

A Capital City
The Life of David
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Well, we're in 2 Samuel 5 and also in 2 Samuel 6. We read 2 Samuel 5, in fact, last week as we were thinking about David's ascent to the throne, how he now having firstly been in Hebron in the south of the territory of Judah, seven years, six months as king there, but then crowned over all of Israel. Not that it was a time of peace, it was a time of some conflict and, well, civil war indeed, or the possibility of further civil war. But this evening, we're looking more closely at Jerusalem itself and the title of our sermon is this, "A Capital City." A capital city, the city of David, Jerusalem.

Well, we see from what we read how it came to fall into the hands of David and his men, and how Joab actually was the one who became commander of the army, as having led the charge, as it were, and seized the remaining parts of the city, Zion, that pinnacle hilltop city Jerusalem but there the kind of most extreme high part of that hilltop. But it's now it's conquered and we read of how David now establishes himself there, and it's important that Hiram, king of Tyre, is now accepting David as king and offering his support, masons and various carpenters to come and build David a house with the cedar trees for which that part of the world that Hiram was from was famous for.

So David is becoming established in Jerusalem; that is now the capital city, the city of David as we read in verse 9 of 2 Samuel 5, bearing his name. And that is significant, significant that he was led to actually call it the city of David, and in a way, its geography, its location, means that it's quite at the northernmost extremity of Judah, and more properly speaking, within the land of the tribe of Benjamin. And when we come in a moment just to look back to Judges 1, we'll see that both tribes had a part, as it were, in the initial conquest or partial conquest of the city.

It was well-defended because it had steep cliffs on three of its sides, so it was a city in which they had to take there, didn't they, with a little stratagem. You couldn't just sort of assault it. It was on top of a hill and hence this water shaft, it's the way that they came in. That was the Achille's heel that they were able to exploit and the Jebusites, the original inhabitants there who had remained actually from when the Israelites came into the Promised Land, well, they taunted David as if to say, "Well, if you try to come in here, the blind and the lame will repel you. We don't really need to muster an army against you." They felt so absolutely impregnable and not a little complacent and that proved to

be their undoing. And so they're saying now it is the blind and the lame shall not come into the house because they thought they could defend it, they now found themselves barred from it and no place for them. This is now the city of David, Zion, it's pinnacle, the kind of most uppermost part of the whole location.

So our first heading is this: why Jerusalem? Why Jerusalem? Why this city, the capital city? Why is it that David feels evidently some significance attached to Jerusalem? Why does it not stay, I suppose, in Hebron? That's a little to the south, that his kingdom when eventually he had the entirety of Israel as part of his charge. No, so perhaps that wasn't going to be suitable. He might have chosen his hometown, Bethlehem, which lay no great distance from Jerusalem. But Jerusalem actually had some good reasons to be chosen. It had significance. It had historic associations which Bethlehem, Hebron, in fact, didn't quite muster. In fact, one has to go back into Genesis to chapter 14 and if we read in Hebrews 7 really taking us back to this curious incident when Abraham, or Abram as he is here, rescues Lot and a series of other people who had been taken captive by a group of kings, come and fought against another group of kings, and at the end of this incident we find that on their return, because Abram is successful, recovers Lot, recovers all the people that had been taken captive, all the goods that have been taken captive, he then meets the king of Jerusalem, the king of Salem. Genesis 14:18-20, "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he," and that is Abraham, "gave him a tithe of all."

So they had taken this plunder, these various kings that had turned previously, plundered them, and now Abraham is returning triumphantly and he's met by this man, Melchizedek, of whom we knew nothing about him before and we hear nothing further of him afterwards. But we notice from what he does here, that he is a most significant person, that he is the priest of God Most High, true God, he is a worshiper of the true God, and that here in this city which just appears here, as it were, and present itself to us, Jerusalem, he's stationed there and he is the priest of God Most High in that city. Abraham seems to know who he is and the man is a prophet and speaks here words of prophecy and blesses Abraham, possessor of heaven and earth. He has the promises of God given to him and Melchizedek knows that and responds to that and blesses Abraham in the name of God as the priest of God Most High and then, in turn, blesses God "who has delivered your enemies, Abraham," but in a sense standing for all the enemies of God's purpose, "into your hand."

