

“JERUSALEM”

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, "Peace be within you." Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good. (Psalms 122:6-9 NKJV)

Jerusalem is built on a mountain 37 miles from the Mediterranean Sea and 24 miles from the Jordan River. There have been cities on this site for the past 8,000 years. The oldest known name is Urusalim. That name first appears in written form as Ur-sa-li-immu on Assyrian monuments of the 8th century BC. It appears as Urusalim in cuneiform in the Tell-el-Amarna letters (1450 BC).

In Genesis 14 is recorded that Abraham and his servants plus some of his neighbors in Canaan pursued and defeated King Chedorlaomer and three other kings. They rescued Lot and his possessions, as well as all the people and plunder that had been taken from Sodom. When Abraham returned, he met Melchizedek, King of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God. Melchizedek blessed Abraham and Abraham gave a tenth of everything to Melchizedek.

Later, God tested Abraham by telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac on the mountain that He would show him. It was Mount Moriah. There are five hills in Jerusalem. The Temple of Solomon and the temple which the Jews built when they returned from captivity in Babylon were built on Mount Moriah. At the present time that site is occupied by a Muslim mosque called the Dome of the Rock. You may have heard of the Western Wall or the Wailing Wall. This is a short stretch of the wall that surrounded the Temple courtyard and survived the destruction of the Temple by the Romans and subsequent conquerors.

1.) Jerusalem in the Old Testament

When the Israelites came into the Promised Land they conquered most of the land but there were pockets of resistance. Jerusalem was not captured. It was inhabited by Jebusites who called it Jebus. For the seven years that David was king of just the tribe of Judah, he ruled from Hebron. When the other tribes of Israel asked David to be their king, he decided to capture Jerusalem and make that the capital of the united kingdom. The Jebusites bragged: “You shall not come in here; even the blind and the lame will repel you.” (2 Samuel 5:6) The city was well fortified but Joab climbed up a water shaft into the city and then opened a gate for more of David’s soldiers. They captured the city.

Jerusalem is set apart from all other cities because of God’s promise: ‘Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there;...’ (2 Chronicles 6:6a NKJV)

While David and Solomon were kings, Jerusalem was capital of a powerful nation. After Solomon’s death ten of the tribes broke away and Samaria was their capital. Jerusalem remained the place of God’s Temple and the throne of David. First Samaria was conquered by the Assyrians, then a couple hundred years later Babylon conquered Judea, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and took the Jews into captivity.

After seventy years the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah they set about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and the temple. Until 331 BC they were under the dominion of the Persian Empire. They were conquered by the troops of Alexander the Great and were under Greek rule about 150 years. Under the Maccabees they overthrew the Greeks and were independent until they were conquered by the Romans.

2.) Jerusalem at the time of Jesus

Herod ruled over Judea as a puppet king for the Romans. Herod was only half-Jewish. He spent vast sums of money embellishing the city. He was the one who built the magnificent temple. He had a grand palace. He led a lavish, royal life.

The Romans gave a great deal of latitude to the priests and officers of the Temple, even allowing them to have their own guards and to convict people for religious offenses. They even had their own coins.

The vast majority of Jesus' teachings and miracles took place in Galilee, but many of the important events took place in Jerusalem. His parents took Him to the Temple to dedicate Him as an infant. Every devout Jew travelled to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple at least once a year. When Jesus was twelve years old, He went with His family to Jerusalem and then stayed in the Temple complex several days listening to the teachers and asking them questions.

During the first year of Jesus' ministry He traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover. This was the first time He cleansed the Temple. During the second year of His ministry He went to Jerusalem for the Passover. While there He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda. It was the Sabbath, Jesus was criticized for healing on the Sabbath and He taught about the Sabbath.

The third year of His ministry Jesus traveled to Jerusalem three times: for the Feast of the Tabernacles, for the Feast of the Dedication, and for the Passover. On this occasion He arrived a week before the Passover and made His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The next several days were crowded with teaching, healing, and miracles in and

around Jerusalem. On Thursday was the Last Supper, His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, His arrest, and the first of several trials and inquiries before the high priest, King Herod, and Pontius Pilate. On Friday He was crucified outside Jerusalem, He was buried in Jerusalem, rose again from the dead and appeared to His disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem. After meeting with them in Galilee, He returned to Jerusalem. He led them out to the place He ascended into heaven.

3.) Jerusalem in our future

In the Revelation heaven is described as the new Jerusalem.

"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name." (Revelation 3:11-12 NKJV)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:1-8 NKJV)