

ISRAEL – Covenant Land (Part II)

by Dr. Catherine Millard © 2006; 2024.

The Declaration of Independence

The 5th of Iyar, 5708
May 14, 1948

"In the land of Israel the Jewish people came into being. In this Land was shaped their spiritual, religious, and national character. Here they lived in sovereign independence. Here they created a culture of national and universal import, **and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.**

Exiled by force, still the Jewish people kept faith with their Land in all the countries of their dispersion, steadfast in their prayer and hope to return and here revive their political freedom.

Fired by this attachment of history and tradition, the Jews in every generation strove to renew their roots in the ancient homeland, and in recent generations they came home in their multitudes.

Veteran pioneers and defenders, and newcomers braving blockade, they made the wilderness bloom, revived their Hebrew tongue, and built villages and towns. They founded a thriving society of its own economy and culture, pursuing peace but able to defend itself, bringing the blessing of progress to all the inhabitants of the Land, dedicated to the attainment of sovereign independence.

In 1897 the First Zionist Congress met at the call of Theodor Herzl, seer of the vision of the Jewish State, and gave public voice to the right of the Jewish people to national restoration in their Land.

The right was acknowledged in the Balfour Declaration on 2nd November, 1917, and confirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations, which accorded international validity to the historical connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, and to their right to re-establish their National Home.

The holocaust that in our time destroyed millions of Jews in Europe again proved beyond doubt the compelling

need to solve the problem of Jewish homelessness and dependence by the renewal of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel, which would open wide the gates of the homeland to every Jew and endow the Jewish people with the status of a nation with equality of rights within the family of nations.

Despite every hardship, hindrance and peril, the remnant that survived the grim Nazi slaughter in Europe, together with Jews from other countries, pressed on with their exodus to the Land of Israel and continued to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in the homeland of their people.

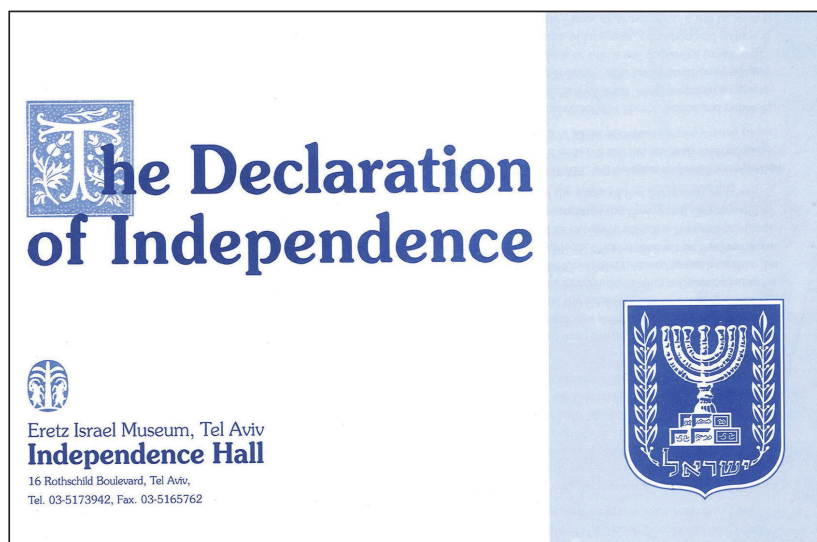
In the Second World War, the Jewish community in the Land of Israel played its full part in the struggle of the nations championing freedom and peace against the Nazi forces of evil. Its war effort and the lives of its soldiers won it the right to be numbered among the founding peoples of the United Nations.

On 29th November 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel, and required the inhabitants themselves to take all measures necessary on their part to carry out the resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their own State is irrevocable.

It is the natural right of the Jewish people, like any other people to control their own destiny in their sovereign State.

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ACCORDINGLY WE, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in the Land of Israel and the Zionist Movement, have assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine, and by virtue of our natural and historic right and of the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, do hereby proclaim the establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel – the State of Israel.