So this man appears to have a seniority, a place that gives to Abraham a sense of respect that needs to be paid, and though Melchizedek brings bread and wine to refresh Abraham after his battle, Abraham is the one who gives tithes to him, that from his plunder and out of respect he gives these materials to Melchizedek. Well, Melchizedek has a significance that occurs later in Scripture. His priesthood, because you notice here that there's no genealogy, we're not told that he is descended from Aaron, couldn't be, Aaron's not even born yet, Levi is not even born yet, they're still, as it says in Hebrews, in Abraham's loins, not yet born. So who is this? What kind of priesthood is this? Well, it's a refresher, isn't it,

really from our time in Hebrews back along, but if we were to turn to Psalm 110:4, "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.'" Who is this priest to come? Well, of course, it's our Lord Jesus Christ who does not descend from Levi or from Aaron, is not connected with that particular tribe, comes from the tribe of Judah which nothing about the priesthood is spoken, at least not in respect of the old covenant, but this priesthood is like Melchizedek's, this one has been instituted from heaven, this has been given by that commandment not based on genealogy before or after. And here is this man who appears in Scripture who seems to have no beginning of days nor any end of his priesthood that's reported. Actually, he did die but that's not reported and here is a pattern of what our Lord Jesus Christ is going to be in his priesthood and he's not going to offer sacrifices on behalf of others, he's going to offer himself as a sacrifice. Aaron's family, they would be the ones officiating and offering sacrifices that worshipers brought and they were offering them on behalf of the worshiper. No, not here. This is our Lord Jesus Christ offering himself and the benefits of what he offers establishes him and his priesthood forever. He's not going to need to repeat that sacrifice. We're not going to need to rehearse again the sacrifices of the Levitical system. They have been superseded, supplanted because something better has come in our Lord Jesus Christ whose priesthood is like the priesthood of Melchizedek.

And we notice whose Psalm Psalm 110 is, just a Psalm of David. Just a Psalm of David. David is destined to speak forth this truth about Melchizedek and his significance and so that significance gave a significance to Jerusalem where he was king of Salem, and now we can just turn to Hebrews 7 and though that reading was somewhat technical and the argument was very carefully worked through, we may not have followed it all, but here is this man that we just read again the first three verses, "For this Melchizedek," the writer here has already begun to explore this particular priesthood, "this Melchizedek, king of Salem," Jerusalem, "priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated 'king of righteousness,' and then also king of Salem, meaning 'king of peace,' without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."

Well, there is the reflection back upon these things and now Psalm 110:4 coming into its own, the explanation to that, it is our Lord Jesus Christ who is fulfilling what is there somewhere within the priesthood of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, we'd say a type of Christ in that way. And David, his Psalm 110, felt the weight of the significance of Jerusalem, that this connection with Melchizedek he knew was significant and that this was therefore to be the capital city, the place also within David's heart, we'll come to that in a moment, was that not only should he have his own house and palace made of cedar wood but that God should have a dwellingplace there in Jerusalem. That was in David's heart somewhere, still battles to be fought at the moment, still on very active service, but that's in his heart somewhere and that's going to be in Jerusalem, that's where that's to be.

Well, of course, we could also note a further instance where Jerusalem or should we say Mount Moriah has a significance in this. In Genesis 22 is the place that we look for this and this is when Abraham is at the point of offering up his son, his only son Isaac, the

one that God had given to him, that extraordinary command that he should go to a mountain that I will show you. Let me just read that part, Genesis 22:3-4, "So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off." And that place we think there is really what now is Jerusalem. There was the place that Abraham was to go to to make this offering of his son.

Now, of course, the Lord intervenes and tells him no. He's seen Abraham's faith but, no, he is not and he is to offer a ram instead, and there again in Jerusalem great promises are spoken. Genesis 22, just reading from verse 16, the angel calls to him and says, "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son--blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

So the repetition of this promise made to Abraham of descendants, that it looked as if this was becoming a very shaky ground if he's going to offer up his only son that he has from whom this particular line is to be descended, but it tells us elsewhere in Scripture that Abraham believed that God could raise him from the dead and thus he was prepared to do that very thing until the Lord told him to stay his hand. Now those promises are given and it speaks to us elsewhere in Hebrews actually about the fact that God gives it with an oath here, that God so places his whole honor and dignity, his reputation, if you like, by this promise through Abraham and his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. You notice "in your seed," singular. That's the Lord Jesus Christ ultimately that is spoken of there when Abraham received that promise in Jerusalem or what was to become Jerusalem, on that mount.

