

Old Jerusalem Is No More

Revelation 18:21-24

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2018-05-13

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Text

Revelation 18:20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, yes you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced your judgment against her!” 21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a huge millstone and threw it into the ocean saying: “The great city Babylon will be thrown down violently, just like that, and will never be found again. 22 ‘The sound of harpists and musicians and flutists and trumpeters will never be heard in you again; no craftsman of whatever craft will ever be found in you again; the sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again; 23 the light of a lamp will never shine in you again; the voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again; because your merchants were the magnates of the earth, because by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.’ 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, even of all who had been butchered on the earth.”

Introduction

I. Where the world laments (vv. 9-19), God’s people rejoice (v. 20)

I listened to a sermon while commuting back and forth to work this week, and the sermon had a lot of good things in it, but I perked up my ears when the pastor at one point started a rant about how pastors are being unfaithful to the text unless they help the congregation to see Christ and to know the Gospel. Now if he had stopped at that, I could have totally agreed because Christ inspired the whole Bible so you are listening to Jesus when you listen to the Bible; and the Gospel is the comprehensive good news of the kingdom and goes much further than personal salvation and the five points of Calvinism. But usually when people rant on this, that’s not what they mean. And it became quickly apparent in this sermon that what he considered the Gospel was incredibly truncated; it was simply what I call the introduction to the Good News of the Kingdom. So he was advocating eisegesis - reading personal salvation into every text of Scripture even when its not there.

He went on to say that a lot of pulpits have written on them, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” I agree with that statement too. I don’t want to see the preacher and his jokes and his opinions. I want to see Jesus and what His Word says. So that is a great saying. But unlike the Jesus that this preacher wanted us to exclusively see (what I call a Precious Moments Jesus who doesn’t ever speak to things that are controversial in our culture), the Bible calls us see Jesus in all of His character and work. Now, I will hasten to say that the part of Jesus this pastor preached on actually ended up being beautiful, and I

loved it, and I preach on Jesus as personal Savior too. The book of Revelation shows a compassionate Lamb who saves His people and who Shepherds them. That is wonderful. But it also shows Jesus to be a Warrior, a Judge, an Educator, a Provider, a Providential Governor, and a King who is interested in every aspect of your life and every aspect of planet earth. The Bible presents a Good News to the whole of creation and very bad news to those who rebel against His plans.

And verse 20 is certainly not a Precious Moments Jesus whom we are seeing. Verse 20 commands us to rejoice in a Jesus who has just devastated Jerusalem in His wrath. And if we love the real Jesus, then we need to understand a little bit about this part of His character. It says, “Rejoice over her, O heaven, yes you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced your judgment against her!”

There are three things I want you to notice in this verse. And each of these three things are unfortunately almost completely absent from the modern Precious Moments church.

First, God’s people are commanded to rejoice in His judgment of evil, not simply salvation from evil. We do not want evil to continue to triumph, so when God smashes tyranny, we not only may, we must rejoice. Why? Because we must love the real Jesus and His kingdom more than anything else in life. If Babylon stands in the way of Christ’s plans and purposes in history, we should desire that it be dismantled completely.

Second, notice that this is not just God’s judgment. The last clause says, “because God has pronounced your judgment against her!” How could he say that this destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent economic collapse was the church’s judgment against Babylon? Well, I would say that it was the church’s judgment in part because she had prayed that God would avenge the blood of the saints. This was the answer to the prayer of the saints in chapter 6:10 - “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell in the land?”

You see, God had taken the prayers of the saints, mixed them with Christ’s intercession, and brought judgments on the earth through those prayers. Over and over again in this book we have been seeing that principle. In chapter 8, it is after the church prays with intensity, that God unleashes His warrior angels and brings retribution upon the earth. In chapter 11, the prayers of the prophets bring judgment on the earth. The song of vengeance at the end of that chapter results in more thunderings and lightnings affecting history. The full-orbed worship of chapter 14 leads to more judgments

against their enemies. And we see songs and prayers of the saints in chapters 15,16, and 17 doing the same thing. Take seriously the fact that your judgment is required, and you can only make your judgment righteous if it comes into agreement with the Scriptures. Otherwise we violate Christ's command, "Judge not that you be not judged," Which in context is only forbidding independent judgment that glorifies self. Jesus commands us in John 7:24 "judge with righteous judgment." That's what you do when you pray the imprecatory prayers. You are coming into agreement with Christ's judgments.

