

The Rescue

Two Jerusalems

Taken from Ezekiel the 16th chapter

There is nothing more disturbing for a student of God's word than men singing praises to themselves when things work out well. They like to pat themselves on the back and raise others up on pedestals . On the other hand, when things go wrong or disaster strikes, it is an act of God. Statements are always made like, why didn't God do something, or how could God have allowed such and such? Ezekiel 16 shows a reader the very nature of God.

The chapter is all about Jerusalem and how God loved her. The name can apply to any city or an individual anywhere in the world. Verse 2 of the chapter tells us that Jerusalem is the subject. At the time of her birth the land was under a curse because of the carnal nature of the Canaanite's who inhabited the land. They didn't care about their young or old, and the land was full of violence and bloodshed. However, the love, mercy, compassion and the very nature of God is expressed in this chapter because of the concern He has for His children.

Tradition tells us that Noah's son Shem was the original builder of Jerusalem. It's name is derived from two words, Yarro, to teach and point, and Salem, to teach peace. In the early verses God describes Jerusalem as an infant. He then goes on to tell her how He had cared for her. He dressed her in linen, meaning God became her guardian and taught her His righteousness. (see Revelation 19: 8). He gave her jewels and a crown. Her beauty was like no other. God built her as the pinnacle of His creation. He courted her and wanted to place His name in her as when two enter into a covenant of marriage. But in verse 1 of this chapter, we are told that God was displeased with her. Why? To understand what happened to her we need to back up and start with the Exodus in the time of Moses. (Remember, Jerusalem can be referred to as a city or as an individual). God wanted to lead the children of Israel from Egypt to the land of milk and honey (Canaan) because of the covenant He made with Abraham. (Exodus 6: 3,4) The journey was required to fulfill three of God's Feasts. Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

After leaving Egypt and fulfilling the first of God's Feasts, Passover, Moses, led by God, had the nation of Israel camp at Mt. Sinai where God wanted to speak to the people directly. Exodus 20:18, And all the people saw the thundering, and the sound of the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet,

and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. Verse 19, And they said unto Moses, ***“Speak thou unto us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”***

The people heard the Ten Commandments themselves but the remaining laws that God wanted to instill in them, they refused to hear. If the people had listened to God they would have had His laws written in their hearts rather than through a third party and they would have fulfilled the 2nd of God's Feast, the Feast Of Pentecost. Then they could defeat their enemies God's way; with the ***“sword of the spirit”*** and never have to learn warfare from their neighboring nations by picking up physical weapons and causing bloodshed. Isn't that the goal that all men seek?

Isaiah 2:4, “And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

God's teachings if applied by the nation of Israel would have been a blessing to others.

Exodus 19: 5, “ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:”

Jesus spoke of this ***treasure*** in Matthew, 13:44 (Treasure hidden in the field or world). They had the faith to experience the Passover by leaving Egypt, but to fulfill God's 2nd feast day, Pentecost, they lacked the faith. The Apostle Paul even uses the expression ***“from faith to faith”*** in ***Romans 1:17*** and makes it clear why the nation displeased God in the wilderness. They refused to hear all of God's laws. Only Moses, Joshua and Caleb allowed God to speak to them. God never favored one people over another. All mankind are God's creation. He works with those who will listen to His voice. But the people wouldn't listen and physical warfare continues till this day. Read what we are told in 1 John 4: 8, He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. If God is love and Jerusalem means to teach peace, how is it that the world is in the condition it is in? It seems like a contradiction doesn't it? Any nation can have the faith that God will protect them if they listen and obey Him. If the nation doesn't listen and obey, then they need to protect themselves with the weapons of warfare.

Since Israel didn't hear God during the time of Moses, Joshua led Israel into the land of Canaan. After conquering Canaan, they set up a tent in a place called Shiloh. The tent was a temporary dwelling that housed the Arc that contained God's law. This is the place where God would place His name

and the nation of Israel would worship.

In Shiloh, there was a man named Eli, who was a High Priest, and he had two sons who were priests. They were to lead the people into the way that would be a blessing to the people, but read what we are told in 1st Samuel 2:12,

“Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial;(Without prophet, worthlessness, wicked). they knew not the lord. And 1st Samuel 3:12,

“In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will make a complete end.” Verse 13, “For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.”

