

WHY IS JESUS WEEPING?

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it . . .” Luke 19:41

The scene is a sad one. Jesus the Messiah of Israel comes near the city of Jerusalem, and weeps over it. Jerusalem, the holy city, was built on Abraham’s Mt. Moriah and David’s Mt. Zion. Its foundations rested upon the Salem of Melchizedek and the Jebus of the Jebusites. It was made the capital of God’s nation during the reign of King David, and served as such until it was destroyed by the Babylonians. Jerusalem was rebuilt by a remnant of the Jews under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. It had heard the voice and seen the face of the Son of God. One day in the future, the prophets tell us, it will be the capital city of the world and the center of God’s Kingdom on earth! But as the awful day it crucified its Savior approached, Jesus wept over the city.

Actually, the Lord Jesus Christ cried for Jerusalem at least three times. Luke 13 (verses 22 through 35) tells us about a day when He wept over the city before arriving there. As *“he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem,”* He cried,

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”(verses 34-35)

Luke 19 (quoted at the beginning of this article) tells us about Jesus weeping over the city as He entered into it. He *“wept over it, saying. . .”*

“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” (verses 42-44)

Then, Matthew 23 records a sermon He preached in Jerusalem just a few days before He was crucified, and at the conclusion, in verses 37 through 39, we read words almost identical to those of His Luke 13 lament.

He was weeping over the tragedy of a lost opportunity. Jerusalem and the Israelites assembled in it for the Passover missed the opportunity to be saved from both earthly and eternal destruction. They were visited by their Savior, but they did not know it. Instead of receiving Him, they killed Him. Some people must wonder why the Son of God would be seen weeping that day. A slant on the doctrine of election that is gaining more acceptance in our day says that the salvation and damnation of individuals is based ultimately upon an arbitrary choice made by the Lord. Some are chosen for reprobation and damnation, while others are elected for repentance and salvation. The perfect will of

God is always accomplished, some declare. People receive and reject Christ because God foreordained that they would. But if that were so, why was Jesus weeping?

He was weeping because He is *not* willing that *any* should perish. That's what the scripture clearly says.

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."(I Timothy 2:3 -6)

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

Yes, the saved are the elect of God, but election is based upon God's foreknowledge. What and whom God *knows* determines whom He *chooses*! The Bible says that we . . .

". . . elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ . . ." (I Peter 1:2)

Election is defined in Romans 8 as God's sovereignty acting in accordance with His omniscience and omnipotence. Study verses 29 through 34.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us".

The Lord *predestined* those He *foreknew* to be some day *like His Son*. This process is called *election*. It is a mystery to us because we cannot understand what it is to be the all-knowing, all-powerful Ruler of the Universe. But we do know that the election of His own does not negate the part human choice plays in determining a soul's destiny.

If Jesus was about to do exactly what He wanted to do, why would He weep? If He had chosen to destroy Jerusalem, why would He weep over it? What tragedy would there be in a sinner's rejection of God's mercy if he could do nothing else?

The choices of man do play a role in his redemption or destruction. Of Jerusalem, Jesus said,

“. . .how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”(Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34)

Jesus “*would,*” but they “*would not.*” The tragedy over which Jesus is weeping is the tragedy of lost opportunity. The people of the holy city missed the opportunity to be saved because of foolish and wicked decisions they made! Their Savior came to their city, but they would not have Him!

A willing heart makes the difference between “*peace*” (Luke 19:42) and destruction (Luke 19:43-44). It was true for Jerusalem, and it is true for the individual soul. If you will decide to turn from sin and self-righteousness in order to trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, the Bible says that you will be saved! Of the first-century Israelites, Paul said that . . .

“. . .they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. . .For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:3-4, 10-13)

A decision of the heart will secure one’s own salvation, and also a decision in the Christian heart will lead to the salvation of others! If Christians surrender to do their Father’s will, a harvest of lost souls can be won to Christ who would not otherwise have been saved. Hear what Jesus said to His disciples after personally leading a sinner to salvation.

*“My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”
(John 4:34-35)*

The willingness of Christians to evangelize and of sinners to repent does make the difference in the matter of who will spend eternity with God and who will suffer forever without Him. The unwillingness of men creates the tragedy of lost opportunity over which Jesus is weeping in the Book of Luke.

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