

## The City of the Great King

South Africa is the only country in the world to have three capital cities: Bloemfontein (the judicial capital), Cape Town (the legislative capital), and Pretoria (the administrative capital). This splitting up of the capitals goes back to the aftermath of the Boer War, when the country tried to find a balance of power between formerly Boer and British provinces. South Africa is unusual, most countries have simply one capital city.

The word *capital* is from the Latin which means *head*. The capital city is the head city, the leading city, the city which controls the rest. Cities have become the focal point of empires and powers. Great ancient cities like Babylon, Nineveh, Athens, Rome, and great modern cities like London, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin are the cities where the rulers and their governments lived, and where skilled, educated, and wealthy people were drawn.

The Bible mentions over 280 cities, and several ancient capital cities. But in the end, the Bible really boils things down to two capital cities: Babylon, and Jerusalem. Babylon is the capital city of false religion, where man first attempted to unite in defiance of the Most High God. Throughout the Bible, Babylon is the place of powerful opposition to God's people, organised rebellion, the world uniting economically, politically, religiously in defiance of God and His anointed ruler.

The other capital city is Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the capital city of the true and living God, the head city from which He will rule all other cities. As Psalm 2 relates, the kings of the earth conspire to overthrow God, but God sits in heaven and laughs and says, “<sup>6</sup> "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." (Ps. 2:6). From there, He will have “the nations for His inheritance, And the ends of the earth for His possession. (Ps. 2:8)

By the time we reach the end of the Bible in the book of Revelation, these two cities represent far more than Middle Eastern real estate: they represent allegiance. They represent where your citizenship is, where you belong. They represent power and authority, one earthly and in rebellion, the other heavenly and in submission to the true Creator God. One city is satanic; the other city is messianic.

If you today are not in a covenant relationship with God, then you remain spiritually a citizen of Babylon. You are under its sway, influenced by its gods, living by its priorities. But if you have found Israel's God through His Son Yeshua, then you are a citizen of Yerushalayim, the city of Shalom, God's peace. The writer of Hebrews says in 12:22 that if we are in the new covenant, in Christ, then we “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22)

Babylon, we read in Revelation, will come to a final and humiliating end. But Jerusalem not only has a future in this age, but also in the age to come. Jerusalem is the city you want to be a citizen of.

The story of Jerusalem becoming the capital city of the true God is found here in 2 Samuel 5. The king of the city, the conquering of the city, the consolidation of the city. We'll see definite messianic shadows pointing towards final fulfillments and urging us to make sure we are the citizens of the right city.

### I. The King of the City

**2 Samuel 5:1** Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. <sup>2</sup> "Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" <sup>3</sup> Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel.

<sup>4</sup> David was thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. <sup>5</sup> In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

After the murder of Ishbosheth, there are no longer any rivals to the throne of Israel. Although the ten northern tribes have not been following David, now after seven years they come to David. They admit that they are all Israelites, ethnically one. They admit that David had led Israel before as a general, and they confess that Yehovah God had anointed him. So the elders of the other tribes of Israel come down to Hebron and anoint David king over all Israel, as David makes vows to them to be their king. But it was not just the elders of Israel who came to Hebron. First Chronicles 12 lists the numbers of warriors from each tribe who marched down from the furthest parts of the country so as to pledge their swords and their lives to David. The amount of men who came to this town in Judah was 340 000 men, with 1200 chiefs. In a marvelous display of enthusiasm, loyalty, and festive joy at finally having a king after God's own heart.

You might recall when we started studying the life of David, we said that David was anointed three times. The first was at the age of fifteen, secretly by Samuel, in front of Jesse and David's brothers. The second is fifteen years later, after having served around 8 years with Saul, and been on the run from Saul for another seven, David was anointed king of the tribe of Judah in Hebron. After an ugly civil war, seven years later, at the age of 37, David is anointed for the third time king over all Israel.

We remember that Messiah Jesus also has three anointings. The first was His baptism, where He was anointed by the Spirit for His public ministry. The second was His resurrection, where the Father vindicated Him and anointed Him as king over His own tribe, His people. But there awaits a third, future anointing, when He will return, and all Israel will say, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh", they will recognise Him whom they have pierced and mourn over Him like a son, like the brothers of Joseph, they will realise that the king is their brother. And He will take up this very throne that David was anointed over, but of His kingdom there will be no end.

Now once David had been anointed king, the battle with the enemies of God began, both outside the city of Jerusalem, and inside.