Because Eli and his sons were not faithful priests, God withdrew His protection and allowed the Philistines to defeat Israel in battle.

1st Samuel 4: 11, “And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.”

The unfaithful practices of the priesthood forced God to removed His name from Shiloh. King David eventually defeated the Philistines and restored Jerusalem to be the place where God would place His name. Since David, Jerusalem was conquered, destroyed and rebuilt many times by different people. All this bloodshed and warfare was in vane. Why? Because the name Jerusalem itself means to teach peace not war. The city of Jerusalem has always suffered violence at the hands of men who never understood the nature of God. God always sent prophets to correct the people and lead them into the way that would bring blessings to them and others, but the people wouldn't listen to instruction.

Jeremiah, 6:8, “ Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited” Verse 10, “To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold the word of the lord is unto them a reproach; and they have no delight in it”.

Because the people of Jerusalem thought they were God's chosen, they thought that they could sin and get away with it. The prophets always warned them of the six different times they were sold into slavery to other nations during the days of the judges, but they wouldn't consider their ways. When they cried out to him, He always sent a prophet to re-establish them as His chosen people. The people virtually hurt themselves by their disobedience.

Jeremiah 11: 6, Then the Lord said to me, “ Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, “Hear

the words of this covenant and do them. Verse 7, “For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting saying, Obey My voice. Verse 8, “Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination their evil heart”.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem were no different when Jesus had His ministry.

Matthew 11:12, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffered violence and the violent take it by force”.

God never intended for his people to shed other men’s blood. He always wanted for them to learn war against His enemies by the use of “the sword of the spirit”. Listen to the psalmist in

Psalm 144: 1, “Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teaches my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:”

Hands picture works whether good or bad. Does anyone need to be taught how to wage war? Human nature does so almost automatically. We need to be taught to use the “*sword of the spirit*” not wage war and kill our brothers and sisters.. The people of Jerusalem thought that Jesus came to destroy the Romans and proclaim himself to be King. Physical wars were the only way they knew of to defeat their enemies.

Matthew 23:37, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Thou that killeth the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.

Luke 13:35, “Behold your house is left to you desolate; and verily I say unto you. Ye shall not see me until the time comes when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem have placed themselves in a very precarious position. They want to be God’s chosen but they don’t realize they need to bring forth the fruit of being chosen.

Matthew 21:43, “Therefore I say unto you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.

When the people wouldn’t listen to God’s voice and have a change of heart, Jeremiah’s only choice was to warn the people of Jerusalem’s fate.

Jeremiah 7:12, “But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see, what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. 14-, “Therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my name wherein ye trust and unto the place which I gave to your fathers as I have done to Shiloh.

God allowed Shiloh to be destroyed and he prophesied the same

would happen to Jerusalem if the people didn't change their ways.

The Two Jerusalem's

Just as Jerusalem is a plural word, Yarro means to teach and point, and the word Salem, means to teach peace. There is also a dual application for the name also. Scripture tells us that there is a Heavenly Jerusalem as well as a physical Jerusalem.

Hebrews 12:22, " But you have come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels. 23- " To the general assembly and the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Men have usually taken the initiative to believe that they need to help God in His creation but history tells us they are wrong. God doesn't need our help. He knows exactly what He is doing. Jacob supplanted Esau, Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham, the nation of Israel fought wars when God didn't want them to etc. God made covenants old and new along with promises which He swore by Himself. And if we as His children don't follow His teachings, we will be in error and our understanding will evade us.

Galatians 4: 25, " For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and answered to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26- "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Mount Sinai is where the children were to receive the law but refused. That's the reason the Jerusalem of today is in bondage. Men seem to follow their own reasoning, but the church today which Jesus Christ is raising up obeys His instructions and is growing into a Spiritual body and putting on linen garments as a bride getting ready for our marriage to take place.

Revelation 21: 2 And I John saw the Holy city new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

This is the Jerusalem that God rejoices over in Ezekiel 16. She eventually came to see who her maker really was and she is where God would place His name.