



THE CITY OF GOD

Without a doubt, the one spot on the globe which has greater significance to the Jewish people than any other is Jerusalem, the ancient city which was established by King David as the capital of the Nation of Israel around 998 B.C. and which has held that distinction ever since, a period of 3,000 years!

Jews of today feel the same passion felt by Jews of old toward the city. Jewish exiles in Babylon in the sixth century B.C. wrote:

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (Psalm 137:5-6)

The present mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, in an address given in December of 1993, said regarding efforts to keep the city as the undivided capital of the Jewish state:

We are not fighting here for territory or a piece of land. We are fighting for the soul of the Jewish people. . . While there can be flexibility

about some issues, Jerusalem is beyond and above any compromise and is the essence of Jewish existence and the State of Israel.

There is one day each spring when Jews in Israel, as well as many Jews in other parts of the world, celebrate the joy of having complete control of the city. In fact, the holiday is known as *Yom Yerushalayim* (pronounced **yohm yah-roo-shah-lie-yuhm**), meaning "Jerusalem Day."

The date of Jerusalem Day is the same each year on the Jewish calendar, though it varies from year to year on the civil calendar due to the difference in the two dating systems (See Vol. 2, No. 3 issue of *Heart's Desire*). The holiday is observed on the 28th day of the second month of the Jewish calendar, Iyyar, and commemorates the fact that it was on that day in 1967 (June 7, 1967) that the Old City of Jerusalem which had been under Jordanian control since 1948 was reunited with the New City of Jerusalem which had been under Jewish control. With the Israeli occupation of both the eastern and western halves of the city, Jews found themselves reestablished in their ancient

capital for the first time since it fell at the hands of the Romans in 70 A.D..

The significance of this event to the Jewish people is indicated by the fact that part of the observance of the holiday includes recitation of the entire Hallel (Psalm 113-118), Psalms of praise to God, in the synagogues. Overall, it is a day of national celebration and patriotic expression.

In 1998 *Yom Yerushalayim* falls on May 24, just 24 days after the official date of Israel's fiftieth anniversary as a modern state (April 30, 1998 or the fifth day of Iyyar on the Jewish calendar), though Israel's independence was actually declared on May 14, 1948 of the civil calendar.

AND DID YOU KNOW?

- The Old City of Jerusalem (the walled city) is actually divided into four distinct quarters: Armenian, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish.
- There are eight gates in the wall around the Old City and visitors can enter through all but one of them, the Eastern Gate (also called the Golden Gate), the one through which it is believed the Messiah will enter to establish His kingdom and the Messianic Age (Ezekiel 44:1-3). This gate was bricked up by the Turks more than a thousand years ago.
- The State of Israel guarantees access to people of all religions to Jerusalem's holy places, including those sites sacred specifically to Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

- The present population of Jerusalem is approximately 600,000.
- The New City of Jerusalem, to the west of the Old City, is where numerous notable attractions are found, including:

The Knesset , center of Israel's government

The Israel Museum, home of the Shrine of the Book where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Museum

SPEAKING OF JERUSALEM. . .

- Jewish tradition proclaims the superiority of the city in virtuous splendor:

Ten measures of beauty descended on the world; Jerusalem took nine and the rest of the world, one. —Ancient Saying

- Jewish tradition also maintains that Jerusalem was created first by God and then the rest of the world; therefore, it is considered the center (or the navel) of the earth.
- The rabbis say that there are seventy different names used in the Scriptures (Old Testament) for Jerusalem.

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