*The Declaration of Independence – English translation.
Independence Hall, Tel Aviv, Israel.*

WE RESOLVE that from the moment the Mandate ends, at midnight on the Sabbath, the sixth of Iyar 5708, the fifteenth day of May 1948, until the establishment of the duly elected authorities of the State in accordance with a Constitution to be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than 1st October 1948, the National Council shall act as the Provisional Council of State, and its executive arm, the National Administration, shall constitute the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, and the name of that State shall be **Israel**.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open to Jewish immigration and the ingathering of exiles. It will devote itself to developing the Land for the good of all its inhabitants.

It will rest upon foundations of liberty, justice and peace as envisioned by the Prophets of Israel. It will maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, without distinction of creed, race or sex. It will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture. It will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions. It will be loyal to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be prepared to cooperate with the organs and representatives of the United Nations in carrying out the General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of **Eretz Israel**.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building of their State, and to admit the State of Israel into the family of nations.

EVEN AMIDST the violent attacks launched against us for months past, we call upon the sons of the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in building the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its institutions, provisional and permanent.

WE EXTEND the hand of peace and good-neighbourliness to all the States around us and to their peoples, and we call upon them to cooperate in mutual helpfulness with the independent Jewish nation in its Land. **The State of Israel** is prepared to make its contribution in a concerted effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE CALL upon the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to join forces with us in immigration and construction, and to be at our right hand in the great endeavour to fulfill the age-old longing for the redemption of Israel.

WITH TRUST IN THE ROCK OF ISRAEL, we set our hands in witness to this Proclamation, at this session of the Provisional Council of State, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, this Sabbath Eve, the fifth day of Iyar, 5708, the fourteenth day of May nineteen forty eight.”

Jerusalem – “The Holy City”

Jerusalem, ancient city and **capital of Israel**, is located about 15 miles west of the northern extremity of the Dead Sea, 33 miles from the Mediterranean and has a maximum altitude of 2,528 feet. “All roads lead to Jerusalem” as it were, from Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Jericho, Hebron, Damascus and other cities. It is indeed “**The Holy City**,” with sacred shrines and sites where Jesus, the Messiah walked, lived, had much His ministry; was falsely accused, died, was buried and resurrected the third day – according to Scripture prophecies which He fulfilled.

Jerusalem rests on a spur of the principal range of the Judean hills. This plateau is divided on the south into two ridges, the one to the east being known as **Mount Moriah** and the one to the west as **Mount Zion**. On the western side of the city is the Valley of Hinnom, and to the east is the Kidron Valley, or Valley of Jehoshaphat, beyond which lies the **Mount of Olives**, rising above the level of the city. Both valleys unite not far from the southern extremity of the city near the Pool of Siloam. The Tyropoeon Valley runs southeast, joining the other two valleys of the city.

The first mention of **Jerusalem** dates to about 1900 B.C. Seven of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets of Egypt refer to an imminent attack upon the city and the request of its inhabitants for the help

of the Egyptians in repelling the invaders. The location of the Canaanite town was limited to a certain area by reason of the water supply. Two springs were the main source of water; the one, *Gihon*, in the **Kidron Valley**, and the other, *En-rogel*, was at the juncture of the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys. The hill between these valleys and above the springs, Ophel, or the “Eastern Hill,” was the site of the early Jerusalem. At the time of Jesus, the Messiah, the use of aqueducts and cisterns had allowed the city to spread to the north and west. The city was inhabited by the Jebusites when David took Jerusalem (c. 1000 B.C.), buying **Mount Moriah** from Araunah the Jebusite for fifty shekels of silver. David’s son, Solomon, built the Temple, the Royal Palace and other magnificent buildings, fortifying the city.



After the painting, “Jeremiah lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem.” by Rembrandt von Rijn. II Kings 25: 8, 9.
Illustrator: Maxwell Edgar.

