

# **How to Interpret the Bible Correctly: Jerusalem's History Displays the Elements of God's Unfolding Plan of Redemption**

Geography is very important to Bible study and interpretation. Everything happened somewhere; and if God repeatedly uses a special place, we should take note.

That brings us to the “most mentioned” place in God's Word: Jerusalem.

## **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 is the city that God has chosen for Himself. 1 Kings 11:13 (NKJV)

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. There are three reasons why Jerusalem is so vital: because Jerusalem is **God's city**, **God's clock** and **God's canvas**.

## **JERUSALEM IS GOD'S CITY**

Jerusalem is God's city because God Himself 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)

## **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. That is what we saw last time as we walked through Zechariah 12-14

## **JERUSALEM IS GOD'S CANVAS**

Another beautiful truth is that Jerusalem is **GOD'S CANVAS**. In the Word of God this city has seven beautiful sides. Each speaks to us if we are to fulfill Christ's last words and reach our world. For in a very vivid way, Jerusalem portrays all that this world needs!

Jerusalem is **GOD'S CITY, GOD'S CLOCK AND GOD'S CANVAS**.

1. City of Melchisadek (Gen. 14:18-24).
2. City of Moriah (Gen. 22:1-14).
3. City of the Temple (2 Chr. 3:1)
4. City of Revival (2 Kings 23:19-23)
5. City of Apostasy (Ezk. 11:23; 43:1-2)
6. City of the Cross (Jn. 19:17; Heb. 13:12-13)
7. City of Heavenly Hope (Rev. 3:12; 21:1)

## **JERUSALEM'S HISTORY HAS SEVEN ELEMENTS OF GOD'S HISTORY**

### **ELEMENT-1: CITY OF MELCHISADEK**

Where does the history of Jerusalem begin? The first mention of this city on God's canvas is in Genesis 14:18-24. To Abraham it becomes a **CITY OF MELCHISADEK & THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION**.

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.” (KJV).

From its gates descends Melchisadek, the Priest King, who was an awesome reminder to Abraham of the mystery of God's plan. Melchisadek was a real man, a real priest, and a real king in a real city, that had a huge place in God's plan that perhaps neither he nor Abraham even knew.

Look at Hebrews 7:1-10 to see how amazing the six short verses about Melchisadek & Jerusalem become in God's plans.

Hebrews 7:1-10 (NKJV) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Jesus Christ is our perfect and eternal High Priest, who has given to us the power of an endless life. Look at Hebrews 7:16 (NKJV):

who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

## **ELEMENT-2: CITY OF MORIAH**

Then later on God's canvas, we find God targeting a mountain outside Jerusalem. Here the city becomes a **CITY OF MORIAH & THE COMING SACRIFICE OF THE LAMB OF GOD**. In Genesis 22:1-14, Abraham returns to Jerusalem, and goes to the top of the hill north of the city where God has him build an altar and sacrifice his son Isaac.

Here is an awesome picture of the coming sacrifice of Christ, as a loving Father would some day offer His only Son.

Genesis 22:2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” (NKJV).

Mystery of mysteries, outside Jerusalem on a hill Abraham acts out the sacrificial death of an only son. We may not always understand what God is doing but we must obey.

Genesis 22:1-14 (NKJV) Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

### **ELEMENT-3: CITY OF THE TEMPLE**

Jerusalem was a pagan Canaanite Jebusite city when Joshua conquered the Promised Land. Later David as king, made the city his capitol and we find Jerusalem becoming a **CITY OF THE TEMPLE & SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP**. In the only other passage where Moriah appears is:

2 Chronicles 3:1 "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah..."

So, evidently the place Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah, was the exact spot where the temple was later built in Jerusalem. When you look at the temple area today, remember this is where that dramatic event happened.

But even more astounding is that the north-west corner of Mount Moriah is called Golgotha. This is where Christ bled and died for our sins! That is why there is always worship associated with remembering the work of the Cross.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, (NKJV)

## **ELEMENT-4: CITY OF REVIVAL**

Later this city of worship slides into sin. But God makes it a **CITY OF GRACIOUS REVIVAL**. He sends this revival under Hezekiah and Josiah.

2 Kings 23:19-23 Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. 20 He executed all the priests of the high places who were there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem. 21 Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." 22 Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the Lord in Jerusalem. (NKJV).

## **ELEMENT-5: CITY OF APOSTASY**

But it doesn't last. Revival cools into and God's people slip away. Jerusalem becomes a **CITY OF GRIEVOUS APOSTASY**. The visible sign of the presence of God is His glory. Listen as Ezekiel describes the departure

Ezekiel 11:23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city. (KJV).

Gone. God no longer dwelt above the ark in His temple. The glory left not to return until clothed in a human frame. For Christ is God's glory. Although there will be a yet future day of the glory returned to a Millennial Temple, we today are His temple!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you

were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJV)

## **ELEMENT-6: CITY OF THE CROSS**

When Jesus came Jerusalem became a **CITY OF THE CROSS & COSTLY REDEMPTION**. Within its walls the good news was preached by Christ. Outside its walls the Creator was crucified by His people. Within its walls the church was born. Outside its walls they went forth to tell every creature of salvation. The city of Christ and His Apostles was one of religious zealots and spiritual hypocrites. It was a city overflowing with sinners, foreigners and common folks just like you and me. That was where it all began. At home. In their city they had to start telling people they didn't know that well, the greatest story the world has ever heard!

Jn. 19:17 (NKJV) And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,

Hebrews 13:12-13 (NKJV) Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

## **ELEMENT-7: CITY OF HEAVENLY HOPE**

But finally, the Bible ends with the last picture on the canvas of Jerusalem. For Jerusalem becomes a **CITY OF HEAVENLY HOPE** ! First, in Rev. 3:12, Jerusalem is written on the hearts of every truly born again Christian as their destination. We are address to our place prepared for us in New Jerusalem.

Revelation 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. (KJV).

Second in Rev 21:1 it is the gleaming, eternal reminder of Christ's promise to make all things new. It is new because the old is passing away. The old world of sin, tears and death. The NEW is coming. Hope from God.

Why is Jerusalem a city of glorious hope? Hebrews 11:10-13 tells us that those who are going to heaven are Citizens of Heaven. And all born again Christians are to LOOK FOR THE CITY. Why?

**BECAUSE ITS A SECURE CITY:** Hebrews 11:10,13 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

**BECAUSE ITS A TRANSFORMING CITY:** Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced [them] and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (NKJV)

**BECAUSE ITS A AN UNSHAKABLE CITY:** Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God [is] a consuming fire. (NKJV)

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