

The Doomed City

Luke 19:29-44

THE CONQUERORS OF JERUSALEM

David
Shishak I
Jehoash of Israel
Nebuchadnezzar II
Artaxerxes III
Alexander the Great
Ptolemy I Soter
Antiochus IV Epiphanes
Judas Maccabeus
Pompey
Gaius Sosius
Herod the Great
Titus
Bar Kokbha
Sextus Julius Severus
Shahbaraz
Heraclius
Caliph Umar the Great
Malik-Shah I
Al-Afdal Shahanshah
Godfrey of Bouillon
Saladin
As-Salih Ayyub
Kitbuqua
Muhammad Ali of Egypt
Edmund Allenby
Moshe Dayan

PHOTOS OF SACKINGS

It changed hands 44 times. Jerusalem – one of the most besieged cities in the world at 27 times – not all these resulted defeat. Extensively destroyed in 587BC by Nebuchadnezzar, in 168 BC by Antiochus Epiphanes, 70AD by Titus then 135AD by Sextus Julius Severus – Aelia Capitolina. 1245 – City destroyed by Muslim Caliphs.

Different people marched into Jerusalem over the years. Some were to destroy, some were to plunder, some were to liberate. One of the more interesting conquerors of the city was a man who is Felixstowe's claim to fame for Jerusalem. He was General Sir Edmund Allenby who's British Expeditionary Force captured Jerusalem in December 1917 after the Turks who had occupied it for over 400 years fled.

ALLENBY MOVIE

He decided to walk into the city rather than ride in on his charger. Why? Because he was a Christian and he did not want to enter the city as Jesus had – so he and his senior officers walked unarmed into the city (he had plenty of armed soldiers line the streets though, just in case!)

JESUS

How different the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday was. He didn't enter as a conqueror – yet in Jerusalem He scored the world's greatest victory. Yet he never raised a sword, never commanded an army, never killed a man, yet he has saved millions from oppression and death.

How different that was to the history of the city He entered. It wasn't lost on Him either. The Name Jerusalem is an interesting one in itself.

JERUSALEM

It was originally a Jebusite town, called Jebus but it was believed to have had a Canaanite name of Urusalimum or Ursalimmu, Foundation of Shalem – named after a Ugarit god.

However, in Hebrew it sounded similar to Yerushaláyim - Foundation of Peace, Possession of Peace, Rain of Peace.

Jerusalem, the city of peace. Why? Because it was a city which God had chosen to dwell with His people and the Temple was a symbol of this. Ex 25:8 *"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.* And for as long as the people of Israel remained faithful to Him, the city stayed at peace.

Unfortunately it didn't and we know that the destruction of the city and the Temple in 586BC was a mark of this – that was the most severe of many before Jesus.

And as Jesus comes to the city He prophesied over it. VERSE

41 He came closer to the city, and when he saw it, he wept over it, 42 saying, "If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it! 43 The time will come when your enemies will surround you with barricades, blockade you, and close in on you from every side. 44 They will completely destroy you and the people within your walls; not a single stone will they leave in its place, because you did not recognize the time when God came to save you!"

At another time He also prophesied this: VERSE

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me! 38 And so your Temple will be abandoned and empty. 39 From now on, I tell you, you will never see me again until you say, "God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord."

MAP

Jerusalem was a doomed city. That was the message of Jesus. It was. In AD 70, the Romans trashed it and destroyed the Temple. Most see it as the fulfilment of the prophecy, but not quite so. Jesus talked about one stone not being left on another – the destruction of all buildings. The Romans left the city habitable even though the walls and temple were destroyed. In AD135 after another uprising from the Jews, Emperor Hadrian decided to put the rebellion down under General Sextus Julius Severus. He completely reduced Jerusalem to its foundation, wiping out the Jewish city. The Romans built a new city, Aelia Capitolina over the top. The only surviving piece of the old city was the retaining wall for the Temple Mount – the Wailing Wall - which wasn't part of the Temple, just a wall to retain a steep slope.

