

O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it” (Luk.19:41).

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing”(Matt.23:37).

Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem? To understand His feelings one has to realize that He knew that the city would be totally destroyed in forty years time. Scripture explains:

“And (He)said, If you had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you” (Luk.19:41-44).

In 70 A.D. Roman soldiers under Titus, after a 143 days siege, breached the walls of Jerusalem and totally destroyed the city. The majestic temple was set alight and the heat was so intense that the gold decorations melted. It is told that fortune hunters broke down the walls in order to get to the molten gold that had flowed into the cracks between the stones. According to the historian Josephus, more than 600,000 men, women and children were brutally killed by the Romans. Thousands were abducted as slaves to go and work in mines and many were killed by gladiators. The rest fled to seek refuge in various countries across the world and by the year 73 A.D. the Jewish state of Israel had ceased to exist. What Jesus predicted had literally been fulfilled. As result of rejecting their Messiah, even the physical emblem of God's presence had been destroyed. Since then, for more than two thousand years, the Jews remained scattered across the world while their holy city was being occupied by foreign nations. What the prophet Hosea had prophesied was literally fulfilled:

“My God will reject them because they have not obeyed him; they will be wanderers among the nations” (Hos.9:17).

But God had promised that He would regather His covenant people and bring them back to their promised land (Jer.31:7-10).

The liberation of Jerusalem – 1917. One of the most amazing incidents in history!

God's prophetic word spoken more that 2600 years ago by the prophet Isaiah was literally fulfilled between 8-11 December, 1917:

*“For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, **Like as the lion and the young lion** roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. **As birds flying**, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it” (Is.31:4-5, KJV, my emphasis).*

After Jerusalem had been under Turkish control for nearly two centuries and because Turkey was a German ally, the British general, General Allenby, received orders to liberate the city from their control. General Allenby, a devout Christian, had read the book of Dr H. Aldersmith "Fullness of Nations" written in 1898 and was impressed by the idea that Dr Aldersmith expressed that based on the words in the prophecy in **Is.31:4-5**, "like birds hovering overhead", Britain would be involved in the liberation of Jerusalem making use of some type of flying machine. Dr Aldersmith came to this conclusion before aeroplanes were in use and even before the Wright brothers had had their first test flight in 1903. Because the lion was the emblem of Britain, Dr Aldersmith associated the lion in the prophecy with Britain and the young lion with the Australian and New Zealand troops making up his army.

Aeroplanes were used in the liberation of Jerusalem, but not in the conventional manner that one would expect. As a Christian, out of respect for the holy city, Allenby did not want to fire shells on the city. When seeking advice from head quarters, the reply came that he should pray. Allenby then printed pamphlets with the words "Surrender the city today" in Arab, Turkish and English and had them strewn out over the city by aeroplane. Allenby's name was read by the Arabs as Alla Nabi which translated in Arab meant "Prophet of God." The British forces were greatly surprised when the Muslims came out through the gates waving white flags in surrender. Jerusalem had been liberated without a shot being fired! On 11 December, 1917, General Allenby and his soldiers, out of respect, entered the city on foot, leading their horses behind them. Allenby did not want to ride into the city on a horse that Jesus entered on a donkey! No rifles or cannons were fired in salute, only bells were rung. 973 years of Moslem domination had come to an end.

The Arabs had been so assured of their dominance of Jerusalem that they had a saying that they would stay in the city until the Nile flowed in Palestine and the Prophet ordered them out. Through a peculiar set of circumstances, Lieutenant Archibald Murray, with head quarters in Egypt, built a pipeline to Palestine to pump fresh water from the Nile for the troops stationed there. The water reached Palestine in 1917! Strangely enough, then the Nile was literally flowing in Palestine!

The establishment of the State of Israel

God had promised he would restore Israel:

*"Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth...a great company shall return thither...Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, **He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock**" (Jer.31:7-10, my emphasis).*

After the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews were scattered across the world and Israel ceased to exist as a state. In 1923, after the liberation of Jerusalem, Britain received the mandate to administer Israel as a British protectorate. Years later, at a critical stage during the Second World War, the British forces experienced a shortage of acetone, a substance needed for the making of cordite which was used in the manufacturing of bombs and ammunition. Sir Winston Churchill heard of Dr Chaim Weizmann, a chemical scientist at the

university of Manchester who could manufacture acetone out of grain. He was contacted, provided with equipment and facilities and Weizmann supplied the British government with all the acetone they needed. The British Government gave recognition to Weizmann's contribution to the British War effort by endorsing the Balfour Declaration through which Israel once again became a Jewish home land and a sovereign state. On 17 February, 1948, Chaim Weizmann was inaugurated as the president of Israel, the first Jewish state in 2000 years.

In his memoirs Sir Lloyd George wrote the following about Weizmann:

"Weizmann's name will rank with that of Nehemiah responsible for the fifth-century BC rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem in the fascinating and inspiring story of the children of Israel."

Conclusion

The fulfilment of prophecy is important evidence of the existence of God and the fact that the Bible was inspired by Him. It also shows that God has the power to fulfil His own sovereign plan that He has for the world. Warnings in the Bible should be taken seriously. While there is still time people should turn to Christ Jesus for salvation in order to escape God's predicted judgement of a sinful world (**Rev.21:7-8**).

*wikipedia.org/wiki/BattleofJerusalem
<http://www.cai.org/bible-studies/as-birds-flying>*

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