

The Peace of Jerusalem

2018-03-11 - Year B - Lent 4

2 Chronicles 36:14–23; Psalm 122; Ephesians 2:4–10; John 6:1–15

- Jerusalem is a great place to put a city. It is surrounded by steep valleys on three of its four sides making it very challenging to attack it.
- When Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan and began occupying the land of Canaan, Jerusalem was inhabited by the Jebusites, and Joshua was unable to take it.
- The Jebusites and the Tribe of Benjamin peacefully coexisted next to each other until David decided to capture it and make it his capital city (1000 BC).

The Importance of Jerusalem

- Center of Government
 - Capital of the united Kingdoms of David and Solomon
 - Capital of the Kingdom of Judah (Southern Kingdom)
- Center of Religion
 - The Temple
 - Probably the most beautiful structure anyone at that time had ever seen
 - Sacrificed offer on behalf of the entire nation and for individuals
 - Pilgrim Festivals - Passover, Pentecost, Sukkot (Booths)
 - Psalms of Ascent (120-134)
 - My own visit to Jerusalem. Going “up” to Jerusalem.
- Psalm 122:1-2 - The pilgrim finally arrives and enters the city gates
 - v. 6 - “Pray for the peace (shalom) of Jerusalem (Yerushalam)”
 - It was a common custom to pray for peace upon a house as you enter it
 - This is still a part of our BCP with the visitation of the sick
 - It is only natural for pilgrims to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem as they enter.

The Capture and Destruction of Jerusalem

- Destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC
 - 2 Chronicles 36:15-16
 - “In the end, the exile came about not because Israel sinned, but because they spurned God’s offers of reconciliation”¹
 - Lamentations 1:1-2
 - Psalm 137:1-6
 - And yet, the 70 years of exile are called a “sabbath” for the land
 - 2 Chronicles 36:21
 - The land was resting so it could once again receive the descendants of Israel. Resting so God’s people could be restored.

¹ Martin J. Selman, 2 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary (vol. 11; Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 571.

- When Jesus went “up” to Jerusalem for his triumphal entry, instead of Psalm 122, Jesus laments Jerusalem and predicts its destruction - Luke 19:41-44
 - Instead of praying for Peace, he mourns the fact that they did not know the “things that make for peace.” (v. 42)
 - Again, Jerusalem is destroyed because it did not heed the warnings of prophets and it “did not know the time of [its] visitation” (v. 44).
- Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD
 - The only piece of the Temple still standing is the Western “Wailing” wall
 - Destruction of the Temple important symbol of the New Covenant - Hebrews
 - Hebrews 7:23-35 - Probably written just before the Temple was destroyed. Jesus is the great and enduring high priest who makes intercession for us forever!
 - Jesus is also now our King. He reigns on high at the right hand of the Father.
 - The old tabernacle and later the Temple were intended as copies of heavenly things (Hebrews 8:5).

The New Jerusalem

- Rev 21:1-5 - The New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven
- Rev. 21:5 - “Behold, I make all things new.”
- Rev. 21:22-23 - No temple - The temple is not necessary because “the dwelling place of God is with man” (21:3).
- Jerusalem the Golden
 - 2 They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song,
and bright with many an angel, and all the martyr throng;
the Prince is ever in them, the daylight is serene;
the pastures of the blessed are decked in glorious sheen.
 - 3 There is the throne of David; and there, from care released,
the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast;
and they, who with their Leader have conquered in the fight,
forever and forever are clad in robes of white.
 - 4 O sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect!
In mercy, Jesus, bring us to that dear land of rest,
who are, with God the Father and Spirit, ever blest.²
- This is our hope, this is our future, this is what we were made for.
- This is our true home. Until we reach that heavenly city, we will be merely passing through. I know that I will be there, and I hope you have that assurance too!
- Let us not be like those of the “old Jerusalem” who did not know the time of their visitation! Instead, let us hold fast to our great high priest. Accepting his offer of forgiveness and salvation and waiting with eager longing for his return.

² *Jerusalem the Golden*, Bernard of Cluny (1145), trans. John Mason Neale.