



Christ's Kingdom Forecast-Part 3

The Importance of Jerusalem

Pastor Mike Fabarez

I was asked to bring the invocation, the opening prayer, this last Friday for the big State of the City celebration that we had here in our fine town and that got me thinking about how to pray for Aliso Viejo. Of course, I do pray for it, I trust you know that, I trust you pray for our city. Yet here I was asked to pray publicly in front of all the city council members. Of course, asked by the leaders of our city to do this and I thought, yeah, let's think about the role of our city, the importance of our city, the history of our city, the challenges of our city, the progress we've made. Spending all that time doing that just, you know, a while, I segmented a little time on my schedule to do that, I thought how ironic that was, how coincidental that seemed to be, because I'd spent all week thinking about another city because of the passage that we've reached in our study of Luke, in Luke Chapter 21 beginning in verse 20. It's, of course, a city that 7,600 miles away. A city that is less than, in its all of its environs, less than 900,000 people. A city that's the centerpiece of Scripture in so many ways.

A city that's probably the most embattled and beleaguered piece of real estate ever. It's not probably, it certainly is. It's a remarkable city in that it has incurred so much in terms of attacks and being conquered and besieged and all the rest. It's changed hands over 40 times. I mean, there's been major conflicts, military conflicts, at least 50 times throughout history in this piece of real estate. Of course I'm talking about the city of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, just to give you a sense of feel for it, it's about the same latitude as San Diego. And it's got its elevation somewhere near Alpine, just north of Alpine, if you know San Diego County, which makes for kind of a nice climate, high 80s in the summer at its hottest, and norms high 50s in the winter. Breezy, it's built on seven hills and one in particular at the core and the hub of the city center is a nice breezy hill that gives it just a nice feel, a nice climate and all of that.

But it is not the most fought over piece of real estate because of its weather, you know. It's fought over and it's so critically important, it's in the news every day, you can't even move your embassy to this city without making national headlines and sending a tremor through geopolitics. It's embattled because, frankly, in Scripture, God has set this city apart. Psalm 87 verse 2 says, "God loved this city," in that passages it's named Zion, "more than all the other dwelling places of Israel." He says this is the City of God, "wondrous things of you are spoken," Zion, "city of our God." A city that God, he says in verse 1 of that Psalm, has founded himself. I mean, so many of the Psalms, the 150 psalms that we have, the hymn book of Israel, written really about the city of Jerusalem.

This embattled and beleaguered city is important for us to understand. And so I want to do something this morning we don't normally do, is looking at a passage of Scripture and taking this warning to this one city and recognizing, even the grammar of this particular passage, that this is a city that, not only was important in the Old Testament, not only is important in our day, but, to Christ, it's important in his prophetic plan.

Now some people don't believe that. You may sit here and not believe that. But let me spend some time in a little different kind of approach to a Sunday morning sermon, think through this important city, utilizing this text as a springboard to kind of think biblically and systematically through the Bible about the city of Jerusalem. You may not be asked by the mayor to pray for this city that you live in or this city, at least, that we worship in, Aliso Viejo, but God has asked you, as the Scriptures say, to pray for this city, and I believe that command is still in vogue.

So take your Bibles, if you haven't already, and turned to Luke Chapter 21. We're going to take five verses, the next five verses, in our verse by verse study, and we're going to understand something about the importance of this city to God, even in the context of a dire warning about what's going to happen to this city. And we'll have to deal with a little bit of the hermeneutics of how we interpret this text as well. Hermeneutics is simply the art and science of how we take a text and read it, which is in the news everyday, I suppose, if you follow the Supreme Court, because we're trying to figure out how to read and interpret the Constitution, the same battle has taken place in theology and seminaries to know how we're supposed to understand a text. We can't make a text say whatever we want, if we are originalists, to use the term that's used in the news, and we say the original authorial intent, what did the author mean by this text. We need to realize that that's a very complex question to ask, even as we deal with something that seems so obviously connected to an historic event that, from our perspective, is in the past and from Jesus' time frame is yet in the future.

Remember, he speaks these words in 33 A.D. We know the scene, if you've been with us in our study, that's coming in 70 A.D. The commander, Titus, who would nine years later become the emperor, was the conquering Roman captain who came and destroyed the city, in an utter desolation of the city, one of a few in history, and we want to understand this text in his authorial intent, not by just understanding the immediate context of what was to come, but even what was yet to come and what the rest of the Bible makes clear is still on God's prophetic schedule.

So look at this text with me. Let's read it and then we'll take some time to understand the value placed on this city throughout the Scripture. Verse 20 Luke 21, I'll read from the English Standard Version. "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that it's desolation has come near. Then let those who were in Judea," that's the surrounding region, you know, "flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are the days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas..." Which is kind of an onomatopoeia of ancient Koine Greek, it's a statement of, "oh no, it's awful," sometimes translated "woe". Remember that word in the Bible, "woe"? "Alas, woe, terrible." It's a statement of grief, it's an interjection of "this is horrible." "Alas for women who are pregnant," it's a bad thing for women who are pregnant. "And for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth." Now, this seems more than just a localized problem, dropping some hints here, "and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles." Now this is an important word in this passage, "UNTIL the Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

So, let us do what I said, take a little different approach to, at least the first part of this message, to stand back and just note the importance of this city in God's plan.