So for David this place has great great significance. This is to be the place Melchizedek was who was a type of Christ, and where promises were given which are so significant in all of Scripture. Jerusalem, so this city of peace, a fitting place, a city of righteousness, names in themselves which are full of meaning of what God will give to his people, what he will be to them. David understood the purposes of God, the deep appreciation of what lay off in the future, and could see that this location was to be the location. His dwellingplace, the city of David, yes, but actually to be the dwellingplace of God himself, King of kings and full of significance on into the future.

We must also just say this, that all of this is happening before much of what needs to be in place is actually in place. Right, the city has been captured surely, but the worship of God at that time in the country was in total total disarray, it was in total chaos. The ark was at Kiriath Jearim, some nine miles from Jerusalem. The ark, the mercy seat, sprinkling of blood, high priest going in once a year, very very significant and where God's dwellingplace would be. The tabernacle, that's not there, that's somewhere else, that is across at Shiloh and Zadok, priest, I think is the man who's in charge of looking after that, that the tabernacle is there, the ark of the covenant is there, and when then

some of the furniture that is in the tabernacle, that's somewhere else, that's at Nob, that's where Ahimelech is high priest and his son Abiathar is destined to follow after the murder of his father. So we learn of David when he's hungry going there with his men and there was the showbread, the bread that is on the golden table that was inside the holy place. It was renewed every Sabbath day and the loaves that were there so that's in another location again.

So the worship is, well, we might say at this point, all over the place, but David knows that it's to be brought together to Jerusalem. There is not going to be a tabernacle, a more temporary structure which the ark is going to be and the various other items such as the altars and the table for the showbread. No, it's to be a building, not that he's to build it, as we'll learn in future sermons. I'm sure you know already that that's to be for his son Solomon but we can turn to Psalm 132 for there we see how David had it in his heart very much to build a house for the Lord. We'll come to it, as I say, in future weeks but just to briefly allude to it here in Psalm 132 and in the first four verses. "LORD, remember David And all his afflictions; How he swore to the LORD, And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: 'Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, Or go up to the comfort of my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to my eyes Or slumber to my eyelids, Until I find a place for the LORD, A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.'" Jerusalem is that place that's in David's heart and although it's going to be some years down the way before he actually intimates to prophets, to Nathan, that this is what he has in mind to do, but it's there, it's with David, and this whole idea that here was to be God's dwellingplace, the dwellingplace for the Mighty One of Jacob. This is David's zeal for God, for his glory. This is his zeal for the worship of God and these are things that moved him greatly, so much so that what's his own house, what's the comfort of his bed, what's his sleep or slumber to his eyes that he can't be doing for this, he can't be kind of looking after himself and feeling okay about that while still the worship of God is in disarray.

We'll think about that a little bit more with our second heading: a city to be captured. A city to be captured. We read about it, didn't we, in 2 Samuel 5 whereas the ark of the covenant had been recovered from the Philistines and was now in Kiriath Jearim. We see that the city of Jerusalem is still in enemy hands. It is not under the control of Israel. The city right in the middle, as it were, of the country but well-fortified, well-defended, and therein lay the problem that they'd not been able to dislodge the Jebusites who were there.

Now this was a historic problem and in Judges 1, I mentioned we'll be looking in Judges, well here we are, Judges 1:8, into the Promised Land, the conquest of Canaan, we read, "Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire." That was the tribe of Judah, the children of Judah were fighting against Jerusalem, but then you can read on to Judges 1:21, "But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day." That the city, at least in part, was captured but there was that stronghold where the Jebusites still held onto and the tribe of Benjamin, though it was in their territory and the Lord was with them in their work, failed to dislodge them. They're still there and as it says, they're still living with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day, and evidently then further

on beyond now the times of Joshua and the judges, things have deteriorated and the Jebusites are feeling very comfortable, very confident to be able to laud it really over the tribe of Benjamin and to go on about their work unhindered so that when David is there with his army, they just scoff and think, "You'll never enter here." They'd been able to gain some place there, some foothold.

