

The Coming

Siege of Yerushalayim

John Steed (written Sept. 1993)

As we watch the moves toward peace in the Middle East it is interesting to see that the biggest remaining hurdle and obstacle to peace is Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). Both the Israelis and the Palestinians lay claim to it as their capital. A solution to this will have to be found if a settlement is to be achieved. So it is of interest to look at the history of Yerushalayim, and more importantly, it's prophesied future in the light of these current events.

Ironically, while the name 'Yerushalem' means 'foundation of peace' (the modern name, Yerushalayim, being the dual form), it is a city that has been fought over many many times and which has been besieged many times. A few of these stand out as turning points in the history of Israel .

The first being it's capture by King David from the Yebusi (Jebusites). After which he made it the capital of Israel, and Shlomo (Solomon) went on to build the temple of YHWH there. Thus it became the "place of YHWH's Name"

The second being the series of sieges by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, culminating in the destruction of the temple and the taking captive to Babel (Babylon) of a large portion of it's inhabitants.

The third turning point was the siege of 70 CE.. when the Romans under Titus destroyed the city, burnt the temple, razing it to the ground - all except for one wall. According to tradition this remaining wall, now known as the "Wailing Wall," was actual a part of Shlomo's original temple. Tradition brings us the following story as to how it also miraculously survived destruction by Titus' army. "The first Roman general who approached the west wall fell dead" says tradition. "Titus himself than raised sledge to smite the wall but his right hand withered... One of the lessor Roman officers finally convinced Titus that by leaving one wall intact, history would be able to better gauge the dimension of his great victory. Impressed and flattered, Titus accepted the solution but ordered the Roman officer to jump off the wall for disobeying his orders to destroy it" (pages 103-104 "Lightning Out of Israel" Associated Press).

But Scripture also speaks of two future sieges. One to occur shortly before Yahushua's return, the second to occur at the end of the Millennium. It is the first of these that is relevant to us at this point. This siege is one that differs

from those of the past in one important respect, it is perpetrated by **all nations** rather than just one or two nations as in the past.

It is first clearly mentioned in Zech. 12:2-3, where YHWH says, "Behold I will make Yerushalayim a cup of reeling **to all the peoples** all around. and also for Yahudah it shall be in the siege against Yerushalayim And it will be in that day that I will make Yerushalayim a heavy stone for all the peoples, all who lift it will be severely injured. **and will be gathered against it all nations of the earth.**" Unfortunately part of verse 2 is often either mistranslated or ignored, and the meaning that Yerushalayim will be a cup of reeling not only to the nations, but also to Yahudah is consequently lost. Verses 9&10 give us a greater understanding as to the time when this will occur - "It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Yerushalayim. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Yerushalayim the Spirit of favour and supplication; then will look on Me whom have pierced and will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son."

Chapter 14:1&2 repeats the prophecy of all nations coming against Yerushalayim: "Behold the day of YHWH is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. **For I will gather all the nations to battle against Yerushalayim;** the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished, half of the city shall go into captivity. but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city." Note that this prophecy of chapter 14 is emphatic, it cannot be conditional upon Israel's obedience as some have suggested, as no conditions are laid down. Rather chapter 14 is a continuation of the prophecy begun in chapter 12, which it says is "The burden of the word of YHWH for Israel" and does not speak of any conditions either. The word of YHWH is sure as it says in Isaiah 55:11 "so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please," so we can be confident that these things will occur just as they were prophesied over 2000 years ago.

In saying that "the city will be taken... and half the city shall go into captivity" it is evident that these events occur over a space of time and that YHWH's response to fight against the nations does not come immediately upon the city being besieged, rather it comes at a here undefined point in time after the city has fallen.

Thus this prophecy of Zechariah may be summarized as follows:

(1) Yerushalayim becomes a major problem to both the surrounding nations and Yahudah.

(2) The city is besieged by an international force.

(3) The city is captured and atrocities are committed against the people.

(4) Half the population are made "prisoners of war."

(5) After a short time YHWH intervenes and destroys the occupying armies.