So, number one, if you're taking notes, let just head this discussion with this: we need to "Note God's Values," how God values Jerusalem. If I were to ask you when does Jerusalem come into the historical narrative and when do we see that in the Bible, if you know your Bible well, you might remember all the way back to Genesis 14, where it's not called Jerusalem but, if you do any kind of study in this, you'll see that what was called then Salem was the future Jerusalem. Abraham, coming through after this battle with the kings, meets up with a king who's also described as a priest of the most high God. He brings out, interestingly enough, bread and wine, which I guess is not all that bizarre, but certainly from a New Testament perspective, you see those are interesting elements to name in Genesis 14. And he comes to Abraham and he brings him those things as the king and the priest, which you would never have in Israel, because you have one line for the king and one line, by line I mean tribe, Judah, for the kings, and Levi, for the priests. Nevertheless, he's all one,

Melchizedek, and Abraham then gives him a tenth of all the spoils of war. Interesting. Genesis Chapter 14, our first encounter with the region, with the piece of real estate, and we meet this enigmatic, mysterious king-priest named Melchizedek.

In Genesis 22 we have a place called Mount Moriah where Abraham goes up and he sacrifices his son Isaac, at least in his own mind he does, but the angel, you know, God stops him and says, "Don't do it," because it was all for not, at least in the judicial sense in doing anything in his world or in terms of his sins or any kind of sacrifice. Human sacrifice was nothing until we had a genuinely perfect human sacrifice, where human justice could be solved and settled because God in his justice could say, human sin is paid for. So that was a type, of course, a picture of what would come with Christ. But it took place on a place called Mount Moriah. That mount, I said, is the city center of what is now geographically, topographically, the city of Jerusalem.

It is actually the Temple Mount, north of the old city of David, which is still all part of the same complex there, and it would be a place that was always remembered with this dramatic scene where a father, the patriarch, the head of Israel, would sacrifice his son, at least in his own mind. And it would be this great type of a coming sacrifice which will be on that very rock, on that very mount, that all of the sacrifices would be sacrificed, the animal sacrifices at least, for all those years, about 1,000 years of those sacrifices taking place on that very place, Mount Moriah, also known, as we've described it in the psalms, as Mount Zion. I know Zion is a different mount in Jerusalem but that has become known as the whole region, we call it the Temple Mount.

Then you have a promised 1,400 years before Christ. So, we've got... I didn't give you the time frame, Abraham 2,000 B.C., rough and dirty. You've got now Moses and Joshua being promised the land in the 15th century B.C., and God says I'm going to give you this piece of real estate. And in that real estate you are going to have descendants who are going to inhabit it and it will be your land. It was called then the land of Canaan, all of it, the region was called the land of Canaan. And you are going to have this as your possession, it will be yours.

So, God decrees it and he makes it a covenant, a land covenant. This will be your land and you will dwell here, you will live here, your descendants will inhabit it. It is what was called the Promised Land, a good land. A land, as it's poetically said, "to be flowing with milk and honey." A deed given to the descendants of Abraham.

Fast forward the clock to 400 years later to David. That land was given, Joshua came in and conquered the region, but there was a city, a stronghold, that they did not conquer and it was called, in that time, the city of the Jebusites. If you did your Daily Bible Reading this morning, we read about it in Second Samuel. The city of the Jebusites was a holdout. For 400 years, this one city where Mount Moriah was, was not, also called in Genesis 14, Salem, it was not conquered.

God, in his providence, saved it, a little commentary now, until his prototypical king, to whom he would promise his Son would reign as the ultimate King, not only that but be the ultimate sacrifice in that place, he holds that city out unto the Jebusites, part of the Canaanites, and he says, now you can have it, and David goes in and takes the city of the Jebusites, which is then called Jerusalem and also the city of David. Now we know the city of David is Bethlehem because that's where he was born, which is not too far from Jerusalem, but the city that he captures and makes his capital is now called Jerusalem, aka, the kingly city of David, or as Jesus put it in Matthew Chapter 5, Jerusalem, the city of the great king, which there's a lot of double entendre there, is there not? Not just the great King David but the great King God, and, most importantly from our perspective, the great King, the Christ Jesus.

So now it's completely in control of the descendants of Abraham's, specifically, David the captain of the army takes that city and it's his. He has a son whose name is Solomon. Solomon then takes that very spot that Abraham had sacrificed Isaac, at least in his own mind, and he constructs the Temple. David had moved the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem but it was in a tent and he wanted to build a temple. But God said, "No, your son will build it" and he constructs the most elaborate building Israel had ever seen, and they construct this huge thing called the Temple according to specifications of God and then they dedicate it.

Now there's no mistaking this in Solomon's mind, as he dedicates this, he says, "I know no building could contain God. I'm not under any illusions like the pagans that our gods, like Dagon, live inside of a temple, or like Moloch, we don't believe that. But we understand that this building would be a majestic representation of the presence and activity of God among us. And he says, "Heaven is your throne, the earth is your footstool." "Now where then is there a house that can be built that can contain you." Of course not. "But this will be the place where your name is set." As a matter of fact, so much of the Bible says that, God chooses Zion, he chooses Jerusalem to set his name, and in that building was the representation of all of that.

From about 950-970 B.C. until 586 B.C., you had that temple being a functioning worship center with sacrifices, reminding them back to Abraham and Isaac, and thinking forward, theologically, to the coming of the death of Jesus Christ. It's a very important piece of real estate. In 586, that's an important date because that's when Babylon, the world power, led by Nebuchadnezzar, comes in and destroys the Temple, 586 B.C. The Temple is destroyed. The people are said to be ushered out of that piece of real estate, as you know, famously Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, aka Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They all go as just representatives of many others who went as prisoners into Babylon.

And God reminded them the land is still yours, but it's going to be resting now while you're being punished in the dog house of Babylon until it gets its rest and until you learn the lesson of idolatry. Because if you are idolaters, you will not be able to occupy the land. You are going to have to be out of the land, but I'll bring you back to the land and, of course, 70 years later, as God promised, he brings them back and they resettle under the Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel, and you know the names Ezra and Nehemiah, but those were the three key characters who come back and Zerubbabel builds another temple.