But an inverse implication that can be deduced is that if we do not ask for judgment, no judgment will fall. If that is true, it is an astounding conclusion. James says, "You have not because you ask not." The modern church is not seeing Jericho's walls falling down because we are not praying against Jericho. God has included numerous Warfare Prayers in His inspired hymn book (the Psalms), and He expects us to come into agreement with those Imprecatory Psalms and to pray them. Those Imprecatory Prayers are the prayers of Jesus - not the Precious Moments Jesus, but the true Jesus of Scripture. We cannot complain about persecutors continuing to persecute if we do not ask God to take them out. As Chilton worded it, "The Church must pray for her enemies' defeat - a defeat that must come either by conversion or by destruction."¹

Third, we are commanded to rejoice because when we pray in faith, God agrees with our prayers and He pronounces our judgment. And to me that is encouraging, because anything He pronounces will be done. His victory is sure. Again, Chilton's comments are spot on. He says,

If the Church in our age is to proceed from victory to victory as did the Church in the apostolic age, she must recover the triumphalistic perspective of the early saints... We are at war, a war in which the definitive victory has been won by our King. All of history is now a mopping-up operation in terms of that victory, looking forward to the conversion of the world and the final overcoming of Death itself. Our opposition is doomed to perish, and the Church is called to rejoice in the certain knowledge of her earthly vindication and ultimate victory.²

What greater reasons could there be to rejoice? Rejoicing shows faith. Rejoicing shows submission to God's purpose for history. Rejoicing shows a true eschatology. Some Amillennialists actually use Chilton's term "triumphalistic" as a term of derision that they think will shut us down. They think, "Surely no one would be triumphalistic!" One professor at Westminster

1 David Chilton, [Days of Vengeance](#)1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20 (Fort Worth: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 459.

2 David Chilton, [Days of Vengeance](#)1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20 (Fort Worth: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 459.

Seminary thought he would make me blush by calling my eschatology triumphalistic. But I wore it as a badge of honor and asked him what the alternative to triumph is? It is defeat. Do you know what his response was? The Christian eventually wins by losing in history. And he went on to explain that when we lose in martyrdom we go to heaven. OK - well, there is a certain aspect of truth to that. But this book does not just give us good news for heaven; it gives us good news for planet earth. There is plenty to rejoice about in history if the church would once again live by faith rather than by pessimillennialism.

II. The great city Babylon thrown down and will not be found any more

But others say that winning must wait until the final day of history. And they point to this verse to prove it. They believe that there can be no winning in history. According to them, Babylon will be thrown down at the very last day of history (or if they are Premils, the last day before the Millennium). This is one of their key verses to disprove the idea of victory in history. How do they do that?

A. Objection of some: “What about the old city?” “What about the western wall?”

Well, their objection is that verse 21 did not yet get fulfilled. They say that Babylon could not possibly refer to Jerusalem because Jerusalem still exists. “Ha ha. All it takes is one verse to disprove Preterism.” They point out that verse 21 shows a complete destruction of the city. It says, “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a huge millstone and threw it into the ocean saying: ‘The great city Babylon will be thrown down violently, just like that, and will never be found again.’”

They say, “What about those last words - ‘will never be found again’? If you take that phrase at face value, there shouldn’t be any Jerusalem in existence today, and for sure there shouldn’t be a Wailing Wall.” In fact, they use the Wailing Wall to prove that the first two verses of Matthew 24 could not have been fulfilled yet - part of the temple is still standing (according to them), so they claim that there must be a rebuilt temple in the future that will once again be completely demolished in the future, and then get rebuilt again by Christ. So they claim that verse 21 is our Achilles Heel. If the entire city was not demolished, this prophecy has not been fulfilled.

So I want to spend a fair bit of time on this verse and show you that archeology actually shows that it was indeed literally fulfilled. As

Dr. George Wesley Buchanan worded it, “In 70 AD, the Roman soldiers destroyed this city so completely that no one would ever realize that a city had been there.”³ It was gone. It completely disappeared off the map. Nothing but the Roman fort was left.

