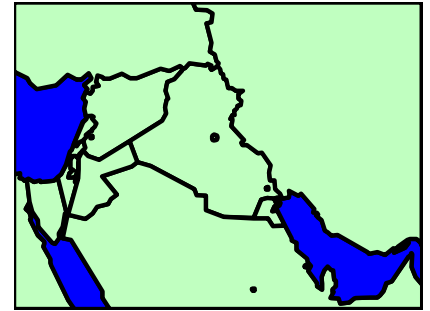


**Let the  
ROCKS  
CRY OUT**

SPIRITUAL  
LESSONS FROM  
ISRAEL'S  
GEOGRAPHY &  
CULTURE



By **Jerry Schmoyer** Copyright © 1998  
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## ***JERUSALEM***

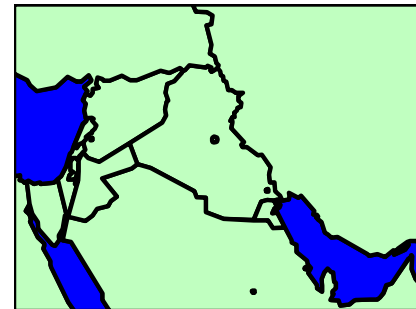
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# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

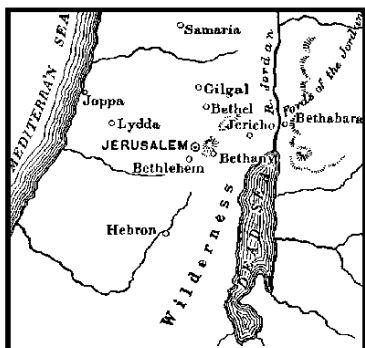
## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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## 20. 6,000 YEARS OF SOVEREIGN CARE

Jerusalem is truly a very special city. It is the capital of the only kingdom God ever established among men. It is the only spot God Himself graced with His continuing presence. He Himself chose it to be His earthly home. It is the only city God ever called "holy," or "My city" (Isa 52:1; Neh 11:1). No site in all of Scripture receives such constant and exalted praise as Jerusalem. It is located at the meeting point of three continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. It is the meeting point of east and west. Nations to the east read right to left while those to the west read left to right. It is sacred to three great religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam.



This special city has **SEVERAL NAMES**. It is called "Jerusalem", "city of peace," 600 times in the old city. In reality it is the world's most hated city with more wars being fought there than any other single city. It is also called "Salem," meaning "peace," when Melchizedek was its king (Gen 14:18; Ps 76:2). "Zion" is a common name. Of uncertain origin, it is first used of the oldest part of the city, then for all Jerusalem. Other names include "City of David" for the king who conquered it and "City of God." All in all, it has about 50 different names in the Bible.

That Jerusalem is **VERY SPECIAL** is stated over and over in the Bible. "Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress." (Psalm 48:1-3) Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again." (Isa 52:1) "Jerusalem is the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name." (I Kings 14:21)

The **SITE OF JERUSALEM** was first inhabited about 3000 BC (5000 years ago). Semitic people first settled at the spring Gihon. It is first mentioned in the Bible as a Jebusite city called Jebus (Gen 10:16). The first details we have about the city are when **Melchizedek** was its king and helped Abraham, who paid to tithes to God through him (Genesis 14:18). Hebrews 7:1-4 says that Melchizedek is a picture of Jesus (king of peace and righteousness, without beginning or end, king and priest both, etc.).

**Abraham** went to a spot right by this city when he (almost) sacrificed Isaac on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:1-2). That very rock was to become the location of the Holy of Holies in the temple which David planned and Solomon built.



Secular history sheds some light on the early history of Jerusalem, too. About 1450 BC letters were written from Ursalim ("city of peace") to Egypt who owned the area at that time, asking for help against enemies threatening the city. This would have the time Joshua was conquering the land.

In **Joshua's** day Jerusalem was the chief city of the Canaanites (Joshua 10:5), but Joshua never captured it, although one king was killed (Joshua 20:23-26). It was on the border of Judah and Benjamin. Judah and Simeon defeated the city once during the time of the judges but never really captured it.

It wasn't until the time of **David** that the city was captured (I Chron 11:4-7; II Sam 5:6-9) by infiltrating through the water tunnel. The city was small: about 8 acres (400' by 1250') and about 1230 people. David made it the capital of Israel because of its neutral and central location. It was God, though, who was behind the choice of Jerusalem as His capital and headquarters.

**GOD PROTECTED** His city against attack after attack. The Philistines were soundly defeated when they invaded (II Samuel 5:17-25). That was the end of Philistine's threat against Israel. When the tabernacle was destroyed David built a new tent to house the sacred ark and bought a threshing floor just north of the city to use for a permanent temple (II Sam 24:1-25).

While David planned for the temple, he didn't build it because he was a man of war and it was to be a place of peace. **Solomon** built the temple and did much to enlarge and beautify the whole city (I Kings 5 - 8; II Chron 2 - 5). By now the city was 32 acres and about 5,000 people.

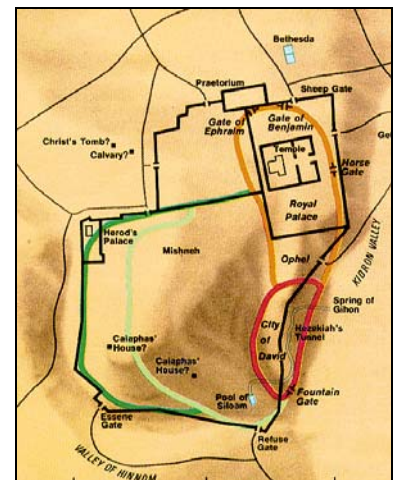
After Solomon's time the glory of Israel and Jerusalem faded. The people turned from God and He allowed enemies to come against them so they'd turn back to Him for help. The temple was looted 8 times, mostly for bribes to keep enemies from destroying them. The Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians and even the northern 10 tribes all attacked. Despite this the city continued to grow and expand until it reached a size of about 125 acres and 25,000 people.

One of the most detailed accounts of an attack on Jerusalem was the one by **Sennacherib** (II Kings 18-19; II Chron 32; Isa 36-37) when God intervened and miraculously destroyed the Assyrian army. Eventually, though, the city did fall to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians because the people refused to repent and turn back to God (II Ki 24 - 25; II Chron 36; Jer 39; 52). This happened in 586 BC.. Jerusalem was defeated and the temple destroyed. Daniel and Ezekiel were taken captive, along with thousands and thousands of Jews.

Later some Jews were allowed to **RETURN TO REBUILD** the city wall and temple (Ezra 3:8-13; 4:23-25; 5:1-5; 6:15-18). Rebuilding started in 537 BC and was completed in 516 BC. The city and temple were lacking in size and glory. It was nothing like it had been, The city was only about 30 acres and had 4,500 inhabitants.

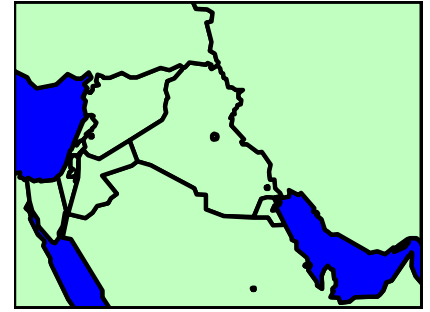
Wars continued to find their way to Jerusalem. It was totally destroyed at least 5 times. Finally Alexander the Great conquered it in 332 BC. Antiochus Epiphanes profaned it in 168 BC, leading to the Maccabean revolt. Under Jewish control the city grew to 165 acres and 35,000 people. Pompey conquered the city for Rome in 64 BC and Crassus pillaged the temple in 55 BC. The Parthians occupied it in 40 BC but Rome won it back and gave control of the area to Herod the Great in 37 BC. He rebuilt the city and temple, making it one of the greatest cities of its day. During the time of Jesus it had expanded to about 450 acres and 80,000 people.

What is most striking about Jerusalem through the last 5,000 years is God's obvious sovereign control over it. In prosperity or affliction, it is still God's city and His sovereign control is always evident. If He would care for His city in this way, wouldn't it stand to reason He would care for us, His people, even more? After all, WE are where His presence dwells on earth today (I Cor 3:16-17; II Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21). Thank God for His continual watch-care over you.



# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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## 21. THE VALLEY THAT GAVE HELL ITS NAME

When aiming a rifle at a target, it is essential to line up the two sights, the one in front and the one at the rear of the barrel. If they are lined up exactly, the shot will be accurate. If they aren't the shot will miss. To accurately understand any part of the Bible there must be two sights that also line up on it. The one is chronology the other geography. In order to accurately interpret any Bible passage we must understand where it fits in historically (on a time line) and where it is located (on a map). These are essential to correct understanding and interpretation. Often we are more aware of Bible history than geography.

The **GEOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM** is key to its significance. Any city site had to have two things: height (for defense) and water (for life). These two elements don't naturally come at the same place. In Jerusalem the water site was part way down the hill, but an underground tunnel allowed access even when under siege. There was no river or lake for water. The Kidron was dry most of the year. Jerusalem's water supply will be considered in a future article.

Jerusalem itself was on a "V" shaped hill with valleys on two sides for protection. A strong wall protected the north. It was 2550 feet above sea level, which was 33 miles to the east. It was 3800 feet above the Dead Sea which was just 14 miles to the west. The city was so situated that anyone approaching couldn't see it until they were right on top of it, then there it was! It was an impressive sight with the sun reflecting off the gold of the temple.

This location provides a nice **CLIMATE** for Jerusalem. The temperature averages 77 in summer (not above 86 in the day but with cool nights). During the 'sinter' the average temperature is 59 degrees with occasional light falls of snow which soon melt. The worst weather is drought when the temperature is high and humidity low. This occurs for about 50 days a year. The high elevation of the city exposes it to cooling breezes from the Mediterranean.

The valley to the east, **KIDRON**, is about 3 miles long and dry much of the year. It's only during the wet winter months that water flows in it. The Tyropoeon Valley runs to the west. As the city grew it was filled in to connect with another hill to the west. The valley that came down to the west of that hill and then cut under Jerusalem to connect with Kidron is called the **VALLEY OF HINNOM** (Joshua 15:8; II Chron 28:3; 33:6; etc.). These valleys shaped the geographical limits of the city and protected it from attack on those sides. Important events happened there.





on each side of Him. That is why Joseph of Arimathea intervened to save His body from that fate.

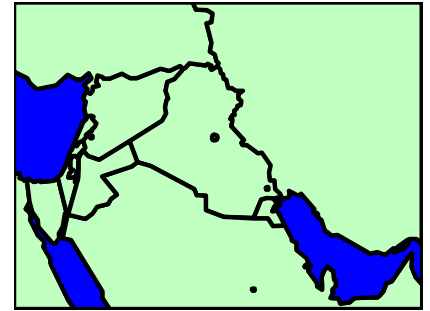
Jesus said that those without salvation are controlled by anger and hate, and the result of this is eternity in **HELL**. "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell" (Matthew 5:22).

He also recognizes hell as a place of eternal torture. “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Thus understanding the history and geography of a valley to the south of Jerusalem is key to understanding Jesus' teachings about hell. What a vivid picture it paints! Thank God that His children never have to fear going to such a place!

# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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## 22. CRUSHED ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

How can you tell when someone loves you? Usually love is shown by someone's actions, but something done. How can you tell that God loves you? God used an olive press to show His love for us. In order to understand this it's important to understand some more about the geography of Jerusalem.

In the last article we saw the significance of the Valley of Hinnon to the west and south of Jerusalem. This time we want to look at the valley and mountain to the east and its importance. This is the Mount of Olives.

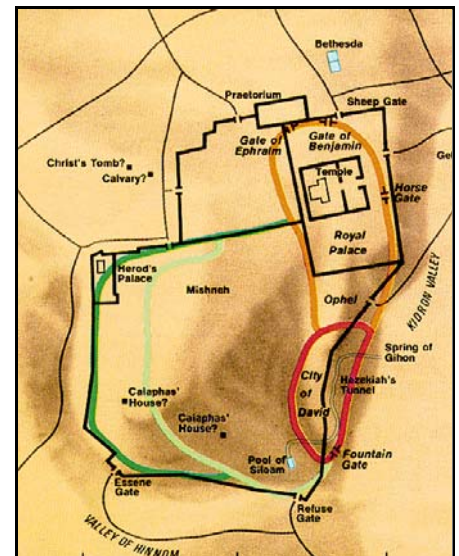
The **MOUNT OF OLIVES** is a mile-long spur of limestone hills. It is a very conspicuous landmark of Jerusalem, rising 100 to 400 feet above the city. From the top all of Jerusalem can be seen to the west and the Jordan Valley seen to the east.

The **villages** of Siloam, Bethany (home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus) and Bethphage (where the donkey for Jesus' ride into Jerusalem was obtained) are on the Mt of Olives.

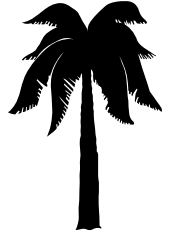
A very important **road** led out of Jerusalem (through the Eastern Gate) and over the Mount of Olives, going to Jericho. Roads were very important, as most travel was done by foot. It was on this road that the Babylonians pursued Hezekiah and caught him (II Kings 25:4-5). Jesus used this road often (Luke 19:28). The parable of the good Samaritan takes place on this road as well (Luke 10:29-37).

Because of its topography the Mount of Olives couldn't be farmed. It was ideal for vineyards and orchards, though. Grapes, olives and figs grew in abundance (Num 13:23).

**GRAPE VINES** were one of the most important plants for the Jews, similar to what the buffalo was for native Americans and apples were to early settlers. Vineyards produce grapes, which could be eaten right from the vine. Many products could be made from grapes: grape juice, grape honey, wine and raisins. The variety and portability of these products made grapes very important. Usually grape vines were grown in small, terraced plots with stone walls or thorn bushes to keep animals and thieves out (Song of Sol 2:15). There was much work involved with protecting, pruning (John 15), hoeing, weeding, etc. Large vineyards had towers with guards to protect the ripening grapes. The poor often lived in the vineyard near harvest to protect their crop.



**FIG TREES** also were planted and cultivated there, for they produced 3 drops a year. They were eaten fresh or dried for winter use. When barren they were cut down and burned (Luke 13:6-9). Leaves and fruit grew together, so a tree with leaves and no fruit looked good from a distance but was useless, a picture of those just going through the outer motions of obeying God (Matthew 21:19).



The third crop grown on the Mount of Olives was that which gave it its name: **OLIVE TREES**. It took 14 years to grow to maturity and start producing, then they were very sturdy, living and producing for hundreds of years. Olives were easy to harvest. You could knock them off a tree with a sick (Dt 24:20). One had to be careful to not injure the tree, though, or that would affect the next harvest. A healthy tree would produce about 20 gallons of olive oil a harvest. Olive oil was a great source of wealth. It could be eaten like butter or used for cooking like fat. It was also used to light lamps, make soap, anoint bodies (medicinal or ritualistic uses), etc. Olives could also be eaten fresh or dried (for easier transport and preservation). The wood was used to make cabinets and other furniture.