Now, the fathers who were old enough who saw the temple when Solomon had built it, now they didn't see when he built it but they saw the building that Solomon had built, and they watched it be destroyed and then it was rebuilt, they said, "This is nothing." They wept because Zerubbabel's temple was so much smaller and such a pitiful reflection of the grandeur of Solomon's Temple. Nevertheless, that temple stayed in place until the time of Herod, you remember, when he took that temple and refurbished it. We talk about the first temple period. That was from the mid-10th century B.C. until the 6th century B.C. We had a 70-year gap. We had a rebuilding with Zerubbabel that took place all the way until the end of the Temple in 70 A.D. It was all refurbished under Herod, Herod the Great, and as he refurbished this, several years before Jesus was born, he started the refurbishing process, that's what led to this discussion about, see how great this temple is. Now Israel's back in the land, they have Rome, of course, that's got a heavy hand on them but, nevertheless, they're occupying this piece of real estate.

Now, we saw in Chapter 19 of Luke that Jesus said, it'd be great if you would respond rightly to me. "If you only knew this day what would bring you peace." I say it so calmly, but it says in the text

that Jesus was weeping when he said these things. Because if you reject me, which is implied in that statement, he says, here's what's going to happen. You are going to be surrounded by armies and this city is going to be overturned. Now we get specific on this Olivet Discourse, as he sits on the Mount of Olives talking about the Temple, he says "Now, let's talk about that building. That building is going to be torn down."

Now that's the immediate reference, that's the immediate antecedent to what we're talking about, that's the immediate focus. And the wording in this text makes us think that's all we're talking about, and yet that's not all we're talking about. Matter of fact, we'll get to that in a second. But first let me turn you, if I could, to Jeremiah Chapter 31, a very important text of Scripture. Now I know we often go to Jeremiah 31 to look at the promise of the New Covenant, which has to do with a change in people's hearts that God is going to bring in, the new activity of the Spirit in the New Covenant age, which has been inaugurated but not fully realized yet.

But in this particular passage, you see a promise that should bring back, and again, I'm trusting that you are with us the last two sessions of this study of the Olivet Discourse, I had to refer to, I think a referred to it in both sermons, Romans Chapter 11, which speaks of us, let me get to that as you're taking time to turn to Jeremiah 31, an olive tree. That olive tree, it's described as Israel. Israel has these natural branches growing out of it, which is God's blessing and God's favor and God's attention and God's administration and God's oversight. And he's going to break off most of those natural branches and he's going to graft in the wild olive shoots, so the wild olive branches, and put those in place. And he says, the tree is Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham, and the branches are the Gentile nations.

And Paul speaks of that as he writes to the Romans, clearly mostly Gentiles there, and he's saying, "Look what God has done." But then he says, "Don't you new wild branches, who are now a part of this whole thing that God is doing that started in the Old Testament, don't you get arrogant about the natural branches that have been broken off. Because God has the power to graft them back in."

In Romans Chapter 11 he says that's in fact what will happen. He will graft them back in. And one day, he says, all of Israel, speaking of that generation, it's going to be saved, that whole tree is going to be filled with Jewish branches again. So he says, "Know this," and we quote this often, "the gifts and the calling are irrevocable." And the context is God has made a promise to the descendants of Abraham and that promise to those people is irrevocable.

And that doesn't mean that they're Christians. Let me make that clear. He says in that passage, as it relates to the Gospel and the call to repentance and trust in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, they're enemies of the Gospel, they reject Christ, and the problem is there's no other name given among men by which we must be saved. They're lost unless they embraced Christ. They don't embrace Christ.

But, for the sake of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, they are blessed. And that means God is keeping them in his special box, special list, in his special place, where he says, "One day I'm going to graft them back in and all of Israel will be saved." Now, when you think about Jerusalem, some people may say, "Why I recognize God's special plan for Israel. I know the descendants, the physical descendants of Abraham, will be blessed in the end times, whatever that looks like. But don't talk to me about the city of Jerusalem. Don't talk to me about the real estate, don't start talking like a Zionist now. Like there's something about that place."

I want to turn you to Jeremiah 31 because I want to show you this is not a metonym of the people of

God. Jerusalem, in Israel, the land, is not a metonym. You know the word synonym and antonym? Right? Synonym and antonym. Metonym is the word that we use for some word that represents something else. We're not saying God has a love and a covenant with the city of Jerusalem, because all we're really talking about is not the city, not the real estate, not the dirt, not the land. We're talking about the people.

I want to show you this isn't just a metonym. Take a look at this text starting in verse 35. Drop all the way down to verse 35. I'll show you the combination of both the people and the city. Jeremiah 31:35 says, "Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar - the Lord of hosts is his name." That's a big resume builder. He lays that out there. "OK. You're in charge of all that big stuff that we can't even touch or go to. It's amazing. You're the God of creation. Why are you laying down all that authority on us?" "Because I got to tell you something about my authority to do things that you could never do."

If this fixed order, all these things, the sun, the moon, the light, how it all functions, "If it departs from before me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel," Jacob, the offspring of the patriarchs, "will cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus says the Lord; 'If the heavens can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the Lord.'"

Now remember, Jeremiah is the weeping prophet, not because he's got a fragile disposition, but because he is watching this terrible thing happened with Nebuchadnezzar coming in in the sixth century B.C. destroying the Temple. He writes another book called Lamentations, he's weeping and crying and grieving over the fact that the nation and the city and the Temple are destroyed. He's seeing all that and now he's trying to be reminded by God's prophetic word through his own voice that, listen, God hasn't cast them off forever. Now if the heavens go away, the stars go away, then you could maybe think... This is all a poetic way to say, "No way."

