



THE CITY OF GOD

God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress (Psalms 48:3 NIV)

1

SCRIPTURE

- **Great is the LORD**, and most worthy of praise, in the **city of our God**, his holy mountain. (Psalms 48:1 NIV)
- 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. (Psalms 48:2 NIV)
- God is in her **citadels**; he has shown himself to be her fortress. (Psalms 48:3 NIV)

2

SCRIPTURE

- When the **kings** joined forces, when they advanced together, they saw [her] and were astounded; they fled in terror. (Psalms 48:4-5 NIV)
- Trembling seized **them** there, pain like that of a woman in labor. (Psalms 48:6 NIV)
- You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind. (Psalms 48:7 NIV)

3

SCRIPTURE

- As we have heard, so have we seen in **the city** of the LORD Almighty, in **the city** of our God: God makes her secure forever. Selah (Psalms 48:8 NIV)
- Within your temple, O **God**, we meditate on your **unfailing love**. (Psalms 48:9 NIV)
- Like your name, O **God**, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. (Psalms 48:10 NIV)
- **Mount Zion** rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments. (Psalms 48:11 NIV)

4

SCRIPTURE

- Walk about **Zion**, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. (Psalms 48:12–13 NIV)
 - For this God is our **God for ever and ever**; he will be our guide even to the **end**. (Psalms 48:14 NIV)
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INTRODUCTION

- Many **cities** like to think that they have personality and character that is *unique* to them.
 - Such as, New Orleans, Savannah, Boston, New York City, San Francisco, and Seattle, to reference a few of U.S. cities.
 - Internationally, Paris, Barcelona, London, Amsterdam, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore and Delhi, come to mind as cities that are unique in flavor and culture.
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INTRODUCTION

What city is associated with the following nicknames?

- The Eternal City
 - The City of Light(s)
 - The City of Brotherly Love
 - The Big Apple
 - The Little Apple
 - The Big Pineapple
 - The Windy City
 - The Mile-High City
 - The City of Angels
 - Tinseltown
 - The Big Easy
 - Beantown
 - Motor City
 - Sin City
 - City of Roses
 - Titledown USA
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INTRODUCTION

- Others have famous slogans like:
 - Las Vegas: "What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas";
 - New York: "The City That Never Sleeps";
 - Hershey: "The Sweetest Place on Earth."
 - Lexington, Kentucky: "The Horse Capital of the World."
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INTRODUCTION

- Some have **slogans** that aren't so great, like:
 - "Welcome to the town of Fort Laramie -- 250 good people and 6 soreheads."
 - "Incredinburgh" -- Edinburgh, Scotland
 - "Hong Kong will take your breath away."
 - "City of Cheese, Chairs, Children and Churches" -- Sheboygan, Wisconsin
 - But no city has the slogan quite like Jerusalem in the Old Testament, "**City of God, City of the Great King.**"
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THE CITY OF GOD

- By the time **Jerusalem** is mentioned in the Bible, it has already been an ancient city.
 - Some believe that this site at an elevation of about 2,900 feet has been inhabited since the early Bronze Age.
 - It is in a mountainous region with steep valleys on three sides.
 - The **Gihon spring** offered the ancient city a water supply, and as a city protected on three sides by steep valleys, its longevity was ensured.
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THE CITY OF GOD



- As today's text proclaims, "**His holy mountain**, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of the whole earth" (vv. 1-2).
 - "As the **mountains** surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people from this time on and forevermore." (Psalm 125:2).
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THE CITY OF GOD

- The city is mentioned in the Bible as early as Genesis 14, where it is called **Salem**, and it was governed by **Melchizedek**, whose name appears in the New Testament (Hebrews).
 - The city is also associated with **Mt. Moriah**, where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.
 - After David captured it about 1004 B.C., it was known as the **City of David** and also the **Citadel**.
 - It was a wedge-shaped stronghold, a **natural fortress**. "*Within its citadels God has shown himself a sure defense.*" (v. 3).
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THE CITY OF GOD



- Finally, the city was a frequent site of **joyous celebrations**.
- David danced and rejoiced when the **Ark of the Covenant** was brought to the city coinciding with the advent of his regency there.
- Solomon threw a huge celebration when his **temple** was dedicated. *“Then Solomon said, ... ‘I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.’”* (1 Kings 8:13-14).

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THE CITY OF GOD

- And **King Josiah** also gathered the people of Israel together for an **enormous Passover observance**, one of the **greatest** of all time.
- *“No passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; none of the kings of Israel had kept such a passover as was kept by Josiah, by the priests and the Levites, by all Judah and Israel who were present and by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”* (2 Chronicles 35:18).
- However, less than **50 years later**, the **city was in ruins** and **Judah was desolate** and many of its inhabitants were carted off to Babylon, an exile that lasted more than 70 years.