Answers sometimes given that do not require a literal fulfillment

You won't get the information I am about to give to you in Preterist commentaries. They typically say that this is just symbolic and shouldn't be taken literally. But as you know, I tend to think that every symbol in Revelation was a literal event in history that symbolized deeper truths. As I have said a number of times, just because the rock that Moses struck was a symbol of Jesus being smitten does not mean that there was not a literal Moses, who literally struck, a literal rock, with literal water flowing out of it. It's not either/or but both/and. And I believe the same is true here.

I believe Jerusalem as a whole was completely decimated with most of its stones being carried off to another place to build another pagan city. There was nothing left of the former city. Only the Roman Fortress known as Antonia was left, and it didn't count as part of Jerusalem because the Jews considered it to be a Roman embassy on Roman soil. Nothing of true Jerusalem was left.

What does Jesus mean when he says “Jerusalem... kills the prophets” (Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34)?

However, before I prove that, let me briefly mention other non-literal approaches that Preterists have put forward. There is an element of truth to these interpretations, so it is worth looking at them. But I don't think they are adequate to deal with the text.

Some Preterist commentaries point out that Matthew 23:37 says that “Jerusalem... kills the prophets,” and since buildings don't kill, we should take the reference to the city of Jerusalem killing prophets to mean that the leaders of Jerusalem killed those prophets. In the same way, they say that we should take this verse as a reference to the leaders of Jerusalem being destroyed and no longer existing, not the buildings being destroyed. And it's true that the Sadducean leaders were destroyed.

But the reason I don't find that explanation adequate at all is that verses 23-24 seem to speak of a geographical place being destroyed. There are several things that are said to no longer happen “in you.” These things don't happen

3 George Wesley Buchanan, Ph.D., Litt.D., D.S.L., “In Search of King Solomon's Temple,” June 2009 newsletter.

inside of people, but inside of a city. Verse 22 says, ““The sound of harpists and musicians and flutists and trumpeters will never be heard in you again; no craftsman of whatever craft will ever be found in you again; the sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again.” And you keep reading in verses 23-24 and the text seems to be referring to things that used to exist within a geographical city that would no longer exist because that city no longer exists. And Futurists say, “That’s right Phil. Keep preaching. That’s precisely why your interpretation of Revelation is wrong.” I’ll get to them in a bit, but I want to first of all make corrections to the interpretations within our own camp.

Some say that the focus is on the temple

In response to this objection, some Preterists say that the temple was being identified with the city here, and that each of these verses is only referring to temple activities, not city activities. They say that verse 22 refers to temple music, the craftsmen who worked on the temple, and the millstones that ground the grains for priests and Sadducees. They say that verse 23 refers to the lamp of the temple that Titus carried away to Rome, the marriages that were solemnized in the temple would no longer happen, and the sorcery that the Sadducees engaged in would stop because they would all be dead. My problem is that I just can’t get past the words “the great city.” This could be a partial answer, but not the complete answer.

Note the full contrasts between heavenly Jerusalem and earthly Jerusalem show more than buildings

Others point to the numerous contrasts between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem and use it to show that the system of Judaism was being permanently swept aside by Jesus and replaced by the church and not the city itself. And it is true that nothing about the Old Covenant would remain after AD 70. You can look in your outlines at the fact that the old Jerusalem is contrasted with the New Jerusalem symbolically in a number of ways. That chart says:

Old Jerusalem

Earthly Jerusalem
Non-continuing city
City whose builder is man
Jerusalem which now is
Jerusalem beneath
Jerusalem in bondage
Wicked city
Harlot
Babylon, Egypt, Sodom, Tyre

New Jerusalem

Heavenly Jerusalem
Eternal city with foundations
City whose builder is God
Jerusalem to come
Jerusalem above
Jerusalem that is free
Holy city
Bride
Holy Jerusalem, Israel, saints

So they do have a point - there is something being symbolized by the city.