So, I got the people part, verse 38. "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when the city shall be rebuilt." "Well, it's probably just a metonym." No. "The city rebuilt for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. And the measuring line shall go out far." That's what construction workers use to make straight roads and walls, fortresses. "Straight to the Hill of Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. The whole valley of dead bodies," all the stuff that you're seeing, this terrible catastrophe of the Babylonian army, killing all of these Israelites, "and all the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron," that Jesus is now looking over as he's talking about the Temple Mount "to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east." We're not talking here, poetically. We're talking about gates and we're talking about real valleys and we're talking about a piece of real estate. "It shall be sacred to the Lord. It shall not be plucked up or overthrown anymore." OK.

The importance that God places on the city, I'll give you a little historical overview of the city, I give you a little promise here. Little promise? Big promise from God about his view of the people and the city and then you have these superlative words, extreme words. It's not going to be plucked up or overthrown anymore. What won't? The city won't. With all of its gates, the valley, sitting there, built, the thing that the architects would use to draw things out, the engineers and the construction workers. It's going to be built.

So, God is promising, as we see in the Old Testament, about a people, Abraham's descendants, and a city and a region and a land, all of these things God says, "I'm going to set them all up. It's all going to be, and it's all going to be forever." Now you can raise your hand and say, "Well, I



understand what happened, matter of fact, Jeremiah, Isaiah, they talk about it. There's going to be a restoration and it's going to take place 70 years later. Zerubbabel is going to come back, as you said, with Ezra, Nehemiah. We're going to rebuild all this and there you go. And so we got the fulfillment of this promise."

Well, it will be rebuilt, but it's going to be rebuilt, as Ezekiel makes very clear, in a whole different way than it was rebuilt. It won't come with the former glory. It's going to come with much lesser glory and it's going to be without a king and there will be no administration, no theocracy. It's just going to be under the heavy hand of first, Persia, and then into the harassment of Greece and then under the heavy hand and annexation of Rome and then it's going to be destroyed by a Roman commander. Well, I don't know how I could ever say it's not going to be plucked up or overthrown any more forever. It seems like that's what's happening.

So then we start asking the question: is this really what God has in view when he says this to Jeremiah? Well, I guess the coming back under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, that certainly is one example of it. But it's not a fulfillment of it.

Jot this down because this is really where we need to go next in Luke 21. Number two, we need to "Understand the Two-fold Fulfillment." This is a little hermeneutical point. We have to understand as we read the text sometimes God makes a promise and that promise has a fulfillment that you'd put an asterisk next to and say, well, that's PART of what he was talking about. And then there's another fulfillment that comes later, that's ALL of what he was talking about. "It sounds like your tap dancing here on this." No. This is not a dance.

Back to Luke 21. Luke 21 verse 20 talks about Jerusalem being surrounded by armies. "When it's surrounded by armies, know that it's desolation is near." Now, all you can think is what he said in Chapter 19. You would think that what we're dealing with in this passage is the same thing he's dealing with in Chapter 19. And that is in 70 A.D., 47 years after he said this, you're going to have the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Historically, we know that happened. That's not what he had in view. He had much more in view. I'm not saying that the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem was not a fulfillment of what Jesus says here. It's just not THE fulfillment.

Let me tell you why. Let me start with this. If you read all the words in red of the Olivet Discourse in Luke 21, it would take you three and a half minutes to read it, at the pace that Jesus would speak it. Of course, it's an English, nevertheless that's a pretty short sermon. My question would be: what would you imagine Jesus was doing on the Olivet Discourse in terms of time frame? I hope you'd say, "Well, I imagine it's longer." But now, we're all imagining, I guess you can imagine whatever you want.

I don't have to imagine. I don't know how long he preached, but I know he preached longer than three and a half minutes because I can turn over to the same setting, the same situation, and the words that are echoed and completely harmonious with what we read in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, which are also labeled the Olivet Discourse, where Jesus says the same things, and yet we have more of it. And guess what? Read both of those and what you get in both of those is at least four minutes. So if you sat down and read it out loud, you've got a four-minute record of what Jesus said.

Now my question would be what would Jesus be doing, in terms of time, when he spoke about these future things? Well, I'm going to say, he's certainly teaching more than three and a half minutes. I know that scientifically for sure because I've got these other records of the same speech, and that takes at least 30 seconds longer.

I think I'm assuming, much like the Sermon on the Mount and several other records of Jesus's preaching, it probably lasted a lot longer. Well, in God, his superintendents of the writing of Matthew and Mark and Luke, when it comes to this record of this particular sermon, what's going on with God's intention in these three Gospels? And all I'm saying is this: in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 certainly we have much more that looking beyond the immediate fulfillment of these things to the ultimate fulfillment of these things, because words are added in that record of what Jesus said that take me way past 70 A.D., because there's no possible way that even these references about surrounding armies can possibly be just confined to the fulfillment, that we're led to think in Luke 21, not because it's not true, it's just partial. It's not full. It is a fulfillment but it's a fulfillment with an asterisk.

"It still feels like your tap dancing Pastor Mike." Listen, I'll prove that this is all over the Bible, whether it's the Passover, the conquest of the land. I mean even just the conquest of the land, if you read the conquest of the land in the book of Joshua, then turn over to Hebrews Chapter 11, you'll see, whatever was happening in the conquest was not the full, complete fulfillment of the promise of God. The same with the Passover. Read the Pauline epistles and read the Passover and you'll see that wasn't the full fulfillment of being brought out of Egypt. Well, the Passover, I know, it was about being brought up in Egypt, but it was about more than that. Matter of fact, the more significant parts of that were further down the road.