Jerusalem declined in political importance after the revolt of **Jeroboam** and the northern tribes, although its religious inheritance was preserved. Joash, king of Israel, took the city during the reign of Amaziah (c. 790 B.C.) and destroyed much of the northern wall which was repaired later by Uzziah. Under **Hezekiah**, the city was besieged by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, who was repelled. Jerusalem was sacked and its Temple, Palace and walls destroyed in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar; but in 536 B.C., a group of exiles returned under Zerubbabel and a new Temple was completed in 515 B.C. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall about 445 B.C. Alexander the Great entered Jerusalem without damage to the city in 332 B.C. The Temple was desecrated and the wall destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C., but the Jews, under Judas Maccabaeus, took the city and restored the Temple in 165 B.C.

Pompey captured the city in 63 B.C. and, in 37 B.C., **Herod** became king. He reconstructed the Temple and the fortifications and made Jerusalem a strong and impressive city. After a long siege, Jerusalem fell to Roman Emperor, **Titus in 70 A.D.** (according to Jesus the Messiah's prophetic words – Matthew 24:1-2 and Luke 21:5-6), sacking the city. However, it was not until after the unsuccessful revolt of the Jews under Bar Kochba (132 A.D.) that the city was completely destroyed. A new city, *Aelia Capitolina*, with pagan temples was built on the ruins of the old. Christian churches were erected under the reign of Constantine and later emperors. In 637, the Romans lost control of the city to Omar, and Jerusalem came under the domination of Islam. Mosques were erected, including the Dome of the Rock. The Crusaders entered Jerusalem in 1099, under Godfrey of Bouillon; while Jerusalem was conquered by Saladin in 1187, and, except for two short periods during the 13th century, remained under the control of the Moslems until its capture by British forces under General Allenby on December 11, 1917, near the end of WWI. The city then became the capital of the British mandated territory called "Palestine."

On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed with the Jewish **Declaration of Independence**, and Jerusalem reverted to being the capital of Israel.

Mount Moriah – The Temple Mount

In no other edifice, sacred or profane, ancient or modern, has there ever centered so deep an interest as in the temple of the Jews.

To the children of Israel it was the most holy place

on earth. In its oracle was the symbol of the presence of Almighty God. From its sacred courts, for more than a thousand years, the smoke of their morning and evening sacrifice ascended to the skies.

To the Christian, the story of the temple will never lose its interest. It was the historic center of the religion of the people of God in the past, and was ever and again associated with the early life of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Within or near its sacred precincts were unfolded many of the incidents of the Gospel, while around it cluster some of the most memorable deeds recorded in the Scriptures.

The Temple of Solomon – The Location

The temple was built at **Jerusalem**, the capital of the Jewish nation and the center of its religious worship. It was erected on **Mount Moriah** (meaning, "land of Teaching"), and the site was especially appropriate. It was the spot upon which **Abraham** offered up his son **Isaac**:

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And **Abraham** rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him. Then on the

third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off...And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And **the angel of the Lord** called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Genesis 22: 1-4; 10-12.

Mount Moriah was also the place upon which David built an altar to the Lord after the plague was stayed:

"And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done:



After a photograph of General Allenby entering Jerusalem at the Liberation of Palestine from Ottoman Turkish occupation, December 11, 1917. Illustration: Maxwell Edgar.

and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly...And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of **Araunah the Jebusite**. And David spoke unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. And **Gad** came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of **Gad**, went up as the Lord commanded.

“And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: Behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So **David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver**. And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from **Israel**.”

II Samuel 24: 10; 16-19; 22-25.

The Building

The temple was erected at a very great expense and by the free-will offerings of the people, and it was considered the most remarkable piece of architecture in the ancient world. The work was done in the quarry and in the forest, and fitted together without the sound of hammer or chisel. This temple was the center of Jewish worship for more than four hundred years. It was frequently plundered during the latter part of its history, when many of its vessels were carried away and much of its beauty impaired. It

was finally destroyed by the army of **Nebuchadnezzar**, in 588 B.C. (II Kings 25: 8,9)

This brings us to the second epoch in the temple history.