The most sturdy trees were those where a cultivated olive tree was grafted into wild (and thus stronger) roots. Paul talks about God doing the opposite of this when He grafted us wild trees into the cultivated roots of Israel (Romans 11), and says that they one day will be restored to their rightful fruit-producing position.

When the Romans surrounded Jerusalem in 70 AD they cut down all the olive trees, vines, etc. Today a few 900 year old trees remain, having grown from the roots of previous trees going back to the time of Jesus.

The Mount of Olives, therefore, was very important to the life of Jerusalem. Because of the trees there and the shade they produced, many of the rich people in Jerusalem also used their groves and orchards as a cool place to escape the heat and noise of Jerusalem in the summer. **GETHSEMANE** was such a place. It served as a garden escape as well as a place for grapes, olives and figs to be harvested and processed. In fact, the word “gethsemane” means literally “olive press.” It was a round wheel-shaped stone that rolled around a groove in a bottom stone to crush grapes and figs so the juice could be extracted.

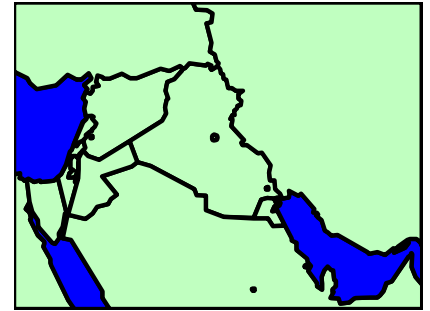
Isn't it significant that it is here that Jesus went to pray and even to spend His final nights on earth (Luke 22:39). Judas knew that if He wasn't in the upper room any more, He must have gone to Gethsemane as was His practice. Here, in the shadow of the olive press which forced the 'blood of the grape' out under stress and force, Jesus Himself had His own blood forced out by the stress and pressure of the anticipation of carrying our sins on the cross. The thought of going through our eternal hell, of being the helpless victim of all Satan and his demons could throw at Him and of being the object of God's awful wrath was so much that blood came out of His body with the sweat (Luke 22:44).

Thus God used an olive press to show how much He loves us. It clearly describes that Jesus knew what He was getting in for. He could have avoided the cross, He could have left the area. Instead He stayed and allowed Himself to go through that because He loves us. What a great picture of His love. What a beautiful way to describe. Without understanding the geography and culture of Palestine in Jesus' day this wonderful message can't be received. Take a moment right now to thank Him for what He did for you, for all He voluntarily went through for you.





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 23. A TYPICAL WORK DAY IN JERUSALEM

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Suppose you were alive in the time of Jesus, even living in Jerusalem. What would it have been like? What would a typical work day have been like. While it might have seemed exciting and glamorous to live in Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, for those who lived there it was just 'business as usual.' Those who grew up inside the **WALLS** of Jerusalem hardly noticed them, but to visitors they were massive and dominated the view wherever you looked. They averaged 38 foot high and 24 foot thick. They were impenetrable.

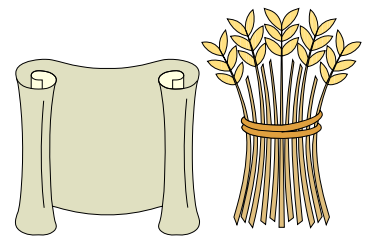
The only in or out was through the **GATES**. The gates were very strongly constructed to keep enemies out (see article 1 in this series for more information). The gates were named after locations (Eastern gate, Bethlehem gate, etc.) or functions (sheep gate, dung gate, etc.). There were towers near the gates, as well as throughout the wall, for better protection.

Since everyone funneled through them coming and going to town they were very busy, active places. Because of this, and the large open areas by them, many activities took place "**INSIDE THE GATE.**" It was a common meeting place (Ruth 4:1; II Sam 15:2; I Ki 22:10; Neh 8:1-3). Because of the extra space, and exposure to so much foot traffic, many farmers and craftsmen with products for sale would set up a booth here (II Ki 7:1; Neh 3:1,3,28). "Inside the gate" became the main gathering place of the city, as the center square was in early New England towns. Even legal tribunals were conducted here (Dt 16:18; 21:19). That is where prophets and teachers would go to proclaim their messages (Prov 1:21; 8:3; 31:31; Jer 17:19). Scribes set up their offices along the walls to read and write documents for the uneducated. Kings would hold court here, too (II Sam 19:8; I Ki 22:10; Jer 38:7). It was here the militia assembled (Judges 5:8) and the town riffraff gathered (Psalm 69:12). It was the hub of all activity for the city. If you lived in Jerusalem your daily life, in one way or another, would revolve around the markets by the gates. That is where you would buy or sell, or both.

In Jerusalem there were many gates and many "inside the gate" areas. Each was a special gathering place. The location in the city (rich section, poor section or middle class) determined the type craftsmen who would gather. If you lived there you have one, probably the one nearest your home, and it would be your work place, shopping center, town hall, school system and office complex.

Whatever **STREET** you took would eventually lead to a gate. Streets were straight and squared off only in the newer Roman section where the very rich lived. In the rest of Jerusalem they were twisty, narrow and crooked. There were often steps in them. Some were mud, others paved stones. Animals such as donkeys and camels were common on them. One-room shops

opened up to them on each side of the street. Living quarters for the family was another single room in back of the shop.



Your **WORK DAY** in Jerusalem would start early, as sunup or before. What you did for your life's work was determined by what your father (or perhaps an uncle) did, for they would have taught you their skill, as they learned it from their father. Common trades practiced inside Jerusalem included potters, carpenter, mason, metal worker, tanner, dyer, tentmaker, merchant, money-changer, banker, tax gatherer, physician and many others. Farmers, fishermen and hunters were usually found in more rural areas, although they did bring their produce to the cities to sell it.

**Potters** were much in demand as jars were needed to keep water, food and olive oil. They lived mainly in the southwest corner of town. All trades tended to stick together in one area. The skills were passed on from generation to generation, all living in the same family home. God is often pictured as a potter who is sovereign over His people (Jer 18:4-6; Rom 9:20-21) and one who will judge those who disobey Him (Ps 2:7; Jer 19:11; Rev 2:27).

**Masons**, often translated 'carpenters,' were those who built with stone. They used wood to frame the doors and windows and for roof beams, but mainly they worked in stone. They built houses, terraces, walls -- whatever needed building. Herod and his sons used many masons for their building projects all over Palestine. Joseph and Jesus probably did this kind of work. Wood was very scarce while stone was plentiful. Jesus Himself then became our foundation, upon which we and all we have are built (Rom 15:20).

**Carpenters** would work with wood making furniture and tools (Isa 44:13) such as yokes, plows, locks & keys, doors, low tables, chairs, stools and storage chests. They were very skillful men who gave great attention to their work.

**Metal workers** were quite advanced at their crafts. Blacksmiths did work like they do today. Coppersmiths made pots, shovels, basins and other objects for the temple as well as homes of the rich. Silver and gold smiths also made jewelry, dishes and utensils and ritual objects for worship for the temple and the rich. They heated metal very hot to burn away any impurity so they would be pure, a picture of how God uses trials in the lives of His people (I Peter 1:7).

**Tanners** worked with sheepskin and goatskin, making tents, shoes, bottles or whatever leather objects were needed. **Dyers** colored woven material brilliant crimson (in crushed worms), purple (from a special shellfish) or whatever color was wanted. Both tanners and dyers were on the edge of town, sometimes outside town, because of the awful smell their crafts created.

**Tentmaking** was a good, necessary craft. Tents were used by those traveling, and most trips were by foot and overnight. Other people lived in tents permanently. Paul was a tentmaker. He learned to cut straight edges to sew together, the same as he wanted others to have a straight interpretation of God's Word (II Tim 2:15).

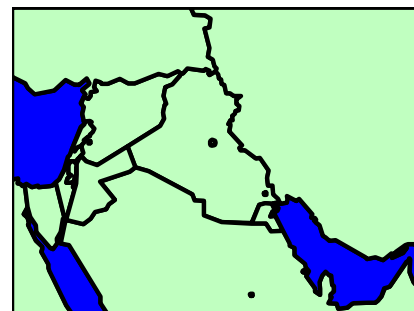
**Merchants** were common, buying and selling dry goods, grocery items, utensils, leather and cloth goods, baked items, vegetables, fruit, meats and fish -- whatever was necessary for life. Prices weren't set on items for things were always bartered for. The seller would ask a very high price, the buyer would offer something very low, and they would eventually meet in the middle somewhere.

Most of the men of Jerusalem practiced one of these crafts, so if you lived in Jerusalem in Jesus' day you would probably be involved in one of them, and that's how you'd spend your day, sunrise to almost sunset. It was a hard life, but it wasn't a bad life. Aren't you glad for the variety of occupations available today, and that you can choose any you want? Thank God for choosing when He wanted you to be alive on earth.





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 24. HEROD: RAGES TO RICHES TO RAGS

From rages to riches to rags -- that's the life story of Herod the Great. He started out with nothing and when he died he took nothing with him. In between he made quite a name for himself, one which lives on to today. He was a ruler, a king, a military leader, an astute businessman and a great politician, but most of all he was a builder. He chose architecture as his way of turning Jerusalem and all Palestine from a hill-billy, backward nowhere to a place as urbane and modern as Rome itself. Our purpose here isn't to focus on his life (for more information on that see the article in the Life of Jesus series, # 8, "The First Shall Be Last") but to focus on his buildings.



While Herod was responsible for great building projects throughout Palestine and other parts of the Roman empire, his main impact was in Jerusalem. He rebuilt other cities, but Jerusalem was his jewel. Much of his building, in Jerusalem and elsewhere, was of a military nature. He built Masada and other similar fortresses for his protection. He enlarged the walls of Jerusalem and strongly fortified it, building the fortress Antonia as well as his own personal palace, which was a fortress inside a fortress.

**HEROD'S PALACE** was made up of sumptuous bedrooms and dining halls, pleasure gardens, fountains and water courses. It was probably here that Jesus was brought before Herod before His crucifixion. Three towers protected the palace, each one a fortress in itself. The first was named Hippicus after one of his friends. The second Phasael, the tallest, after Herod's brother. The third, Mariamme, after the Jewish wife he loved but had put to death for plotting against him.

The other main fort in Jerusalem was named **ANTONIA** after Herod's friend Mark Anthony. The Roman garrison in Jerusalem was stationed there. It was attached to the temple so they could better watch the activity there and get in quickly in case of a revolt. Antonia was large and strong, with walls 60 feet high and towers up to 105 foot high. It was, in effect, a palace, an armed camp and almost a city itself. It was here that Jesus was brought to Pilate (John 19:13).

Perhaps Herod's crowing achievement was the rebuilding and enlarging of the **TEMPLE**, one of the wonders of the ancient world. That will be considered in detail later. Herod thought he could better rule the Jews if he did something nice for them and won their loyalty. It never worked.

To be more like a modern Greco-Roman city Herod built a **THEATER** which was very impressive. From the top the whole city of Jerusalem was visible. Thus the Jews were forbidden to ever enter. Since there were no PA systems, large wax masks were held in front of the actor's

faces to show the mood of the character they were portraying: anger, fear, sorrow, etc. These masks were called in Greek “hypocrites” and referred to someone who put on a false face.



Much of what Herod built in Jerusalem was sports-oriented. Herod himself was quite an athlete, being a champion wrestler, archer and horseman until his old age. He made sure that Jerusalem was filled with athletic-oriented buildings. One such was the **GYMNASIUM**. In it wrestling, boxing and discus-throwing were practiced by naked males (no females could enter). There were hot and cold saunas and baths, a library, and classrooms where philosophy (Greek wisdom) was expounded. These were very ungodly world views and attitudes. The Greeks felt that a person’s mind and body both needed to be trained together. Pious Jews kept away from it all.

The **AMPHITHEATER** was, in Greek, called a “hippodrome” (meaning “horse races”). Gladiators and animals from all over were brought in to fight. It was also used for musicians, choral acts and flooded for naval displays where ships were actually floated in it. Herod even held his own Olympic-type games every 5 years when athletes from all over the world would come to compete. Herod thought the Jews would like such an impressive, modern structure and all the entertainment, but it only turned the Jews completely against him. They couldn’t stop its construction and use, but they did give him trouble because of it the rest of his life.

The other athletic arena he built was a **STADIUM** for foot races, boxing and wrestling. It was located outside the city walls.

**ATHLETICS** was a very big part of everyday life in Jerusalem. The Jews avoided because of the immodesty, pride and pagan philosophy that was so wrapped up in it. Still, they were very familiar with it. Paul himself used many athletic metaphors to teach about the Christian life. He said self-discipline is necessary in each of them. “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize” (I Cor 9:25-27).



In each there are rules to be obeyed. “Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules” (II Tim 2:5). The goal in each is to win the prize, to persevere to the end, to not quit. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (II Tim 4:7).

For that to happen anything that would in any hinder must be removed. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Heb 12:1). Paul says prayer is like wrestling as we ‘struggle’ to have victory in it. “Join me in my struggle by praying to God for me” (Rom 15:30). Cooperating is needed in both (Phil 1:27; 4:3).

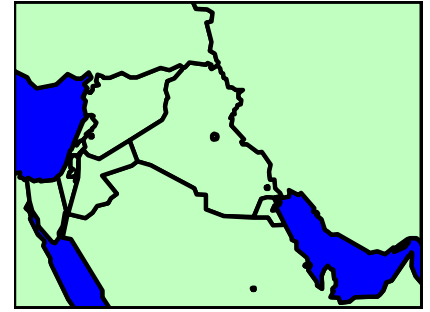
Paul even used an analogy of the gladiatorial fights, encouraging those in Corinth to set a good example for Jesus as they were being persecuted or killed. “It seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men” (I Cor 4:9).

Understanding Jerusalem’s buildings and their usage is very helpful in understanding Paul’s metaphorical use of athletics and the Christian life. Herod seemed to be winning his race, but finishing life without salvation makes one a loser for all eternity. Make sure it doesn’t happen to you!





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 25. FANCY ON THE OUTSIDE, DECAY WITHIN

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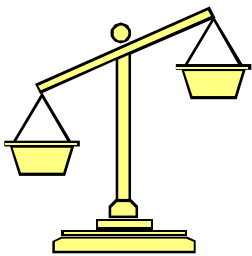
In this day and age it isn't easy to tell a very rich person from everyone else if you see them at the mall or on the street. However if you lived in Jerusalem in Jesus' day it wouldn't be hard to pick them out right away. The rich were very, very, very rich. Everyone else lived in a far different world than they did. The rich were clearly noticeable by their dress and living styles. Their homes were far different from every one else's.

The **PALACES OF THE WEALTHY** were large and beautiful. Covering about 2,000 square feet, they were located in the Roman section of Jerusalem, to the west of the old city. They had their own cisterns for water, ritual baths, and frescoes painted on walls. There were spacious living areas, slave and servant quarters, storage rooms, a library, and attached apartments for married children and grandchildren. Gardens, terraces, pools and colonnades made them places of beauty. Instead of being built of mud they were made of hewn stone and cedar wood. Their gates were richly ornate. They were like small villas themselves. Herod's palace (previous article) was the grandest of all. Others were nearly as grand, though none as large.