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THE CITY OF GOD



- In Jesus' day, Jerusalem was an occupied city, but its religion flourished thanks in part to the presence of the **second temple**, which was built centuries earlier.
- The temple's most recent renovations had been completed by **King Herod** -- the same Herod who slaughtered the innocents in Bethlehem not long after Jesus was born.
- And then the city **disappeared** for a long time, when the **Romans**, led by Titus, destroyed it in A.D. 70.

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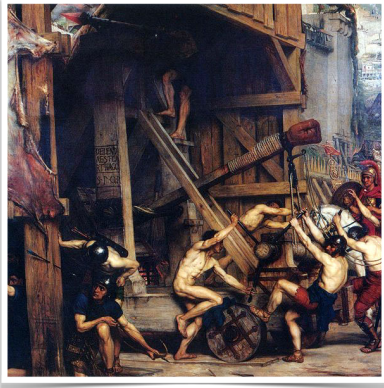
JERUSALEM - 1ST CENTURY AD



Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:28 NIV)

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SIEGE OF JERUSALEM (70 AD)



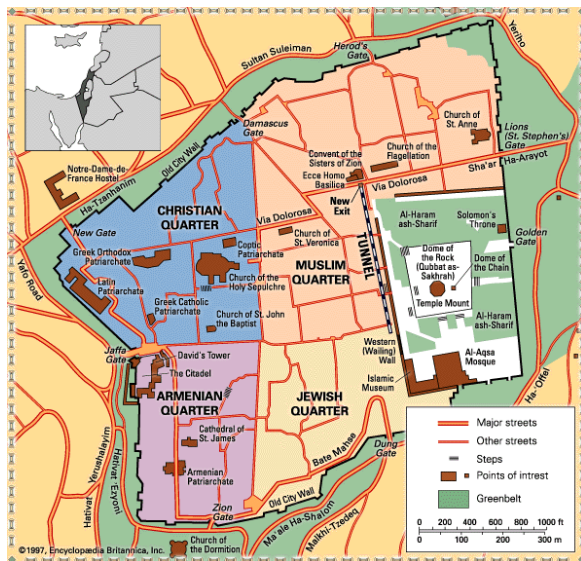
- According to Josephus, **1.1 million** died in Jerusalem.
- Many of the **casualties** were observant Jews from across the world such as Babylon and Egypt who had travelled to Jerusalem wanting to celebrate the yearly Passover but instead got trapped in the chaotic siege.
- After the fall of Jerusalem 97,000 Jews were **enslaved** by the Romans.

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THE CITY OF GOD NOW

- Although **the city** was in ruins following the campaign of Titus, people still lived in the region throughout the 1st Millennial and Middle Ages.
- Today, **the city** is a flashpoint for international political movements, which include 14 wars and conflicts since the end of WW2.
 - War of Independence (1947-1949)
 - Six-Day War (June 1967)
 - Yom Kippur War (October 1973)

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THE CITY OF GOD NOW



- Just recently the United States moved their **embassy** from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem thus formally recognizing that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.
- However, this was an event that also sparked **outrage** by not only the Palestinian Authority but from many Arab and Muslim nations.
- In fact, many **allied nations** with the United States highly criticized this move.

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JERUSALEM'S FUTURE

- The current population of **Jerusalem** is estimated to be around 856,700 people. In 2016, Israel's population was estimated to be 8.5 million.
- However, according to the prophet **Zechariah**, while the future of Jerusalem is glorious, it will not be before it is greatly tested.
 - "In the whole land," declares the LORD, "**two-thirds** will be struck down and perish; yet **one-third** will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. (Zechariah 13:8–9 NIV)
 - [Jerusalem] **the city** will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. (Zechariah 14:2 NIV)

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JERUSALEM'S FUTURE

- [Jesus said] So when you see standing in the holy place 'the **abomination that causes desolation**,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How **dreadful** it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! (Matthew 24:15–19 NIV)
- For then there will be **great distress**, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the **sake of the elect** those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:21–22 NIV)

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JERUSALEM'S FUTURE

- However, just when everything looks like the **Jewish people** will all be destroyed, God arrises.
 - Then **the LORD** will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the **Mount of Olives**, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. (Zechariah 14:3–4 NIV)
 - When the **kings** joined forces, when they advanced together, they saw [her] and were astounded; they fled in terror. Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor. You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind. (Psalms 48:4–7 NIV)
 - Like birds hovering overhead, the **LORD Almighty** will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it, he will 'pass over' it and will **rescue** it. (Isaiah 31:5 NIV)

