

"O Jerusalem"



“O Jerusalem” By David Lawrence III*

Over 3000 years ago there was a little town named Jebus, whose name meant “trampled down” or “trodden underfoot.”

Appropriately, and perhaps prophetically named, the town - which was conquered by King David, and renamed Jerusalem - would be conquered again and again, being occupied by many empires down through the ages.

A crossroad of culture and commerce from ancient times, the city of Jerusalem has been a focus of world attention for thousands of years. Even today, Jerusalem remains a central concern to the entire world. Why?

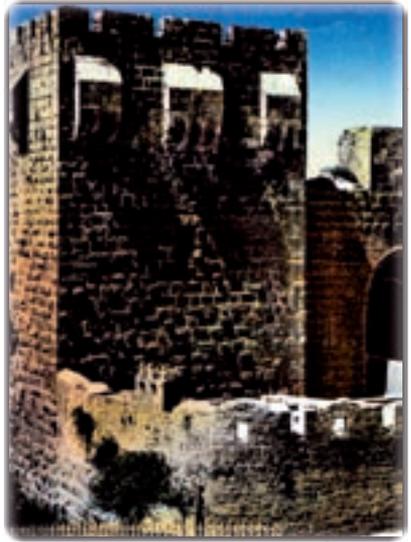
Most of the commentaries and articles you may read concerning Jerusalem and Zion tend to be cultural and political in focus, without much consideration of the prophetic biblical perspective.

Because it is ‘politically incorrect’ to discuss biblical details or anything that might be viewed as religious dogma, utilitarian concerns of sociology and political agreement dominate discussions about Zionism and the future of Jerusalem. More regard is given to the evolutionary survival of the Jews as a tribe amongst competitors than their relationship and response to God.

The real story of Jerusalem and the destruction and restoration of the temple revolves around one thing: God’s relationship with His people and their response to Him.

“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Simple, but profound, yet so often left out of the equation when discussing Jewish needs, desires, and expectations concerning the Holy City and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem.

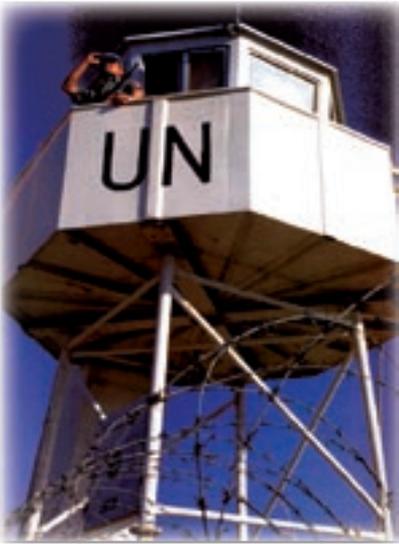


From ancient times, God made one concept clear:

“If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken (Isaiah 1:19,20)

The most relevant and immediate social and political question is this: are we to expect God to restore Jerusalem and the temple in the context of our current society, or will this happen in a more supernatural manner connected with the final Judgment and the end of all things?

Modern Expectations



Ever since the events of 1948, '67, and '73, with the modern re-establishment of Israel as a nation and the return of Jerusalem to Jewish control, hopes have been high that the Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled as a precursor to the arrival of the Messiah.

Whether these remarkable historical milestones of the late 20th century and today's current events are just a natural outgrowth of secular politics and the evolutionary progress of an ethnic people, their culture and tradition or whether they may be connected to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy - this topic deserves closer examination. Particularly since the rest of the world is being drawn into a conflict that may not otherwise concern them.

Is it reasonable to expect God to rule now as He once ruled Israel? Will He intervene again after all these centuries? How many of the ancient prophecies were dealing only with the past?

To what extent is there still a residual blessing left over from ancient Israel, or should we look forward to a brand new world and a heavenly kingdom of an entirely different kind? This is a major difficulty of biblical interpretation - trying to apply many or all of the prophetic writings concerning Jerusalem and Zion to our modern times.

Many mistakes have been, and continue to be made in this regard, and secular people need to take note, because these notions and misinterpretations are having an impact and influence over public opinion as well as trends in current government policy in the Middle East

The Old Testament prophecies, promises, and warnings were often a mixture of pointed commentary and exhortation for the immediate times with a distinct forward look to the far future, when God would bring all things into account and justice would be served on a universal scale.

Today, we are living in those future times. We are now beginning the third millennium since the city and the temple were destroyed. In the context of our now "Global Village," it seems perhaps we ought to be looking seriously at whether the peace and justice described in the Scriptures are to be accomplished within the framework of our current society, or whether we are facing the end of this world entirely, with our only hope to be found faithful on the Great and Final Yom Kippur, so that we might become citizens of the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem in the real promised land.

So where's my milk and honey?