## **II. The Conquering of the City**

<sup>17</sup> Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. <sup>18</sup> The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

Second Samuel 5 is written in a form which is not strictly chronological. For example, in the middle of the chapter, he lists the sons born to David, and includes Solomon, which shows that he is including events at least ten years after David occupies Jerusalem.

It's also likely that the events in verses 17 to 25 occurred before David had taken Jerusalem. How do we know? Well, the text (verse 17) says he went down to the stronghold, which is the wilderness area David used when still hunted by Saul. Had he already taken Zion, there would be no need to go down to some other stronghold; Zion was a mountain fortress perfect for resisting attacks by the Philistines.

First, David had to deal with enemies outside the city of Jerusalem: the Philistines.

Once the Philistines saw this mass movement of soldiers down to Hebron, and heard that David had been anointed in Hebron, they decide to try to kill him before he can unify Israel and establish a capital city. They gather about 28 kilometres north of Hebron in the valley of Rephaim. The war comes in two phases. The first phase is in verse 19.

<sup>19</sup> So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into

my hand?" And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."<sup>20</sup> So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.<sup>21</sup> And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

David, once again, gets instructions from the Lord. He attacks them about four kilometres to the south and routs them, so that they leave the battlefield littered with their idols. 1 Chronicles 14 tells us that David ordered them to be burnt there.

The ancient writer Josephus tells us: "And let no one suppose that it was a small army of the Philistines that came against the Hebrews, as guessing so from the suddenness of their defeat...but let him know that all Syria and Phoenicia, with many other nations besides them, and those warlike nations also, came to their assistance, and had a share in this war."

Phase 2 of this war takes place from verse 22.

<sup>22</sup> Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.<sup>23</sup> Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees."<sup>24</sup> "And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."<sup>25</sup> And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

How good that David did not presume on his first victory and simply repeat the same actions. He once again asked the Lord for instructions. God's specific will for us is not always the same, even if the circumstances appear to be. This time, God told David not to approach them directly, but to stealthily outflank them. God was going to provide an auditory miracle, the sound of marching, which was going to cause mass confusion among the enemy. Similar to when Gideon's army had used the torches and pots to confuse the Midianites, once this sound bewildered the Philistines, the Israelites were to attack. They did, and they crushed the Philistine army and drove it back more than thirty kilometres. In a few chapters, the Philistines would be under the total domination of David.

It was likely here that the exploits of David's mighty men took place, who killed the brother of Goliath, who killed Philistines until their hands stuck to the sword.

But now, with the Philistines defeated, David turned his attention to the city just 2 miles to the northeast of the Valley where he fought the Philistines, and that was the city of Jerusalem.

Now think of it. Why is David choosing Jerusalem? Saul had chosen his own city as the capital city – Gibeah. If he had chosen Hebron, it would have elevated Judah above all other tribes and provoked jealousy. If he had chosen Bethlehem it would have smacked of nepotism and partiality. He needed a city that the whole country of Israel could get to. It needed to be able to be strongly fortified, so as to preserve and protect the sacred treasures of the Ark and the Temple. It needed to be both strong, but also beautiful, a city the nation could both be proud of, but also worship in.

These were all present in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had never completely belonged to any tribe in Israel. It was a Canaanite city for generations. For a short time, it was ruled by the strange king-priest Melchizedek, who knew and served the true God. But by the time of Joshua, it was ruled by a pagan king, named Adoni-zedek. The books of Joshua and Judges record the Israelites partially conquering Jerusalem, but never completely driving out the Jebusites. Likely, the Jebusites controlled the hill fortresses of Jerusalem – Mount Zion and Mount Moriah.

If you remember, David took the head of Goliath to this city after his victory there. Perhaps it was to intimidate the Jebusites; perhaps he had known all along that this would be the ideal capital city for the God of Israel.

As David and his armies approach, the Jebusites taunt him.

<sup>6</sup> And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here."

It may be that they are insulting the abilities of David's men, but it was also a tactic of some ancient armies to put blind and lame people on their walls as taunts and as human shields.

But David had a plan:

<sup>8</sup> Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are hated by David's soul*), *he shall be chief and captain.*" Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

It seems that Jerusalem had some kind of weak spot. It was either either a freshwater channel of the Gihon Spring near its gate, or a sewer channel that came under the gate. David, having already cursed Joab for killing Abner, offered the leadership of the army to the first one who would lead the way into the city through the water tunnel, and undoubtedly fight his way to opening the gates for the rest of the army. Unfortunately for David, the first one to do that was Joab according to 1 Chronicles 11:7, so Joab got his job back.