There is another prophecy that speaks of a siege of Yerushalayim, one that becomes very interesting when we compare it to this one in Zech. This is of course Yahushua's prophecy in Luke 21:20 - "But when you see Yerushalayim surrounded by armies, then know that it's desolation is near" - which has generally been understood as having been fulfilled by the destruction of Yerushalayim by Titus in 70 C.E. I believe however that this should be reconsidered, and would suggest 3 reasons as to why we should do so:

(1) The prophecy in Luke 21:5&6 ("some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'these things which you see, the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down" is very specific. It is true that this was largely fulfilled in 70 C.E. But in light of the existence of the Wailing Wall I would suggest that it is not fully complete.

(2) The whole context of the prophecy is related to the time of Yahushua's return.

(3) The advice given in Luke 21:21-23 as to what should be done by those living in the land of Israel at this time is the same as is given in Mart. 24:16-19 and Mark 13:14-17 when speaking of the "abomination of desolation." Also verse 22 says that "then are the **days of vengeance**, that all things which are written must be fulfilled." The time of vengeance spoken of elsewhere in Scripture is the time when YHWH works to redeem His people and to "render vengeance to His adversaries" - read Deut. 32:35-43, Isa. 34:8; 61 1-9; 63:1-6.

The summary of this prophecy in Luke is very similar to that of Zech.

(1) Yerushalayim is surrounded by armies.

(2) The city falls.

(3) Inhabitants of the city are taken into exile into "all nations."

(4) This begins the "times of the Gentiles" (verse 24) after which Yahushua returns (verses 25-27).

This mention of the "times of the Gentiles" and the treading down of Yerushalayim brings to mind Rev. 11:2 - "But leave out the court which is

outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the set- apart city underfoot forty two months." Here it is clear that the "set-apart city" will be trodden down by the nations for an allotted time. That this city is Yerushalayim is evident from the context, particularly verse 8. This event and the time period associated with it comes from Daniel 7:25 which speaks of a power that treads down YHWH's people for 3 1/2 years, also Dan. 12:7.

It is interesting to note this association between the siege of Yerushalayim, the abomination of desolation, and the beginning of the 3 1/2 year period. Whereas Matt. & Mark show us the spiritual factor of the placement of the "abomination that devastates," Luke shows us the physical event of the siege and occupation of Yerushalayim. Dan. 11:31 also shows this connection: "forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the set-apart (place or thing). the strong (place or thing) and shall take away the continual, and they shall set up the abomination that devastates." The word "forces" here is zaro'im (Strong's #2220) which by the context most likely refers to military forces. So we see that these events are inter-related.

Until very recent times there neither existed the means nor the will for the nations of the world to gather against Yerushalayim to battle. Since the Gulf war this has changed. We are now in position where the human solution to the seemingly endless problem of Yerushalayim, the solution proposed in the original U.N. partition plan of 1947 - to make Yerushalayim an international city under U.N. control - could be implemented and enforced. This fits in with the stated plans of both the World Parliamentarians and the Papacy, who desire Yerushalayim as their world headquarters. YHWH however will not allow this plan to prosper. Yerushalayim can only become the true "foundation of peace" when it becomes the place of YHWH's throne (Eze. 13:7). Let us therefore pray for the peace of Yerushalayim (Ps. 122:6-9).

The above article was written 3 1/2 years ago as you will note, since that time events have continued to progress in the same direction. In 1993 the Italian newspaper "La Stompa" carried an article that detailed a plan for Jerusalem that would be a joint capital - but under Vatican control - it would have two mayors, an Arab and an Israeli, under the authority of the Pope! This is of course a prospect that no self-respecting Israeli could accept - the so-called "Ultra-Orthodox" for one will never accept such an idea! They are most likely to be those who will be inside Jerusalem at the time of this coming siege.

While the time has not yet come, it grows ever closer day by day - consider the following recent news report:

ARAFAT SUPPORTS VATICAN MODEL FOR JERUSALEM

Using Rome and Vatican City as a model, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat proposed this week that twin capitals be established in Jerusalem -- one for Israel and the other for a Palestinian state.

"We are looking for Jerusalem, the Holy City, to be the platform of the real peace in the land of peace," Arafat said in Washington. "We have a very important example: Rome. Rome is the capital of the Vatican, and it is at the same time the capital of the Italian government. Why not, we can repeat the same, capital of two states, the state of Palestine and Israel?"

Associated Press.