

Jerusalem And Current Events

In December 2017 the President of the United States announced he was going to recognize Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel. This created quite a stir at the time as Muslims consider this their holy city. On May 14, 2018 the United States opened their embassy in Jerusalem. Those opposed to this event took to the streets as more than 60 Palestinians were killed and more than 900 injured in protest. There are those in our country have expressed their agreement. Some have even gone so far as to say this was in fulfillment of Bible prophecy (?) and this is God's eternal city.

I am afraid many misunderstand Jerusalem's importance in the Bible. There is a belief that Israel is still God's chosen nation and whoever aligns themselves with Israel will be blessed by God. Others believe Jesus will return to earth and set up a physical Kingdom as He rules on the throne of David in Jerusalem. Both assumptions are wrong!

In the Old Testament, God did promise Abraham the land of Canaan, a great nation, and through his seed all of the nations of the earth will be blessed. "1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12)

Exodus starts with the lineage of Abraham in Egypt in slavery. Through Moses, God brings the Israelites out of captivity. It was not until the days of Joshua 1 Kings 8:10-11 NKJV 10 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.do we read of them entering Canaan. Upon entering they had to subdue the people of the land and take it for themselves.

David did much to conquer the enemies of Israel, including taking the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites. "6 And the king and his men went to

Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." 7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David)." (2 Samuel 5) It was at this time Jerusalem became the city of God. David had the ark of the covenant brought into Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6.

Solomon built the temple including the Most Holy of Holies and the ark of the covenant was brought into the Temple. "10 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD." (1 Kings 8) It was at that time Solomon said that all of the promises of God had been fulfilled, 1 Kings 8.56. The land promise and the promise of a great nation had indeed been fulfilled. Once a promise is fulfilled it is done. That promise also was conditional, based on Israel being faithful to keep God's word. God also promise that if they were not faithful, they would be driven off the land. This did occur as Northern Israel was taken away by Assyria around 720 BC and Judah was taken away by Babylon around 606 to 586 BC. Those expecting God to re-establish God's land promise and His promise of a great nation are missing the point! It has already been fulfilled.

The final promise that through Abraham's seed all of the nations would be blessed and Jerusalem's importance in that promise is important for us today. Old Testament prophecy, specifically Isaiah 2.2-3 says on the mountain of God, His house would be established and from Zion shall go forth the law the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem. Keep in mind Jerusalem and Zion are the same place.

The importance of Jerusalem today is recorded for us by Luke in Acts. In chapter 1 the disciples were told to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit to come with power, see verse 8. In chapter 2 we pick up with the disciples being in Jerusalem as the Holy Spirit came upon the 12 Apostles. They began to preach the Gospel of Christ. This was all in fulfillment of prophecy as the church was established, Acts 2.47. It was at Jerusalem the church met together for a period of time but eventually persecution arose and

the disciples were scattered. As they went into new areas they preached the word of God.

One cannot down play the importance of Jerusalem in the Old Testament as the Temple was built there and it was the center of Jewish worship. The prophecy concerning Jerusalem and its fulfillment in the New Testament should not be ignored. But nowhere does the Bible teach Jerusalem is the center of our worship today. Jesus will not, in fact, cannot come to earth to set up a physical kingdom. It violates numerous passages concerning the nature of the kingdom of Christ and what will happen when Jesus returns. His return will be the end of this world, the kingdom will be turned over to God, 1 Corinthians 15.

We should concentrate on the "new Jerusalem" the spiritual habit of God as spoken of in Revelation 21.1ff. – Dennis Tucker.