How about this? The most obvious one. Jesus is coming, the coming of the Messiah. All the promises in the Old Testament about the coming of the Messiah, if you said, the coming of the Messiah and the promises of the coming of the Messiah, when did that happen? "Oh, oh, oh... I know. It happened when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and you'd be right, with an asterisk, because there are a lot of things about the coming of Christ that were only partially fulfilled with the coming of Christ to Bethlehem. There's another coming of Christ that shows him coming to the Mount of Olives, in Zechariah 14 for instance, and he comes to the Mount of Olives and you start reading all that data and you say, there must be another fulfillment of the coming of Messiah. You have the immediate fulfillment, where a lot of the biblical data was fulfilled. You have an ultimate fulfillment, where all the biblical data was fulfilled.

If you want to see Jesus in the middle of all of that, just think of the questions when they said, "Is John the Baptist the Elijah that is to come?" Now everyone knew that from the Book of Malachi, there was an Elijah who was supposed to come before the great day of the Lord. And everyone said, "Is that John the Baptist?" And then he starts to kind of tap dance around that question. "Well, he kind of is. He is if you choose to believe that he is." What is that? Is he a relativist? No, no, no.

He was in the spirit of Elijah, and he says that at one point, he was. He came in the spirit and the power of Elijah as the forerunner of the Messiah. But, there's another Elijah who is to come. And we have all that start to play out, this double fulfillment, just like the double fulfillment of the coming of Christ, it comes in stages. You need to see the reference of the coming of the surrounding of the destruction of Jerusalem, and you need to see that clearly that did take place in 70 A.D. But there is another destruction of Jerusalem, and the Temple in Jerusalem, that the Bible continues to talk about, that would seem to be the ultimate fulfillment of that, because it's the precursor to the actual arrival of Christ, not in Bethlehem, but his feet touching the Mount of Olives.

Example: dropped down to our passage when it says, "They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the Time of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And," verse 25, "there will be signs," we'll deal with this next

time we're together, "in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth, distress of the nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, and people fainting with fear and the foreboding of what is coming on the world," not just Jerusalem, "for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Cosmic signs in the moon, the stars, the sun. And now we've got the powers of heaven shaken, that descriptive summary of this cosmic thing. "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

So I know this, that hadn't happened yet, unless you're really trying to fit these things into the 70 A.D. mindset when you're kind of looking at a commentary that says, "He kind of came back, he kind of came back in the smoke of the clouds, in the burning of the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D." And I'm just saying, everything that relates to the Son of Man coming in glory and clouds and great power, all throughout the Gospels, is looking to something that hasn't happened yet.

Now the disciples said in Acts Chapter 1, Jesus had come, he lived, he suffered, he died, he rose again and they said, "Woo, woo! Is now the time you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Are we going to get all of the rest of the messianic promises regarding your coming fulfilled?" And he says, "Nope, not for you to know the times and the seasons. It's time for you to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and we're going to go all over the earth, to the ends of the earth." And then he takes off. "Whoa. We didn't finish this messianic coming thing." No, it's going to come in two stages.

There's the destruction of Jerusalem, absolutely, that comes in 70 A.D. But there's so much more than that. And I'll tell you why. Let me give you an example of the double fulfillment. If you look in Matthew 24 and Luke 13 as it describes this scene of the destruction of Jerusalem, it describes something called the Abomination of Desolation. The Abomination of Desolation. Abomination, desolation, abomination. This is awful, this is blasphemous, desolation. It's destroyed.

It starts in Daniel Chapter 9 and it describes, as I have tried to prove, and I can throughout the Scripture, that God makes a promise to Daniel's holy people and the holy city, your people and the holy city. So the city, the land and the people are both a promise and in that promise of the 70 sets of seven, there's going to be, at the very end, in the middle of that last week, there's going to be an abomination that makes desolate. Two chapters later in Daniel 11, matter of fact, turned to that one, he describes it, he describes this scene. Daniel Chapter 11. He gets very specific about the setting up of this Abomination of Desolation.

Now, as you're turning there, as though we haven't had enough history in summation, let me give you some more. As you're turning there, I want you to think about 356 B.C. In 356 B.C., there was a kid born named Alexander. He was a remarkable child and he started to be called Alexander the Great. He was conquering the world in his 20s. He'd pretty much done, conquered half of the populated world by the time he was 30, and a remarkable, military, aggressive, crazy, leader of the Greek nation. He wanted to Hellenize the world. Everything should be in Greek, everything should be about Greek art, Greek culture, Greek philosophy, Greek libraries, all of that. Alexander the Great.

He dies and they say, "What do we do with your kingdom, sir?" And he said several things that were recorded that he said, but, in essence, he says, "We got four commanders here, let's just divvy it up." And so, in essence, this is the Cliff Notes version, the kingdom gets split up under four different leaders. Two leaders come to nothing in time, and the other two leaders make something out of the kingdom. So this Grecian kingdom gets split into two parts. You have Greece torn in half and you have a northern kingdom, that becomes known as the Seleucid kingdom, and you've got a

southern kingdom, known as the Ptolemaic kingdom.

I'm doing this so you can picture a map here. You got up here in the Seleucid kingdom, like Syria, that's in the news, you should know where that is on a map, and then the Ptolemaic kingdom primarily resides, at least the core of it, in Egypt. So you have these two division of powers here. Well time goes on and in 215 B.C. there's a Seleucid leader born whose name was Antiochus. He's named after his father, he's Antiochus the fourth.

He was a lot like Alexander the Great. 215 B.C. he's born and he's called, in time, Epiphanes. Now, if you grew up in a high liturgical church, you know the word "epiphany." Epiphanies. What does it mean? It means "God shows up." Can you imagine that on a business card? "My name's Alex." Right? "When I walk into the room, God shows up." Right? That was the essence of his power. He was scary, he was majestic, he was powerful, he was a lot like Alexander the Great in his youth, he was conquering the world.

