

How to Interpret the Bible Correctly: Understanding God's Purposes for Jerusalem

Our Amazingly Jewish Heritage

Tonight we are headed to a city made by God called the New JERUSALEM,

It has Twelve Gates named after the 12 JEWISH Apostles,

There are Twelve Foundations named after the 12 Tribes of ISRAEL,

God sits on a hill called ZION,

And we are heading to a Feast with **ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB** already SEATED!

Matthew 8:8-13 (NKJV) The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! 11 **And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.** 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Jerusalem is BIG in God's Word

The most mentioned place in the Bible is a city called Jerusalem.

The center of the world and the prophetic universe is the same city.

Jerusalem should be your favorite city. After all, it's the city that God has chosen for Himself.

1 Kings 11:13 (NKJV) However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

Ancient maps put Jerusalem In the center of the world, and I think they were right.

Jerusalem is also God's timepiece.

The final events of world history will culminate there with the glorious return of Jesus Christ to the Mount of Olives.

Jerusalem is God’s Countdown Clock for Humanity’s Survival

“Hearing the word Jerusalem evokes many sensations to my mind. Ancient gray stone walls, with crowded and winding streets; and the thick, pungent scent of spices from distant lands. Then I see a heavily laden donkeys clip clopping down the narrow cobble stone streets. And on the way out, passing one of the pock marked gates. Each a silent witnesses to centuries of mortal conflict that swirls around this city.”

When Jesus told His disciples and us about the future he built every word of it around one spot on earth. In theological circles this message (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) is called the Olivet Discourse. Jesus framed His words about the rest of the history of this planet by the sight of Jerusalem in all its earthly glory spread in front of Him.

Look again at Christ's very first words in Matthew 24:2. All that He says about His second coming is introduced by those words. He said keep your eye on Jerusalem. I am ascending from the Mount of Olives (the center of Jerusalem then and now) and I am returning to the Mount of Olives.

As we turn to the subject again of Christ's coming and those incredibly detailed snap shots He left us in Matthew 24, we are focusing upon Jerusalem. According to the Lord, the end of the world centers around Jerusalem.

Mentioned over 800 times in God's Word¹—Jerusalem is a very important place. It was in Jerusalem that God promised Christ's coming as the Lamb of God to Abraham. It was here that David was promised a future son that would have an endless kingdom. It was here God has worked. In:

¹ Jerusalem: 814 times in 766 verses; Zion: 160 times in 160 verses; City of David 46 times in 46 verses.

Jerusalem! Three thousand years of lifetimes! Abraham and Isaac upon the altar of Moriah, a stone's throw from here! David, the shepherd-king, watching Bathsheba from a distance. Jeremiah, mourning for the exiles. Jesus, teaching in the Temple. Peter's betrayal. Jesus, walking the Way of Sorrows! Dying with forgiveness on his lips. Peter, shouting the good news in the streets on Pentecost! He is risen! Call on His name and live forever with Him!²

But today all that is left from Christ's Jerusalem is called the Western Wall. If you go there one of the first things you notice are several large signs that have been affixed near the entrances to Jerusalem's Western Wall plaza. In addition to the usual guidelines regarding modesty and respect for the sanctity of the holy site, the centrality of the Temple Mount to Judaism and the Jewish people is clearly expressed. The signs, ten feet tall, read:

"Jewish tradition teaches that the Temple Mount is the focal point of Creation. In the center of the mountain lies the 'Foundation Stone' of the world. Here Adam came into being. Here Abraham, Isaac and Jacob served G-d. The First and Second Temples were built upon this mountain. The Ark of the Covenant was set upon the Foundation Stone itself. Jerusalem was chosen by G-d as the dwelling place of the Divine Presence. David longed to build the Temple, and Solomon his son built the First Temple here about 3,000 years ago. It was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The Second Temple was rebuilt on its ruins 70 years later. It was razed by the Roman legions over 1,900 years ago. The present Western Wall before you is a remnant of the western Temple Mount retaining walls. Jews have prayed in its shadow for hundreds of years, an expression of their faith in the rebuilding of the Temple. The Sages said about it: 'The Divine Presence never moves from the Western Wall.' The Temple Mount continues to be the focus of prayers for Jews all over the world."

Jerusalem is God's city

There are three reasons why Jerusalem is so vital: because Jerusalem is **GOD'S CITY, GOD'S CLOCK AND GOD'S CANVAS.**

GOD'S CITY because He has chosen Jerusalem

1 Kings 11:36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. (KJV)

Psalm 48:1-2 Great [is] the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God,

² Bodie & Brock Thoene, *Jerusalem Vigil*. New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 186.

[in] the mountain of his holiness. 2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, [is] mount Zion, [on] the sides of the north, the city of the great King. 12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell [it] to the generation following. (KJV)

Psalm 87:2-3 we read, 'The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, oh city of God.'

Jerusalem is God's clock.

The close of world history is tied to this little city. All the world will focus on it as the Wrath of God is poured out in the Tribulation. And fallen human history culminates with Jesus Christ's descent to the Mount of Olives. The Creator returns to restore His fallen Paradise.

Zechariah 12

New King James Version (NKJV)

12 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: **2** "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. **3** And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. **4** In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. **5** And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' **6** In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

7 "The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. **8** In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. **9** It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. **11** In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning

at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. **12** And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; **13** the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; **14** all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

Zechariah 14

New King James Version (NKJV)

Behold, the day of the LORD is coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
²For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken,
The houses rifled,
And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
³Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.
⁴And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.
⁵Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
Thus the LORD my God will come,
And all the saints with You.
⁶It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
The lights will diminish.
⁷It shall be one day
Which is known to the LORD—
Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.
⁸And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,

Half of them toward the eastern sea
And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
⁹And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be—
“The LORD *is* one,”
And His name one.

¹⁰All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. *Jerusalem* shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses.

¹¹*The people* shall dwell in it;
And no longer shall there be utter destruction,
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

¹²And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

¹³It shall come to pass in that day
That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.

Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor,
And raise his hand against his neighbor’s hand;

¹⁴Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.

And the wealth of all the surrounding nations
Shall be gathered together:

Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

¹⁵Such also shall be the plague
On the horse *and* the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps.
So *shall* this plague *be*.

¹⁶And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have no rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

²⁰In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be *engraved* on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

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That is why understanding God's plans for Jerusalem is a key to interpreting God's Word correctly.