the joint Arab military force, Israeli leaders strongly felt that the very existence of their country was at stake and that they had no choice.

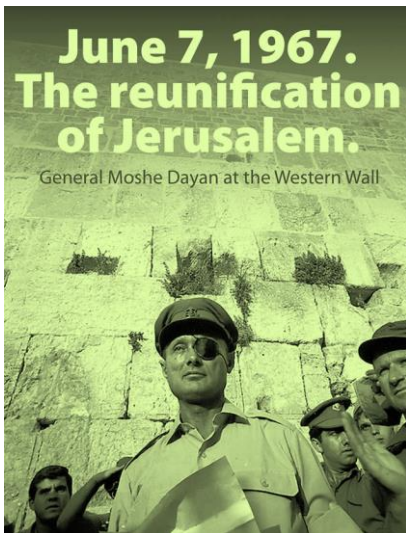
On June 5, 1967, Israel sent almost every fighter plane they had to Egypt. While the Egyptian troops were eating breakfast, the Israelis destroyed 180 Egyptian fighter planes resting on the tarmac. Israel did not attack Syria until Syria attacked Tiberius on the Sea of Galilee and Megiddo. It did not go well for the Syrians; Israel destroyed at least half of their fighter planes in short order. By June 9, Israel had also defeated Egypt on the ground in a great tank battle. Israeli troops advanced to the banks of the Suez Canal; the Sinai Peninsula was in the hands of the Israelis.

Israel's Prime Minister Levi Eshkol had notified Jordan that Israel would not involve Jordan unless Jordan attacked Israel first. After Egypt convinced Jordan that the planes Jordan were seeing on radar were Egyptian planes and not Israeli, Jordan started shelling the Knesset and neighborhoods in West Jerusalem. Once again, Israel had no choice. The Israelis had to defend their citizens and property.

Israeli troops were ordered to start an offensive to push Jordanian troops out of East Jerusalem and as far back as possible. At first, Israeli troops were initially ordered to stay away from the Old City and the Temple Mount. But this became impossible. If Israel was to defeat the Jordanian military and protect the city residents, the Old City had to come into play. Israeli troops had already come under fire in certain places in the Old City and a number of them had been killed by Jordanian troops.

Prime Minister Eshkol offered Jordan's King Hussein a deal. Israeli troops would leave the Old City alone if Hussein would order an immediate ceasefire, order the Egyptian generals to leave Jordan, and start a peace process with Israel. Hussein refused. Instead, he ordered his troops to return to Jerusalem to fight and hold as much of the city as possible. The following is a quote from the Jewish Virtual Library.

"[Israeli General Moshe] Dayan realized he had to make a decision. At 6:15 a.m. on June 7, Dayan ordered the encirclement of the Old City and instructed the army to enter with the warning not to damage any of the holy places. Fortunately, the night before most of the Jordanian troops had retreated so when the paratroopers stormed the gate onto the Via Dolorosa, they met no resistance. [Colonel Motta] Gur led the charge up to the Temple Mount and radioed headquarters at 10:08 a.m., 'The Temple Mount is in our hands and our forces are by the [Western] Wall'. . . At the Western Wall, the IDF's chaplain, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, blew a shofar to celebrate the event, which was broadcast live on Voice of Israel Radio."



King Hussein's decision to turn down the Israeli offer and try to fight for Jerusalem changed the course of history, especially for the city and its residents. While Israel went on to capture the rest of the land known erroneously as the West Bank, which is really the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria, the Temple Mount was now in Israeli hands. The dream of Jews for a united Jerusalem that would be the capital of Israel became a reality.

However, Dayan made another crucial decision that day on June 7. After the capture of the Old City, the Israeli military had hung the Israeli flag on the Temple Mount. Dayan ordered it removed. The Waqf, the Jordanian religious authorities, are still in charge of all the territory on the Temple Mount to this day. Jews are not even allowed to pray on the Temple Mount. While technically allowed to visit the Temple Mount, visitors are closely watched by the Muslim police that patrol the area. The closest Jews and non-Jews can get to praying on the Temple Mount is by gathering at the Western or Wailing Wall, or the "Kotel" as known in Hebrew.

## JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE MOUNT TODAY

Having spent almost eight years living in Jerusalem and reporting on political, military, and religious affairs concerning Israel and the Middle East during the 1990s, I understand the issues underlying the controversy between Israel and Arabs/Muslims more than most Americans. I can personally state that anyone - Jews, Christians, Muslims, Arabs, atheists - has equal access to any place they want to visit, secular or religious, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Israel. This would not be true if Arabs and Muslims had control over this area of land. After the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the peace that was supposed to occur between the Jews and the so-called Palestinians, some things did change. I no longer felt safe in certain parts of the city, including the Arab part of the Old City. I made sure I stayed away from that area unless I was included as a guest with a Christian tour group who was visiting the Arab Quarter. The Oslo Accords have been responsible for fueling the demands of Arabs that Jerusalem must be the capital of a Palestinian state, a capital that cannot be shared with Jews.

The peace treaties that Israel has signed with Egypt and Jordan have not brought the peace that the Jews had hoped for. Even today, the maps of Egypt and Jordan do not show Israel. Israel is shown as an Arab country from Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, complete with Arabic names for all the cities, including Al Quds for Jerusalem. One example of how volatile emotions are when it comes to Jerusalem, is that the Arab/Muslim World erupted in anger when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat simply visited the city after the Egyptian/Israeli peace accord was signed and was assassinated soon after.

While the Bible clearly states in Genesis 22 that God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, Muslims believe Abraham offered Ishmael. Jews believe that the Holy of Holies in both Solomon's Temple and Herod's Temple were built over Mount Moriah, the place and the actual stone were Abraham offered Isaac. Muslims also claim that the Dome of the Rock mosque now residing on the Temple Mount is built over that same stone.

Muslims believe the account in the Quran that one night Mohammed rode a white horse "to the farthest mosque" which they claim to be in Jerusalem. They also claim that Jews have never been in possession of the Temple Mount, nor have any Jewish temples ever been built on the Temple Mount. Muslims also claim that once a mosque has been built on a site, it must forever be a holy site to Islam.

Jews have repeatedly proven that there was a Jewish presence on the Temple Mount and throughout the city of Jerusalem long before the Muslims ever thought about the city. The following excerpts from an October 27, 2016 article published by the *Times of Israel* website is only one example.

"Archaeologists Spotlight First Solomon's Temple-era Artifacts Ever Found on Temple Mount" by Ilan Ben Zion reports the find. "Israeli archaeologists on Thursday presented new details of what they said were the first tiny artifacts, unearthed in situ on the Temple Mount, ever conclusively dated to the time of the First Temple over 2,600

years ago. . . The highly sensitive Israeli excavations were conducted with minimum publicity in cooperation with the Islamic Waqf which manages the incendiary holy site. The artifacts excavated from the mount, detailed in a paper and presentations at a conference at Hebrew University, are said to include olive pits, animal bones and pottery fragments dating to the time of the First Temple, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE. Archaeologists have previously found a limited number of artifacts from First-Temple-period Jerusalem, but none of those finds were uncovered atop the mount itself . . .

“It’s the first time that we’ve found artifacts from this period in situ on the Temple Mount,’ Yuval Baruch, the head of the Israel Antiquities Authority Jerusalem region, said Thursday of the discoveries.”

The article continues, “The digs at the Mount were carried out between 2007 and the past year after the Waqf requested authorization from Israel . . . Previous Waqf projects carried out on the Temple Mount, such as construction of the Marwani Mosque in the late 1990s, did not involve cooperation with archaeologists and resulted in the destruction of antiquities and severe tensions between Israel and the Islamic authorities.”

The Waqf has not only repeatedly denied Israel permission to conduct archaeological digs under the Temple Mount, it has deliberately engaged in illegal excavations on and around the Temple Mount which have destroyed ancient Jewish artifacts. The intention of the Waqf is to perpetuate the fiction that the Jews never owned or inhabited this part of the world until after Muslims built the Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques and therefore have no claim to the Land of Israel.