He said, "Listen, Alexander did it. I want to do it. I'm going to unite this kingdom. I'm going to rule it all." So he tries to go after the Ptolemaic kingdom and basically bring it under his control and reunite everything. He, like Alexander the Great, he wanted to Hellenized the world, he wanted to do everything that Alexander did and he wanted to pick up the mantle and finish the job that he started.

He goes down, and I'm simplifying a series of battles, but he goes down, if you know your maps, you've got Egypt and you've got Syria. Let's just call them those for sake of reference. In between those you've got a nation and a city. What's that? Jerusalem, Israel, on the Mediterranean coast, I should do it this way for you, Mediterranean coast. As he comes down, in essence, with his elephants in battle, Rome is now stirring out in the West. They're coming of age and they're going to take over the world in time, as we know later, and they see what Antiochus is doing and they say, we have to stop this. They know that Antiochus cannot possibly fight the Ptolemaic kingdom and Rome at the same time.

They send their ships, as it came to be known, from Kittim, they came from the West. Kittim was called Cyprus at one time but came to be known as anything coming from Rome. So the ships from Kittim say, "Listen, you've got to stop this. Here are official Senate papers that you cannot do what you're doing. Cease and desist." Well in essence, thumbnail sketch of it, he is thwarted and he's smart enough to know, "I can't do this, you're right," and he comes back frustrated up through Israel and, in essence, says, "I'm going to make this trip worthwhile. I'm going to conquer Israel. I'm going to take over Jerusalem and this real big thing they've got going on here, this Zerubbabel's temple," that has been somewhat remodeled and refurbished a bit at that time, of course, not by Herod, he wasn't born yet. You have him saying, "I'm going to take over."

And so he goes and he starts to work with the Jewish people by saying, "One thing you got to stop is all this worship of your God. You need to worship Olympia and Zeus, you need to worship me as his representative." And so he starts to do what he can to ingratiate what had become a pretty lax Jewish leadership and he starts buying them off, as often happens. The weakness is their greed and the materialism and he says, "Listen, I'll build you libraries, I'll build you gymnasiums. I'll build you everything you need. I'll give you money for your building projects, but I'm going to be in charge. My name is going to be emblazoned everywhere. You're going to put statues of me up and I will be the king here and, really, all this worship needs to stop. Of course the temple was the ultimate edifice of worship, so I need to go in there and fix this." And in essence, again, the short version, he goes in and makes that super-duper clear in 168 B.C., and he comes in the winter of

Kislev, the month of Kislev and he takes a pig and he sacrifices it on the altar, which, of course, if you know anything about kosher food and Israel and its laws, dietary laws, that's the ultimate, horrible thing. It's the ultimate aghast, it's the ultimate abomination. And then he destroys and burns the Temple.

So much of his angst played out on those people and that horrible abominating desolation that takes place. Not a complete desolation. He doesn't topple every stone off, but certainly takes over. And from that, you might know, sidebar, Judas Maccabeus, it actually started with Mattathias, they came to be known as Maccabees because they were fighters. They stood up against them and three years later almost to the day, they say to the day, he recaptures the Temple, they rededicate it, the Feast or the Celebration of Rededications, also known as Hanukkah, Jesus even celebrated that in the Gospel of John. But the scene I'm concerned about is the abominable thing that took place there in 168 B.C.

That's a long lead into Daniel 11, but let's look at this promise. "At the time appointed he," and of course we're talking about a world leader in this particular passage, you can go back and look at it later, this horn, this leader, this authoritative figure, "shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. For the ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him shall appear and profane the Temple and the fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand and take action."

Now, even with the little historical story I just told you, you read that and you think, "Wow, that sounds like a description of what you just said." Read the history of what happened, read that, and then you'll say, "This seems like a prophecy of that," unless you're a liberal, then you're going to say, "God can't tell the future. This must have surely been written after that, because this is exactly what happened with Antiochus Epiphanes and all that took place in the second century B.C.

Well, we just talked about this very big Abomination of Desolation that's going to take place in this "70th Week of Daniel" in Chapter 9. And now we have a discussion of an abomination of desolation that's taking place, that's coming and it's coming, and we don't know when, it doesn't say when, but now we see, just a few hundred years later, exactly what Daniel said takes place and you say, "Well, that's it."

If you ask any Jewish Sabbath school student, "Hey, tell me when did the abomination..." I'm just saying, we were here, let's just say it's 20 A.D., of course they wouldn't know it was 20 A.D., but let's just say it's 20 A.D., we're sitting in the synagogue. "Hey, when did the Abomination of Desolation take place? The students would quickly say, "I know. When Antiochus Epiphanes came in and sacrificed the pig on the altar and told everybody to worship Zeus and Olympia and himself." "Yep, that's it. You get a gold star. Here's a Snickers bar. We're done with Sabbath school." That's what everyone would say.

The problem is, Jesus, in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, which is the longer record of what Jesus says on the Olivet Discourse, he says, and I'll just read it for you, here it comes from Matthew 24 verse 15. "So when you see the Abomination of Desolation spoken by the prophet Daniel..." again we're in 33 A.D., all that took place that every Jewish kid would think was accomplished in 168 B.C., they're going to go, it already happened. "When you see the Abomination, future tense, "of Desolation spoken by the prophet Daniel," okay, Daniel did talk about, "standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), and let those who were in Judea flee to the mountains."

It's the same context and yet we have an added feature here that the destruction of this temple is going to take place when the Abomination of Desolation takes place. And then you're going to have to say, "Well, let's figure this one out. Did it already happen or did it not happen? I guess it must have happened as some kind of a portend, some kind of example of the future of what would happen. And then you're going to say, "Well you're in 33 A.D. and 70 A.D., you've got that destruction..., maybe the Abomination of Desolation took place in 70 A.D."