Near the western wall of the temple was the **HASMONEAN PALACE** which was used by the Jewish royal family from the time of the Macabeans. It was a very large affair with many, many rooms and quarters for numerous families. Large meeting rooms, ritual baths, and many storage areas were neatly arranged within its walls. Jesus may have been arraigned there before Herod Antipas (Lk 23:6-12). In Jesus' day it was where the Sanhedrin met. Peter and John were brought there to face them (Acts 4:5-22), Stephen was charged with being a follower of Jesus there (Acts 6:8 - 7:53), and so was Paul (Acts 22:30 - 23:10).

The other outstanding palace in Jerusalem was the home of **CAIAPHAS AND ANNAS**. It, too, was outstanding in size and opulence. Located in the southwestern corner of the city, in the newer Roman area, it was a large, sprawling affair. Annas was for many years the high priest, but Rome removed him because of practices they didn't like. He has a series of sons then take over the high priesthood, ending up with his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was high priest during the time of Jesus. All these were just puppets for Annas. That's where the religious rulers met when they decided to put Jesus to death (John 11:49-50). Jesus was tried here the night of His arrest by both Annas (John 18:12-23) and Caiaphas with the whole Sanhedrin (John 18:24; Mark 14:53-65). It was in their courtyard that Peter denied Jesus (Mt 26:58,. 69-75; Mk 14:54, 66-72; Lk 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-27). Here plans were made to kill the apostles, too (Acts 4:6).





So it was very easy to tell the very rich from everyone else by their life styles and homes. It was also very easy to tell the rich apart from everyone else in death. The poor were dumped into Gehenna (see article 2 in this series). The rich were placed in fancy tombs.

Large **TOMBS** dotted the landscape of Jerusalem. One of the largest was called David's tomb. He died at 70 years of age and reportedly was buried there, along with many other kinds. Another large monument is called Absalom's tomb, but Absalom isn't buried there.

Most of the rich were buried in stone boxes on western bank of the Kidron river, across from the Mount of Olives. From a distance it looks like any cemetery today, but upon closer inspection it becomes obvious that it is quite different. You see, no one is buried under ground. All bodies are in the stone boxes which set on the ground. The very rich first put their dead on a shelf in a cave to decay so only bones are left or until the shelf is needed for a newly-dead relative. Joseph of Arimathea used his newly-carved cave tomb for Jesus' body. For those who couldn't afford the luxury of a cave, dead bodies were placed directly into the stone boxes.

The outside of these stone boxes was kept very white by frequent reapplications of freshly slaked lime whitewash. They were kept spotless and snow white, often even more so than a person's home. During religious holidays, when many people came to Jerusalem, special care was made to have them looking as clean as possible. If anyone would accidentally touch one in their travels they would be 'unclean' and therefore unable to partake of the Passover or whatever festival was being observed.

In contrast to the beautiful, spotless exterior, however, was the inside. There was only stench, putrefaction and corruption within. Fully or partially decayed loved ones were what were inside. Unless left in the sun to bleach, some flesh would still adhere to the bones. Even in open air the smell would be overpowering, but trapped inside the hot boxes for long periods of time, it was indescribable. Perhaps there is nothing more revolting to a human being than to look into an open tomb containing a partially decayed human body. The sight and stench are nauseating. Imagine sealing a dead animal's body into a garbage can for several months in hot weather, then opening the top. What would it be like? With that in mind read these words of Jesus:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! (Matthew 23:27-32)

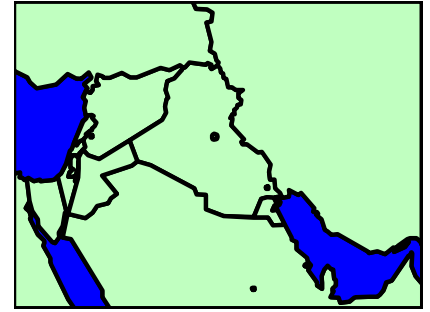
Jesus' words are clear and convicting. Outer actions, hypocrisy, mean nothing to Him. He looks at the heart, not outer appearance. The LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7).

Check your inside appearance. Make your prayer "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23-24)



# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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## 26. LIVING WATER: KEY TO LIFE

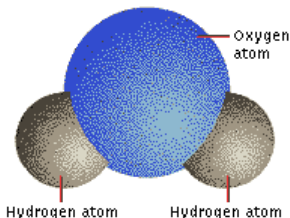
Have you ever been thirsty -- I mean REALLY thirsty? In this time and this country it doesn't happen too much. If we had been living in the early days of this country, crossing the continent in a wagon, or if lived in one of the many semi-arid regions of the world, we would be more familiar with what real thirst is like.

Palestine was an area of contrasts. The mountainous areas received about 20" of rain a year, but the wilderness areas received only 2"! The rainy season was November - March. The rest of the year was very hot and very dry. Water was essential to life, but it was often very scarce. People had to depend on God to send the rain or they would die. "But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end. So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today-- to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul-- then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied" (Deut 11:11-15).



Thus **SEEKING FOR WATER** was like seeking for God. The people could clearly see the analogy. "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps 63:1). "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God" (Ps 42:1).

The **SITE OF JERUSALEM** was originally chosen because it had two elements that every inhabited area needed: height (for defense) and water. It wasn't common to find them both in one location. The spring was called **GIHON** and was part way down eastern flank of the hill. A tunnel was dug into the hill until it met with a shaft dug down from the surface. This was water could flow under the wall and be brought to the surface by a bucket, assuring water even in time of siege. It was through this tunnel and well that David's men gained access to the city and were able to capture it (II Sam 5:6-10). For generations they had been unable to get in.



During the time of King Hezekiah, a longer tunnel was dug bringing water to the surface (II Chron 32:2-4,30; II Ki 20:20). This was a major engineering feat and can still be seen in Jerusalem today. It was 1777 feet long and 6 feet high. The water flowed into the Pool of **SILLOAM**. It was here

that Jesus healed a man blind from birth (John 9). It is still used by Arab women .

The only other natural water source at Jerusalem was a well, **EN-ROGEL** (or Job's well; II Sam 17:17; I Ki 1:9). It was located 1/2 mile South of Gihon, where the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys met. Its yield was small compared to Gihon.



Much more water was needed than these two could supply, though. Rain water had to be trapped and collected during the rainy season for use during the dry. **BETHESDA**, meaning "house of mercy," was located just north of the temple complex by the Sheep Gate. It was in a busy suburb of markets, bazaars and work shops. Here is where Jesus healed the 38-year invalid who couldn't get himself into the water (John 9). Other pools were the Kings' Pool and Hezekiah's Pool. In reality these were just large cisterns.

In fact, until Herod built the large system of high-level aqueducts to bring water into the city and store in reservoir under the temple **CISTERNS** were the main source of water for the majority of the people. Holes were dug in the ground under the house to collect rain water from the roof. They had to be plastered with clay and were constantly cracking and losing their water. Water sitting in them became flat, stagnant and dirty very quickly. Dead insects and even animals which fell in while drinking often littered the surface. They were very poor sources of water, but when thirsty people were glad just to have the water.



People would sell water in the markets or on the streets of Jerusalem. Sometimes a philanthropic person would pay for a seller's whole water supply so he could offer it free of charge to whoever needed it. He would call, "You thirsty ones, come drink for nothing!" This is the same offer God makes to His people: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost" (Isa 55:1).

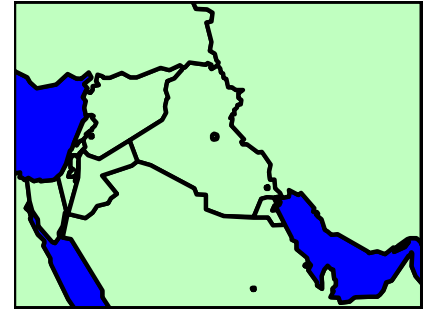
Of course, everyone preferred fresh, running water to cistern water. Who would choose cistern water over fresh flowing spring water? That is what Jesus offered to the woman at the well at Samaria (John 4:10-14). Yet choosing dirty cistern water over God's life-giving water is exactly what the Jews were doing. "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water." (Jer 2:13, 17:13; 14:3). If that sounds crazy think how many today choose the world's sources to find satisfaction and refreshment for their thirsty souls. They drink at the pools of sex, drugs, materialism, pride and self-centeredness. No wonder their inner needs aren't met. What's really sad, though, is when Christians leave God's fresh springs to drink from worldly cisterns!

During the feast of Sukkot (also called Tabernacles or Booths) The Jews had a special water ceremony. It commemorated their wandering in the wilderness, the dry and thirsty land. It was held at the end of the dry season when everyone was awaiting God's fresh supply of water. The priests would form a procession to Siloam to get water and carry it back to the temple as an offering to God. It looked forward to the time God would send His water, ending the dry season. As this procession entered the table Jesus said HE was the living water. "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him'" (John 7:37-38). Are drinking from His living water? It's freely available to all, but you must drink it!





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 27. ROW HOME, SWEET ROW HOME

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You don't really know someone until you visit with them in their home. Seeing someone in the context of their daily life makes it much easier to understand them. The same is true of Bible people. While we can't go back and visit with them in their homes, we can learn what their homes were like. This helps us understand Bible passages much better.

**ONE ROOM HOMES** were where the poor lived. Some had a room in front for their workshop (carpentry, tanning, sell merchandise, etc.). Others had a space for their animals to sleep at night while they rolled out their mats on a raised platform where animals wouldn't step on them. Inside was dark, damp, crowded and hot. Lamps were needed to see (Lk 15:8-10). They were lifted up to shed light everywhere (Mt. 5:1-16). When they smoked they were put out, unlike God who never rejects His own (Isa 42:3).

Cooking was done outside, and most living was done on the roof. This is where food was dried and stored. Rahab hid the spies behind piles of food (Josh 2:6). Rooftops were better than roadways for fast travel as well as spreading news (Isa 22:1; Mt 10:27; Lk 12:3). Peter went to a roof for quiet and privacy to pray (Acts 10:9) and Jesus took Nicodemus there for their talk (John 3:1-2). Grass would quickly grow on these roofs, for they were made of dirt. It would soon wither for it didn't have root (Psalm 129:6). When it rained the roof would leak and water would drip into the house. It produced an annoying effect, like a nagging wife (Prov 19:13; 27:15).

**HOMES WITH A COURTYARD** were much more expensive and elaborate. Cooking, living and relaxing were done outside in the courtyard. Often there would be a well or cistern. David hid from Absalom in such a cistern (II Sam 17:18-19). It was in a courtyard that Peter denied the Lord (Mt 26:69, 71; Jn 18:18). Bathsheba was bathing in the privacy of her courtyard when David went to the roof of his tall palace and was able to look down upon her (II Sam 11:2).

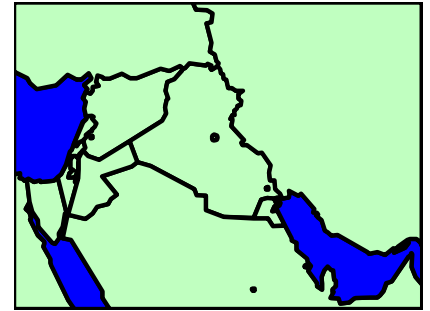
Sometimes there was an upper room, often with its own entrance from the back. This is the kind of place Elijah had (I Kings 4:10), where Dorcas was raised by Peter (Acts 9:36-41), where Jesus had his last supper (Luke 22:7-13) and where the disciples were when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:13).

Entrance was by a front door. When open it was an invitation to enter (Rev 3:8). Usually it was closed until the voice of the visitor was heard, then it was up to those inside to recognize and welcome the person or reject them (Rev 3:20), as is true of us when Jesus speaks to us. We, too, are to hear His voice and open to Him. He won't force the door down, it's up to us. Are you listening to His voice? Do you respond when you hear Him? Please do!



# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE

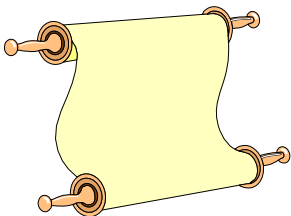


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## 28. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FAMILY - I

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If Peter, or John or even Jesus were alive today, in what ways would their daily life be different than what it was in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago? I guess we could better ask in what ways wouldn't it be different? Would they have liked living today instead of then? The differences are great. In order to understand a person you need to understand their culture. Missionaries must know and become part of the culture in which they live in order to relate to understand the people. We must understand the culture the New Testament was written in so we can better interpret and apply it to use today. If we would have been alive when Jesus spoke and Paul wrote their words would take on new meaning. We can gain some of that by going back and better understanding their times and culture. Since all they said and did related to daily life, it's really important to understand just what daily life was like in Palestine 2,000 years ago.

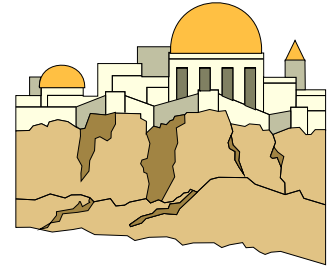


In Jesus' day there were about **4 million Jews** in the world (7% of the population of the Roman Empire). The largest concentrations were in Alexandria, Egypt and in Syria. There were only about 700,000 Jews in Palestine. In fact, in Galilee and Decapolis there were more Gentiles than Jews. Thus Palestine was heavily influenced by all the Romans and other Gentiles who lived there. The Jews lived in their own areas and communities, set apart from the Gentile communities all around them. The only contact was by travel. Today TV, radio, newspapers, movies, etc., cover miles instantly. That was not the case then. The only contact was by travel from one community to another.

**Transportation** was poorly developed in Palestine. Most was done by foot or donkey. Roads were unpaved but were fairly safe except for robbers in the hills (parable of the Good Samaritan). Horses were used mainly for warfare. Ox-carts were used to travel on short trips with goods, but were too bumpy to go far. Only the very rich had chariots, and camels were used by merchants for long trips across deserts. They were the tractor trailers of their day. Everyone, rich or poor, was able to walk. Walking took much time. For example, a trip from Capernaum to Jerusalem was 85 miles and took several days. Walking everywhere contributed to a much slower life style than we have today. Not only was walking healthy, but it was conducive to talking to fellow travelers and enjoying nature.

How a person's day developed was determined largely by their **social class**. Rich merchants and bankers, chief priests and leading rabbis composed the upper class. They lived a life of ease and luxury. The opposite end of the spectrum was composed of the slaves, who outnumbered freemen in the Roman Empire. They were prisoners of war, debtors and criminals.

Many slaves were more educated than their masters and often were teachers for their master's children. Slaves had no freedom, rights or privileges. Theirs was a life of bondage and service. Most were treated kindly, but their day consisted of doing what their masters wanted. In between the upper class and slaves was the working class: farmers, small businessmen and craftsmen. These included shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, silver smiths, iron or brass craftsmen, wine makers, writers, butchers, wool-combers, flax-spinners, candle-makers, night watchmen, shepherds, dyers, and tanners. Life was hard but good for these people. Life wasn't fancy or easy, but it was filled with the basics: good food, nice family life and religious activities.



