

## Why Was Jerusalem Destroyed in AD 70?

Luke 21:20-38

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*"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near . . . Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

- Luke 21:20 & 24, ESV

In AD 70, the Roman army marched on Jerusalem and destroyed it, in response to a Jewish uprising against Rome. The Temple was destroyed and has never been rebuilt in the 1,950 years since. This is remarkable for two reasons:

**1. The Temple had stood in Jerusalem for over 1,000 years**, with a brief period from 586 to 515 BC when the Solomon's Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians and before it was rebuilt under Cyrus and Darius.

**2. Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed** shortly after His life, death and resurrection and that it would remain "*trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.*" Not only has the Temple never been rebuilt, but Jerusalem has never been fully controlled by the Jewish people since AD 70.

These two facts make the destruction of the Temple and the accompanying domination of Jerusalem by non-Jews a most remarkable historical event and a most remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. But why? Why did Jesus say that Jerusalem would be destroyed? Why has it remained under Gentile domination and how long will it last?

First of all, do these kinds of questions matter? Well, I'll put it this way: These questions only matter if the significance of Jesus' death on the cross matters, and if God's kingdom purposes for the Jewish people and the nations matter. In other words, questions like this are important if the whole flow of biblical redemptive history matters.

Jesus Himself told a parable explaining the destruction of Jerusalem and the rise of "the times of the Gentiles." It's the parable of the vineyard and its tenants, recorded in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Clearly, this parable was very key for the early church's understanding of the kingdom of God. In the parable, the tenants who have been working the vineyard symbolize the Jewish leaders. They killed the owner's servants, who represent the prophets, and then they conspired to kill the vineyard owner's son and heir. Jesus makes it clear in the parable that the vineyard owner will judge the wicked tenants, take away their share in the vineyard and give it to others. This is precisely what God did in AD 70.

Another way to view the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 is as the removal of a symbolic form of worship which was no longer necessary. If the Jewish people had received the message of the apostles, they would have seen that the Temple was no longer needed. Jesus' body is the living Temple and the cornerstone for the new and living Temple of the church. His sacrifice on the cross was the final sacrifice.

So, the kingdom of God has been removed from the Jewish people because they violently rejected God's Son and anointed King. The Temple was destroyed because it is no longer needed. Still, the story of the Jewish people and their role in God's kingdom purposes is not over. God has promised to bring the Jewish people back to Himself, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. This is why Jesus referred to our times as "the times of the Gentiles" and said that it would end. Jerusalem's domination by Gentiles will end when the time of the Gentiles ends.

Paul explains the time of the Gentiles and the future restoration of the Jewish people in [Romans 11](#). During the time of the Gentiles, a remnant of Jewish people are still being saved through Jesus Christ. But in the future, the nation will be turned to Christ. And thus, God's purpose to bless all the nations through the seed of Abraham will be completed (see [Genesis 12:3](#))

What we see in all of this is that God's kingdom belongs to God alone. Salvation belong to our God, who sits upon His throne ([Rev. 7:10](#)). This is what all of God's people will confess and celebrate for all of eternity when we are gathered around His throne in glory!