

THE POLITICS OF THE PASSION

March 4: **The City without a Clock:** Luke 19:41-44

Intro: Something was wrong with Jerusalem, according to Jesus. He was so heart-broken about the error in Jerusalem that he wept as he looked at the city. While he was being executed later in the week he told the ladies who wept as he carried the cross, “Do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28). What was wrong with this city? It missed its time just as we miss ours.

I. It's Time to LEARN: *If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes* (Luke 19:42). Jerusalem DID NOT KNOW what would BRING PEACE. Do you know what will bring you peace?

A. The leaders of Jerusalem thought that killing Jesus would bring peace to their city. They were wrong. Killing Jesus ended up creating the great divide among them, splitting their families and communities, their synagogues and their priesthood.

B. What would have brought Jerusalem peace that day? Jesus is not a military general. He was not talking about a military peace that he would have brought. If the entire city had received him as the suffering Messiah, the servant Messiah, the Donkey King, they would have experienced a spiritual peace on earth just as there was peace in heaven (v38).

Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus promises a rest of soul. He says that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. He is describing a yoke of heart, not a yoke of body.

C. The violence Jesus described here was a military violence, soldiers with strategies of war. The horses would pull these great buildings down. The stones that would have cried out would instead be scattered and discarded and buried in the rubble of fire and wrecking ball. Children would die within these walls.

D. The complete devastation of Jerusalem that Jesus described was the hammer that fell upon a leadership that was afflicted by arrogance and ignorance—self-righteousness.

E. Had the citizens of Jerusalem embraced the king on the donkey they might have taken a different course in their quest for peace and freedom. Perhaps receiving Jesus as Messiah would have introduced a different set of priorities for them.

I would insist that the residents of Jerusalem had a right before God to worship as they saw fit. I admire them for holding to that right. On the other hand they were defending a religion that had departed from its heart, according to Jesus. They had taken the simple faith of Abraham and twisted it into a complex web of self-righteousness and self-exaltation. Their system of religion both devoured their inner peace with God and their outward peace.

F. What if Jerusalem had accepted and received Jesus of Nazareth, this unlikely Galilean, as their long-awaited Messiah IN THE WAY THAT THESE PHARISEES envisioned the Messiah? What if Jesus had managed to secure the support of all the factions in Jerusalem for his candidacy as King Messiah of the Jews? What if the Pharisees and Sadducees and Herodians and Zealots, the chief priests and the high priest and the teachers of the law in Jerusalem had thronged the way as he rode that donkey into the Eastern Gate? What if they had carried him on their shoulders to the Temple and declared him King of Israel?

The citizens of Jerusalem would have been massacred by the Romans. Not only Jesus would have died that week, but thousands of his loyal followers would have died in their revolt against Rome. I think Peter and Judas would gladly have died that day if they had been invited to follow Jesus into battle.

G. The WAY of PEACE for Jerusalem was not a new military leader. Jesus could have seized that role many times during his ministry. He refused it. He came to suffer and die.

II. It's Time to MOURN: *He wept over it* (v41). If not a new military prowess in the face of Rome, then what would have brought Jerusalem peace? What do they need to repent of?

A. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because Jerusalem, in her misguided stubbornness, refused the truth while staring right at it. Jerusalem had already embraced its strict religion. It had no room for the Suffering Messiah, the Donkey King. It was full of itself—its manmade religion and heritage and culture. It was willing to die rather than bend, and that is exactly what it did.

B. Jerusalem should have wept, too, in repentance for failing in the greater things. **If they would have kent**

the Great Commandment, they would have begun to experience peace: love God and love your neighbor. If they had followed the Sermon on the Mount—love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, go the second mile, turn the other cheek—this would have brought them a peace within. These are the teachings of Jesus. This is the kind of faith he was bringing to the world of his day. He was seeking to root out the ethno-centric, egocentric, and paranoid self-righteousness of the Jews of his day and to offer them a genuine place in the family of God through personal faith in God and sincere love of neighbor.

C. “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace.” In order to receive the truth they would have had to turn loose of the LIE that held them all their lives. They lived the lie every day. They carried it with them to their families, to their work, to their social gatherings, and to their church. The LIE permeated their culture and community and their city.

D. The LIE was this—God loves you more than he loves anyone else on this planet. You are the chosen people, and no other people are chosen. You live life like it is supposed to be lived on this planet, and nobody else does so. Jerusalem lived in this delusional mindset: “Of all the countries on earth, you live in God’s favorite country. Of all the ethnic groups on earth, you are part of God’s favorite ethnic group. Of all the cultures on earth, you are part of God’s favorite culture. Among all the cities of the earth, you are God’s CHIEF CITY. Of all the clans on earth, your clan is God’s favorite. Of all the families on earth, your family is the one that is closest to God and closest to truth. Of all the persons on earth, YOU are the WISEST, the PUREST, and the BEST. You are the ONE.

The rest of the world is populated by SAVAGES, PAGANS, and GENTILES. But you are God’s Favorite.

D. This mindset of being chosen rings with a kind of truth. Somewhere in there is a kernel of truth, but it is buried under the delusion of self-righteousness, a religious system that has forgotten the weightier matters, that has turned into a whitewashed TOMB.

Indeed, God has a favored people, Jesus told them. Jesus told them about the Gentiles who were favored by God’s power and mercy. Jesus told them about the widow of Nain and the Leper in Syria and the ROMAN SOLDIER who had greater faith than anyone in Israel. Jesus drew out the truth so clearly that in his own hometown they heard it, understood it, and tried to kill him.

But they could not see. “It is hidden from your eyes,” Jesus whispered as he wept over the doomed city of Jerusalem (v42).

E. The LIE they embraced is this: “We are the children the Abraham!” What? They thought they were the children of Abraham, these stiff-necked, unyielding, and self-righteous egomaniacs? Jesus relieved them quickly of this notion: “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matthew 3:9).

III. It’s Time to TURN: *You did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you* (v44). We are told to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6). What does that mean in the light of the execution of Jesus of Nazareth in Jerusalem? Is there any city on earth that has experienced less peace? Does that mean our prayers go unheard?

A. Turn from the Old to the New. I love Israel and Jerusalem, and I consider myself a friend. But I do not believe that praying for the peace of Jerusalem means for Christians that we continue the bloody Crusades that have ripped apart the Middle East for low these thousands of years. I do not believe that, since the coming of the Savior and our rescue from our sins, praying for the peace of Jerusalem means praying for a tiny geographical spot on this planet nor praying for a single ethnicity among us.

Since Jesus came we look for and pray for the NEW Jerusalem “coming down from God out of heaven,” as the Apostle John described in Revelation 3:12 and 21:2. This is the spiritualization of the Old Testament geography which is part of the New Covenant.

B. Turn from violence to peace. The peace of Jerusalem, what Jesus mentions in his tearful survey of that city, is the peace that comes through knowing the Donkey King, the Prince of Peace. It is a peace that comes ONLY from loving your neighbor. You can only do that when you love God with all your heart, soul, and strength.

C. Turn from Superiority to Serving. CHOSENNESS for the Jews and for US was never meant to convey SUPERIORITY or DOMINION. It was always meant to convey SERVANTHOOD and SUFFERING. The true blessing of God is peace of heart and soul, love for God and neighbor, and joy in all circumstances.

D. Turn from Hate to Love. The peace of Jerusalem always lay in her willingness to love her neighbors. This changes your politics by changing your perception of yourself and your world. You no longer see yourself as the center when you receive Jesus as the suffering Messiah. Now you see him as the center and yourself as the

Servant.

Conclusion: Do you have peace? You can have peace with God.