

Jerusalem - the Capital of God's Kingdom

Jesus said to his disciples, "I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King" (Matthew 5:34-5). What did he mean by this?

Old Testament Jerusalem

If we go back to Genesis and read the story of Abraham, we find the great promises that God made to him. God promised that Abraham would have many descendants; that he would possess the land we call 'Israel'; and that one of his descendants would bring blessing to all mankind. This is a short summary of what God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3; 15:4-7 and 22:15-18; it is well worth reading these verses. Genesis chapter 22 tells us that Abraham had such faith that he was even willing to sacrifice his son Isaac to God, although at the last moment God's angel stopped him. This happened on Mount Moriah, which is the place where Jerusalem was built many years later.

A thousand years later King David and then his son Solomon lived and reigned over a kingdom where the laws were God's laws, so that for a time it was actually described as 'the Kingdom of the Lord' (see 1 Chronicles 28:5). Jerusalem was the capital of this kingdom. 400 years later, the city was destroyed by the Babylonians because most of the Jews disobeyed

God's laws, but God spoke through the Old Testament prophets and reassured everyone that in time to come David's kingdom would be restored. Here are some promises God made in Amos 9:11-15:

"On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name," says the Lord who does this thing...

"I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.

Jesus, the Great King

Before Jesus was born, the angel promised his mother that "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-3).

Isaiah chapter 2 shows us that the kingdom ruled from Jerusalem will be worldwide:

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; 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. O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD." (Isaiah 2:2-5).

The prophet Micah prophesied at the same time as Isaiah and gives a very similar promise. Please also take a look at Micah chapter 4, which is a parallel to Isaiah 2. Micah adds the lovely picture of everyone sitting under their vine and fig tree, and no-one making them afraid.

Fulfilment in Our Time

These promises are beginning to be fulfilled in our own time. The Jews have suffered terribly for nearly two thousand years, and many still do. Even today very few of them accept Jesus as their Messiah, but God has allowed them to rebuild a state in the land of Israel. They still have many painful experiences ahead, including invasion



and defeat: see for instance Ezekiel 38:1-15 and Zechariah 14:1-2. However, we can be sure that all of God's promises will be fulfilled, and that Jesus will be established as king in Jerusalem.

It is true that most nations will not hand their power to Jesus willingly. It will take the terrible events summed up in the Bible word 'Armageddon' (see Revelation 16:16) to persuade them. Eventually the announcement will be made that *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).*

In that wonderful time, we are told clearly that Jerusalem will be established as the capital not just of Israel, but of the world:

Then 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 (Zechariah 14:16).

The fulfilment of God's long-term plan for the earth is within sight!

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