Answers that assume a literal fulfillment

This is an acted prophecy of an actual event in history

But while I agree with what was symbolized (and that is what these commentaries are focusing on), I still believe we need to take the symbol as an actual event in history. Did an angel actually throw a stone into the sea that was about the size of a millstone? Yes, I think so. I documented the previous examples of meteorites that were thrown onto earth or into the sea, and if they were literal, I don't see why this one couldn't be literal. This is a much smaller stone, so it may not have been as noteworthy as the others. But we have records of meteorites falling in the previous three years. And if this was a literal stone (as I believe it was), then it would follow the pattern used by prophets in the Old Testament. As one commentator worded it, "This is an acted prophecy like those described in the Hebrew Scriptures."⁴

What is meant by that? Well, in Jeremiah 19:11 Jeremiah broke a literal clay pot to symbolize the fact that Israel would be broken. It was an acted out prophecy. In Jeremiah 51:61-64 Jeremiah had Seraiah throw a literal stone into the Euphrates River to symbolize the fact that Babylon would sink to rise no more. And here I believe an angel threw yet another literal stone (or perhaps a meteorite) into the water to symbolize the fact that Jerusalem would be thrown down with violence and that all that was being judged (both physical old Jerusalem and symbolic old Jerusalem - all of it) would not be seen again. He is not denying that Jerusalem would ever be built again, but he is stating categorically that what was judged would not be found. Let me explain why I take this quite literally.

Other Biblical texts that say the same thing

On city being leveled read Luke 19:41-44

My first reason is that I can't get around Luke 19. In Luke 19 Jesus said that the literal city would be 100% destroyed. In fact, Jesus insisted that the entire city would be leveled to the ground. The context is clearly Jerusalem. Luke 19, starting to read at verse 41:

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your

4 Margaret Barker, [The Revelation of Jesus Christ](#)1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), p. 298.

enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

This is not simply talking about the temple being leveled. This is clearly talking about Jerusalem itself being leveled to the ground. I will show in a bit that exactly this happened in AD 70, and that what we see today was actually built under Hadrian and later times. In fact, some of the walls were clearly built by the Muslims much later. And some archaeologists believe that even the Wailing Wall was built under Hadrian. I have a different take on it. I think it probably was Herodian - based on the style of the stones. Of course, Hadrian could have taken Herod's stones to rebuild the walls, so I guess that is not a definitive proof. But I don't see the need to overturn establishment archeology needlessly. In any case, I don't see how you can get around Luke 19. Jesus was speaking about the literal city of Jerusalem being leveled to the ground.

On temple being leveled, read Matt. 24:1-2

Second, turn to Matthew 24 and I will read the first two verses. This deals with the leveling of the temple. Many Premillennialists insist that the Wailing Wall was a Herodian portion of the temple, and therefore this prophecy was not fulfilled. They claim that we are still waiting for a future temple to get built and to immediately get demolished after seven years. And strangely they say that once that seven-year temple gets demolished, Jesus will rebuild that temple in their supposed Jewish millennial kingdom and re-institute animal sacrifices - which I consider to be beyond bizarre. So they are predicting two more temples in the future. Anyway, Matthew 24:1-2.

Matt. 24:1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

So they are outside the temple, on the Mount of Olives, looking at the temple (which in my opinion could include its walls, though commentators point out that only the temple stones are mentioned, not wall stones), and Jesus says that all of it would be thrown down. Not one stone would be left upon another stone. Every stone would be at least displaced. In verse 34 Jesus said that every detail of what He had been describing in the previous 33 verses would be fulfilled to a “t” within one generation, which means, within forty years. Again, I don't know how you can get around the literal nature of what would be destroyed. Literal stones in a literal temple and a literal city. It's all going to be gone, and as our text words it, “will never be

found again.”

Read Ernest L. Martin, [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#)

. He gives detailed proof that the Jewish portions of Jerusalem were completely dug up. The only portion left was Fort Antonia (made by the Romans for the Romans, and considered like an embassy)

Did this happen? Yes. I wasn't as clear on this when I started preaching on Revelation, but I am now convinced that there was a far greater destruction than I had ever realized. And there are a number of books that document it.⁵ Though I have listed Ernest Martin's book as an intriguing theory, I will hasten to say that there are five theories of where the temple used to exist, and there are various theories of what the Western Wall (or the Wailing Wall) might be. Yet none of those theories change the facts of what I am about to say. You don't have to buy into Martin's theory to accept what I am about to tell you. But his book, [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#)^{1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20}, gives detailed proofs and numerous eyewitness accounts of Jerusalem being completely demolished, with only the Roman Fort Antonia being left as a base for Roman operations. And even part of that Fort was demolished. And Marilyn Sams has built on that work and given more information. And there are others who keep adding to the volume of evidences. You can't prove things with archeology, but you can certainly illustrate what the Bible says.

