The Palestinian Authority has stationed 300 police officers throughout Shechem (Nablus) this morning, the first step in the process of transferring security from Israel to the Palestinians. The move had been delayed by Israel for several weeks, due to concerns that the Palestinian Authority was not capable of keeping law and order in the town.

Quote: *"Meanwhile US Security Coordinator, General Keith Dayton, visited Nablus last week to inspect the PA's readiness to assume responsibility. On the day of his visit Dayton said the handover of Nablus marks the beginning of the establishment of a Palestinian state. "He led us to believe that the Palestinian state will be established from Nablus," the source added.*

The Israeli government has denied that they intend to transfer control of Shechem to the Palestinian Authority, but it's hard to see this as anything else. It has always been the goal of the Palestinian Authority to take control of major towns, to help pave the way for the creation of a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria.

Quote: *""We will present our plan to the Israelis. It clarifies how we intend to impose order and security in the towns that Israel would be willing to hand over to us," he said, "including what we plan to do regarding all the wanted people in these places." He refused to detail which cities were included in the request, but Ynet has found that Abbas and the delegation will initially ask for control over Ramallah, where the Muqata's and Abbas's offices are, and Bethlehem, which is regarded as a relatively peaceful town. Later on, the Palestinians will also ask for control over another town in the north of the West Bank: Qalqilya, Tulkarem, Nablus or Jenin*

And how fitting that Shechem should be one of the first towns that the Palestinian Authority will be granted control over, following Jericho - the city cursed of God (Joshua 6:26). Shechem was of course one of the cities of refuge in the Old Testament times. If any person killed a man or women and it was done unintentionally, they could flee to one of the cities of refuge for safety. The "avenger of blood", the relative who was permitted by law to avenge the death of their loved one, was not allowed to enter the city and slay them. And as the Palestinians are granted control of this city of refuge, it seems the Israeli government will be granting their enemies a city of refuge in which to hide, after having committed their terrorist attacks.

Praise God that we have One to whom we can flee for refuge, the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. One of my favourite books is Pilgrim's Progress, written by the Puritan John Bunyan. It is a similitude or parable of the journey of life, a story of one man by the name of Christian, who is burdened with his sin and seeks how he may be rid of it. He is warned by a man called Evangelist to flee from his hometown, the city of Destruction, which is marked for judgement by God. During his journey, Christian meets one man named Faithful. He was warned by one man that his house would be burned down over his head if he didn't flee. After he fled his home in the condemned city, this man found him and struck him down on the ground. When Faithful asked why he did that, he said it was because of his secret inclination to Adam the First, a man he had met along the way. When Faithful pleaded for mercy, the man said, I know not how to show mercy. Christian identified the man as Moses, a picture of the law. The Bible states that by the works of the law no man shall be justified (Galatians 2:16), for the law cannot show mercy, it knows only how to condemn. Praise God that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Psalm 91:1-2
He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, [He is] my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Source YNet News