The **personality** of the people themselves is important to understand, too. They were witty, clever, good-humored, excitable, impulsive, quick and sharp-witted. They were creative and imaginative as well as fond of parables and good-natured arguing. There was a real enthusiasm for learning. Even though 'education' then wasn't as developed as today, the people were far from dumb. They were quite intelligent, speaking several languages fluently and knowing large portions (even whole books) of the Bible by heart. Not only were they intellectually sharp, they were also emotionally sensitive to the feelings of others and very warm-natured. They were also loyal Jews, very patriotic and zealous for their nation. They were good, honest, hard-working, down-to-earth people. The religious leaders were self-centered and prideful, but they were only a small minority.

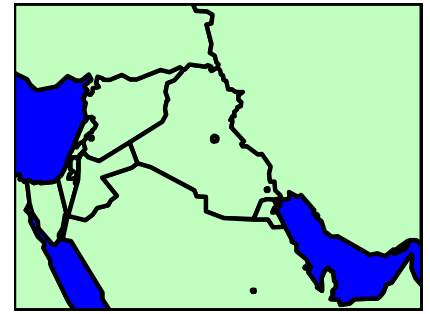
The focus of daily life was on the **family**. A large family of many children was considered a great blessing from God. Children were taught to obey their parents and were disciplined for lack of loving consideration of others. They weren't abused or beaten, though. From birth to 3 years of age the mother was the main teacher. The child learned Jewish history, traditions and customs. They were taught to honor and obey parents and all elders. They memorized Scripture, benedictions and prayers. From 3 to 5 the Father became the main teacher as formal instruction began. These included history, Bible, math and career training. At 5 years of age they started to learn to read the Hebrew Bible and at 6 supplemented their education by taking some classes at the local synagogue. These were for moral as well as intellectual training. They also began learning their life's trade at this time: girls at home and boys learning their father's trade (or that of an uncle or older brother). By 10 girls formal education diminished as she was involved more and more in the work of running the home and raising younger children. Boys would begin studying the Mishnah and preparing for their manhood ceremony at age 13. At 15 boys would begin reading the Talmud and at about 18 they would marry.

Boys would **marry** at 18 or soon after, girls often before 18. Marriage was a very serious responsibility. Parents made the arrangements, but usually a man picked his own wife and she had to give her own consent. Of course, a Jew couldn't marry outside the Jewish race. First came the promise (like our engagement today). Then legal documents were signed -- the betrothal. The couple didn't begin living together for almost a year, until the actual marriage ceremony itself when the groom would go get the bride and bring her back to the home he had been building for her. Marriage was sacred and special, and most marriages were good, with deep love developing and growing as the years went on. Polygamy was rare. Divorce wasn't too easy or too common but was allowed because of the people's sin.

Family life, food, jobs -- everything in life seemed different compared to now. One thing was the same, though -- everyone still died. Basic needs for love and security were still there, and only Jesus could meet them then or now. (Continued in next article.)

# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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## 29. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FAMILY - II

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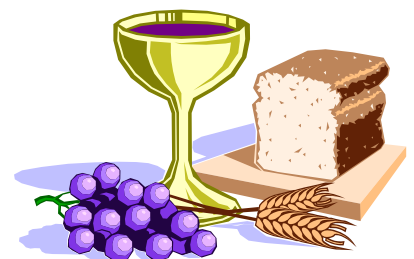
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The **husband** was the head of the family. He lived a long, active life. The 60's were seen as the commencement of aging, 70's gray age, 80's advanced age, 90's bowed down, and 100 as good as dead! The life span then wasn't much different than today! The man, as head of the family, was responsible for family management, religious training, discipline and leadership. He was responsible to provide for and protect his wife and family in all their needs. His work was often in a room in the front of the house and even those who went away from the home for work were home for meals, weekends and evenings. Work time was flexible and flowed around family trips, activities and other needs. The family wasn't fragmented as it is today.

The **wife** was under her husband and very important. She had much influence over her children, took part in family affairs, and was greatly respected and honored by Jews. Among the Gentiles a woman was often valued on the same level as a good head of cattle. Jewish women were very modest and withdrawn from men's affairs. Meekness, modesty and shamefacedness are traits treasured by women. Bad qualities, grounds for divorce, included gossip, immodesty, ill-treatment of in-laws, yelling at husband, bad reputation and disobedience.

Daily life for the Jews everywhere, and especially those in Palestine, was influenced in every way by their religion. It wasn't just a creed but was applied to every relationship and duty and dominated every phase of life. For some it was mere ritual, just outer actions, but for others there was a deep inner faith in God. Their daily **devotional life** consisted of prayer when awakening and before going to sleep as well as any time during the day. There were daily public prayer times at the temple and synagogues. Prayer before and after each meal was standard policy. Scriptures were constantly studied and memorized. The Sabbath was strictly observed as unto God. It was a time of family worship, rest and praise to God.

As in any culture, much of life focused around **meal time**. Food preparation, consummation, and cleanup took much time and shaped much of the daily life, especially of women. A very light breakfast was eaten early, usually just a simple snack. The midday meal was a big meal, but the principle meal was eaten at 6 or 7 in the evening. Hands were washed before and after each meal, as food was eaten out of a common dish with the fingers. Tables and chairs weren't used, instead mats were used for reclining around a very low table.



Kosher laws clearly dictated which foods could and couldn't be eaten. Unclean foods were forbidden (Lev 11:4-8; Dt 14:7-8). Any quadruped which did not chew the cud and have cloven hooves was considered unclean. Also forbidden would be fish without scales and fins (eels,

shellfish - Lev 11:9-12), birds of prey which eat worms and carrion (Lev 11:13), snakes (Lev 11:20-24, 42) and insects which walk as well as fly (Lev 11:20-24, 42). In addition blood and bloody meat was forbidden (Lev 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-14; Deut 12:16,23). Anything consecrated to idols couldn't be eaten (Ex 34:15). The fatty portions of sacrifices had to be burned on the altar (Lev 13:17; 7:23-25). Strong alcoholic drink and getting drunk were strictly forbidden, too (Num 6:3; Prov 20:1).

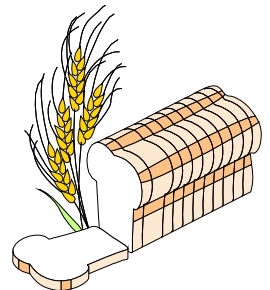
Other food items were forbidden for sanitary reasons. These included cattle that fell down dead or were torn by wild animals (Ex 22:3; Lev 11:39; Deut 14:21), water touched by unclean insects (Lev 11:33-34), food or liquids which were in the tent of a dying person and weren't covered (Num 19:14-15) and a goat cooked in its mother's milk (Ex 23:19; 34:26; Dt 14:21 - done by Canaanites in idol worship). As you can see, these made very good sense according to modern medical knowledge. God was protecting His people from diseases and sickness, and as a result the Jews were more healthy than their neighbors. God knows what He is doing!

What foods were then allowed? More variety than we would think. Grains provided their chief nourishment. They were roasted in fire, eaten raw or baked into bread. Vegetables such as pulse, lentils, beans, onions, garlic, cucumbers and green herbs were used. Usually they were cooked in pots and seasoned with oil. Fruits like oranges, apricots, plums, figs, pomegranates, lemons, grapes, raisins and dates were commonly eaten.

Favorite meats included oxen, sheep and goats. Next best were calves, lambs and kids. Pigeons and turtle doves were also common. The rich also ate stag, antelope, buck and winged game. Meat was usually boiled and served with broth. Fish was also abundant, especially in Galilee, and many Jews there preferred it to red meat.

Milk from cows, sheep or goats, either sweet or sour, thick or curdled was used. These were also made into cheese or butter. Milk was considered a food item, not a drink. Water was used for drinking. Often it would be mixed with vinegar and oil or sour wine to make it sour and better quench the thirst. Weak wine, watered down to a low alcoholic content, was also used, especially where sanitary water was unavailable.

Honey was used as a sweetener. Locusts were roasted after the wings, feet and intestines were removed, or they were boiled in water and buttered. They were also salted and preserved in bottles. Thus there was a good variety of food, despite the lack of preservatives or refrigeration. People ate for nourishment and health, not mainly for taste as is often the case today.

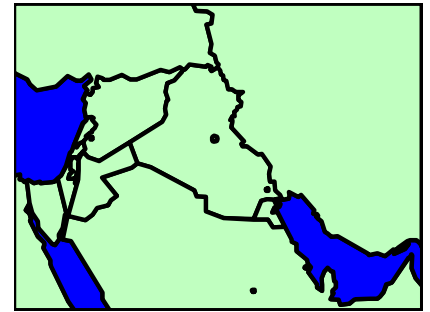


**Funerals** were important, for the Jews (all except the liberal Sadducees) believed in life after death. Arms, legs and the whole body was washed and wrapped in linen cloth. Sometimes sweet-smelling spices were put in the cloth. They did not embalm or cremate. Funerals were held the day of death because of the stink coming from decay. They were carried to a burial place on an exposed bier. Women proceeded first, for they are credited with bringing death into the world through Eve. Hired mourners are also an important part of a funeral procession. Friends and others also walk to the burial spot where a short ceremony takes place. Death then, like now, is devastating

Do you think Jesus would rather dress and eat like He did then or like we do now? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each? What can we do to minimize the disadvantages today? What can we do to have some of the advantages they had? Thinking about these things can bring some rewarding and fruitful insights. (Continued next article)



## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 30. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FAMILY - III

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(Continued from previous article)

**Dress** was simple, without the variety of clothing available today. Neither were their changing fads. A few basic articles of clothing could and would last for many years. The items of clothing for men, women and children consisted of a turban (thick material wound around the head to protect it from the sun and dirt), tunic (basic sleeveless garment of leather, haircloth, wool, linen or cotton worn next to the skin), mantle (overcoat or cloak to shelter from rain or as a blanket at night), sash (long, thin piece of material tied around the waist to hold the tunic in place, often also used to carry money or other belongings), and sandals (worn outside, not in house). While similar, it was easy to tell men from women. Women's dress was longer, material finer, and a long veil covered their hair in back while another veil covered their face in front). Women of all ranks in society made clothing for themselves and their families (I Sam 2:9; Prov 31:22; Acts 9:39).

When entering a home sandals as well as mantles would be taken off. Feet were covered by clothing when sitting on the floor as an act of reverence. People wore their tunics to sleep in and used their mantle for a blanket. To be 'naked' meant to have only a tunic on (Jn 21:7). Jesus' seamless tunic, which the soldiers gambled for, was very valuable since it was woven in one piece (Jn 19:23). "To be girded up" means to tuck the mantle in the sash so it wouldn't hinder action and movement (Lk 12:35; Eph 6:14). Going the second mile means giving someone your mantle when they sued for your tunic (Mt 5:40). Jewish law said no one could sue for the mantle because it was too important, but you could voluntarily give it away. Ruth used her mantle to carry 6 measures of barley (Ruth 3:15; Lk 6:38).

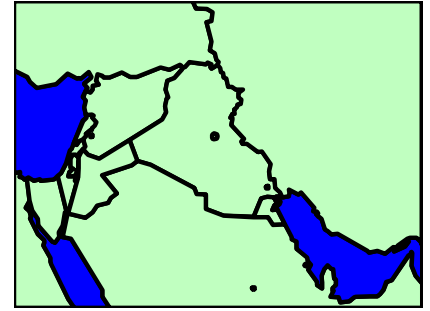
While a woman's long hair was often down but covered by a veil in back, men wore their hair short and trimmed their beards and mustaches. Items which were condemned included wearing oil or perfume in the hair, dying hair, wigs, artificially curling hair, fancy dress or showy jewelry, cosmetics (lipstick, eye shadow or eye brow paint), etc. The Bible gives us guidelines today about how to dress: I Tim 2:9-10; I Pt 3:3-4; Isaiah 3:16-24; Deut 22:5; and I Cor 6:9-10.

The **yearly calendar** for the Jews explains the cycle of the year and what happened when. This greatly influenced their daily lives, as our daily life is influenced by seasons & holidays.





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 31. JUDAISM: THE INSIDE STORY

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You couldn't spit on the ground on this day, for that would disturb the dust and be 'plowing'. You couldn't look in a mirror on this day for you might see a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out and that was work. If a hen laid an egg on this day you couldn't eat it, unless you killed the hen. If your house caught fire on this day, you couldn't carry anything out for that would be work. You could, however, put on several garments at once and wear them out, then take them off and go in for more. On this day you couldn't boil an egg, turn a lamp on or off, move furniture (except ladder, then just 4 steps), wear ornaments, take sandals off, fix a water leak, stop bleeding or wear false teeth -- that was carrying a load! You couldn't tie a knot unless you could untie it with one hand. You couldn't write in permanent ink, but temporary writing was allowed. On and on the list goes, hundreds and thousands of rules were given and enforced, all about how to observe the Sabbath. Who was behind this? What brought this all about? To understand Judaism in the time of Jesus lets go back to the beginning.

God created the nation of Israel from Abraham. As they grew they developed into twelve tribes. Eleven of these were Jacob's sons, two came from the Joseph. That makes 13. One of the 11, however, was set aside as priests and temple workers for God. The tribe of **LEVI** replaced the firstborn male, which belonged to God since the night of the Passover in Egypt. These Levites took care of the tabernacle and then temple. They did the work involved, led the singing, played the instruments, policed the property and did whatever was necessary.

The **PRIESTS** were part of the tribe of Levi. They were descendants of Aaron. There were so many priests that they took turns going to Jerusalem to minister: two weeks a year (it was during his turn there that Zacharias was told his wife would give birth to John). The rest of the time they taught and ministered in their local home towns.

Over each of these 24 groups of priests was a **CHIEF PRIEST**. They had great influence, but were under the authority of the **HIGH PRIEST** who was the firstborn son of the firstborn son of the firstborn son, all the way back to Aaron. He was the king (in effect, not by birth), president and head of Parliament in his day. It was a lifetime position with great power, prestige and wealth. He was to be the main man to represent God to man and man to God, a picture of Jesus Himself, but in Jesus' day the office had degenerated into a political position.



The **SCRIBES** were highly trained, intellectual, committed men from any tribe who spent their lifetime studying the Scriptures and copying them by hand. They were students, interpreters and teachers of the law, highly respected by the people. They were called “scribe,” “lawyer,” “teacher,” or “rabbi.” They memorized and could recite by memory any law in the Old Testament, Targum, Talmud or oral law. They also knew large portions of the Old Testament by heart. Ezra and others are reputed to have the whole Old Testament committed to memory. Unfortunately they rejected Christ and focused on external religious standards. Christ condemned their focus (Mt 16:21; 21:15; 23:2; 26:3; Mk 12:28-40). The Old Testament was studied in the original Hebrew, in an Aramaic paraphrase (Targum) and in Greek, the common language of the day (Septuagint). The Talmud consisted of the Mishna, which were oral laws which had been written down, and the Gemara, which were commentaries on the Mishna laws.

