

A LENTEN STUDY ON THE PLACES *of the* PASSION

A six-week study of the places of Jesus' last hours.

Supplementary Scripture Readings

Session 1: Tues., March 1st: The City of Jerusalem

Luke 2:25-35 - Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Luke 2: 41-52 - The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as

usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Luke 9:51-56 - A Samaritan Village Refuses to Receive Jesus

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

Luke 13: 31-35 - The Lament over Jerusalem

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets

and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' ”

Luke 19:28-40 - Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’ ” So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They said, “The Lord needs it.” Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

Luke 19:41-44 - Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”

Luke 21:5-6 - The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, “As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

Luke: 21:20-24 - The Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

John 19:16-18 - The Crucifixion of Jesus

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

Colossians 1:15-20 - The Supremacy of Christ

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Background: Jerusalem (Source: Easton Bible Dictionary)

Called also Salem, Ariel, Jebus, the "city of God," the "holy city;" by the modern Arabs el-Khuds, meaning "the holy;" once "the city of Judah" (2 Chr 25:28). This name is in the original in the dual form, and means "possession of peace," or "foundation of peace." The dual form probably refers to the two mountains on which it was built, viz., Zion and Moriah; or, as some suppose, to the two parts of the city, the "upper" and the "lower city." Jerusalem is a "mountain city enthroned on a mountain fastness" (comp. Ps 68:15, 16; Ps 68:15 125:2; Ps 68:15 2; 122:3. It stands on the edge of one of the highest table-lands in Palestine, and is surrounded on the south-eastern, the southern, and the western sides by deep and precipitous ravines.

It is first mentioned in Scripture under the name Salem (Gen 14:18; comp. Ps 76:2. When first mentioned under the name Jerusalem, Adonizedek was its king (Josh 10:1. It is afterwards named among the cities of Benjamin (Judg 19:10; 1Chr 11:4 ; but in the time of David it was divided between Benjamin and Judah. After the death of Joshua the city was taken and set on fire by the men of Judah (Judg 1:1 8); but the Jebusites were not wholly driven out of it. The city is not again mentioned till we are told that David brought the head of Goliath thither (1 Sam 17:54). David afterwards led his forces against the Jebusites still residing within its walls, and drove them out, fixing his own dwelling on Zion, which he called "the city of David" (2 Sam 5:5 9; 1 Chr 11:4 8). Here he built an altar to the Lord on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam 24:15 -25), and thither he brought up the ark of the covenant and placed it in the new tabernacle which he had prepared for it. Jerusalem now became the capital of the kingdom.

After the death of David, Solomon built the temple, a house for the name of the Lord, on Mount Moriah (B.C. 1010). He also greatly strengthened and adorned the city, and it became the great centre of all the civil and religious affairs of the nation (Deut 12:5 comp Deut 12:14; 14:23; Deut 12:14 -16; Ps. 122).

After the disruption of the kingdom on the accession to the throne of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, Jerusalem became the capital of the kingdom of the two tribes. It was subsequently often taken and retaken by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and by the kings of Israel (2 Kings 14 Deut 14:13, 14; Deut 14:13, 16; Deut 14:13 -35; 24:14; 2 Chr 12:9 26:9; 2 Chr 12:9 4; 2 Chr 12:9 32:30; 2 Chr 12:9), till finally, for the abounding iniquities of the nation, after a siege of three years, it was taken and utterly destroyed, its walls razed to the ground, and its temple and palaces consumed by fire, by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon (2 Kings 25; 2 Chr. 36; Jer. 39), B.C. 588. The desolation of the city and the land was completed by the retreat of the principal Jews into Egypt (Jer. 40-44), and by the final carrying captive into Babylon of all that still remained in the land 2 Chr 52:3, so that it was left without an inhabitant BC (2 Chr 52). Compare the predictions, Deut. 28; Lev 26:14 -39.

