

Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem

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Y. Joe Kim

yhjoekim@gmail.com

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God. (Luke 19:41-44)

1. Names in the Bible Have Meaning

Naming in the Bible is of great importance. A person's name described a person's character or a sense of purpose in God. God often changed the name of a person. In Genesis 17:5 God says to Abram, "**No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.**" A shortly before the promised son Isaac was conceived, God changed Abram's name (which meant "exalted father") to Abraham (which meant father of many"). God wanted him to be the father of many.

The name of a city also has meaning. This morning I would like to talk about the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem means "a City of Peace" or "Foundation of Peace." The name Jerusalem occurs first in Joshua 10:1 and the city is conquered by Israel. It remains occupied by Jebusites. Four hundred years later David conquers Jerusalem from the Jebusites and makes it his capital (2 Samuel 5:6). Jerusalem is one of the most important cities in Israel. But the Holy Land pilgrims learned that Jerusalem is not the city of peace.

2. Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

Today's scripture Luke 19:41-44 tell us that Jesus comes near the city of Jerusalem and weeps over it. This happens when Jesus begins his triumphal entry to Jerusalem. Why did Jesus weep? Earlier in Luke 13:34, Jesus says, "**Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!**" God sent Jesus to take care of His people as a hen protects her chicks but Jesus would be rejected by his people and soon be crucified on the cross in Jerusalem. Is Jesus weeping for himself? Not at all.

Jesus weeps for God's people because they do not receive God's gift of salvation and peace.

The city of Jerusalem stands in a hilly area at an elevation of 2,575 feet (785 meters). The Dead Sea is to the east and the Jordan River is about 18 miles from the city. To the east of Jerusalem there are the mountains of eastern Jordan and to the west, there are the coastal areas of the Mediterranean Sea.

The significance of the city of Jerusalem begins when David's son, Solomon, builds the first Temple. The Babylonians take over Jerusalem in 586 B.C., destroy the Temple, and send the Jews into exile. About 50 years after that, the Persian King Cyrus allows the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Later in 332 B.C., Alexander the Great takes control of the city.

Over the next several hundred years, Jerusalem is conquered and ruled by an army of different rulers including the Romans, Persians, Arabs, Fatimids, Seljuk Turks, Crusaders, Egyptians, Mamelukes and Islamists. The city of Jerusalem was never in peace.

3. The Peace of Jerusalem

As we find out in the history of Jerusalem, the city is far from being peaceful. This is why the psalmist in Psalm 122:6-7 says, "**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. ⁷ Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers.'**"

The word for "peace" in Hebrew language is "**shalom**." The term is used both as a greeting and for farewells. **Shalom** means more than the absence of conflict. The term includes the concept of health, justice, prosperity, protection, and completeness. How is such a peace possible? Without a savior, such peace is not possible.

When Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem, Jesus wept for the peace of Jerusalem. Verse 42 says, "**If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.**"

Jesus has come to bring a real peace, but the people would reject him and miss the opportunity for peace. Isaiah 52:7 says, "**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'**" They know that the Messiah is the one who brings peace. Yet when the Messiah comes they do not accept him.

Who is able to attain this peace? The scripture tells us that this peace is for those who believe that God reigns no matter what. Jesus tells his disciples in John 14:27, "**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and**

do not let them be afraid.” Jesus tells his disciples that he will leave peace with them, knowing that he would soon be crucified on the cross. Although he would be leaving his disciples very soon, they would be in peace as long as they believe that God reigns.

4. Destruction of the Temple

In verse 43, Jesus foretells that there would be a day when Jerusalem would be totally destroyed. About 40 years after Jesus said these words, they came true. In AD 66, the Jews revolted against Roman control. Three years later the Roman general Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, was sent to crush the rebellion. Roman soldiers attacked the city and broke through the northern wall but still couldn't take Jerusalem. Finally they laid siege to it, and in AD 70 they were able to enter the severely weakened city and burn it. Six hundred thousand Jews were killed during Titus's onslaught. They also destroyed the Second Temple. The destruction remains, even beyond the Holocaust, as one of the more devastating periods of Jewish history. The Western Wall, the only remaining part of the Second Temple, is the site where Jewish pilgrims visit and pray.

The destruction of the Second Temple brought a serious issue to Jews. For the Jews the Temple was central to life in Jerusalem. Many Jews believed that sin could be forgiven by bringing a sin offering in the Temple. Without such forgiveness, the sinner was condemned to alienation from God. But now the channel for forgiveness was gone. The destruction of the Temple meant for the Jews that they were estranged from a valid existence with God.

Much of the remaining Jews after the conflict remained resolute. The people refused to live normally, and harnessed their despair to mount a widespread effort to restore the Temple. In 115 and 117 AD, there was a widespread rebellion of the Jewish diaspora, which was forcefully suppressed. Another revolt in 132 AD led by Simon Bar Kochba was crushed by the Romans. Even today there are Jews who try to rebuild the third Temple at the same place. When I asked about the possibility of rebuilding of the Temple to our pilgrimage guide FJ, he said that then the third world war would break out.

5. Have We Found Peace?

Although Jerusalem means the city of peace, there is no peace in Jerusalem. Are we in peace? Can we find peace without worshipping in the Temple? In Matthew 12:6, Jesus says that he is greater than the Temple. And after he was risen from the dead, he visits his disciples. He says ***“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”***²² ***When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”*** (John 20:21 & 22). Jesus reminds his disciples that they would be in peace as

long as they are with the Holy Spirit and can continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

The Temple is the symbol of God's presence and his forgiveness. Hebrew 9:12 says, "**he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.**" The Bible tells us that our sins can be forgiven without a sin offering in the Temple.

Psalms 46:1 and 7 says, "**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**" Although so many kinds of trouble could happen to us, we would be in peace as long as we trust in the Lord, believing that he is with us.

6. Conclusion

Despite its name, the "city of peace," Jerusalem, has not been a city of peace for much of its history. In our time, the city is the landscape of the ongoing conflict between Jews and Palestinians. Both believe they have a claim to the city and both continue to fight to gain control of Jerusalem.

There have been many attempts to reach peace, but to this day, there is no final peace agreement. A two-state solution, having a country for each side, is one potential solution that continues to be the subject of conversation for the people living in the area.

Our passage today tells us that Jesus wept for the City of Jerusalem. I wonder whether Jesus weeps over America, New England, Massachusetts, and Cape Cod. Have you heard that Massachusetts is known as one of the States with the lowest percentage of Christians in the U.S.?

7. Application

During our pilgrimage in Israel, our guide was a Palestinian Christian who lived in Jerusalem. He didn't weep for the city of Jerusalem, but lamented the current situation of the city that is divided, hated, fighting and killing each other between Jews and Palestinians. Since I came back from Israel, I feel that I need to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

We do not live in such a town like the city of Jerusalem. However, we do know that there are many who need real peace in Jesus.

In June we will have a yard sale and a strawberry festival. What do you expect from these activities? As far as I am concerned, I would like to meet as many people as possible. We will have a booth for blessings of the animals. I will bless the owners of the animals and their pets and take photos of them. I pray that our congregation can help many people to find peace in Jesus through our ministry so that we can help Jesus to be happy instead of weeping over us. Amen.