

Lesson 5 –

City of the Great King - Jerusalem

Opening Thoughts

The Very Words of God

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.

Psalm 48:2

Think About It

Think for a moment about the times you have explored great historical sites — perhaps the site of the Battle of Gettysburg, the great castles of Europe, the ruins of ancient communities in the Middle East, China's Great Wall — or viewed a reenactment of a great event. When we see these things, we often imagine what life would have been like as the significant events that took place there unfolded.

What do you imagine life would have been like for you in Jerusalem during Jesus' time? What sights, sounds, fears, hopes, joys, and struggles might you have experienced if you had lived in Jerusalem when Jesus worshiped, taught, healed, died, and rose again?

DVD Teaching Notes (20 minutes)

Features of the city districts

Herod's palace

The Jewish mansion

The Antonia

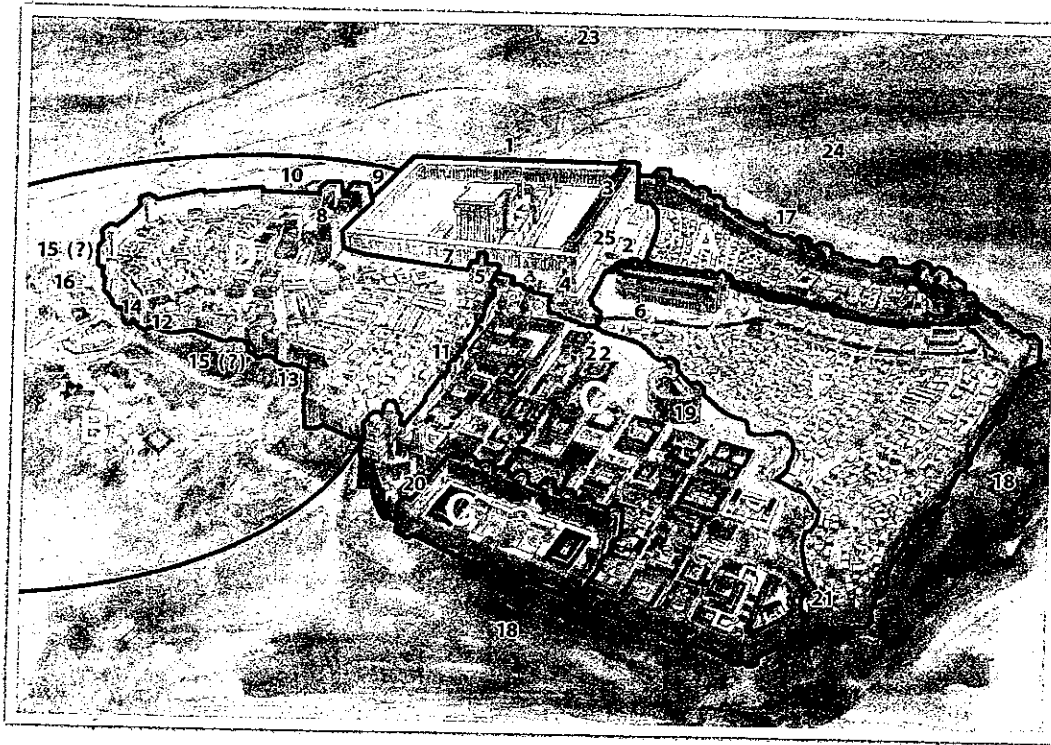
Jesus: our scapegoat

DVD Discussion

Refer to the map of Jerusalem's Districts on page 145. Note the various districts of the city, and the locations of the Mount of Olives, the Temple Mount, the Eastern Gate, Herod's Palace, the Jewish mansions, the Antonia, and the Garden Gate.

1. In our previous session, we explored the ancient temple and learned a bit about the Jews' religious practices, the temple history, and Jesus' ministry in the temple. Today, we looked at other historical sites and events in Jerusalem. Which sites or events in Jerusalem's three-thousand-plus years of history inspire you today?

- A David's City
 - B New City
 - C Upper City
 - D Business District
 - E Temple Mount
 - F Lower City
 - G Herod's Palace
- 1 Eastern Gate
 - 2 Southern Gate
 - 3 Royal Stoa
 - 4 Robinson's Arch
 - 5 Wilson's Arch
 - 6 Tyropoeon Street
 - 7 Warren's Gate
 - 8 Antonia
 - 9 Tadi Gate
 - 10 Pool of Bethesda
 - 11 First Wall
 - 12 Second Wall
 - 13 Garden Gate
 - 14 Towers (Damascus) Gate
 - 15 Golgotha (?)
 - 16 Garden Tomb
 - 17 Spring of Gihon
 - 18 Hinnom Valley
 - 19 Theatre
 - 20 Citadel and Herod's palace
 - 21 Essence Quarter
 - 22 Mansions
 - 23 Mount of Olives
 - 24 Kidron Valley
 - 25 Huldah Gates



JERUSALEM'S DISTRICTS

2. Explain what you think it would have been like to have been an ordinary Jewish person who lived in a city ruled by the temple authorities, Herod, and the Romans.