The Temple of Zerubbabel

After the return from captivity, 516 B.C., the Jews, under the leadership of **Zerubbabel**, rebuilt the temple on the same spot upon which the former one had stood. The Scriptures give us no indication as to the external appearance of this structure. But it was doubtless essentially the same in plan and dimensions as the temple of **Solomon**.

This building also had a tragic, but noble history. It was captured, 168 B.C., by **Antiochus** (I Maccabees I, 21), who not only plundered the sacred edifice but also placed a heathen statue in the Holy of Holies and sacrificed swine upon its altar. Three years after this profanation, however, it was retaken by **Judas Maccabaeus**, one of the noblest of the Jewish patriots of this age, by whom it was cleansed and rededicated to the service of God (I Mac. ix., 36).

Twice afterward it was captured by the Romans, once in 63 B.C., by Pompey, who made its courts run red with blood, and who, through curiosity, pushed his way into the Holy of Holies, only to find it empty (Josephus, *Antiquities* xiv, 4). A few years later it was captured and plundered by Crassius, the governor of Syria. In 37 B.C. it was stormed by Herod, with the assistance of Roman troops, and its walls greatly impaired.

This brings us to the third epoch in the temple history.

Herod's Temple

In order to placate the Jews, **Herod**, in the eighteenth year of his reign, undertook the restoration of the temple. The Priests and Levites completed the work on the temple itself in about a year and a half. The work upon the courts consumed eight years. Some of the outer-buildings were still incomplete in the time of Jesus, the Messiah, notwithstanding forty-six years had elapsed since the work was undertaken (John 2:20). It was finished about 64 A.D., under the governorship of **Albinus** (Josephus, *Antiquities* xx, 9, 7).



Photograph of The Golden Gate, or Eastern Gate, Jerusalem. Shut in 691 A.D. according to Scripture prophecy - Ezekiel 44: 1-3 - "Until the Prince shall enter through it."

On the south side of the temple area there was a gate opening upon the hill **Ophel**, and called by the same name. On the north side there was a gate giving access to and from the *Castle Antonia*, and on the east side was the celebrated **Golden Gate** (known in Hebrew as “The Gate of Compassion”), opening into the *Valley of Jehoshaphat*, (or *Kidron Valley*). Beyond this ravine rose the Mount of Olives, and from its brow the beholder gazed upon the finest view of the temple. Striking, indeed, must have been the appearance of this triple precinct. The lower court standing on its magnificent terraces. The inner court surrounded by its embattled towers and gateways. Within this again, the temple itself, with its snow-white walls and glittering pinnacles of gold rising out of this singular group and crowning the view, and the whole scene soaring out of the deep and dark abyss of the precipitous glen which lay beneath it.

It was on this spot, probably, that Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer stood and gazed upon the temple, and uttered in the presence of his disciples *the prophecy* of its coming doom:

“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple and his disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

Matthew 24: 1-2.

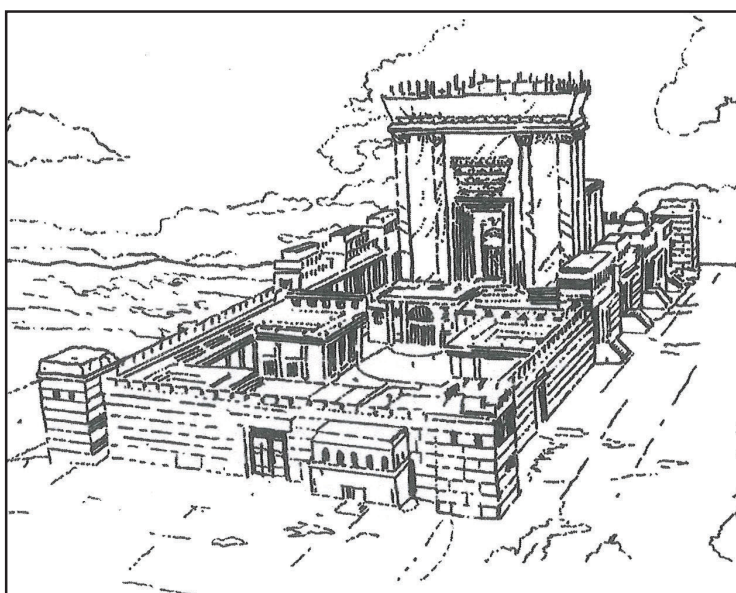
“And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said: As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”
Luke 21: 5-6.