Titus was initially going to keep three Roman forts, but because of the frenzy for finding gold, the soldiers started tearing down even the Roman forts. The only Roman Fort that was mostly preserved was Fort Antonia. Titus had to break down part of the walls to capture that.

And the question that may be in some of your minds may be, “Why does the Wailing Wall not contradict Christ's prophecy?” One answer is that it wasn't part of the temple proper, which would have been 600 feet by 600 feet, but

5 I particularly found Dr. Paul Feinberg, Ernest L. Martin, and Marilyn Sams to be helpful. Though I disagree with them on the extent of stones removed from Jerusalem (there are still artificats remaining), the quotes of authors who say the same thing that Scripture says does indeed show that what was intended by the prophecies as been fulfilled. For approximations to Martin's unique (and partially wrong) theory, see Marilyn Sams, [The Jerusalem Temple Mount: A Compendium or Ancient Descriptions](#)^{1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20} (Amazon, 2017); Marilyn Sams, [The Jerusalem Temple Mount Myth](#)^{1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20} (Amazon, 2014); Ernest L. Martin, [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#)^{1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20} (Academy for Scriptural); See also www.realtemplemount.com; <http://www.baseinstitute.org/pages/temple/22>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTSCQgZirts> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IONLPq64FIs>; <http://hope-of-israel.org/critique.html>; see testimonials of Prof. James D. Tabor, Dept. of Religious Studies, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Dr. Michael P. Germano, Professor Emeritus Ambassador University at <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>

was a wall going around a much larger compound. Another possible answer is given by Martin - that the wall wasn't part of Jerusalem; it wasn't part of the temple; it was part of Fort Antonia. The third possible answer is that the Wall was built by Hadrian in the second century using stones from Herod's temple. There are actually some strong evidences of that.

But if either of the last two theories are correct, then the wall isn't even Jewish. Antonia was built by Rome, for Rome, as an outpost of Rome, and contained only Roman soldiers. If it contained 10,000 Romans⁶ as Josephus seems to say, it would have to be much bigger than picture #1 shows it to be. A maximum of 600 people could have squished into that. The small size of the fortress shown in that picture certainly doesn't fit the magnificent dimensions that Josephus gives for that fort. He said that it was so large that several cities could be contained in it.⁷ So the third and fourth pictures down on your outlines represent two versions of a much newer theory held by Christians and Jews. They have come up with this new theory based on numerous evidences from Biblical and ancient sources. In fact, it is the Biblical texts that describe the temple that finally made me jump ships on the establishment view and adopt a modified Martin view. But the truth of this sermon does depend on which theory you hold to.

In any case, Fort Antonia was treated as an embassy (so to speak) and therefore was on Roman soil. That's why any Jew that went into that fort on diplomatic business had to get cleansed upon coming out. So it was not destroyed, but 100% of the temple and 100% of what the Jews considered to be Jerusalem was torn down and even the foundations of buildings were torn up.

But if theory three is correct, then it was built by the man who engaged in the most massive butchering of Jews in their entire history - Hadrian. Either way, it is rather ironic that the thing that many modern Jews (though not all) consider to be the most holy place was either part of a pagan Roman fort dedicated to the Roman god, Jupiter or built by their arch enemy. And I have read numerous testimonies from Jews, Christians, and pagans that this Western Wall belonged to the Roman fort, not the temple.

Read eye witnesses of the temple. See Josephus Wars 7:1:1; Eleazar; Aristeeas, Tacitus, Hecateus of Abdera. Also read descriptions of nothing left of Old Jerusalem by historians from first through 10th centuries.

But since this verse deals with the city, let me give you a sampling of some

6 6000 soldiers constituting the legion, and 4000 support people.

7 "...it might seem to be composed of several cities..." (War 5:241)

of the accounts I have read of nothing being left of Jerusalem after AD 70. They are quite clear on this point.

Josephus

Josephus, the eye witness historian who wrote the most detailed account of the war, said, “It [Jerusalem] was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was nothing left to make those that came to that place believe it had ever been inhabited.” (War VII.1,1) And you might wonder why even the foundation stones would be dug up. It was because the soldiers had been so successful in finding treasure hidden in walls and under floor pavement stones, that they took down every wall and dug up every foundation to see if money could be found underneath those stones. And that was done throughout the city.