Thus the priests and scribes had tremendous influence on the Jews of Jesus’ day. The ruling body was called the **SANHEDRIN** which means “council.” They had supreme civil and religious power over Jews no matter where they lived. It consisted of the High priest as president, the 24 Chief Priests, 22 Scribes to interpret the law, and 24 elders (rich, influential men who represented the laity). Jesus (Mt 26:57-68), Peter, John and Stephen were all brought before this powerful body (Acts 4:1-7; 6:12 - 7:1).

Now, to further complicate the matter, these men and others of influence in Israel belonged to various sects, ‘political parties’ they could be called. The largest and most influential group was the **PHARISEES**. They were the hypocritical legalists and were highly respected by the people who were impressed with their outer show of piety. They were behind all the Sabbath rules. They clashed constantly with Jesus (Mt 12:1-2; 23:1-33; Lk 6:6-7; 11:37-54). They looked for a coming Messiah who would overthrow Rome and restore their power, for they traced their roots back to the Maccabeans. They accepted the inspiration of the Scriptures, but put the oral law above the written Word. They felt there was a future life and that salvation came from being born a Jew and keeping the law.

Their arch rivals were the **SADDUCEES**, the worldly-minded liberals. They were a smaller group and not as influential over the common people;. Wealthy and influential Jews sided with this group. They lived for the here and now and didn’t care about a Messiah, future life or salvation. They rejected the inspiration of the Scriptures. Jesus condemned their beliefs, too (Mt 16:1-12; 22:23-33). That the Pharisees and Sadducees would work together in cooperation to remove Jesus shows how strong their jealousy of Him was.

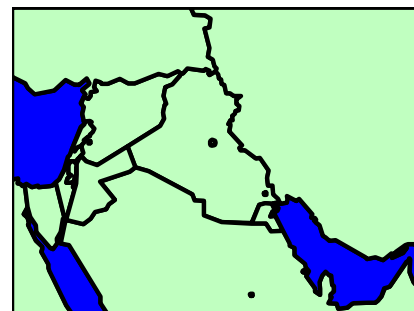
Other less numerous groups were common, too. The **ZEALOTS** wanted to drive Rome out by force. They were underground terrorists. Barabbas, the 2 men crucified with Jesus and Simon the Zealot, the disciple of Jesus, were from this group (Mt 10:4). **HERODIANS**, were just the opposite. They wanted to further the power of Herod’s family. They were very bitter enemies of the Pharisees and regarded Christ as a revolutionary because they didn’t want any challenge to the political system as it was (Mk 3:6; 8:15; 12:13-17).

Another group, the **ESSENES**, formed a monastic community at the Dead Sea. They were very strict in discipline and lived a simple life. The four thousand or so members were preparing for the coming of the Messiah. One of their most strict communities was **QUMRAN**, where the Dead Sea Scrolls originated.

Just this short overview shows the conflicting ideas when and where Jesus lived. It shows why the Jews needed Him at that time, but also shows why they rejected Him. Today, too, He is needed yet often rejected. Make sure you aren’t a hypocritical legalist or a worldly-minded liberal. Open your heart to the King of the Universe who came as the Jew’s Messiah!

# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE

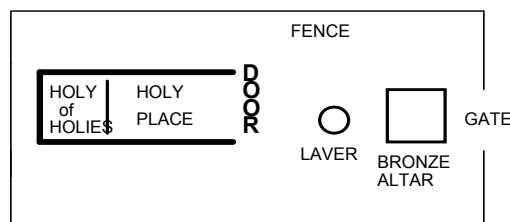


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### 32. THE TEMPLE: WHERE ALL ROADS LEAD

World traveler and renowned historian, who lived during the time of the temple Herod rebuilt, said that temple was the greatest building in the ancient world, greater than the Acropolis (Athens) or the Forum (Rome). Truly, the temple in Jesus' day was a majestic building. It was also a very important building. It was the central place for all Jews: geographically, emotionally, spiritually and politically. A visit to it was the highpoint of any Jew's life.

God gave the pattern of the original **TABERNACLE** to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and for hundreds of years that was where God met with man (see series of articles, "The Tabernacle," by Jerry Schmoyer). David planned for a permanent temple in Jerusalem, which Solomon built. However it was destroyed by the Babylonians when the Jews went into captivity. Ezra started rebuilding it, but Herod is the one who made it into the magnificent building it was in Jesus' day.



**HEROD'S TEMPLE** was twice as large as the one Ezra started and Zerubbabel completed, 26 acres. He even cut the top off the hill north of the old City of David and built up retaining walls to enlarge the platform area. In the chambers under the platform supplies were kept. Later the Crusaders kept their horses here. One of the large underground foundational retaining walls, by the way, is the current "Wailing Wall," the only part of Herod's temple still standing. The Romans destroyed everything above ground in

70 AD. While Herod had many large building projects, the temple was his greatest. He wanted to win the approval of his Jewish subjects and spent great amounts of money on it. The work was done by 18,000 priests (for they were the only ones who could enter the temple). He started this project in 20 BC and didn't complete it until 64 AD, just a few years before it was destroyed. This became an important key in dating Jesus' ministry (John 2:20).

The Temple building itself was beautiful! It was made of white marble with parts covered with gold. Thus the rays of the rising eastern sun would be reflected everywhere by it. It was high and could be seen from a great distance, and was very impressive (Mark 13:2-3). The outer walls were over 100' high, made of blocks weighing 50 to 100 tons each. Stones in the Wailing Wall, the remaining foundation, are 3 to 4 feet high (the largest is 6 feet high) and 3 to 10 feet long (the largest being 40 feet long). They fit so exactly without mortar or cement that paper can't be inserted between the blocks. No wonder the disciples were startled when Jesus said that not one of these stones would be left upon another (Mark 13:1-2).

The highest part of the temple, the **PINNACLE**, was 450 feet above the Kidron. This is where Satan tempted Jesus to cast Himself down (Mt 4:5) so all would see angels protect Him, and thus make Him king without having to go to the cross. James, Jesus' brother, was killed by being thrown off here in 62 AD (Acts 12:2). There were 8 **GATES** into the temple: 2 on the south (the Hulda gates), 4 on the west, the Sheep Gate on the north and the Susa (Golden) on the east.

Upon entering one of these gates one was immediately in the **OUTER (GENTILE) COURT**. Here various people from all countries gathered to meet, buy and trade, worship and learn. It became such a highway and place of business that Jesus, in anger, tried to turn it back to its rightful use as a place of worship (Mark 11:15-16).

The southern portion of this great court was called the **ROYAL PORCH**. One hundred and sixty two columns 100' high held up a gallery and above that a roof. An isle went down the middle 45' wide. Each pillar was so large it took 3 men to encircle it. Here the temple markets were set up and the temple tax paid. Here is where Joseph bought their pigeons for Jesus presentation.

On the eastern side, toward the Kidron Valley, was **SOLOMON'S PORCH**. In the winter it was a shelter from the cold and would catch the warming rays of the sun (John 10:22). Here rabbis (teachers) went to teach their followers. Galamiel taught Paul here. Jesus was taught here by the leaders when he was 12, then later taught His own followers here (John 10:23). Peter and the other apostles went here to preach and teach as well (Acts 3:11; 5:12). Perhaps this was where Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost was given.

As one moved toward the middle of this great court and into the temple itself, one would first have to pass by a wall called the **SOREG**. This was to warn all Gentiles to enter no further. In fact, a stone with this inscription has been found: "No alien may enter within the barrier and wall around the temple. Whoever is caught violating this is alone responsible for the death penalty which follows." The Jews were quite serious about God forbidding any but His people entrance into his presence. Paul was once falsely accused of bringing a Gentile past this wall, and was only kept from death by the intervention of the Roman troops stationed there (Acts 21:27-36). His trial was moved to Caesarea, then to Rome itself when Paul appealed to Caesar. It was on that trip that Paul was shipwrecked. That whole event, starting with his arrest for seemingly violating the Soreg, moved Paul from the spotlight of the early church and eventually led to his death.

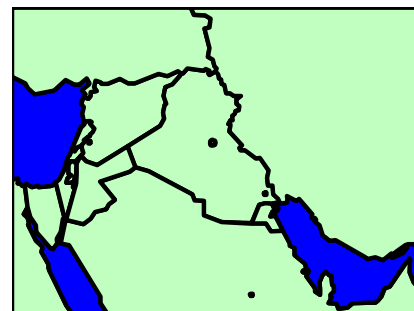
Of even greater significance, though, is Paul's statement that the Soreg in heaven was broken down by Jesus on the cross. *"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility"* (Ephesians 2:14-16). Because of Jesus, we Gentiles now have what we before were denied: direct access to God's very presence!

Even better, however, is the truth that we don't have to go to a temple in Jerusalem to be in God's presence. God now sets up His temple in our hearts. WE are the temple of God (I Cor 3:16-17; 6:12-20; II Cor 6:16). Allowing Gentiles entrance into His presence was great, making His home on earth in our hearts is more astounding than words can describe. He is worthy of all our praise and service for this great act of love of His! No sacrifice is too great for One who would do something so wonderful for us!





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 33. THUS FAR & NO FURTHER: COURTS

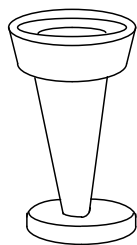
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Can you imagine someone watching over your shoulder as you put your offering in the plate on Sunday, recording what everyone gave? We would be shocked by the behavior of anyone doing such a thing, but Jesus evidently made a habit of doing that in the temple.

Upon entering the temple, crossing through the outer court (court of the Gentiles), one passed the Soreg, the wall keeping Gentiles out. Then one entered the **COURT OF THE WOMEN**. It was called this because it was as far as women could go, since they were considered ritually impure because of Eve's part in bringing sin into the world. Thus they couldn't go into the court of the men or the priests.

In each corner of the Court of the Women were unroofed rooms for storage of sacrificial wine and oil, materials for the cleansing ceremonies for lepers, a place for those coming to take a Nazarite vow, etc. It was here that Anna and Simeon met Jesus when He was dedicated. It was here the woman caught in adultery was drug before Jesus. It was here Jesus gave His 'light of the world' discourse.

Around the court were set 13 chests for the collection of offerings to God and the temple. They were made of brass, shaped as inverted trumpets. When metal coin was dropped into them a large sound was made, and quite a show was given when rich men gave their offerings. A servant would sound a trumpet and other servants would slowly pour in bag after bag of pennies, making as loud and long a noise as possible. The rich man would stand in the front to receive the acclaim of everyone watching him give such a large gift. Evidently this didn't impress Jesus, though, as He watched one day. What did was a widow who gave the bare minimum required by law (Luke 21:1-7; Mk 12:41-44) which, Jesus knew, was all the money she had. Jesus really wasn't looking at the amount anyone gave, He was looking at their motive as they gave it. What does He think as He looks at your hearts as you give your offerings to Him?



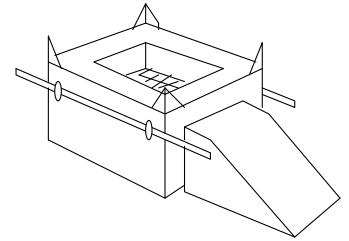
To the west of the Court of the Women was a beautiful gate, called the Nicator Gate. Only men could go through it and enter the outer edges of the next court. This area was called the **COURT OF THE MEN**. Men could enter here to offer sacrifices, for they needed to place their hands on the animal (a picture of the animal becoming guilty of their sin) before killing it. The central part of this court was called the **COURT OF THE PRIESTS**. In it were the laver and the altar of sacrifice. The laver was for continual cleansing (after salvation -- I John 1:9).

Around the outer wall were rooms where the Sanhedrin and its various committees met. It was here that the man Jesus healed at Siloam was brought to be interrogated, that Judas made



his bargain with the religious rulers (Mt 26:14-16), that Jesus was condemned (Lk 22:66-71; Mt 27:1), that Judas tried to return the money (Mt 27:3-10), and that the guards reported Jesus' resurrection (Mt 28:11-15).

The **ALTAR** itself was a picture of salvation, and dominated the court. Actually the court was more a butcher shop than anything else. Even before entering one could hear the cries of the animals being killed and smell the burning skin, hair and fat of the sacrifices. As one got closer one could see thousands of animals being slaughtered and burnt. You could feel the blood under your feet on the stones as well as feeling the soot in your throat. Of course there was much music and singing of psalms and praise songs, but the central object was blood -- innocent blood being shed because of sin!



All day long **SACRIFICING** went on. It started at first light, when a priest on the pinnacle would blow a sofar (ram's horn for a trumpet) signaling the start of the day. The priests inside would open the gates allowing people who had already gathered outside to enter. Some gates were so large and heavy they took 20 priests to push them open.

Immediately sacrifices would begin. First incense would be burnt on the altar in the Holy Place starting the rising of sweet-smelling prayers and praise to God. This was also toward the close of the day, when Zechariah heard from Gabriel about his son John.

With this completed, burnt offerings for the sin of the nation as a whole and the emperor would be given. These were paid for out of the temple treasury. Private individuals and groups could then make their own offerings. These consisted of trespass offerings for sins committed in ignorance as well as thank offerings which were given in praise and thanksgiving for God's goodness. Depending on the giver's financial status, animals (large or small), grain or oil were given. Tickets for animals were purchased in the outer court, and then the animal was brought to the sacrificer by the altar. The animal was thrown to the pavement with his body aligned north and south so when his head was twisted back his last sight would be the temple. This was a picture of his death for sin being because of God's holiness in not allowing sin in His presence. As his throat was slit a gold or silver bowl would be used to catch the blood. It was poured out at the base of the altar, where an underground channel would carry it into the Kidron River below. Then the dead animal was butchered and its parts distributed: some burnt, others kept by the offerer or given to the priests for their use.

All throughout this time trumpets, cymbals and other instruments would be playing, choirs of Levites would sing the psalms, and people would be chanting and praising God. This is certainly different than when we would be comfortable with when we walk into church!

It's obvious, though, that the blood of innocent sacrifices is the focal point of it all. To them it was a picture that sin had to be paid for by innocent blood. To us it is a reminder of the One who

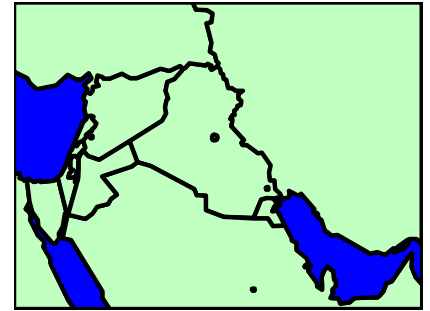


paid that price, Jesus Himself who died on the cross for our sins. The Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world is the final sacrifice for all sin, the **ONLY** sacrifice for sin. When the Jews rejected that sacrifice and kept turning to animal blood, God allowed the Romans to destroy Jerusalem and its records, so the sacrifices would have to stop. Even today they cannot be resumed because the Dome of the Rock, the second most sacred place to Islam, is now on that spot, which is the only place sacrifice can be

offered to God. Praise God that the final sacrifice has been made, and that our sins are now eternally covered by the blood of the Lamb!

# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE

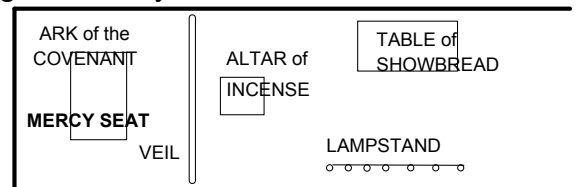


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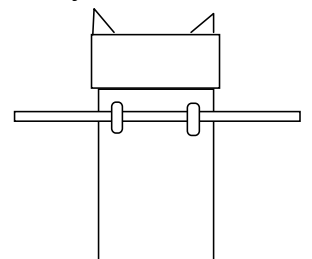
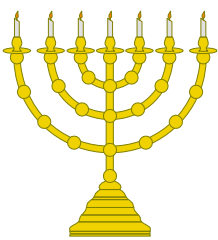
### 34. THE BUILDING GOD CALLED 'HOME'

What a sight! Marble and gold reflecting the morning sun. Power and glory evident everywhere. Tremendous external glory only surpassed by the internal glory of God's very presence. This place is the temple, patterned after the tabernacle. Solomon built the first permanent one (planned by his father David). The Babylonians destroyed it and Zerubbabel rebuilt it. Herod remodeled it into one of the most splendid buildings of its day.

Situated in the midst of the various courts, the temple building itself housed the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Around the outside were the priest's chambers where they stored things and perhaps even lived.



**THE HOLY PLACE** When one entered the Holy Place immediately one was taken with all the beauty. Only priests could enter, and only as it was their turn to serve. On the right was the table of showbread, on the left the lampstand, and straight ahead the altar of incense. Each Of these was very important in its function and significance. The lampstand provided light and was a picture of Jesus as the light of the world. The table of showbread speaks of Jesus as the bread of life, the One who nourishes us. The altar of incense is a picture of prayers ascending as a sweet smell to God. (For detailed information on this see "The Tabernacle" by Jerry Schmoyer).



ALTAR OF INCENSE

Having come by the only door (Jesus is the only way), past the altar where innocent blood is shed (salvation provided by Jesus) and the laver where daily cleansing takes place (confession of sin through Jesus), when a priest (a picture of all believers, for we are all priests before God, 1 Peter 2:5-9; Rev 1:6) entered the Holy Place all changed. The sights, sounds and smells of the courtyard were replaced by quietness and a sweet smell. It was a picture of coming into God's presence to worship. Of all in the camp, only some came by the blood for salvation. Of those, only a small part entered into God's presence to minister in his light, enjoy a sweet time of prayer and be nourished on the Bread of Life. What could be better than to withdraw from the business outside and enter into the presence of the Lord? That's what we need today, too. It's available in the same way for us. However we must come.

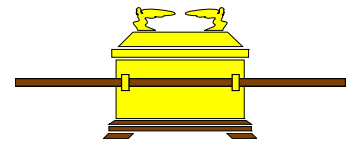
FURNITURE	SYMBOL	TYPE
BRONZE ALTAR	Atonement through Sacrifice	Atonement of Christ
BRONZE LAVER	Spiritual renewal	Regeneration & renewal by the Holy Spirit
TABLE OF SHOWBREAD	Spiritual sustenance	Christ the Bread of Life
LAMPSTAND	Spiritual illumination	Christ the light of the world, esp. His people
ALTAR OF INCENSE	Acceptable supplication	Prayer in the name of Jesus
THE ARK	Access through covenant	Christ as our covenant access
MERCY SEAT	Acceptance at the throne of God	Acceptance with God in Christ

## THE HOLY OF HOLIES

Separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was a thick, strong curtain. The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube, 30 foot on each side. The Holy Place was two cubes: 30' by 30' by 60'.

The Ark of the Covenant (which held a pot of manna, Aaron's

rod that budded and the tablet of the 10 commandments) was in the middle of the cube. The lid of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat. It was a solid gold plate with two angels looking down at the ark on top. One day a year the High Priest would come in with blood on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) and offer it as a sacrifice to God for the sins of the year. He would wear a rope around his ankle in case God rejected the offering and he died there. His body could be pulled out to keep from decaying and desecrating the place. At no other time and in no other way could anyone enter God's presence.



## HEAVEN TEMPLE

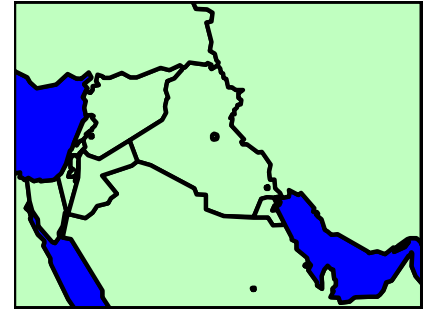
God's dwelling place	God's dwelling place
God surrounded by cherubim	God surrounded by cherubim
God surrounded by His heavenly hosts	God surrounded by His earthly hosts
God seated on a throne	Ark is God's throne
Altar representing the blood of the saints	Blood sprinkled on the altar
Incense as the prayers of the saints	Altar of incense where the priest met with God
Sea of crystal	Sea of bronze

When Jesus died that very veil was torn in two, from top to bottom, showing God was opening the way into His presence. In fact, Hebrews 10:20 says the veil was a picture of Jesus' body broken on the cross for us. Because of what He did on the cross we can come into God's presence any time we want. When we pray "In Jesus' name" we are recognizing that it is Jesus' blood that allows us access into God's presence any time. What a privilege!

An even greater privilege than being able to enter into where God's presence dwells is having God's presence dwell in us (1 Cor 3:16). While there is no temple in Jerusalem now (the Dome of the Rock, sacred to Islam, now stands on the spot), that doesn't mean God isn't dwelling on this earth. He makes His abode in the hearts of His people. His throne is in our hearts. We who have accepted Jesus as Savior are now His dwelling place on earth! Does He REIGN in your heart? Do you allow Him His rightful place of authority in your life? What a privilege that He would be willing to indwell and use us. What a difference that makes in every moment of life!

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## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 35. TOUR OF A SYNAGOGUE

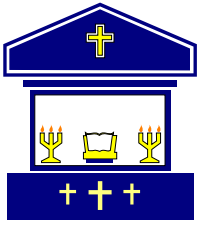
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“Lord,” “Savior,” “Alpha and Omega,” “Rock,” the names we have for Jesus goes on and on. Those who lived when He lived, though, only had two. His name, of course, was “Jesus.” The title that was given Him by people who knew Him was “Rabbi.” While we know this means “teacher,” just what were they saying when they called Him “Rabbi.” Just what was a rabbi and what did he do? To understand this we must know about synagogues in Jesus’ day.

**ORIGIN OF SYNAGOGUES** The synagogue system was started in Babylon by Ezra, when the Jews were there in captivity. Without the temple, there was no central place to gather, nothing to hold the fabric of the nation together. The synagogue has been that for Jews for almost 3,000 years. For the last 2,000 years, without a temple, the synagogue has been to Jews what the church is to Christians. Synagogues were built everywhere. Jerusalem itself had about 450 during the time of Jesus. People gathered much as today: by ethnic background, cultural status, neighborhood proximity and even occupation.

**LOCATION OF SYNAGOGUES** Synagogues were always built near water for cleansings, washings and other rituals. If they weren’t able to afford a building, meetings were held outside near running water (Acts 16:13-14). Synagogues were built facing Jerusalem if at all possible. Often they were on a high point of the town so they could get a better view toward Jerusalem.

**CONSTRUCTION OF SYNAGOGUES** They were built out of stone, decorated with motifs of garlands, animals, stars or vines. Some were plain, others quite fancy. Archaeologists can tell them from other buildings because of the Jewish symbols or inscriptions carved on them, because of the small aspe at the east end hold the Torah, and because the benches face this aspe. There are numerous windows so their encounter with God would be more direct (in a symbolic way).

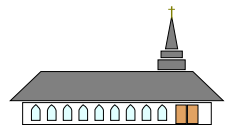


**INSIDE SYNAGOGUES** If the people were rich it would be very ornately furnished, if not it would be plain. Colonades would help support the roof. Usually there was a Biblical quotation on the wall such as “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” In the wall closest to Jerusalem there was a small opening with an ark (a chest to keep rolls of Scripture). A veil was hung in front of it, like in the temple, and lamp above it was always burning. There was a raised platform in front of this ark, called the “bema,” with steps up to it. The elders had seats on the platform, and the service was conducted from it. There was also a pulpit there, in front of the ark, to set the scrolls when they were being read from. Often a 7-branched Menorah was on the platform, too. Men would sit in the middle, facing the platform. Women would be on the sides or in the back, but out of the view of men. This was to keep men from sinning by lusting. It was also because of woman’s lesser role as a result of Eve’s role in Adam’s sin.

**OFFICERS IN A SYNAGOGUE** There were elders in charge of general affairs. A Rule of the Synagogue conducted public worship, chose the readers and speaker, was responsible for the upkeep of the synagogue building and was one of the elders. The Receiver of the Alms collected the money and products donated and used them as needed. The Minister was the best-educated man there, and the teacher (“rabbi”). He took care of the scrolls, taught the children, and did teaching and training.

**USES OF A SYNAGOGUE** The synagogue was a combination church, community center, library and city hall. Of course it was used for worship on the Sabbath as well as on Monday and Thursday (market days when people came to town). Daily prayer times were held. It was also the meeting place for public meetings, the place where charity was distributed to the poor (Acts 6), a place to shelter and care for strangers, somewhere where older men could gather each day, a school for children in the community, a court of justice for the community, the place where the military gathered and plans were made in times of war, where funerals were held, where adult education took place and as a general place for social gatherings or visiting.

**SYNAGOGUE SERVICES** As you can see, everything so far is very similar to churches today. That’s because churches (as well as public schools) had their origin in the synagogue. The first Christians were Jews, and when they started their own Christian gatherings they kept the same form and structure they had as Jews, but they added Jesus to it. Their worship would start with a reading of the shema (the call to worship - Dt 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37). Then could come a confession of faith in the form of a prayer. There would be a Scripture reading, both from the Torah (law - Genesis thru Deuteronomy) and Prophets. Then the Scriptures, read in Hebrew, would be translated into the common language of the people. If there was someone able and qualified, he would give a discourse explaining the Scripture. This ‘Rabbi’ would explain the text and apply it to their present needs. The service would then close in prayer.



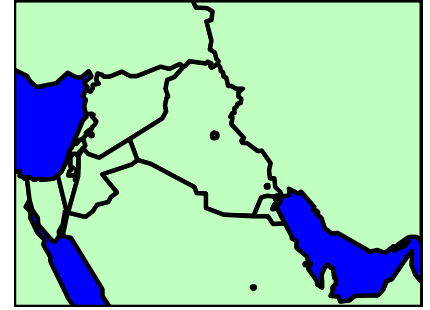
As Jesus traveled from place to place, He was invited to be the special reader for the service and then explain the Scriptures to the people. It was during the time of the Rabbi explaining the text that Jesus claimed to be Messiah in Nazareth, but was rejected by the people (Luke 4:15-30). Paul was also invited into synagogues to read and teach, too.

Thus in calling Jesus “Rabbi” the people were recognizing something very special in Him. They saw a maturity and a knowledge there that others didn’t have, and a willingness to pass this on to his followers. Not all rabbi’s ministered in synagogues, many traveled and took their disciples with them, as Jesus did. Still, understanding the synagogue structure shows the respect and role of the rabbis. Is Jesus YOUR ‘rabbi’? Do you follow Him, come to Him for teaching and wisdom, and apply what He says to your life? He may be your Savior, but is He your rabbi?





## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 36. JESUS' LIFE IN JERUSALEM

While Jesus spent most of His time in Galilee, especially the start of His ministry, Jerusalem was where it all ended. Jerusalem also fits into Jesus' ministry from the very beginning.

The very first event, you could say the first domino to fall, which eventually culminated in Jesus' death and resurrection in Jerusalem, was the **announcement to Zacharias**. While in the temple Holy Place offering incense (prayers to God), the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him he would have a son. This son was John the Baptizer.

A few months later Jesus was born in a little village 5 miles from Jerusalem, **Bethlehem**. Word from the local shepherds spread throughout the area and into Jerusalem. This must have thrilled the small group of faithful Jews awaiting the Messiah. Some even got to meet Jesus when his parents brought Him for His presentation at 40 days of age. **Anna** and **Simeon** had been waiting for Him for years. Jesus then spent some time in nearby Bethlehem, until Herod's edict to kill all the young boys drove them to Egypt. The **Magi** themselves passed through Jerusalem looking for the young King, stopping to talk with Herod at his palace.



Jesus didn't get back to Egypt until He **12 years old**. From Egypt His family moved back to Nazareth in Galilee where He grew up. When He was 12 and became a man they took Him to Jerusalem for the Passover. He stayed in **Solomon's Porch** taking with the Religious Rulers, who were impressed at His insight and knowledge. Mary and Joseph were frantic!

Jesus spent the next 30 odd years maturing in Nazareth. While it can't be proven, Jesus probably traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover as well as other feasts every year. All Jewish men who were able were expected to make this trip for the three main feasts each year (Passover, Tabernacles and Dedication).

Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem after being baptized by John was when He was tempted by Satan. Satan tempted Him by taking Him to the temple, on the **pinnacle** (the corner of the Royal Porch overlooking the Kidron Valley 450 feet below). By throwing Himself down from there and having angels catch Him, watching people would have been so impressed they would have made Him King then and there, without having to go to the cross. Fortunately for us, Jesus resisted this temptation!

Jesus went to Jerusalem every Passover during His public ministry (and for other feasts, too). The **first Passover** was a particularly eventful time. It was the summer of 27 AD. Jesus cleansed the temple for the first time. What a first impression this made on the religious rulers, the very ones He making the decisions about accepting or rejecting Him as Messiah! It was following this that a man named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and they went to the roof where Jesus was staying. Talking on a roof was quieter, cooler and more private than going inside a house or on a street to talk – it was a common practice.

Following this Jesus returned to Galilee (by way of Samaria, where He talked to the woman at the well). He spent the next year teaching and preaching, healing and helping in Galilee. If He traveled to Jerusalem during this time, and He might well have gone for the feast of Tabernacles or Dedication, nothing

is recorded. It is recorded, however, that He again went to Jerusalem in the summer of 27 for His **second Passover**. It was during this trip that he healed an impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda. This was one of the water reservoir in Jerusalem, for water was a scarce and important commodity.

Again Jesus' main ministry was in the north, Galilee, during the next year. In the summer of 29 AD He returned to Jerusalem for His **third Passover**. No details are given of what happened during that visit, but Jesus then started focusing His ministry more in Jerusalem and the surrounding area. He had spread His message through Galilee and now, as the time for His death drew nearer and nearer, He wanted to make sure those in Jerusalem and Judea had the same opportunity. He knew the response would also be rejection, but He wanted to make sure all had a fair chance. Jerusalem, because it was the seat of the religious and civil authorities, would be the place where the final decision was made. Thus Jesus' ministry shifted south during His final year on earth.

