

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.
(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Jerusalem: Has Peace Been Fulfilled? Tale of Two Cities!

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. "May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, "May peace be within you." (Psalm 122:6-9a NASB [bold italic added])

Question: Has David's prayer for the peace of Jerusalem been fulfilled? The answer is yes, but on two counts.

First Count

The people descended of Jacob-Israel were collectively identified by the Lord as His firstborn son. As a chosen people, they were called forth from Egypt by the Lord, called to be a kingdom nation that would be a blessing to all the nations on earth and be an expression of His glory so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no one else (Exodus 4:22; 1 Kings 8:60). This raises another question: Did they achieve this greatness? They most definitely did! And, it started with David whose heart was set on building God's house; but due to his involvement in much shedding of blood and the waging of wars, the Lord would not allow him to build. *You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me* (1 Chronicles 22:7-8). Instead, the mantle was passed to David's son Solomon.

Behold, a son is being born to you; he shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about. Indeed, Solomon shall be his name, and ***peace and quiet shall I grant Israel in his days.*** Is he who shall build the House for My Name, and he shall be to Me like a son, and I for him like a father? I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel the eon. (1 Chronicles 22:9-10 CLV [bold italic added])

Under Solomon's reign, true greatness was achieved. In fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 13:16-17; 22:17; 28:14; 32:12), Judah and Israel were ***as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance*** (1 Kings 4:20); ***Solomon had peace on all sides around about him, and they lived in safety*** (1 Kings 4:24, 25; 5:4). The historical record indicates that the greatness and influence of Solomon's Israelite kingdom stretched around the world, even to the North American continent. But even more importantly, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord (temple) built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:1). Consequently, they came into the inheritance of the land along with all its abundance and greatness. The Queen of Sheba was breathless when she saw the wisdom of Solomon and all that he had done (2 Chronicles 9:1-8).

Thus, the ancient firstborn sons of God that made up the twelve tribes identified as Judah (two tribes) and Israel (ten tribes) and united into one kingdom under Solomon were truly blessed as a chosen people, at least for a season, and had come into their inheritance on the promised land. Peace and rest had finally come to the ones called out of Egypt to live on a land promised to Abraham. **The peace of Jerusalem had come in answer to David's prayer.**

Second Count

Now, to understand the second count, we need to see that, in Hebrew, the city *Jerusalem* always appears in plural form, *Yerushalayim*; never in the singular, which means that hidden within ancient Hebrew scripture is ***a tale of two cities.*** Throughout the old testament, we only read of Jerusalem as if it were one and the same city; however, we err if we think that, when we see the word *Jerusalem*, it always refers to the ancient city. So, the question arises: what is or where is the second Jerusalem? Answering this requires a very brief review of history.

As scripture testifies, David's prayer for peace was fulfilled from around 970-947 BC. David's experience was one of war and bloodshed, and this led him to pray for peace in the first place. It came shortly later under the reign of his son. However, it did not last, for Solomon strayed from the Lord, and, upon his death, his kingdom was divided into Judah (southern kingdom) and Israel (northern kingdom) (1 Kings 11:9-13; 31-32). From then on, the history of Jerusalem has been filled with conflict and bloodshed, even to our present day. Ezekiel called it the *bloody city* (Ezekiel 7:23; 22:2; 24:6, 9), and recorded how the glory of the Lord departed from the temple until it went up from the midst of Jerusalem and stood (hovered) over the mountain which is east of the city (Ezekiel 11:22-23), the Mount of Olives. The Lord removed His name from Jerusalem just as He had done with Shiloh (Psalm 78:60; Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6).

About 626 years later (593 BC to 33 AD), Jesus, the Son of glory, stood in the temple and cried out: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together.... Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!* (Matthew 23:37-38). With this, Jesus departed the temple; the glory of God had appeared in the form of the Son of God, and it departed once again. When it came time to ascend back to heaven for the last time, Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives, the same place that Ezekiel saw the glory of God hovering centuries earlier. The glory had hovered all those years waiting for the Son of glory to come. With Jesus' ascension, the glory departed the present Jerusalem for the last time, never to rest again upon a physical temple of inorganic stone. John, while on the isle of Patmos, prior to 70 AD, described the earthly Jerusalem of his day as the *great city* which mystically is called *Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified*, and identified it as the great harlot city *mystery Babylon* that rode on the beast of Rome (Revelation 11:8; 16:19). There is no record indicating the Lord again placed His name on the earthly Jerusalem. Paul even confirms this as he exhorted the Galatians to cast out the present Jerusalem of his day that was mystically linked with Hagar and Mount Sinai in Arabia. Why? Because *Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother!* (Galatians 4:21-31). Both Paul and John (and Hebrews 12:22) introduce us to the second Jerusalem, the one that is in the heart of God today and the one upon which His name rests. It is called ***New Jerusalem, the holy, heavenly city, having the glory of God*** (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2; 10-11)!

Tracing history back to when Jesus rose in glory in His final ascension; ten days later, the glory returned to rest upon a new temple of living organic stones gathered together in the upper room as they were filled with the promised holy spirit (Acts 2:1-4). This was the beginning of ***New Jerusalem, a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling of God in spirit*** (Ephesians 2:21-22) seen by John and described in Revelation 21-22. The name of God no longer rests on an earthly city and temple but on the city of God, New Jerusalem (Revelation 3:12), the heavenly temple of God made up of sons of glory.

Now, has peace come to this city of glory. Most definitely! How so? Because Jesus is the center of New Jerusalem and He is the Prince of Peace. As the king-priest of the order of Melchizedek, Jesus is the king of Salem, that is the king of peace (Hebrews 7:2). How can there not be peace in New Jerusalem? *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you* (John 14:27). *We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1). *For He himself is our peace* (Ephesians 2:14). *We have the good news of peace* (Ephesians 6:15). Much more could be added to this list of peace verses, but the point is that where our Lord Jesus is there is peace. We don't need to pray for peace to come upon New Jerusalem, for it is the very embodiment of peace!

Dear saints, the fact that ancient Jerusalem has been rebuilt on the land and declared the eternal capital of the modern state of Israel after having been totally destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD does not mean that this city has the name of God on it or that it ever will. Regardless of what lies ahead for this earthly city, the fact remains that God's name now rests on New Jerusalem. God's interests have moved from that which is temporal and made obsolete (Hebrews 8:13) to that which is heavenly. In reading Hebrew scripture, keep in mind that, as a general rule, all the judgments are for the old, earthly Jerusalem, and most of the blessings, especially those related to the ages to come, are for New Jerusalem. We are New Jerusalem that God is building; the glorious city is not finished yet but, be assured, it will be soon. This spiritual city of God's people is in the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Let us rejoice in Jesus' word: ***Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.***