The result: <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (*that is*, the City of David).

And so, in what was probably 1003 B.C., David conquers Jerusalem, makes it the capital city of Israel, the heart of what is supposed to be the kingdom of Yehovah.

Many years later, Jerusalem will be the scene of a different kind of conquering. Daniel, writing in around 535 B. C. received this prophecy:

<sup>24</sup> "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. <sup>25</sup> "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

<sup>26</sup> "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. (Dan. 9:24-26)

It will be in Jerusalem that sins are finally paid for, atonement made. Daniel is told that it will take seventy weeks of years, or seventy sevens, in total – 490 years for the whole prophecy to finish. The first 69 sets of seven years will bring Messiah into the city, where He will die. Sixty-nine sets of seven years would be 483, but adjusted for the Jewish year of 360 days, you get 476 years. The prophecy kicks off when the command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem is given. You may know from our other studies that this command was given in 444 B.C. If you add 476 years to that, you come exactly to the year 33 A.D., the year Jesus of Nazareth was in Jerusalem, dying on a cross.

Jesus came to Jerusalem the first time, riding on a donkey, and there paid the price for sin, defeating all the enemies of sin and death. This was the first phase of how Jesus owned this city.

David conquered the city of Jerusalem. But then we see how he settled in and made it the seat of his kingdom.

### III. The Consolidation of the City

<sup>9</sup> Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. <sup>10</sup> So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him. <sup>11</sup> Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. <sup>12</sup> So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel. <sup>13</sup> And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. <sup>14</sup> Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, <sup>15</sup> Ibhara, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, <sup>16</sup> Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

We can see both the bad and the good here. The bad is that David did what the kings of the nations did: took multiple wives and concubines, adding to a family that he would later lose control of.

The good is David establishes himself and sets Jerusalem up to be the centre of worship. Hiram, the king of Tyre sent cedar and skilled labourers in stonework and woodwork to build David a palace. This is likely the same Hiram who would help David's son, Solomon, to build the Temple. But from this place of stability, David is ready to do three monumental things. First, he will bring the Ark to Jerusalem. Second, he will organise the worship of God's people and the priests in Jerusalem. Third, he will get ready to build the house of God, only to find that God will build the house of David: God will make a covenant with David, that will be fulfilled in Messiah.

For David, conquering Jerusalem has all been about the glory of God: establishing a capital city for the worship of the true and living God.

But as we'll see, as close as David gets, he never gets there. He is frail and fallen, and brings his own sin into the city. David's own passions rule him, and ultimately, he brings more death and pain. It comes down to David's descendant who has already conquered sin and death in Jerusalem, to finally come and conquer and set up God's kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them.

<sup>9</sup> "It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (Zech. 12:8-10)

Look at how the kingdom is now established in the hand of Messiah Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.

<sup>5</sup> Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You. <sup>6</sup> It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.

<sup>7</sup> It shall be one day Which is known to the LORD-- Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light.

<sup>8</sup> And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.

<sup>9</sup> And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be-- "The LORD is one," And His name

one. (Zech. 14:4-9)

The book of Revelation describes how this intermediate kingdom will phase into the eternal kingdom, where the New Jerusalem comes to the New Earth, and Jesus reigns as our King for ever and ever.

Revelation tells us who is in and who is out the city:

<sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. <sup>24</sup> And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. <sup>25</sup> Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). <sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev. 21:23-27)

<sup>14</sup> Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Rev. 22:14-15)

What capital city do you belong to? Babylon or Jerusalem?

The first phase is that the Lord Jesus must have conquered your sin and death, and you must have anointed Him king of your life. It's first the internal enemies, breaking down the stronghold of pride, those Jebusites who say to Jesus, you shall not come in here. Surrender to Him the king, and let Him apply His conquering death and resurrection to your life.

The second phase is that you show you are a citizen of His city by how you live: you walk by His law, live by His covenant, seek to please Him. You do His commandments, and that is evidence that you are written in the Lamb's book of life. For there is coming a day when Babylon the great will be fallen for ever, and all her citizens will mourn, because all they lived for, all they wanted crumbles with her destruction. Citizens of the city of the Great King are building their lives on the rock that will not be washed away by the Flood, they are building for a kingdom that cannot be shaken. As Psalm 2 puts it: Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in* the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him. (Ps. 2:12)