

Jerusalem

“Places in the Bible”



“And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased. And said unto Him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” Matthew 21:15-16

The city of Jerusalem is not really important to our faith because our God is in the world. What happened there is very important. At a very early age, Christ was taken to the temple in Jerusalem by His parents. There was a man named Simeon there who had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen Christ. When Christ’s parents took Him into the temple, Simeon recognized Him and said “Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.” Luke 2:29-30

We also know that His parents took Him to Jerusalem each year as was the custom. It was there when He was twelve that He spoke in the temple and the people who heard Him were astonished. But that was also when His parents, thinking He was part of the group that had traveled to Jerusalem, realized that He was not with them on their way home. They returned to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple. He said to them “Why were you looking for me? Didn’t you know that I had to be here, dealing with the things of my Father?” Luke 2:29 Some commentaries find this very interesting. Didn’t Mary and Joseph remember twelve years earlier they had been visited by angels who told them they were to bear a son who would be the Son of God? Some think that families were traveling together and they assumed Christ was with the other members of the family. This seems to be the actual beginning of His talking about His mission on earth. At the age of twelve, the older men in the temple were putting up with and actually talking with this Child who wasn’t even in His teens. As I studied these verses, I wondered why they bothered listening to Him. Sometimes children try to tell us something, and too often we think “Oh, they’re just kids, they don’t know what we have learned from experience.” Sometimes we can learn from children, but we have to be receptive to what they say. According to Luke 2, this was a time that things began to change. Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents, but people seemed to think about Him in a different way. Luke tells us that He matured in both body and spirit and was blessed by both God and the people. This was also the first time we have recorded words of Christ.

Following Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the day we call Palm Sunday, the disciples and Christ went back to Bethany and then into Jerusalem the next day. When Christ went into the temple to pray, He found that some of them had set up shop and were buying and selling. This is where some say we saw the temper of Christ because He threw them out and kicked over the tables of the bankers and merchants. He told them “My house was designated a house of prayer for the nations. You’ve turned it into a hangout for thieves.” Mark 11:17 Notice that He said “My”.

This was just another spark to begin the fire for the governmental authorities to get rid of this man because they were concerned with His following. They tried to question Him, but He wouldn’t tell them anything different than what He had already said. They knew they had to get rid of Him as soon as possible.

From then, His time in Jerusalem was what we have come to know so well and His dying for us. This last week in Jerusalem is recorded in all of the Gospels. The authorities pursued Him relentlessly until they put Him on trial and crucified Him. We know about Gethsemane and His prayers there with the disciples and then His crucifixion at Golgotha, His burial and His resurrection. Because of all the things that happened in Jerusalem, we know about the teachings of Christ and His sacrifice for us. We know that if we accept these teachings, we will someday be in what some call the New Jerusalem in reference to eternal life with Christ.

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" Revelation 21:2-4

Prayer: Dear Lord, we praise and thank You for Jesus Christ, who came to earth to save us from our sins and allow us to someday be with You in the New Jerusalem. We thank You for all that happened in Jerusalem and our ability to speak Your word freely and not be afraid of government authorities putting us in prison. Please continue to feed us with Your love and truth so that we may let Your light shine through us. Amen

1. What is the importance of Jerusalem today to you?
2. What is the importance of the New Jerusalem to you?
3. Have you ever assumed your children were one place only to find out they were somewhere else?
4. How do you think Simeon recognized Christ as the Holy Child?
5. What is the significance of "My house was designated a house of prayer for the nations?"

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