Within a few years Jerusalem was taken by Roman emperor Titus, in 70 A.D., and the temple entirely destroyed, thus literally fulfilling the words of the Master, “*There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down.*” Matthew 24: 2.

The Temple Institute, Jerusalem

Architectural plans based upon those of the Second Temple, have been drawn up by the Temple Institute in

the Jewish Quarter, Jerusalem. As of August 1st, 2006, the first detailed section of these plans, drawn up by **Architect Shmuel Balzam and his firm**, were complete. This comprised the **Gazit (Hewn Stone) Chamber of the Sanhedrin**, the latter having reconvened in May, 2005, for the first time since 170 A.D. In August, 2006, according to Yehuda Glick, Director of the Temple Institute, 75 of the 93 vessels used in the Temple were already fashioned, among which is the Altar of Incense. At this writing, all detailed architectural plans are in place, as well as all the vessels of the Temple – *excluding* the Ark of the Covenant, made of pure gold. Scholars and historians believe that the original was hidden prior to the destruction of the Temple. To date, however, a search for its whereabouts has proved fruitless. As Jesus, our Messiah is the fulfillment of the Ark of the Covenant, He Himself will take its place in Jerusalem’s new Temple.



After a Model of the Second Temple. The Temple Institute, Jerusalem.
Illustrator: Maxwell Edgar

The Temple Mount Excavations

The Temple Mount (Tel Ophel) recent excavations disclose the following:

The western **Huldah Gate** was built in the Second Temple period as a double gate. Most of the gate is blocked today with only part of one of the arches still visible. A Latin inscription was set into the masonry just above the lintel, in an inverted position. The inscription is from the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian (2nd century A.D.).

Among the collapsed stones was one uncovered below the northwestern parapet of the Western, or “Wailing Wall.” It bore the following Hebrew inscription:

to the Place of Trumpeting...to herald.

From here, during the Second Temple period, a priest would proclaim the beginning and end of the Sabbath.

During the 1969 excavations, one of the stones discovered of the Western Wall bears the inscription from Isaiah 66: 14:

And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice and your bones shall flourish like an herb.

The remainder of this verse reads,

“And the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and His indignation toward His enemies.”

Excavations also show the remains of Jerusalem's main street, running the length of the Western Wall (about one kilometre), in the late Second Temple period. The street was paved with flagstones and edged with curbstones. It had two large drainage channels running beneath it, and shops opened onto the street on both sides.

Collapsed on the paved street are stones of the Western Wall of the Temple Mount enclosure. They were hurled down by soldiers of the Roman Legion, after the destruction of the Temple, on the 9th day of the month of Av, 70 A.D.

The Temple is awaiting its rebuilding at God's appointed time in fulfillment of Scripture. We await the return of the King of kings and Lord of lords, The Anointed One, Jesus, the Messiah – this time in great power and glory. Our Lord spoke of the present times we are living as follows:

“And they asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And He said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near: Go ye not therefore after

them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified, for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh... Men's hearts failing them for fear and the looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”

Luke 21: 7-10; 20; 26-28.

In prayerful anticipation, we reiterate with fervor the last lines of the Bible:

“And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely...He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Revelation 22: 17; 20.