

• *Jesus wept as He approached Jerusalem*

1. *The story of Jerusalem is an example of a lost destiny*

• *The temple had a dramatic history*

• *Jesus honoured the temple and regularly went to its festivals*

• *The temple had been taken over for commercial purposes*

• *It often happens that something that was truly used by God in days gone by gets to be misused*

2. *The temple leaders were about to lose spiritual blessings*

As Jesus approaches Jerusalem He breaks down and begins to weep<sup>□1</sup>. The leaders of this city will reject Him and will crucify Him. He knows that the city will come under the judgement of God.

1. **The story of Jerusalem is an example of a lost destiny.** God had promised that it would be 'out of Zion' that salvation would go to the world. Yet the city and its temple had lost sight of its wonderful destiny and was full of corruption.

The temple had a dramatic history. Solomon had built it, but God had always given warnings that if the people of Israel turned to sin, the temple would be destroyed. In 587 BC that is what happened. The glory of God was withdrawn, and the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. Another temple was built about seventy years later in 515 BC, but this was not as big as the original one and the glory of God never returned in the same way. In about 20 BC Herod the Great started enlarging the second temple. The temple symbolised the holiness of God and the way of access to Him by the blood of sacrifice.

Jesus honoured the temple and regularly went to its festivals. During the last week of His life He spent much time teaching in its courts. Even after the resurrection of Jesus the disciples still honoured the temple<sup>□1</sup>. But Jesus wept over Jerusalem as He approached the city because He knew that it had lost sight of its destiny. It would still be the centre of salvation because Jesus died there and the Spirit was poured out on the Jerusalem church. It was from Jerusalem that the gospel went out to the uttermost parts of the earth. Yet Jerusalem's destiny was being fulfilled only by a remnant. The vast majority of its inhabitants would reject the gospel and suffer in the terrible invasion of the city in AD 70.

This temple had been taken over by people buying and selling pigeons for the sacrifices, and no doubt other things as well. The entire place had become spiritually dead and traditional. Jesus gave the temple an opportunity to welcome Him, but He always knew that its worshippers would reject Him. They were **forgetful** (no longer keeping in mind the purpose of the temple), **blind** (unable to recognise Jesus), **unbelieving** (without faith in the promises of God concerning the city) and **corrupt** (twisting the use of the temple to their own selfish purposes).

It often happens that something which was truly used by God in days gone by gets to be misused. The temple was a picture of any place which God specially indwells. It can picture Christ (because God indwells Christ). It can picture the church (because God indwells the church). It can picture heaven, the dwelling place of God. And it can symbolise our own lives (because we too are to be temples of the Holy Spirit).

2. **Consider, next, the spiritual blessings the temple leaders were about to lose.** Jesus is weeping because He can see what is going to happen to this city with its temple. As He weeps He says, *'If only you, you also, had know today the things that make for peace. But now they have been hidden from your eyes'*<sup>□1</sup>.

□1 19:41

□1 see  
24:53; Acts  
2:46

□1 19:42

• *Jesus wanted them to have peace*

**Jesus wanted them to have peace.** The temple was built at a time of peace. God would not let David build it because he was a man of war. The name 'Solomon' has a connection with the word for peace (*shalom*). If only they would receive Him, it would bring them the blessings of peace: peace with God, peace with each other, peace of conscience, and peace amidst the circumstances of life.

• *Jesus wanted them to have understanding*

**Jesus wanted them to have understanding.** He says, 'But now they have been hidden from your eyes.' The people of Israel are unable to detect what is happening. The Son of God is visiting them, but they do not see it.

• *Jesus wanted the protection of the next generation*

**Jesus wanted the protection of the next generation.** He could see into the future, and was concerned about the next generation. Forty years after His death the temple would be destroyed. He knows Israel's enemies will come<sup>□1</sup> and the city will be destroyed. He says that they 'will level you to the ground, and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another...'.  
□1 19:43

• *Jesus wanted His temple to be a place of prayer*

**Jesus wanted His temple to be a place of prayer.** The temple was intended to symbolise the way to God, through the blood of a sacrifice for sins. It was intended to be a place where people gathered together in the courtyards for prayer. But the leaders of the temple were misusing it. Jesus throws out the sellers and small-time business people<sup>□1</sup> and protests against what has happened.  
□1 19:46

• *Jesus wanted His temple to be a place of teaching*

**Jesus wanted His temple to be a place of teaching.** This is how Jesus is using the temple during His last few days on earth<sup>□1</sup>. The common people are listening, though the leaders of Israel are looking for a way to kill Jesus<sup>□2</sup>.  
□1 19:47  
□2 19:48

**3. There was only one sign of hope for Jerusalem and that is that Jesus is weeping**

**3. There was only one sign of hope for Jerusalem and that is that Jesus was weeping.** It means that Jesus still loves the people of Jerusalem. He goes on teaching them, because some might listen to Him. Despite the majority who will reject Him, He goes on teaching because there might be a remnant who will trust Him. Three thousand people were converted in the city of Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus' tears and prayers brought some forward progress in the kingdom of God. Perhaps Jerusalem will again be used in the purpose of God. I would like to think so.



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