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JERUSALEM'S FUTURE

- On **that day** the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack **Jerusalem**. (Zechariah 12:8–9 NIV)
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THE GOD WHO RESCUES US

- I don't know if you know this or not, **God** is in the “rescuing” business.
 - According to Galatians, Jesus gave himself for our sins to **rescue us from this present evil age**. [See Gal 1:4]
 - According to Colossians, [Jesus] **has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves**. (Col. 1:13)
 - Which will mean Jesus, will **rescue us** from the coming wrath because the powers of darkness have no control over us. [See 1Th 1:10]
 - [T]he Lord knows how to **rescue godly men** . . . (2 Peter 2:9 NIV)
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THE GOD WHO RESCUES US

- The point is that while **Jerusalem** will be rescued in the future, we believers in Christ are already rescued.
 - We know that **anyone born of God** does not continue to sin; the **one who was born of God** keeps him safe, and **the evil one** cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that the **whole world** is under the control of the evil one. (1 John 5:18–19 NIV)
 - But the Scripture declares that the **whole world** is a prisoner of sin (Galatians 3:22 NIV)
 - He replied, “I saw **Satan** fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you **authority** to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the **enemy**; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:18–19 NIV)
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THE RESCUE OF JERUSALEM

- While we are already rescued, our **future home** isn't.
 - The **City of God** is waiting for her deliverer!
 - *The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: “Say to the **Daughter of Zion**, ‘See, your Savior comes! See, his **reward** is with him, and his **recompense** accompanies him.’” (Isaiah 62:11 NIV)*
 - *They will be called the **Holy People**, the **Redeemed of the LORD**; and you will be called **Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted**. (Isaiah 62:12 NIV)*
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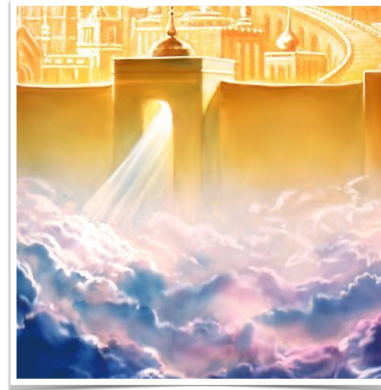
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THE RESCUE OF JERUSALEM

- **Who is this coming from Edom**, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, **mighty to save**.” (Isaiah 63:1 NIV)
- **He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood**, and his name is the **Word of God**. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. (Revelation 19:13–15 NIV)
- On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. (Revelation 19:16 NIV)

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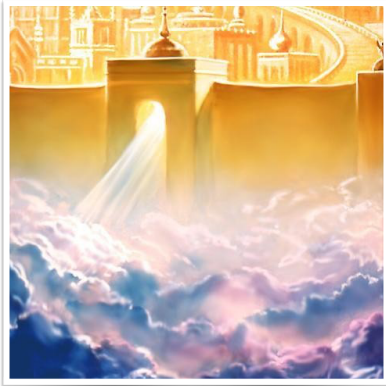
JERUSALEM'S DESTINY



- Then after the 1,000 year rule of God's Son on the earth, something very spectacular happens.
- *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the **Holy City**, the **new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.* (Revelation 21:1–2 NIV)

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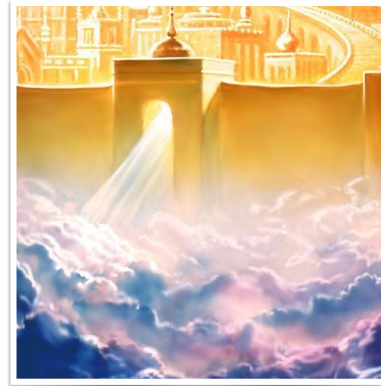
JERUSALEM'S DESTINY



- And I heard a **loud voice** from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. (Revelation 21:3 NIV)
- He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the **old order of things** has passed away.” (Revelation 21:4 NIV)

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JERUSALEM'S DESTINY



- In other words, **Jerusalem** (the City of the Great King) will be in every since of the word and in every way the **City of God** as he will dwell with his people and they with him.
- What a blessed hope we have through faith in Jesus Christ.

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CONCLUSION

- There is a destiny for this world of ours.
 - It will not end with faithless and ungodly people fighting over limited resources and then blaming the righteous for their difficulty.
 - The people of faith are winning and will win big, when God is in his citadels.
 - God is already on the march. He has defeated Satan's control over us where we can live for him and reap his precious promises. In due time, he will make all things new again.
 - Therefore, let us be encouraged and keep on serving the Lord and pressing in to him.
 - [For] The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.
(Proverbs 18:10 NIV)
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