The **Feast of Tabernacles** in the fall of 29 AD was a very busy time for Jesus. He faced a lengthy, heated challenge from the religious rulers who were jealous of His popularity and wanted to discredit Him before the people. They were jealous and thought only of their own prestige. It was during this conflict that a **woman caught in adultery** was brought before Jesus, in the Court of the Women, to trap Jesus. Freeing her would break the law, condemning her would show He wasn't as merciful as they were and alienate people. Jesus turned the challenge right back to them, and once again they failed to discredit Him. During this same time, though, a mob **attempted to stone Jesus** in the temple, but God protected Him. He then **healed a man who was born blind** at the Pool of Siloam, and later gave a talk known as the **Good Shepherd Discourse**.

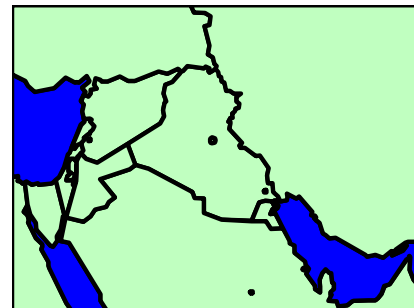
Jesus then traveled throughout the countryside around Jerusalem for several weeks, but returned to Jerusalem for the **Feast of Dedication** in the fall of 29. Again they attempted to **stone Him**. Jesus was in the temple, in Solomon's Porch (the eastern side of the temple) teaching them about their need for repentance when their stubbornness caused them to rebel.

During this time Jesus spent much time with friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus in **Bethany**, which was right over the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem. On one occasion Martha worked while Mary sat at His feet learning. Another time Lazarus died and Jesus waited two days before going to their rescue. This was so He could show His power by bringing Lazarus, who had been dead for 3 days, back to life. This caused a tremendous stir among the people and priests in Jerusalem. Many came to see Lazarus and the religious leaders decided he as well as Jesus would have to die to stop this new movement from growing. Everything is now set up for Jesus' final week on earth. No one knows what the future will hold but Jesus. Jesus will stay in Jerusalem now. He has been home to Galilee for the last time. The focus of the most important events in the history of the world would be unfolding in the next few days. Jerusalem would be the stage where these events would transpire. Jerusalem. So much had already happened in her walls. Jerusalem. So much more will soon happen...



# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 37. DEATH & RESURRECTION IN JERUSALEM

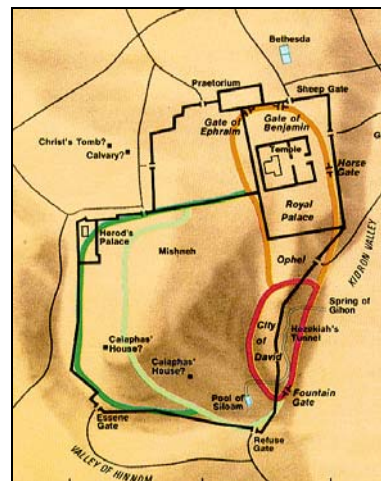
Before He even took time (6 days) to create the universe, God planned the events which would bring salvation to those who would accept it. The stage for this most-important episode was Jerusalem. God planned it that way. What a privilege to host this most-important occurrence.

Jesus arrived in **BETHANY**, across the Mt of Olives from Jerusalem, according to schedule on Friday, March 27, 33 AD. He stayed with friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus, as was His practice when going to Jerusalem. Because of Sabbath travel restrictions He stayed in town Friday evening and Saturday. Saturday evening, when the Sabbath was over, Lazarus had a feast for Jesus and the disciples. This is when Mary anointed Jesus, Judas complained, and Jesus supporter her choice.

On Monday, March 30, Jesus made His grand entry into Jerusalem. Every other time He just walked the short distance across the **MT OF OLIVES**, but this time He rode an unriden colt (proclaiming Himself Messiah-King) and encouraged His followers to proclaim Him God and King ("Hosannah," palm branches, etc.). When Jesus looked down on the city from the crest of the hill He started crying for He knew what an awful fate awaited the city and nation because they were going to reject Him. Instead of proclaiming Him king, the people scattered and wondered what He was doing. After spending a little time in the **TEMPLE** Jesus went back to Bethany for the evening.

The next day, Tuesday, March 31, Jesus again walked into Jerusalem from Bethany. This time He stopped to curse a fig tree that wasn't bearing fruit – a picture of hypocritical Israel. He showed God's coming judgment by cleansing the **TEMPLE** again. After spending time teaching He left, but now He started spending the night on the cooler **MT OF OLIVES**. Evidently an owner of a garden there let Jesus use it. It was more private and also took the heat off Lazarus and his family in Bethany.

When Jesus and the disciples passed the cursed fig tree on Wednesday, April 1, they saw it was dead and withered – an omen of things to come for Israel. Jesus spent the morning in the **TEMPLE COURTS** arguing with the religious rulers who were trying to show Him up, but failed. Then he went into the **COURT OF THE WOMEN** where the containers for offerings were located and watched as a poor woman put in all she had – 2 mites.



When they were walking out Jesus told the disciples that every stone in the **TEMPLE** would be torn down. They then paused on the **MOUNT OF OLIVES** as Jesus gave a panorama of coming events – the Olivet Discourse. Later Jesus was back in the temple teaching, probably in **SOLOMON'S PORCH**. Meanwhile, in **CAIAPHAS' HOME** in the rich section in southwestern part of the city plans were being made to arrest Jesus. Judas came there to make His offer.



Thursday was Passover day for the people from Galilee, a day before the others. After spending some time in the **TEMPLE** teaching, Jesus went to **JOHN MARK'S HOME** in the poorer southern section of the city. There He and His disciples celebrated the Passover. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, changing the focus from the Passover Lamb to Himself, the Lamb of God. Late that night, when the meal was over, Jesus and His disciples walked the streets of Jerusalem heading out to the **MT OF OLIVES**. He talked, taught and prayed while walking. He crossed the dark Kidron, running with blood from the thousands of lambs even then being killed in the temple.

After praying in **GETHSEMANE** Judas arrived with soldiers to arrest Jesus. Jesus knew Judas would know to look there, so He went awaiting His own arrest. The disciples scattered and were safe among the trees, for they weren't ready to stand up for their faith yet. Jesus was alone.

By now it was Friday, April 3. He was taken first to the **HOME OF ANNAS**, the figure-head high priest who was controlled by his father-in-law, Caiaphas. Before long He was transferred to Caiaphas' home, connected to Annas'. When that, too, failed to come up with charges that would stick, other like-minded members of the Sanhedrin were called in. Breaking all their own laws guaranteeing a fair trial, they decided Jesus had to die.

During this time Judas tried to return his money to the priests in the **TEMPLE**. When they refused it he took his own life, ultimately being buried in the **FIELD OF BLOOD** southeast of Jerusalem which was bought with his blood money. Peter was having his own crisis, too. In the **COURTYARD** of Annas' and Caiaphas' home he denied Jesus 3 times.



At about sunrise the Jews took Jesus to **ANTONIA**, the Roman fortress north of the temple area. There the Jews eventually forced Pilate to give his approval to their plan to have Jesus 'legally' murdered. Jesus was temporarily transferred to Herod who was probably staying at the **HASMONEAN PALACE**. Before long, however, He was taken to **GOLGOTHA**, a small hill north west of the city just outside the city walls. There, by a busy gate with many people passing nearby, He was crucified. When dead He was taken to a nearby **GARDEN TOMB**. The tomb was sealed and Roman soldiers stationed outside.

Most of the disciples gathered back at **JOHN MARK'S HOME** in hiding, fearing for their own lives. That all changed on Sunday, April 5. Some women went to the **TOMB** to finish covering the body with spices to cover the smell of decay. Eventually several women and probably Peter, too, saw the risen Lord there.



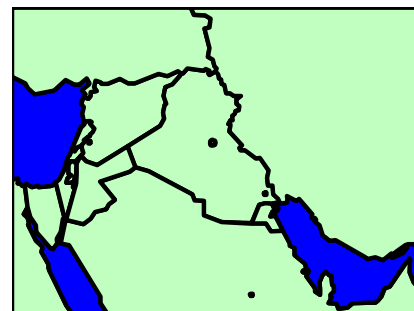
Mary and Cleophas saw Him on the **ROAD TO EMMAUS** north of Jerusalem, but that same evening He was back in Jerusalem appearing to 10 disciples and others in the **UPPER ROOM**. He returned the following week when Thomas was back, and appeared to others in Jerusalem.

After a short time in Galilee, Jesus and the disciples were again in Jerusalem, on the **MT OF OLIVES**, where Jesus ascended into heaven.

Jerusalem was indeed the stage for these events, the place where the most important events in the history of the world took place. It was God's choice for these things to happen there.



## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 38. THE EARLY CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

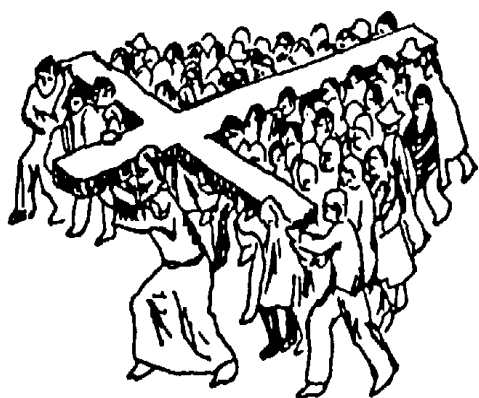
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Not only did the important events of the crucifixion and resurrection happen in Jerusalem, so did the birth of the new Church God was starting. While Israel was on the decline in God's program because of their rejection of Jesus, God was temporarily replacing them with the Bride of Christ, the Church. This, too, took place in god's special city – Jerusalem.

After the ascension of Jesus, the disciples gathered in the **UPPER ROOM** awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. During this wait they chose Matthias to replace Judas. Each day the followers of Jesus gathered in the **TEMPLE COURT** to pray and worship God.

One day before long, while gathered in the **TEMPLE**, the Holy Spirit descended like a fire. Peter preached and 3,000 were saved. Some were from out of town, just visiting for the Feast of Pentecost. They took the good news of Jesus back to their homes and synagogues. Others were residents of Jerusalem. They continued to meet in the temple each day, as well as in small groups in neighborhood homes. Many lost their jobs, savings and families because they became Christians, so others sold their possessions to help the poor.

With the **TEMPLE** as their central gathering place, the church continued to grow. Once Peter and John healed a lame man by the **BEAUTIFUL GATE**, which separated the Court of the Women from the Court of the Men. This led to an opportunity for Peter to preach, so he did in nearby **SOLOMON'S PORCH**.



Not everything went well, though. Peter and John were arrested in the **TEMPLE** and jailed there. They were taken to the **COUNCIL ROOM** in the temple to be tried. After threats and intimidation they were released. They continued to preach and the church continued to grow.

One sad event about this time was the death of Annanias and Sapphira in a **HOME** in Jerusalem. They lied, saying they gave all their money, when they had kept some back for themselves. Still, God blessed the early believers and they prospered. God even gave the leaders power to do miracles and heal people in **SOLOMON'S PORCH**. They were again arrested but released.



Before long the church was so large, and so many needy believers were being helped with food and clothing, that the leaders were using all their time to meet these physical needs. Seven deacons were taken to make sure the resources were distributed fairly among the needy. This took place in **HOMES** throughout the city.



This time of prosperity and peace was soon to end, though. One of the deacons, Stephen, was so good at defending Jesus in debates that no one, not even the Jews' star debater named Saul (later Paul) was able to show him wrong. To silence him anyway Saul had him arrested and tried in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** by the temple. He was then taken **NORTH OF THE CITY WALLS** and stoned under Saul's authority. With this a great persecution of the church began. Saul went from **HOME** to home, arresting, beating and killing believers. God used this to get the Christians to start moving out of Jerusalem and take the Gospel to others, as He had so clearly commanded them.

Saul continued his persecution, heading north on the **ROAD TO DAMASCUS** in 36 AD. It was there he met Jesus. He then spent a few years alone with God in the Arabian desert before returning to Jerusalem in 39 AD. If it hadn't been for Barnabas, Paul may not have been accepted by the Christians in Jerusalem. Paul then moved to Caesarea and helped in the church there.

Jerusalem continued to be the headquarters for the new church despite the earlier wave of persecution. Where else but Jerusalem? James, the brother of John, was thrown from the **PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE**, then stoned to death, in 45 AD. Leadership of the early church was shared by Peter, John and James, the brother of Jesus. Spurred on by the success of having James killed, the Jews tried to have Peter killed, too. He was arrested and imprisoned in **ANTONIA**, but an angel released him and he went to the **HOME** where everyone was praying for his release.

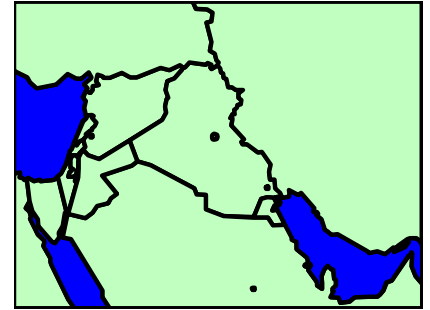
Paul's first missionary journey, which lasted a year, brought to a head a long-standing theological debate: did a Gentile have to become a Jew before he could accept Jesus as his Savior and become a Christian? The leaders of the church from all over gathered in Jerusalem to discuss and decide. Again they probably gathered in **SOLOMON'S PORCH**. God clearly showed them that they didn't have to become a Jew, a decision which has greatly affected even us today.

After going on a second (2 ½ years) and third (3 ½ years) missionary journey Paul ended up in Jerusalem again. He was bringing an offering collected from the Gentile churches for the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. While in the **TEMPLE**, in the **COURT OF THE WOMEN**, he was accused of bringing a Gentile past the **SOREG**, the dividing wall to keep Gentiles out. To keep him from being killed by the hysteric mob, Roman soldiers rescued him. He preached to the crowd from the steps leading from the temple into **ANTONIO**. Later he was taken to the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** to be tried by the Jews. Before long he had to be transferred to Caesarea to be protected from assassination by the Jews. There he witnessed to Felix and Festus before being taken to Rome and eventually his death.

Jerusalem passed from the forefront of church leadership. First Caesarea to the north, then Ephesus to the west and eventually Rome further west became the center for the early church. Jerusalem had rejected their Messiah, and the consequences were severe. Still, it wasn't the end for Jerusalem. God never forgot His special city. One day it would again be the center of His kingdom on earth.

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## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 39. JERUSALEM: FROM THEN TO NOW

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It is named the "city of peace," but Jerusalem has known anything but peace. It has been the site of over 100 wars. From 70 AD to now it has changed hands and religions at least nine times. The city of peace won't know peace until it accepts the Prince of Peace as its king!

**DESTRUCTION BY TITUS IN 70 AD** The long-smoldering discontent of the Jews against the Romans burst forth into open rebellion under the criminal incompetence of Gessius Florus, 66 AD. Palaces and public buildings were fired by the angered multitude, and after but two days' siege, the Antonia itself was captured, set on fire and its garrison slain. Cestius Gallus, hastening from Syria, was soon engaged in a siege of the city. The third wall was captured and the suburb BEZETHA burnt, but, when about to renew the attack upon the second wall, Gallus appears to have been seized with panic, and his partial withdrawal developed into an inglorious retreat in which he was pursued by the Jews down the pass to the Beth-horons as far as Antipatris.