A Prophecy and a Promise

There is one prophecy that provides specific details about the fate of the Jews, Jerusalem and the Temple, which is found in the book of Daniel. Near the end of the seventy years of captivity (538 B.C.E.) prophesied by Jeremiah, Daniel was seeking to understand what was to become his people and his city. The angel Gabriel came to Daniel in answer to his prayer, and said:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

Daniel 9:24-27

Here we find a definitive outcome predicted for the Jews, the city and the Temple.

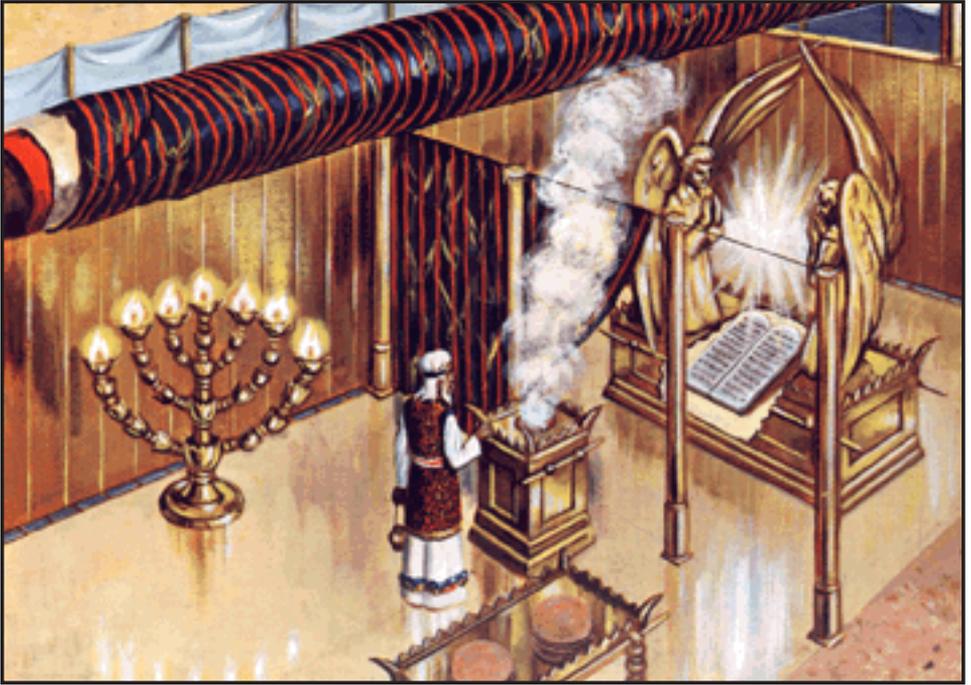
Gabriel’s explanation to Daniel was given in direct response to the question raised in Daniel’s previous vision about the Sanctuary, and how long it would be “trodden underfoot.”

“How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed..... Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.”

Daniel 8:13-15



“How Long, O Lord?”



“It was too painful for me, until I went into the Sanctuary”

Psalm 73

The Painful Purpose of the Almighty

The question “How long?” permeates Scripture and Jewish consciousness. Moses was instructed to make a sanctuary “after a pattern” of the true Temple in heaven, to serve as a symbolic lesson book of God’s plan and purpose in dealing with the problems and pain caused by sin and evil.

From the dawn of time, God had given His people the freedom to choose whether they would serve Him. He constantly warned of the serious consequences of evil and promised them a reward as the fruit of obedience from honest, righteous living. The bottom line is that evil will continue only until the human race learns that evil is evil, that God is just, and love supreme. God has promised that He will “finish the transgression ... and... bring in everlasting righteousness.”



“Know therefore, and understand...”

If we take Daniel’s vision and Gabriel’s explanation at face value, we may come to conclusions that are not very popular in some mainstream Jewish and Christian circles.

The only formal religion to recognize these verses as particularly significant to its faith is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has come under attack from within and without for its historical position. Adventists have long understood that the question of ultimate justice is resolved in the Sanctuary on the Day of Judgment, and that one of the keys to understanding God’s purposes is to be found in the Book of Daniel.

In the New Testament, Matthew quotes Jesus who points specifically to this prophecy, emphasizing the need to understand the significance of Gabriel’s words to Daniel:

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. Daniel 7

“When ye, therefore, shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, (whosoever readeth let him understand), then...flee....” Mt. 24:15

Common evangelical misconstructions, fueled by popular Christian fiction along with a distinct lack of extensive rabbinical research and authoritative Jewish commentary on Daniel have created a climate of confusion and speculation about the rebuilding of a third temple in Jerusalem.

A plain reading of the text would indicate the 490 years explained by Gabriel ended in the first century, his explanation marking the beginning of the longer time frame of the 2300 mentioned in the previous chapter, which Daniel was told, was for the “time of the end.” This view cannot be readily purchased or found in bookstores today. It used to be an integral part of the backbone of historic prophetic interpretation.