And David knew that this city was to be conquered. Deuteronomy 12, quite a few places in the Old Testament that we hear Deuteronomy 12, what had been told to Moses. Well, Moses had already said to the children of Israel that when you go into the Promised Land God will show you a place, a place where you are to come assemble in worship. For instance being Deuteronomy 12 and just reading from verse 5, "But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you." You see it all comes together. Melchizedek, the promises that were given to Abraham, a place that is to be revealed.

Here it is and yet though that place had this significance already, it had not been totally captured and that remained for David still to do. Maybe just a thought we can have there for a moment about whereas the conquest had gone quite a way and been quite successful, it hadn't taken everything. It had left things undone and those things left undone kind of grew as a problem and is still there as a problem during David's time many years after the time of judges. Still the Jebusites are there and if anything have gotten stronger, they're more settled, they're more at home, and bossing Benjamin around, if you like. Well, while reformation captures ground that's been lost, it recovers what has been forfeited, and God takes back into possession, well, if we think his worship, for instance, well, here the Jebusites still held out, still a bit of holdover from the Canaanites, hadn't been dislodged, created a problem down the way. Maybe not immediately, not in the time of judges so much but later on it did, and they had obviously really dug in deep and felt themselves impregnable against David and his army.

Well, they're wrong, that's the fact, but how did they get to that place where they were so confident? And we can see the failure earlier on to properly address what was needed to be done in Jerusalem, all of Jerusalem, capturing Zion as well, left problems a way down the road to be reaped. Well, we know that worship is a hugely hugely vexed issue that what can be done, what can't be done, and all these kinds of things bigger than I'm going to try and do an exposition on here and now. But just a few thoughts and we see that churches add idols and statues and such things and things to venerate and to draw the attention away to. Well, that's not the full reformation of worship, that's left something still hanging over, well, from Roman Catholicism in that regard, vestments and things. We make no comment about the funeral yesterday of the Duke of Edinburgh and the vestments that there were to be found on display there.

Well, music is another one, isn't it there? But if not addressed, it will lead to problems down the way, that if it introduces something in the way of thinking about God, some different way of how we might experience him and what his presence is, what it "feels like," then it's leaving. If it's a poorly thought through idea of what worship is, it'll leave problems in the future, problems in understanding what the presence of God is and how we encounter him, what it feels like, putting it that way, and what we should expect this to feel like. It leaves problems and also as well where worldliness creeps in with the whole thing as well. Immodesty, modesty in dress and clothing. It leads to boasting. It leads to big name stars with their music and all the rest of it. And there unaddressed it just grows and you can see from some of the church movements that I've been following for 30 years, I'm a sad person, aren't I, doing these sorts of things, but anyway they've gone from bad to worse. They've started in one place but where they've ended up now, what they are teaching and what kind of goes on on their platforms and all their music, well, it makes the mind boggle.

Reformation, partial. Well, that leaves problems for the future and really just as when in the days of judges Jerusalem was not fully captured, left the Jebusites there, and it took then a further work of reformation under David to finally drive them out with the men of Benjamin perhaps earlier had done a more thorough work in that way. My third heading: the ark comes to Jerusalem, and were we to go on into 2 Samuel 6, we would see how that took place. But as ever, there's a Psalm to go with our considerations and Psalm 24 carries this thought, the Lord's presence coming to his dwellingplace. So in Psalm 24, reading from verse 3, "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face." Now remember that just previously, we haven't time to do anything more than just allude briefly to this, they thought to bring the ark into Jerusalem but to do it using a cart and to have not Levites because the whole way in which the ark was to be treated with very very carefully regulated, the book of Numbers and the book of Leviticus, very carefully regulated with only particular people were allowed to actually cover it, to actually see it in that way to be able to transport it, there are other special designated people to carry it on poles and it was all to be done, great care and David allowed it to be done carelessly. There's great rejoicing, they're very excited about bringing the ark up into Jerusalem except that they did not follow proper protocol and a man called Uzzah who seemingly was doing a good work in that the oxen, the cart, they sort of stumbled and it looked as if the ark would fall off and he put his hand out to stop that happening, but it shouldn't have been on the cart in the first place and Uzzah shouldn't have been there as part of the kind of party that were accompanying it, and he died. And that day ended there with shock, the Lord had broken out against his people and they detour and bring the ark to the house of a man called Obed-Edom.