If you look at what happened in 70 A.D. comparing it to what happened in 168 B.C., and then you compare it to what is written in the book of Revelation about an abomination that takes place and the blasphemies in the Temple and the sacrifice and all that, you're going to recognize, "Wow, one seems ultimate. This one seems big. The one in the middle in 70 A.D. looks rather small by comparison." In other words, this speaks to a future, a future situation that I think, if you're looking for a time when the altar is in place and the Temple of God is active and there is an abomination that takes place, it's going to be the Daniel 9 Abomination of Desolation, not the Daniel 11 Abomination of Desolation. It didn't take place in the second century B.C. It's something that hasn't taken place at all yet.

Revelation Chapter 11 verse 1. "Rise and measure the Temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but don't measure the outside core to the Temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations," the Gentiles, "and they will trample the holy city for 42 months which is half of one week, if one week is seven years, which, of course, I could take time to prove that. This is the only way to understand that prophecy in Daniel 9.

Two chapters later in Revelation, speaking of the one would be the leader of all this, the beast as he's called, the antichrist as he's called, it says, the beast," or the antichrist, "was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and he was allowed to exercise his authority for 42 months," half of that week. "It opened his mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven."

The people of God, the dwelling of God, the Temple of God, the blasphemy within the Temple of God, all of this now being trampled by the Gentiles is exactly what the Apostle Paul said was coming during the time that would be the fulfilment of what is the ultimate Time of Jacob's Trouble, as it's called, or the 70th Week of Daniel, that's divided by an event called the Abomination of Desolation, that comes after the rise of one who's called the beast or the antichrist, who would lead all of this.

Which, by the way, as Paul tells the Thessalonians, you think you missed the bus? You think you missed the gathering together? No, the coming of the Lord will be preceded, immediately preceded, by this 70th week of Daniel, as I call it, as the Bible calls it, as he says, this great time of blasphemy, this great rebellion. Matter of fact, let me read that for you. Second Thessalonians Chapter 2, "Now concerning the coming of our Lord," that's the ultimate event, "and our being gathered," which as you understand from the New Testament, and I'll try to prove this next time we're together, takes place before this time of tribulation, he says, "We ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarm, either by spirits, spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect of the day of the Lord has already come." Don't think you missed the bus. "Let no one deceive you for in this way, the day will not come." What day? The gathering? No, not the gathering day. The coming of the Lord where his feet touched the Mount of Olives. When he comes back to save his people, after the Temple has been desecrated in the abomination. He says, "That day is not going to come, unless you see the rebellion first, the man of lawlessness revealed, the son



of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, he takes his seat in the Temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God," the ultimate blasphemy that Revelation 13 talks about, the ultimate blasphemy or abomination that Daniel Chapter 9 talks about.

And you're saying, "See, we're going to live through it, and a lot of people think we're going live through it because of what he said." Notice this: it would be like you and I being at a baseball game. A lot of fights in the crowd. And I said, "Here, I'm a prophet. There's going to be an all-out gang warfare on that field when this game is over. But the good news is we've got a bus and it's going to take us out and we're going to get onto the after-game party and we won't be a part of that." And don't think because we've had some skirmishes here in the stands that you missed it, you've missed the bus, because people in Thessalonica were saying, "Did we miss it?. Did we miss it? We didn't get gathered? Because I know before the coming, we're going to have these fights, and I'm seeing fights."

John said the spirit of antichrist is active. There are many antichrists in the world, but there is an antichrist coming. And he said, "No. If you missed it here's what you would see. You'd see the gang warfare going on right now. You'd see this great gang leader step up and fight this huge fight on the field." You know you haven't missed it because you haven't seen the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist rise to power yet, because we won't see that, because as the Church, we will be caught up together to be with the Lord in the air, because the Lord will come back to meet his Church in the air, he'll come back at the end to touch his feet on the Mount of Olives.

You have to understand the two-fold fulfillment throughout the New Testament. And when it comes to the destruction of Jerusalem surrounded by armies, yes, it's happened, over 50 times throughout the history of Jerusalem, many times. I mean, you can think about the army, think about Omar coming in the 7th century to Jerusalem and surrounding the city of Jerusalem with his armies. You can talk about Constantine and what went on in terms of just even wresting the rest of that city even from the residual Jews. You can think about Titus, you can think about the crusaders coming back to take it from the Muslims.

You can think about a lot of armies surrounding Jerusalem but, when it comes down to it, the ultimate one that precedes all the cosmic signs in heaven, verse 25, and the coming of the Lord, where he comes in great power in the clouds with glory, well that whole thing's going to take place in the future, verse 24 Luke 21.

If nothing else, if you don't believe any of this, and I know a lot of people who don't, that's fine. It's the whipping boy of modern eschatology to say all the stuff I just said. But I'll take the heat because I think 100 years from now you're going to say, "Hey, Pastor Mike was right." Anyway... Let me tell you this. There's a word in verse 24 that should be a real problem to try and think all of this is just historical nonsense. And as the a-millennialist would say, everything related to Jerusalem and Israel today is irrelevant to biblical history or biblical prophecy.

It says in the middle verse 24, "And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the Time of the Gentiles are fulfilled." The key word there I said, as I read it the first time this morning, "until". "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles UNTIL the Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Well, what's going to happen between now and then?

At least one, I know, is the Jews getting back that piece of real estate, which now has on it the third most holy shrine or place in all of Islam, called the Dome of the Rock, the Dome of the Rock shrine, well that would have to go away. Nevertheless, we're going to have a recapturing of that



city, have to be to have a Jewish temple that's working, that can then be desecrated and the abomination take place halfway into this 7-year period. That, in terms of what's happening and coming, you need to understand, is the "until" part.