But the streets and walls of Jerusalem were again to be built, in troublous times (Dan 9:16, 19, 25), after a captivity of seventy years. This restoration was begun B.C. 536, "in the first year of Cyrus" (Ezra 1:2 3, 5-11). The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah contain the history of the re-building of the city and temple, and the restoration of the kingdom of the Jews, consisting of a portion of all the tribes. The kingdom thus constituted was for two centuries under the dominion of Persia, till B.C. 331; and thereafter, for about a century and a half, under the rulers of the Greek empire in Asia, till B.C. 167. For a century the Jews maintained their independence under native rulers, the Asmonean princes. At the close of this period they fell under the rule of Herod and of members of his family, but practically under Rome, till the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. The city was then laid in ruins.

The modern Jerusalem by-and-by began to be built over the immense beds of rubbish resulting from the overthrow of the ancient city; and whilst it occupies certainly the same site, there are no evidences that even the lines of its streets are now what they were in the ancient city. Till A.D. 131 the Jews who still lingered

about Jerusalem quietly submitted to the Roman sway. But in that year the emperor (Hadrian), in order to hold them in subjection, rebuilt and fortified the city. The Jews, however, took possession of it, having risen under the leadership of one Bar-Chohaba (i.e., "the son of the star") in revolt against the Romans. Some four years afterwards (A.D. 135), however, they were driven out of it with great slaughter, and the city was again destroyed; and over its ruins was built a Roman city called Aelia Capitolina, a name which it retained till it fell under the dominion of the Mohammedans, when it was called el-Khuds, i.e., "the holy."

In A.D. 326 Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with the view of discovering the places mentioned in the life of our Lord. She caused a church to be built on what was then supposed to be the place of the nativity at Bethlehem. Constantine, animated by her example, searched for the holy sepulchre, and built over the supposed site a magnificent church, which was completed and dedicated A.D. 335. He relaxed the laws against the Jews till this time in force, and permitted them once a year to visit the city and wail over the desolation of "the holy and beautiful house."

In A.D. 614 the Persians, after defeating the Roman forces of the emperor Heraclius, took Jerusalem by storm, and retained it till A.D. 637, when it was taken by the Arabians under the Khalif Omar. It remained in their possession till it passed, in A.D. 960, under the dominion of the Fatimite khalifs of Egypt, and in A.D. 1073 under the Turcomans. In A.D. 1099 the crusader Godfrey of Bouillon took the city from the Moslems with great slaughter, and was elected king of Jerusalem. He converted the Mosque of Omar into a Christian cathedral. During the eighty-eight years which followed, many churches and convents were erected in the holy city. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt during this period, and it alone remains to this day. In A.D. 1187 the sultan Saladin wrested the city from the Christians. From that time to the present day, with few intervals, Jerusalem has remained in the hands of the Moslems. It has, however, during that period been again and again taken and retaken, demolished in great part and

rebuilt, no city in the world having passed through so many vicissitudes.

In the year 1850 the Greek and Latin monks residing in Jerusalem had a fierce dispute about the guardianship of what are called the "holy places." In this dispute the emperor Nicholas of Russia sided with the Greeks, and Louis Napoleon, the emperor of the French, with the Latins. This led the Turkish authorities to settle the question in a way unsatisfactory to Russia. Out of this there sprang the Crimean War, which was protracted and sanguinary, but which had important consequences in the way of breaking down the barriers of Turkish exclusiveness.

Modern Jerusalem "lies near the summit of a broad mountain-ridge, which extends without interruption from the plain of Esdraelon to a line drawn between the southern end of the Dead Sea and the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean." This high, uneven table-land is everywhere from 20 to 25 geographical miles in breadth. It was anciently known as the mountains of Ephraim and Judah.

"Jerusalem is a city of contrasts, and differs widely from Damascus, not merely because it is a stone town in mountains, whilst the latter is a mud city in a plain, but because while in Damascus Moslem religion and Oriental custom are unmixed with any foreign element, in Jerusalem every form of religion, every nationality of East and West, is represented at one time."