So in Psalm 24 the question who may ascend into the hill of the Lord or who may stand in his holy place, there it is, this is a mighty thing, this is a great thing with great gravity, but we have the happy arrival because eventually having got it right, got the right people to carry it in the right way, the proper way, then from verse 7 of Psalm 24, "Lift up your

heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory." There's much in that Psalm that also speaks about the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ but this bringing in of the ark representing the very presence of God coming into Jerusalem carefully, this needs to be done carefully ascending into the hill of the Lord, that the king of glory has now come in. God's presence is there. The place that in Deuteronomy 12 the Lord had said there will be a place where you are to bring your offerings, where you will find me, where the various things that are part of my worship including having the ark of the covenant, the day of atonement, the high priest going in and bringing blood before the mercy seat, all of this has now come together. God's presence and God's honor is bound up now with Jerusalem. It's all tied up together. The worship of God is with David's ministry but then furthermore and later on with Solomon, the building of the temple, is now coming together, coming together in this significant location where God is pleased to call his dwellingplace.

Well, God's presence at least in that economy, is to be known to be present and where one approaches, one goes up the hill of the Lord carefully, thoughtfully, worshipers who will be coming to Passover, day of atonement, tabernacles, whatever it would be, coming carefully and thoughtfully. A place where enemies and you can see in Psalm 48:1-7, enemies would find that they are put in great fear, though they may come against the city which is well-defended because God is there, God is present. Psalm 46 tells us that as well, God is in the midst and his honor is tied to this city. But is this tied to it as long as the people behave in such a way as to uphold his dignity? If they become presumptuous, just assuming that everything is fine because we're the people of God and here is Jerusalem and there is the ark of the covenant in the temple after Solomon has built it, and if then their behavior drifts away, become ungodly, well, they become idolaters, then the Lord has a rude awakening for the people in the successive generation, that though he had placed his honor upon Jerusalem, if the people did not honor him, he would remove that protection, take away that honor, as it were, of the city and allow the city then to fall into enemy hands which, of course, is what happens when the Babylonians come and destroy the temple, break down the walls and deport in three successive stages so many of the nobles and priests and take them away to Babylon. Promise that have been there in Isaiah and some weeks back in our Thursday evenings restoration that they will be able to come back.

Then the city has its new temple which is smaller but is destined to have the visit of the greatest greatest person who had ever graced the city with his presence, the Lord Jesus Christ, the priest who is forever after the order of Melchizedek, the King of glory coming in. Well, in that we know, don't we, that Jerusalem turned its back upon him and he grieved over it. Luke 13 as he is speaking to those who are warning him that there's trouble ahead, he says, "Nevertheless," in Luke 13:33, "I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem." It is the city, my city, the city that is where all these things are to find their richest fulfillment in my death.

So the Lord Jesus Christ and here's a subject indeed, he becomes while he's in Jerusalem, he becomes the temple. He becomes the ark, the place where blood is to be shed. He is the location now. It's a person, not a place now. It's a person that we come to worship him, that what Jerusalem here stands for is now what the Lord Jesus Christ represents. So we just take this a little further in the time that we have and the literal location of Jerusalem since the Lord Jesus Christ came, and I say this carefully and try and be as respectful as possible because lots of points of view on this, but has lost some of its function now. It is no longer operating in the same way that it was operating here. That's the city of David. This location which rich with historic significance and where God's dwellingplace was to be, but now it is the Lord Jesus Christ who fulfills and it is now the place where we come to worship, where we approach him, not needing to go to Jerusalem to find the presence of God. We can come to our local church wherever that is and where God's name is lifted up and where the Bible is preached, then he promises to be in the midst. The day of Pentecost laid down new ground rules in that way and brought to the attention of all who were gathered that not just in Jerusalem now is God's word to be heard and understood, that God is now going to have his language and all the teaching of his glorious things heard in all the languages of all the peoples in all places. They wouldn't have to come to Jerusalem to hear this. It had its place in the early church when the apostles were teaching there but the plan was always this, going out into all the world. It's going to begin in Jerusalem, then Samaria. Onwards it would go, Judah, Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