Not satisfied with just allowing Arabs to throw stones and bottles down at Jews worshipping at the Wailing Wall, the latest Waqf innovation is to allow the Temple Mount to become a militarized zone for “worshipping” Arabs and Muslims. On Friday July 14, 2017 after Friday prayers on the Temple Mount (Friday is the day Muslims hold worship services, just as Christians worship on Sunday and Jews on Saturday), three Arabs left the Temple Mount with guns and when they neared one of the gates of the Old City, the terrorists fired at Israeli policemen on duty, then fled, intending to return to the Temple Mount. While Israeli policemen in the area pursued the terrorists and killed them, two Israeli Druze policemen were shot during the gunfight by the terrorists and transported to a nearby hospital where they were pronounced dead.

In response, Israel installed metal detectors and cameras on the Temple Mount so that no one could smuggle guns or any other type of weapon in to the Temple Mount to be used against Israelis - or anyone else. Arabs responded by rioting so violently that Israeli police had to subdue them with tear gas. Incredibly, the world sided not with Israel, who is only trying to protect their own Jewish and Arab citizens, as well as the tourists who come to visit Jerusalem from all over the world - but with the Arabs!

One example of the pablum that is substituted for intelligent analysis came from the Middle East Quartet, composed of representatives from the United States, Russia, the EU, and the UN that is supposedly trying to bring about peace in the Middle East. This group issued a statement that they are “deeply concerned by the escalating tensions and violent clashes taking place in and around the Old City of Jerusalem . . . strongly condemn all acts of terror” and reminded Israel and Arabs that they both “should demonstrate maximum restraint, refrain from provocative actions and work towards de-escalating the situation” (Jewish Telegraph Agency, July 22, 2017, “Clashes Between Muslim Worshippers, Israel Security Officials Continue Over Temple Mount Metal Detectors”). It is telling that the Quartet were not concerned about “provocative actions” after the death of the two Israeli policemen but only after Arabs started rioting over the metal detectors on the Temple Mount.

Although Israel has removed the metal detectors and will replace them with the latest high-tech, “smart” security cameras to ensure the safety of everyone visiting the Temple Mount, the Arabs have already announced that these, too, will be rejected. What a surprise!

The controversy over who should have control over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount should not surprise anyone. Thousands of years ago, the prophet Zechariah predicted:



“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (Zechariah 12:2-3).

Even though our current president promised to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, I doubt it will ever happen. The outcry around the world would be deafening.

While Jews pray for a solution so they can rebuild the Temple - like an earthquake that will swallow up both the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosques - it is hard to see any scenario that would allow Muslims to accept any kind of a Jewish temple on the Temple Mount. The Arabs have already promised World War III if the Jews even attempt such a thing. But this has not stopped Jews from planning for a future Temple. According to The Temple Institute in Jerusalem, everything needed to reinstitute Temple worship has been created or made, including the robes and clothing needed by the priests, including the high priest, to begin the sacrifices and offerings as described in the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

## THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM

It certainly is difficult to know how and when a Jewish Temple could ever be built or erected on the Temple Mount, considering the political and religious tensions already in the Middle East today. But Daniel prophesied that one day, this would indeed happen.

Daniel 9:26-27 states, “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

In order for a sacrifice and oblation to cease in a Jewish Temple, there must be a Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount in the first place so the Temple sacrifices and oblations can begin. How a world leader will be able to bring about a peace agreement that will include the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount right now is not clear. But we know it must come to pass because God says it will.

At the end of the Tribulation, the climactic siege Jerusalem will experience in its tragic history will occur. “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” (Zechariah 14:2).

Thankfully, this is not the end of the story for Jerusalem. At that time, Jesus Christ will return, and His feet “shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south . . . And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be” (Zechariah 14:4, 8).

When the Lord sets up His kingdom on the earth, He will make Jerusalem His capital. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that 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 to 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 the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2-3).

It may not look like it right now, but the Lord has a glorious future in store for Jerusalem. It will *finally* fulfill its eternal destiny as the city of peace!

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Carol Rushton lived in Jerusalem for eight years during the 1990s and has written many articles about Israel. She is an accomplished author and co-wrote, "The Christian Cleansing of America" with her late father, Noah Hutchings. Noah was one of the most prolific Bible Prophecy authors of the last 60 years.*

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