DOOMED CITY

But as we know, the city had no peace in the 2000 years since. It has been part of other people's empires in down the centuries. In fact no-one appears to have held on to it for more than 300 years without someone taking it off them. The present city area and walls were built by the Ottoman Turks who held it for 400 years but like previous empires, there was at least one time when it fell out of their hands for a short while. It was even part for the British Empire for 30 years.

The Israelis captured it in 1967 and it has remained in their hands ever since. More on that in a moment.

POINTS

Why these prophecies by Jesus? They were there to tell people that God was no longer going to make his dwelling with people in this city in the way He had.

- they did things their way – the nation had a history of doing just that – doing their own thing. Following after other gods, bending the law to say something other than what God had said.
- they did not recognise God's salvation – as Jesus said, they ignored and killed the prophets, but most of all, they ignored Him – He came to those who were His own – and His own would not receive Him.
- the city would be marked by an absence of peace. From this time onwards, the dwelling of God would no longer be associated with the Temple. The veil of temple which hid the Most Holy Place from view was torn from top to bottom. It was exposed to the world. But the presence of God was no longer going to be in the Temple. He was going to be literally with His people. This is how Paul described the people of God – those that had decided to trust and follow Jesus.

Why? Jesus came to bring peace with God. No longer was the dwelling of God going to be in Jerusalem but with men – *2 Cor 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

There are still Temples. If you know Christ, you are the temple of the Living God. The Spirit of God resides with you. Mind blowing or what? May God reveal that truth in a fresh way to us this morning. In a real way this morning. In us? We have the presence and power of God in us. The power that changes the world. The power that reveals the mind of God to us. The power that works through us in our lives. The power that heals. The power that does wondrous things. The power that raises from death. In us. Amazing?

The Jews didn't recognise Jesus – he came to His own and they didn't receive Him. As Jesus says of Jerusalem *you did not recognize the time when God came to save you!* . He came to His own and they didn't receive Him but as many as did receive Him He gave the right to become children of God John 1:12.

If we know Jesus this morning, then knowing we are the temple of the Holy Spirit is one thing. The danger is that we become so caught up in ourselves, the problem and pain of life, the pressures of life, sometimes even our own religion – that we fail to see God's salvation and celebrate it, and speak it out.

If you don't know Jesus this morning, then maybe you're not seeing Jesus either. But you

need to see what He's about. That you might know Him, that you may find forgiveness and hope. There is an important reason for this.

Jesus is coming back and Jerusalem is central to God bringing final peace in this world through Jesus. Let's go back to a familiar phrase. This verse from Revelation is spoke after it is prophesied Jesus will return,

Rev 21: 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is going to return. Bodily, in victory. As a conqueror. My video on Allenby centres on that. – Jesus will return. He's coming back.

ARE YOU READY?

We don't know when He will return. If you don't know Jesus, then you're not ready. Because when He returns, those who know Him will be with Him as the verse I just read says. Those that don't, won't. They will spend eternity outside the presence of God. The Bible calls it hell. There are various pictures of it in the Bible. All horrible. Look at the history of Jerusalem down the ages – horrible. That is a picture of men and women out of peace with God.

Christians are you ready? Should we be? The second coming used to be unfashionable in 2000 years of history. But then something happened. An important prophecy got fulfilled. Israel is a sovereign state again and Jerusalem is in Jewish hands. In over 1900 years it was thought inconceivable that Jerusalem would ever be in Jewish hands again; that a state of Israel could exist. It was a Muslim city for over 900years. It was a Christian city for the rest. Jews were persecuted and excluded. The empires that owned it desired to keep it.

Except that in 1917 the British invaded it, only for the reason to protect the flanks of the Empire from the Turks who had for centuries had been our friends but now had become our enemies. Suddenly Jerusalem became part of an Empire that Britain didn't really want and pressure came to bear to give the Jews a homeland. It's a long story that much to everyone's surprise in 1948, the state of Israel emerged. All end-time prophecy involves an Israel and a capital in Jerusalem – and a victorious Christ reigning from it.

NEXT TIME HE WON'T BE ON A DONKEY

Once prophecy starts getting fulfilled – sit up and take notice. Jesus will return. When? I don't know. But if prophecy is getting fulfilled than it suggests soon. Are you ready?

Next time He won't be on a donkey.