So the significance now of Jerusalem has changed. No longer the literal city so absorbing us now, it's the Lord Jesus Christ who fulfills what that city is to be, our place where we go to find God, where he dwells. Well, it's in Christ. There is the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him. Where his sacrifice to be made? Well, we don't need to go to Jerusalem now for a day of atonement or to offer burnt offerings. He did all of that. He has fulfilled that absolutely. And that's not to say now there's a lot of function for ethnic Jews in the purposes of God. No, there may still be some quite significant purposes that God has reserved still for ethnic Jews. It's not to say that that's disappeared entirely because Jerusalem is no longer quite the same focal point as it was to be here in the old covenant.

And within all of it, that earthly Jerusalem, Zion, points us forward, doesn't it, to a greater city still, a heavenly city, that this final dwellingplace, God with men, is heaven itself. So earthly Jerusalem then in a very local sense, that is where you would meet with God and now he waits for his people in the glorious dwellingplace, heaven itself, the new Jerusalem. That's why it's called the new Jerusalem. It supersedes the old and it's so expansive and all peoples from all over the world are found dwelling there in the very presence of God.

I'd just like to draw our attention and pretty well opens up a debate here which I in no means am going to try and conclude because it's from the allegory in Galatians 4:26 to 28. Jerusalem, this supernatural Jerusalem, God's dwellingplace. Well, today the local church, churches, but then taken up into the very glory of heaven itself and Paul writes

this in Galatians 4 and in verse 26 and following, contrasting being under bondage, under the law, looking to be saved by the law or looking to be saved by grace where he says, "but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: 'Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.'" He goes on, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." That's the church and that function that she has under God as the repository of truth where you will hear the gospel preached, where the Bible is explained, and where people come to a living faith. This Jerusalem making people free, where God dwells amongst his people in the local church but actually pointing us forward to a greater reality, that Jerusalem that really is above, heaven itself.

So it seems to be quite big, isn't it, saying actually that local churches should be just that little foretaste of heaven here on earth, making people free, getting us ready for that free citizenship in glory itself, the new Jerusalem. As God's dwellingplace now, no longer there in the ark of the covenant in the most holy place, that curtain was torn, this has moved on. Now the Lord is pleased to be with his people all over the world in every location, everywhere is a capital city now and we're all preparing as God prepares us in our local churches for that heavenly reality, the new Jerusalem, the place where in its fullest sense we will dwell with God, God will make his dwellingplace with us and absolute wonder, joy and fulfillment will be found.

And David had something of that already in his mind, had something of that already in his heart. He was a prophet and could see that Jerusalem was opening up one day to something bigger, all over the world little Jerusalems, places where God's presence would be but ultimately heaven itself and the glory of all the saints, David, all the saints when we, dear friends, if we're believers, one day we as well, our capital city.

A CAPITAL CITY

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: 2 Samuel 5: 6-16.

Jerusalem, David's intended capital city, has now been conquered. With the help of Hiram, David has now built a fine palace to live in. It is now to be known as the city of David (v9) which is very significant. It is located in the northernmost part of Judah, actually lying mostly in the land allotted to Benjamin. It has steep cliffs on three sides and the pinnacle of the hill it is built on is called Zion.

1. Why Jerusalem?

There were many other candidates for being the capital city, such as Hebron or Bethlehem. Jerusalem was not on a main trading route and would seem to have some downsides. But it was a well defended city.

It also had featured in the past history of God's people as having some significance. In Genesis 14:18-20 Melchizedek, King of Jerusalem, meets Abram on his return from defeating the kings that had taken Lot captive. He is a worshipper of the true God and has a dignity and office that Abram respects. Melchizedek is also a priest, and his priesthood has huge significance, being a type of Christ's priesthood (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7: 1-3). David thus knew something of the importance of Jerusalem in the outworking of God's purposes.