So, the trampling underfoot is not just now until the Jews start worshipping on it again, it's until they trample underfoot the Temple, as it says in Revelation Chapter 11 verses 1 and 2, there's got to be a trampling, because when it will stop being trampled on is when Christ himself comes back in Zachariah 14, sets his feet on the Mount of Olives and says, "Now we're going to take all your enemies who don't follow you and we are going to expel them and punish them." And now we have Israel functioning in its land in peace in a time that Revelation 20 says will be for a period of 1,000 years.

And in that regard, let's end on a positive note if that's possible. Number three, we need to "Anticipate Jerusalem's Restoration" because one day the Times of the Gentiles trampling the courts of the Temple will be fulfilled. Well you say, "There's not even a temple now." I understand that. Jerusalem itself will be trampled underfoot by Gentiles until the Time of the Gentiles will be fulfilled.

And according to Isaiah 60 verses 10 through 15, which is just a chunk of a great prophesy you need to read some time, there are foreigners who will come at the very end, bring all of their wealth to Jerusalem, they will build up the walls, Zion will be exalted, Israel and Jerusalem in particular, and God will build his city and it will be a majestic city and "a joy from age to age." That hasn't happened yet.

Joel Chapter 3 verses 1 through 21, another great passage for you to read, perhaps, before you go to your small groups. "A restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, all the nations gathered together and judged in the Valley of Jehoshaphat," as it says. And there will be now a fixing of all inverted Gentiles controlling the Temple Mount, and Zion will be reestablished and Israel will be made a "stronghold for the people of God," the descendants of Abraham. And "Judah," it says in verse 20, "will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations." It hasn't happened yet.

I've quoted now Ezekiel 14, or at least referenced the address many times in the message. Another great passage for you to study this week, that the Lord himself will fight against the ultimate trampling of the Gentiles after the Abomination of Desolation and he will come back and "Israel will be inhabited and never again will there be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem will dwell in security." That hasn't happened yet, it certainly didn't happen after 70 A.D.

Jerusalem, a city that we should know something about, and to understand God is to understand something of his affinity and his relationship and, more importantly, his covenant toward a city 7,600 miles away from us today.

It's so important in God's economy that one day that earthly city that will dwell there with Christ on the throne for a thousand years will be converted into a thing called the New Jerusalem, the eternal state, the holy city, that will come down unto the heaven and like, you know, like a like a press, it will just squish the other one out, if you will, it will destroy the other one. The eternal state will be set up and that home in which we'll all live that, now, is not just a piece of real estate that's a third of a square mile, it'll be a 1,500 mile square. You've got that piece of real estate called the New Jerusalem. It's named after the Jerusalem that we now have been discussing. It will have 12 gates. It will be secure. It will be the place where there is not a temple in the middle of it because Christ himself, God himself, will be its temple.



Next March, not this year obviously, but next year, we're going back to Israel. If you haven't been, you might want to go. We've got a table out on the patio. But if you can't go, you can't afford it, you can't fit it into your schedule, just know that if you're a Christian, a visit to Jerusalem, as Jesus called the great city of our king, is on your itinerary. You're going. You won't need a 14-hour plane flight, you won't have to beware of pickpockets when you're there on Mount of Olives, you won't have to sleep in hotels that you're not used to. You will be moving in. It will be your home.

It will be a place, as it says in the Scripture, that will be a place that you will be logged in as a citizen, even as a Gentile grafted in, in the eternal home. Maybe you'll nostalgically read those 3,000-year-old lyrics from King David's song in Psalm 122, that says, he was sure happy when he came to Jerusalem. It will be a whole different Jerusalem than the one he wrote about. Our feet will be standing within the gates of Jerusalem. "Jerusalem - built as a city bound together firmly, to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as decreed." What for? "To give thanks to the name of the Lord."

The next verse, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" And that's all David could do is fight and work and pray for it. It will be secured, not by David's army in that day, but by God himself and "May those be secure who love you! Peace within your walls, security within your towers! For my brothers and companions' sake I say, 'Peace be within you!' For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good." God himself will be the house of God within the city of New Jerusalem. If you pray for Jerusalem your prayers will be answered in an ultimate way. In an intermediate way, there's a time coming when God, I believe, will fulfill all the promises that he spoke about this city.

John Newton, I know you know his name, hymn writer, wrote a hymn in the 18th century that came from that Psalm 87 I quoted at the outset, "Glorious things of thee are spoken." Do you remember that, old timers, that old hymn? Listen to these words: "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God! He, whose word cannot be broken." I love that in every way, "formed thee for his own abode; on the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose?" Not even the armies of the world, ultimately. "With salvation's walls surrounded, thou mayst smile at all thy foes." No threat. "Savior, if of Zion's city, I through grace a member am. Let the world deride or pity. I will glory in thy name. Fading are the world's best pleasures. All its boasted pomp and show; solid joys and lasting treasures. None but Zion's children know."

Let's pray. God, help us as we think through a little bit of your Word and what it has to say about a piece of real estate that still exists that, I believe, clearly has a prophetic promise tied to it that will not only come into play in the eternal state when we have a whole new world, a new heaven and a new earth, but even on this old one, when Satan himself will be bound and you, again, will be functioning with the descendants of Abraham ruling and reigning with a bunch of mostly Gentiles saints in resurrected bodies, as we become governors and mayors, if you will, of various regions and municipalities within the kingdom. So God, help us, please, as we think through just a little bit of what your prophetic word has to say about the future. I know today's sermon was far different than most in this church and from this platform, but I pray you make us good students, good Bereans, regarding your Word, that we might know the majesty, the tapestry of your prophetic word in Scripture and come to respect it as we ought, and maybe become better students of it as well. Dismiss us now with a sense of the hope and optimism we should have, as I hope many of us, most of us, I pray, to be genuine citizens of Zion, so to speak. Kids that have our sins forgiven in Christ as our King.



In whose name we pray, Amen.