

March 28, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Palm Sunday)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"

— Promise, Restoration, Hope —

Text: Matthew 23:37~39

23:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

23:38 Look, your house is left to you desolate.

23:39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Introduction

God chose "Jerusalem" as only one place in the world to put His name which means "peace of God". On the contrary, there is no city other than Jerusalem, in which battles repeated and much blood was shed.

Jesus said, **"You are light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."**

(Matthew 5:14)

Jerusalem is located on a mountain at about 800 meters high. Therefore the city cannot be hidden. There were numerous events in this city. The most impressive ones were death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His Resurrection and Ascension. This year's Easter is celebrated on April 4, the next Sunday. Jesus, who defeated death appeared to many people for 40 days.

Then Jesus was taken up into heaven before the crowd. They had Pentecost 10 days later. The Holy Spirit came to rest on people who believed in God. It is the day of Pentecost, on May 23, this year. And **the first church** was born in Jerusalem. The disciples of Jesus began to preach the Gospel of God to the world according to Jesus' commandment. It was the beginning of the evangelical work to the world encouraged by the Holy Spirit.

Nowadays, Christian churches are built over the world. It is the God's plan that has begun from Jerusalem.

There was the magnificent temple to worship God in Jerusalem about 2000 years ago, the days of Jesus. The priests and Levites were serving God there. Jerusalem was loved by God and called the City of Peace. However, the reality was quite different indeed.

Today's text records about days just before Jesus was persecuted. Jesus came up to Jerusalem after three years of preaching and watched Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives located on the east of the city. As He went down to the slope of the mountain He began to grieve for Jerusalem looking at it. Let us study today the following two points.

Main Points

1 . **Jerusalem Which Has Lost God's Glory** (The city judged)

Jesus said, **"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."**

Why did Jerusalem the only one city God has chosen lose His glory?

This is the important point.

1) **The Reason of Its Collapse**

They had known about God the Creator. However, the biggest reason was that their faith became superficial, and their worship was becoming mere ritual.

Jesus said Jerusalem was the city who killed the prophets from Abel to Zechariah. **"And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." 23:35**

This is the strict word, but it was true.

They lost the relationship with the living God. Why did they, who were chosen and loved by God, become like this?

① **Human Beings Are so Imperfect.**

Israelites could not keep **God's commandments of love** which made not them go astray. They had forgotten them even though they were given God's grace again and again.

God sent many prophets in the day of the Old Testament. He gave warning many times against them. However, the Israelites were unfaithful to God. Not only that, they committed sins before God and shed blood. And,

They have been shedding blood until today. God told the 6th commandments, **"You shall not murder."** (Exodus 20:16) However, they had broken the Commandment.

They are exactly what we are. Man is sinful from the time of his birth. The Bible says we are sinful. **Isaiah 48:8 Well do I know how treacherous you are; you were called a**

rebel from birth.

As Israelites are imperfect, we are also imperfect.

② Human Beings Are So Sinful.

He who is imperfect commits sins. He has strayed away. "Sin" is originally "hamatia" in Hebrew. ⇒ it means **"to miss the point"**.

He who was created by God should walk toward God, the goal, but he doesn't. As a result, he comes to do various evil things and commits sins before God. This is a sinner.

Jesus' first coming was to save sinners.

Matthew 9:13 For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

God had compassion and sent Jesus to them so that the city would be saved. Even so, they were not willing.

Jesus told **the parable** as below.

Matthew 21:33 "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.

21:34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

21:35 "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.

21:36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.

21:37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said.

21:38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.

21:39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

It must be very painful and sorrowful to Jesus, who came to save them, to declare them judgment.

Matthew 23:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."

2) The Consequence of Losing the Relationship with God

Jerusalem lost the glory of God as a consequence of rejecting Jesus just like the glory of God departed from the Temple (Ezekiel 10). They experienced the same thing again.

Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army in 70 A.D. as Jesus said. Their city remained desolate. However, God did not turn His back on His city and people forever.

Ezekiel 11:17 "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.

11:18 "They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols.

11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

* This is the word God had given to them through Ezekiel.

2. Jerusalem Restores the Glory of God (The city restored)

1) God's Promise

Jerusalem was destroyed by Romans in 70 A.D. as Jesus said and remained desolate.

However, God did not turn His back on His city and people forever. The nation of Israel had not existed for more than 1800 years since 70 A.D. However, God said through Isaiah the Prophet as below.

Isaiah 54:7 "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back.

54:8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you, says the Lord your Redeemer.

54:9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again.

54:10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

* The Scripture testifies to rightness of the Bible.

2) Restoration of Israel

Diaspora Jews have led a life as outsiders over the world. God began to restore them about 100 years ago (1897). Theodor Herzl, a Jew who lived stood up with determination.

Theodor Herzl said, "It is because the Jews have not a place where we can live in peace that we have persecuted and discriminated for a long time. The place is Palestine where God promised and gave Abraham. Jerusalem is the center of it and center of Jerusalem is Zion. We must return to Zion!" This is called Zionism. (Zechariah 8:3) He urged the Jews over the world to be involved in Zionism.

Then the Holocaust occurred during the Second World War. More than 6 million Jews were sent to gas chambers and killed by Nazi Germany. It must be the worst disaster in human history. This tragedy accelerated Zionism. The Israel State was established in 1948 with the approval of the United Nations.

The first Prime Minister of Israel was David Ben-Gurion. His house in a Kibbutz of Negev was not a luxurious house but a simple one. I saw the Bible, his favorite book, on his desk when I have visited there.

My friends. God will faithfully fulfill what He has said. We have confirmed many “signs” of God through the trip to Jerusalem.

God gave the miraculous prophecy through Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 47:9 Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows.

There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live.

47:10 People will fish along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea.

47:11 But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt.

47:12 Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.

* I was shaking with deep emotion before the living God.

3) Hope of Israel

Jesus will come again.

Matthew 23:39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

We realize the authority of prophecies in the Bible.

People, who lived before the State of Israel was found, had trusted in God and believed that this prophecy would be fulfilled in future. Today we see this prophecy lying behind us. (Fulfillment) What do you think? Which situation do you think is easier to believe? Although God did such a great miracle, some people believe, and some do not.

My friends. Faith does not need to eyewitness. We believe because God has told us. Jesus the Resurrection said to Thomas.

John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

The Passion Week begins, the last week of Jesus’ walk to the cross. Why did He walk such a painful way?

⇒ to save us who are imperfect and sinful.

Jesus cried for Jerusalem looking at the city.

Matthew 23:37 “O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

We would like to take a quiet time remembering Jesus this week.

Conclusions

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Jesus cried for Jerusalem today, the day before the Passion week begins. The place where Jesus' cried is called the church of "Sanctuary of Dominus Fleuit," now.

We have studied the following two points.

- 1 . Jerusalem which has lost God's glory
- 2 . Jerusalem restores God's glory

Israel restored in 1948 and it's spiritual restoration begins. And,
Jerusalem is given the hope. It is

⇒ the hope to welcome Jesus who is coming again.

• God bless you !