Furthermore, it had been the place where Abraham had been about to offer up his son, Isaac, the mountain that the Lord had shown him (Genesis 22:3-4). It was then the location of Abraham receiving great promises from the Lord (Genesis 22:16-18). The meaning of the name Jerusalem, City of Peace and Righteousness, was also significant. David was a prophet who understood the purposes of God and saw that the choice of Jerusalem was itself a fulfillment of prophecy since the Lord had told the people, through Moses, that He would choose a place where He was to be worshipped.

At the time David made this decision, the worship of God was in disarray. The Ark of the Covenant was in Kirjath-Jearim, some nine miles from Jerusalem. Although the Ark, with the mercy seat, was the place representing the Lord's presence among His people, it had been neglected. The tabernacle was at Shiloh under the care of Zadok. The other items of sacred furniture were at Nob under the care of Ahimelech, and then Abiathar, his son. David was not satisfied that this chaotic system should remain (Psalm 132:1-5) and desired that the Lord should be more greatly honoured than this. Such was David's

zeal for the things of God. We ask ourselves do we care this much about the glory of God and the worship of God? Or do our own interests and affairs pre-occupy us too much?

2. A city to be captured.

While the Ark had been re-captured from the Philistines, the city of Jerusalem still needed to be captured from the Jebusites. Some progress had been made in the past towards the capture of Jerusalem (Judges 1:8) but the conquest had not been complete (Judges 1:21). The Jebusites had become complacent and thought they would not be dislodged by David, but they were wrong and the city was taken.

There is the need for a complete not a partial reform of things. It is never wise to leave parts unconquered by the Lord's truth as these will become a problem in the future. It is why people are careful about what is permitted and what is not permitted in worship. Allowing for idols and heathen additions can introduce thoughts and attitudes that are foreign to Scripture and the true knowledge of God. That is why such care has to be taken about the nature of the music that is used in church worship services. Not reforming worship can lead to ungodly ideas and behaviours taking root, including immodest dress and acts.

3. The ark comes to Jerusalem.

This is a hugely significant moment when the Ark is now brought to the capital city, Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6). Despite the failure to observe the God-given rules for the movement of the Ark, which led to the death of Uzzah, Psalm 24 speaks about this event and the arrival of the Lord's presence in the place of His choosing and appointment. God's place in the city now lends it a fresh prominence and significance which is reflected in Scripture (Psalm 48:1-7). Sennacherib, the Assyrian King, was to learn the importance that the Lord set on the city when he fails, despite his superior forces, to take the city when Hezekiah was king. The Lord puts Himself at the heart of the city and puts an honour on Jerusalem.

This is not to be thought of lightly and, as Judah was to learn to its cost, presumption would cost them their city for the Lord would not suffer His name to be dishonoured. If needs be, He would allow the city to be destroyed if the people failed to honour Him, the Lord in their midst. As a result, the people were to go into exile in Babylon. Later the same city would be destroyed because it failed to recognize the Lord's coming to them (Luke 13:33).

Now, rather than be focused on the literal city, we are to see in our Lord Jesus Christ the Temple, the Ark, the place of atonement, all the things that old Jerusalem provided for,

which are now fulfilled in His work and ministry, but with no longer any actual need for the actual places and objects.

We would believe that literal Jerusalem has lost some of its significance and that the Day of Pentecost points forward to the truth of God and the worship of God now taking place all across the world, rather than being found in one location. Local churches, scattered across the face of the earth, are the places where the Lord's presence is to be found, none of which is to deny the unique place ethnic Jewish people have enjoyed and may still enjoy in the purposes of God.

In all of this, Jerusalem points upwards and forwards to the New Jerusalem, a greater city, a heavenly city, the dwelling place of the Lord's redeemed people in glory. This New Jerusalem becomes the final dwelling place of God with men. It is a deeply supernatural and real place where all is holy and joyful. This future reality is to be reflected in the local church now. Galatians 4:26-28 tells us that the preaching, Bible-believing church is our mother. The spiritual Jerusalem, a heavenly city, is our birthplace and dwelling place.

David's choice of Jerusalem for a capital city was full of significance which would only become more apparent with the passing of time and the unfolding revelation of the Lord's purposes.