If this article accomplishes nothing else, the reader can at least become aware of the prophecy and the significance of the passage for the future of Jerusalem, and its potential international political ramifications with respect to the Middle East Crisis and U.S. foreign policy toward Israel. Popular misconceptions are rife amidst so-called Jewish supporters and this can be dangerous for the peace and stability of Jerusalem today. The only thing worse than a Bible bashing bonehead who bastardizes the text is a biblically illiterate media commentator quoting them as an authoritative source on Scripture. Further research, reference and original source materials can be found on the various interpretations by calling the number on the back of this pamphlet.

Until My People Repent

Daniel's name means "God is Judge".

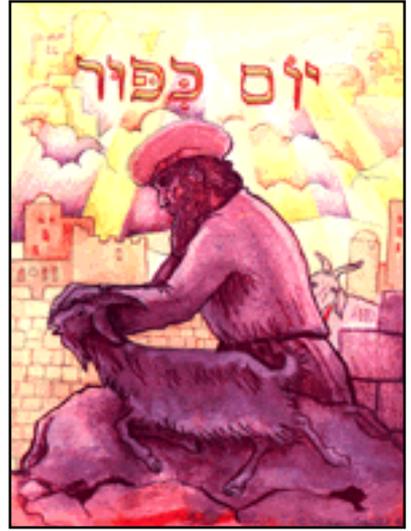
The question "How long?" is a two edged sword. We want to know how long God will let evil continue, and God wants to know how long we will continue to indulge it.

There is no doctrine in the Bible more important or profound than the notion that God is in charge, that evil was never intended to last forever, and that we must all face Judgment on the last Great Day of Yom Kippur, the Day towards which every temple service and prophecy has pointed. It is also the doctrine most proscribed and vilified, relegated to the religiously imbalanced fraught with apocalyptic paranoia. Nevertheless, the end of this world may just be the cleanest and most politically correct solution after all, with the healthiest remedy for what ails us being Divine intervention rather than political maneuvering.

In terms of the current dialogue between the secular and religious communities that is now taking shape, both must recognize one thing: that the God of Heaven as described in the Bible has no intention of trying to establish a permanent peace on this earth in the context of our modern society.

He's planning on destroying this planet by fire and making a new one. Recognized by many Orthodox Jews and historic Protestants alike, this concept has been repeated in enough chapters, translations and languages as to be very clear. The war against evil will be won by God not man. This is final executive justice; And it's probably our best hope.

There is a huge difference between a brand new earth and a patched up old one. Personally, I want my milk and honey and to eat it too, but not if it has to be irradiated, pasteurized and inspected for FDA approval and I have to eat it under armed guard and the constant surveillance of security cameras - no thank you. I'd rather just get the experiment with evil over with and go home....



"God, seated on His throne to judge the world, at the same time Judge, Pleader, Expert, and Witness, openeth the Book of Records; it is read, every man's signature being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded; a still, small voice is heard; the angels shudder, saying, this is the day of judgment...so doth God cause every living soul to pass before Him to fix the limit of every creature's life and to foreordain its destiny... on the Day of Atonement it is sealed who shall live and who are to die.." Jewish Encyclopedia

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He is the son of a Broadway producer, and the grandson of David Lawrence, who was the first nationally syndicated columnist by wire, a personal advisor to eleven U.S. Presidents, and the founder of both the Bureau of National Affairs and U.S. News & World Report.

“I will be their God...and they shall be My people”

“Behold, I will create New Heavens and a New Earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more...

The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

“Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance.”

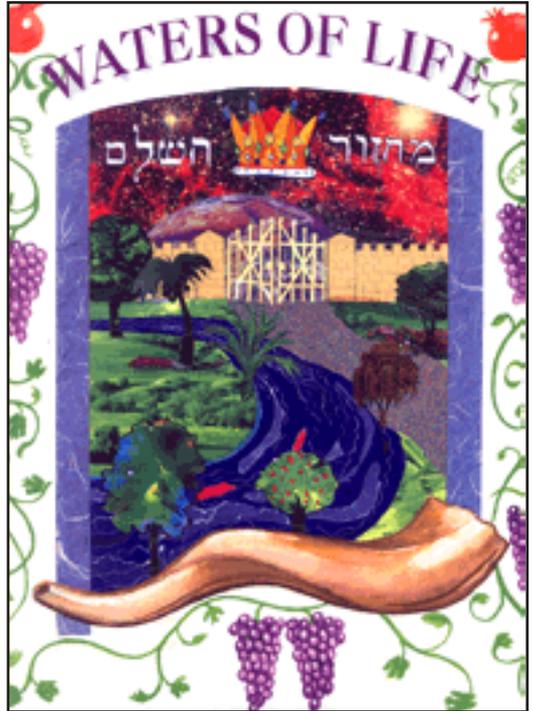
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For this is what the LORD says:

“I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.”