This victory cost the Jews dearly in the long run, as it led to the campaign of Vespasian and the eventual crushing of all their national hopes. Vespasian commenced the conquest in the north, and advanced by slow and certain steps. Being recalled to Rome as emperor in the midst of the war, the work of besieging and capturing the city itself fell to his son Titus. None of the many calamities which had happened to the city are to be compared with this terrible siege. In none had the city been so magnificent, its fortifications so powerful, its population so crowded. It was Passover time, but, in addition to the crowds assembled for this event, vast numbers had hurried there, fleeing from the advancing Roman army. The loss of life was enormous; refugees to Titus gave 600,000 as the number dead.

The siege commenced on the 14th of Nisan, 70 AD, and ended on the 8th of Elul, a total of 134 days. The city was distracted by internal feuds. Simon held the upper and lower cities; John of Gischala, the temple and "Ophel"; the Idumaeans, introduced by the Zealots, fought only Walls for themselves, until they relieved the city of their terrors. Yet another party, too weak to make its counsels felt, was for peace with Rome, a policy which, if taken in time, would have found in Titus a spirit of reason and mercy. The miseries of the siege and the destruction of life and property were at least as much the work of the Jews themselves as of their conquerors. On the 15th day of the siege the third wall (Agrippa's), which had been but hastily finished upon the approach of the Romans, was captured; the second wall was finally taken on the 24th day; on the 72nd day the Antonia fell, and 12 days later the daily sacrifice ceased. On the 105th day-- the ominous 9th of Ab-- the temple and the lower city were burnt, and the whole city was in flames.

**BAR-COCHA REVOLT, 132 AD** For 60 years after its capture silence reigns over Jerusalem. We know that the site continued to be garrisoned, but it was not to any extent rebuilt. In 130 AD it was visited by Hadrian, who found but few buildings standing. Two years later (132-35 AD) occurred the last great rebellion of the Jews in the uprising of Bar-Cocha ("son of a star"), who was encouraged by the rabbi Akiba. With the suppression of this last effort for freedom by Julius Severus, the remaining traces of Judaism were stamped out, and the very site of the temple was plowed up by T. Annius Rufus; An altar of Jupiter was placed upon the temple site, and Jews were excluded from Jerusalem on pain of death.

**JERUSALEM REBUILT** In 138 Hadrian rebuilt the city, giving it the name AElia Capitolina. An equestrian statue of Hadrian was placed on the site of the "Holy of Holies". Either Hadrian himself, or one of the Antonine emperors, erected a temple of Venus on the northwestern hill, where subsequently was built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The habit of pilgrimage to the holy sites, which appears to have had its roots far back in the 2nd century, seems to have increasingly flourished in the next two centuries; beyond

this we know little of the city. In 333 AD, by order of Constantine, the new church of the Anastasis, marking the supposed site of the Holy Sepulchre, was begun. In 362 Julian is said to have attempted to rebuild the temple, but the work was interrupted by an explosion. The story is doubtful. In 450 the empress Eudoxia, the widow of Theodosius II, took up her residence in Jerusalem and rebuilt the walls upon their ancient lines, bringing the whole of the southwestern hill, as well as the Pool of Siloam, within the circuit

**PERSIA CONQUERS JERUSALEM** In 614 Palestine was conquered by the Persian Chosroes II, and the Jerusalem churches, including that of the Holy Sepulchre, were destroyed, an event which did much to prepare the way for the Moslem architects of half a century later, who freely used the columns of these ruined churches in the building of the "Dome of the Rock."

**MOSLEMS CONQUER JERUSALEM** Heracleus won the city back for Christianity, but his victory was short-lived. In 637 the victorious followers of the Prophet Mohammed appeared in the Holy City. After a short siege, it capitulated, but the khalif Omar treated the Christians with generous mercy. The Christian sites were spared, but upon the temple-site, which up to this had apparently been occupied by no important Christian building but was of peculiar sanctity to the Moslems through Mohammed's alleged visions there, a wooden mosque was erected, capable of accommodating 3,000 worshippers. This was replaced in 691 AD by the magnificent Kubbet es Sakah, or "Dome of the Rock," built by `Abd'ul Malek, the 10th khalif. For some centuries the relations of the Christians and Moslems appear to have been friendly: In 969 Palestine passed into the power of the Egyptian dynasty, and in 1010 her ruler, the mad Hakim, burnt many of the churches, which, however, were restored in a poor way.

**SELJUK TURKS AND THEIR CRUELITIES** In 1077 Isar el Atsis, a leader of the Seljuk Turks conquered Palestine from the North, drove out the Egyptians and massacred 3,000 of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The cruelty of the Turks was the immediate cause of the Crusades. In 1098 the city was retaken by the Egyptian Arabs, and the following year was again captured after a 40 days' siege by the soldiers of the First Crusade, and Godfrey de Bouillon became the first king. Great building activity marked the next 80 peaceful years of Latin rule: numbers of churches were built, but, until toward the end of this period, the walls were neglected.

**CRUSADERS TO THE RESCUE** In 1177 they were repaired, but 10 years later failed to resist the arms of the victorious Saladin. The city surrendered, but the inhabitants were spared. In 1192 Saladin repaired the walls, but in 1219 they were dismantled by orders of the sultan of Damascus. In 1229 the emperor Frederick II of Germany obtained the Holy City by treaty, on condition that he did not restore the fortifications, a stipulation which, being broken by the inhabitants 10 years later, brought down upon them the vengeance of the emir of Kerak. Nevertheless, in 1243 the city was again restored to the Christians unconditionally. The following year, however, the Kharizimian Tartars-- a wild, savage horde from Central Asia-- burst into Palestine, carrying destruction before them; they seized Jerusalem, massacred the people, and rifled the tombs of the Latin kings. Three years later they were ejected from Palestine by the Egyptians who in their turn retained it until, in 1517, they were conquered by the Ottoman Turks. The greatest of their sultans, Suleiman the Magnificent, built the present walls in 1542.

**OTTOMAN TURKS TAKE OVER** In 1832 Mohammed Ali with his Egyptian forces came and captured the city, but 2 years later the fellahin rose against his rule and for a time actually gained possession of the city, except the citadel, making their entrance through the main drain. The besieged citadel was relieved by the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha from Egypt with reinforcements. The city and land were restored to the Ottoman Turks by the Great Powers in 1840.

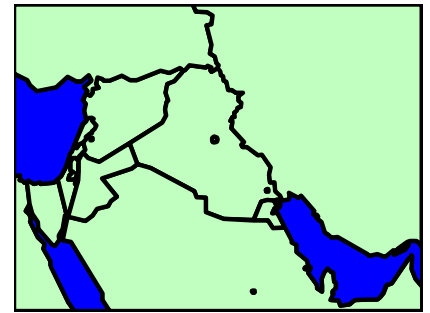
**JERUSALEM: CAPITAL OF A NEW NATION** In 1946 Israel became a nation, following the Holocaust of WW II. It took heroic acts of courage and dedication for Jewish freedom fighters to wrest control of their city from the Arabs, though. In 1967, outnumbered 60 to one, Jewish soldiers recaptured old Jerusalem and the temple area.

What a great, yet sad, history Jerusalem has had in the last two millennia. But the next one will be better!



# Let the ROCKS CRY OUT

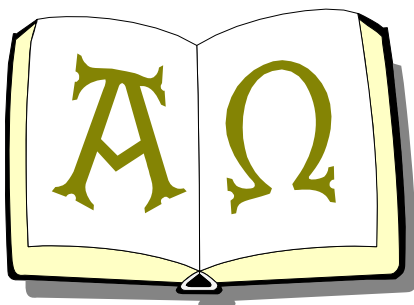
## SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S GEOGRAPHY & CULTURE



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### 40. JERUSALEM: ACTIVE FOR ALL ETERNITY

While it might seem like Jerusalem is just like any other city today, it is still God's special city and has an important part in His continuing plans. God said it would be a place of wars until the through these times (Daniel 9:26). God's plan is for it to be under Gentile rulership (Luke 21:24) and oppressed but not destroyed (Zechariah 12:3). That is what has happened to Jerusalem.

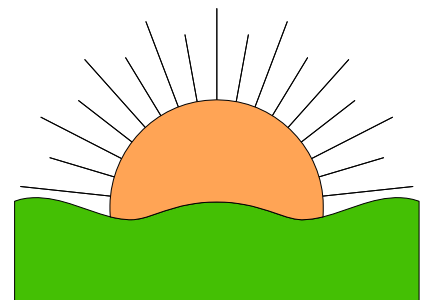


God also prophesied that, after being scattered throughout the whole earth, He would bring His people, Israel, back to their land and Jerusalem (Joel 3:1). For a nation to exist for hundreds and hundreds of years without a homeland is truly a miracle!

The next event on God's prophetic calendar for Jerusalem is to have a **TEMPLE REBUILT** there (Dan 9:27; 12:11; Jer 31:8-9; I Sam 55:11; 60:1-3; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; II Thes 2:3-4). This will be in place by the middle of the Tribulation. Of course we know that the Rapture is the next event on God's calendar for mankind. Nothing has to happen before that happens. As of now the only site a temple can be rebuilt is in Arab hands. Presently the Mosque of Omar (the dome of the Rock) is on that site. It is the second most holy site to Moslems, and one they won't give up easily. Somehow that will be worked out, perhaps by the Antichrist at the start of the Tribulation. In any event, by the middle of the Tribulation the Jews will be worshipping in a temple rebuilt on it's original site – but not for long!

In the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist will suddenly reverse his policy and set himself up to be worshipped on the temple site, forbidding Jews to worship there. In fact, any worship of God will result in death. Daniel calls this the "abomination of desolation" (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). It will be similar to but worse than when Antiochus Epiphanes did the same thing, leading to the Macabean war for Jewish independence in 165 BC.

Also during this time in Jerusalem God will rise up **TWO WITNESSES** to minister for Him (Revelation 11). They will be men similar in ministry and miracles to Moses and



Elijah. They will be persecuted, but God will protect them from death during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. They will be a sure throw in the Antichrist's side. Then, when their mission is complete, the protection will be lifted and they will be killed. Their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem but, while the whole world watches (probably by satellite TV) God will bring them back to life and take them into heaven! What a testimony this will be. It will be at the very end of the Tribulation period, which culminated with the armies of the world destroyed at Armageddon. While to the north of Jerusalem, this battle and its results will spill down into Jerusalem. The Antichrist and his armies will be defeated. Satan and his demons will be bound for a thousand years, and God will purify and rebuilt His land.

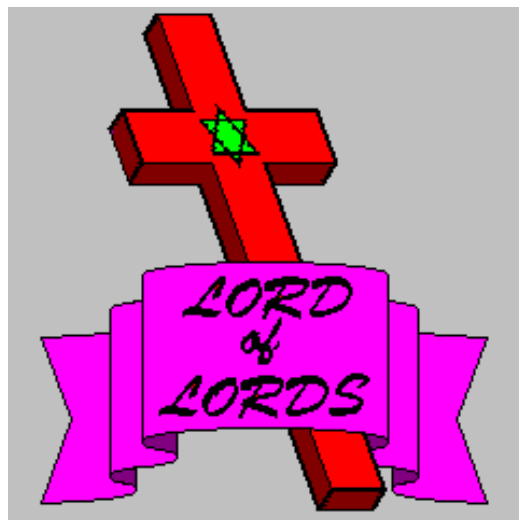
Then will begin what is called the **MILLENNIUM**. It is a thousand year rule of God on earth, a return to Garden of Eden conditions on earth. Jerusalem will be thoroughly and completely cleansed (Isaiah 1:25-26; 4:34; Joel 3:17; Zechariah 14:20-1). God Himself will again dwell in Jerusalem, and it will reflect His glory (Ezek 43:1,2; Isaiah 62:2). Ezekiel chapters 40 - 48 even gives the description and plans for the new temple that will be built in this glorified Jerusalem. It will be a large, beautiful place. A river will flow from it, splitting and flowing east and west, to the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. This topographical change seems to take place when Jesus' foot first touches down on the Mt. Of Olives, splitting it. All the details aren't known, but it is clear that it will take place in Jerusalem!

Finally Jerusalem will become a city of peace (Psalm 122:6-9; Isaiah 60:17; 66:12). People who still live on earth (believers who weren't martyred during the Tribulation and then their children) will come to Jerusalem to worship God. In fact, all nations will come for instruction and blessing (Isa 2:2-4; Psalm 102:21-22). Joy will abound in the streets of this city which has seen so much sorrow (Psalm 53:6; Isaiah 5:11).

We will live in the **NEW JERUSALEM** in heaven above the earthly Jerusalem. There will be much contact and going back and forth (as Jacob saw in his vision of a ladder).

After the thousand year Millennium, Satan and his demons will lead one final revolt and then be consigned to hell forever. Jerusalem will then continue to be the center of the earth, and universe, for all eternity. What a wonderful destiny God has prepared for the city that has His Name and Presence. Just remember that He has an even greater destiny for His people who also carry His Name and His Presence! We have a great future because we have a great God!

"In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3)

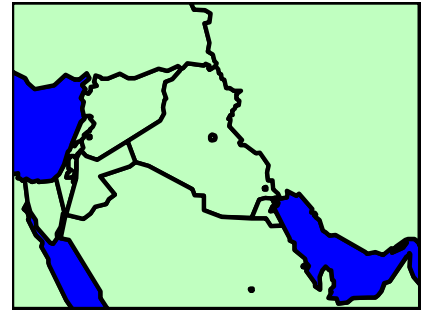






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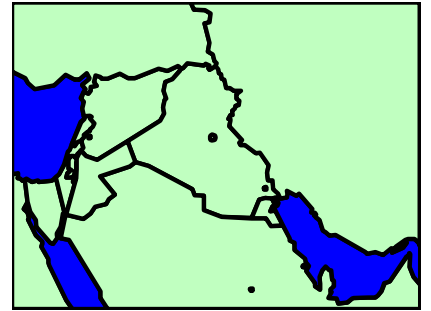
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## 1. IMPACT YOUR WORLD

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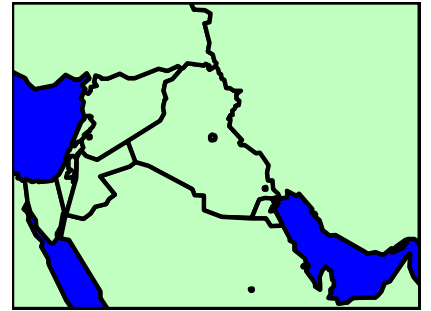
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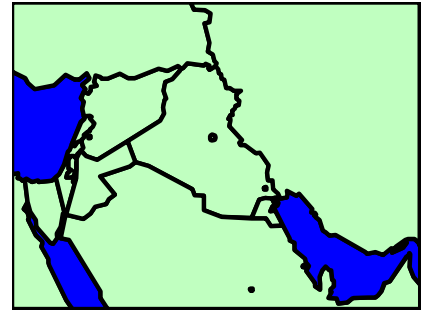
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1. IMPACT YOUR WORLD
  2. CROSS YOUR JORDAN