In what ways has your understanding of what life was like during Jesus' day changed as a result of what you have seen?

Did you expect to see in Jerusalem a palace like Herod's, a fort like the Antonia, or fine mansions in which a priestly family may have lived? What were your expectations?

3. What are some of the images of Jerusalem you think Jesus might have had in mind when he wept over the city? What feelings do those images stir up in you?

DATA FILE

The Geographic Features and Events of Jerusalem Hinnom Valley

The Hinnom Valley formed the western boundary of the Western Hill and the Upper City of Jesus' time; it began along the Western Hill and ended where the Tyropoeon and Kidron Valleys met. Here the kings and people of Judah sacrificed their children to Baal (2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3-4; 33:1, 6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5-6; 32:35) and burned Jerusalem's garbage. Hinnom became a synonym for hell itself (Matthew 5:22, 29; 10:28; 18:9; 23:33; Mark 9:43-48; James 3:6).

Kidron Valley

The Kidron Valley is a deep wadi about three miles long, east of the city between David's City and the Mount of Olives. David crossed here when fleeing Absalom (2 Samuel 15:13-24); various kings destroyed idols and pagan objects here (1 Kings 15:11-12; 2 Kings 23:4-7, 12-14; 2 Chronicles 15:16); Jesus crossed here on his way to Gethsemane just before his



TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM

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arrest (John 18:1); Joel prophesied concerning the judgment of nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat—believed to be part or all of this valley (Joel 3:2, 12); and Solomon refused to allow Shimei to cross here (1 Kings 2:36–38). Hezekiah's tunnel brought fresh water from the Spring of Gihon, which was in the valley, to the Pool of Siloam.

Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives is the highest peak in the area. David went here to escape Absalom's revolt (2 Samuel 15:13–37); Jesus entered Jerusalem from here (Matthew 21:1–11; Luke 19:1, 28–44), gave his final teaching here (Matthew 24:3–46), and ascended to heaven from here (Luke 24:50–52; Acts 1:6–12). This may be the location for Jesus' return (Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:11).

Tyropoeon Valley

The Tyropoeon Valley is between David's City and the Western Hill where the Upper City was located. Hezekiah expanded Jerusalem into this valley; the western wall of Herod's Gentile Court was located here, as was the Pool of Siloam where Jesus sent a blind man to wash (John 9:1–12); Nehemiah's workers repaired the wall near the Pool of Siloam (Nehemiah 3:15).

Western Hill

Now called Mount Zion, the Western Hill was called the "Upper City" during Jesus' time. This was the site of Herod's palace; probably where the wise men talked with Herod the Great (Matthew 2:1–7), where Herod Antipas met Jesus (Luke 23:6–7), and where the Upper Room was located (Luke 22:7–13; Acts 1:12–13).

Small Group Bible Discovery and Discussion

Jesus Heals at the Pool of Bethesda

During his frequent visits to Jerusalem, there is little doubt that Jesus often passed by the pool of Bethesda. The pool was believed to have healing powers, so many disabled people who had little

hope of being made whole other than through a miracle would gather there. Let's take a look at one life-changing miracle that Jesus performed at this site.

1. On the map of Jerusalem's Districts (page 145), locate the Sheep Gate, also called Tadi Gate, on Jerusalem's northern wall. Next locate the Pool of Bethesda, which is just north of the Sheep Gate.

Given the reputation of the pool of Bethesda, its proximity to the temple, and its size (surrounded by five covered colonnades), how quickly do you think news of a healing there would spread through Jerusalem?

2. Read the story of how Jesus healed the paralyzed man (John 5:1–14).
 - a. Who would come to the pool of Bethesda and why? (See John 5:1–7.)
 - b. Which aspect of Jesus' character was touched by what he saw at the pool, and how did he respond? (See John 5:6–9.)
 - c. How much did the paralyzed man know about Jesus, and how quickly did he do what Jesus said? (See John 5:11–13.)

- d. After being healed, where did the man go, and why do you think he went there? (See John 5:8 -9, 14.)
3. Although this story looks self-explanatory on the surface, it raises some questions that bear discussion.
 - a. Jesus was on his way to the temple to worship on the Sabbath during one of the Jewish feasts when he "stopped by" the pool of Bethesda. Why do you think Jesus went to the pool at that time?
 - b. While Jesus was at the pool, what did he learn about the paralyzed man? How do you think he learned this? How long do you think Jesus was there, and what might he have been doing?
 - c. Why do you think the paralyzed man, who didn't even know who Jesus was, responded so quickly to Jesus' healing command? Do you think this was an expression of his faith in God? Why or why not?

Memorize

O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you... Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. Psalm 143:1-2,8