Jesus said that Jerusalem would be leveled to the ground and Josephus said that Jerusalem was “laid even with the ground.” Was it fulfilled? Josephus says it was in almost identical language. Jesus said that even the foundations of houses would be dug up and Josephus says that the whole city was dug up to the very foundation and nothing was left to even make you think there was a city there before. You could call Josephus a liar, but he was an eyewitness of the war. And his testimony is word-for-word confirmation of Luke 19. I have read articles seeking to debunk this testimony based on archaeological finds, but in order to do so they have to discount the words of Josephus just like they have to discount the words of the Bible. He was an eyewitness.

Eleazar (the general defending Masada - AD 73)

The next eyewitness was Eleazar. This was his testimony in AD 73 before Masada was taken. He was one of the generals fighting against Rome. So this statement was made three years after Jerusalem fell. He said, “Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations; and has nothing but that monument of it preserved, I mean the camp of those that have destroyed it, which still dwells upon its ruins; ...a few women are there preserved alive by the enemy, for our bitter shame and reproach.”⁸ So Eleazar said that Jerusalem was demolished down to its very foundations and had nothing left but the Roman Fort Antonia, with some Jewish women being used there as prostitutes. He too confirms that there was a literal fulfillment.

⁸ recorded by Josephus in War 7:376-377

Pliny (AD 79)

In AD 79 (just nine years after Jerusalem was destroyed), Pliny said that nothing was left of Jerusalem except a heap of ashes.⁹ Nothing else was left.

2 Baruch 6:3-7 (1st century)

A first century document known as 2 Baruch said that even the foundations of Jerusalem's walls were overthrown. This is not true of the alleged temple mount of today, but there are numerous witnesses that everything of Jerusalem was laid low. So either the current walls were built under Hadrian using Herod's stones, or they are exclusively part of Fort Antonia. I don't know any other way of reconciling these numerous historical statements with the archeological record.

Hippolytus (AD 225)

In AD 225 Hippolytus said that Jerusalem was only a heap of stones after the war, and where the temple used to be there is now nothing but weeds. I have been reading a lot of Christian archeologists this week, and I have been seeing proofs that as late as the 1930s, there was nothing but farmland where the temple location proposed by Martin used to be - nothing but farm fields. And by the way, the Old Testament twice prophesied about the temple area being plowed (Jer. 26:18; Mic. 3:12). And both Jewish and Christian sources say that once the foundations of the temple were removed, the field that the temple used to sit on was plowed. There is nothing but hard rock under the Dome of the Rock or that entire platform. You couldn't plow it. But Martin's temple site was plowed as late as the 1930s.

Clementine Homilies (c. AD 220)

The Clementine Homilies were written in about AD 220. One of those homilies said that not a single stone was left intact where it had been placed.¹⁰

Eusebius (AD 265-340)

Eusebius of Caesarea said in the early fourth century, The hill called Sion and Jerusalem, the buildings there... have been utterly removed or shaken, in fulfillment of the Word... Their ancient holy place... are to this day as much destroyed as Sodom... Their once famous Mount Sion instead of being as it once was, the center of study and education based on the divine prophecies... is a Roman farm like the rest of the country. Yea, with my own eyes I have seen the bulls plowing there, and the sacred site sown with seed. And Jerusalem itself is become... a stonequarry..." (Proof of

9 Pliny, Natural History V.71.

10 Clementine Homilies, Homily III, Chapter XV. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0808.htm>

the Gospel, 8.3.405-406)

Athanasius (AD 296-373)

In the mid-fourth-century Athanasius said, "If the Jews had [their ancient city and temple]...then they could deny that Christ had come...but now all prophecy is sealed, and their gift of prophecy, their holy city, and their Temple are taken away—forever." (Oration on the Incarnation of the Word, 40) Not just their temple was taken away, but their holy city was taken away. There was nothing left in the mid-fourth century.

Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335-395)

All the way to the time of Gregory of Nyssa in the late fourth century, Jerusalem and temple were still gone. He said, "[But now] no traces even of their temple can be recognized, and their splendid city has been left in ruins, so that there remains to the Jews nothing of the ancient institutions..."¹¹

Martin's summary

And I could read other examples of Jews and Christians who saw Jerusalem for themselves. Martin summarizes numerous other witnesses, and says, "There was such an abundance of various stones dislodged from their foundations that the emperor Hadrian sixty years later was able to build an entirely new city (Aelia) to the northwest of the former city by reusing many of those ruined stones. The original southeast area of Jerusalem remained an open quarry until as late as the time of Eusebius. He lamented that stones of Jerusalem and the Temple were in his day still being used for homes, temples, theatres, etc. What must be realized is the fact that Jewish Jerusalem and the Holy Temple were so dismantled and torn down that even the foundational stones of the buildings were uprooted and in complete ruin. These eyewitness descriptions are in contrast to one complex of buildings that almost completely escaped the destruction and continued to remain as functioning structures within the devastated area of Jerusalem. That complex of buildings was the Haram esh-Sharif that we still see standing to this day."¹²

And that last sentence is referring to the platform rock on which the Dome of the Rock sits. And the Wailing Wall is on the west side of the Haram esh-Sharif. That was the Antonia Fortress. The second from the bottom picture of your outlines shows how Josephus' measurements of Fort Antonia fits perfectly on top of Haram esh-Sharif. It's just one theory, but it's an intriguing one.

11 Gregory of Nyssa, "The Great Catechism," chapter XVIII.

12 <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>

Five theories on location of temple. Various theories on the location of the city of David. Various theories of who built the Wailing Wall. But all agree that the original city is no more.

Now, even if you were to reject Martin's thesis that many Jews and Christians now hold to, you still can't evade the conclusion that Luke 19 was fulfilled. The fact of the matter is that even among secular archaeologists, there is no consensus of where the temple used to be. That is how thoroughly dismantled the temple had become - experts are guessing as to its location. Even those who say that the Wailing Wall is the outer wall around the temple admit that it is not part of the temple proper. In any case, there is no consensus on the location of the temple - not even among Jewish archeologists. For such massive lack of consensus to be there illustrates the truth of Christ's prophecy.

But it isn't just the location of the temple that is in dispute. There is even dispute about where the city of David exists. Jerusalem was so thoroughly removed that it is hard to get archaeologists to agree on the details.

But here is the important point - what they are all agreed on is that the pre-war city no longer exists. Martin says,

All archaeologists and historians today (including Ritmeyer) readily admit that the Haram esh-Sharif is the only facility of pre-destruction Jerusalem that survived the war with its foundation stones still in evidence. Those four Herodian walls of Fort Antonia and its interior buildings were the only man-made structures that Titus the Roman general allowed to remain for the protection of the Tenth Legion left to monitor Roman affairs.¹³ And I've checked with many sources, and I don't think his statement can be contradicted. I've some articles that try to do so, but I think unsuccessfully. Even Wikipedia agrees, saying,

What is today known as the "Old City" was laid out by the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century, when he began to rebuild Jerusalem as a pagan city. In 130, Hadrian visited the ruins of Jerusalem remaining after the First Jewish-Roman War of 66–73. He rebuilt the city, renaming it Aelia Capitolina in 135 CE.¹⁴

I've maybe given way more quotes than you needed to have in order to be convinced, but this is a verse that is trumpeted so frequently as being unfulfilled that I wanted to make sure you had no doubts. The various forms of Futurism are flat out wrong on this verse - it was perfectly fulfilled.

13 <http://askelm.com/temple/t010513.htm>

14 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Jerusalem

Summary of everything about “the great city Babylon” that “shall not be found anymore”

The original city disappeared

But as I mentioned before, symbols symbolize something. If the disappearance of the temple and city symbolized something else disappearing, what is it?

The Babylonian-Tyrian international banking system and military-industrial complex of verses 9-19 disappeared

Certainly the Babylonian-Tyrian international banking system and military-industrial complex that we looked at last week completely disappeared. Since it was so tightly connected with the temple, it disappeared with the temple. It wasn't just the central bank that was looted and destroyed, every facet of the smoothly running machine was dismantled.

The Sadducees and priests disappeared

Second, the Sadducees and priests disappeared. They were the ones who were running the show for Jerusalem, for the bank, for politics, and for the temple. The corruption that Jesus opposed in the temple was now forever gone.

The temple disappeared

And of course, the temple disappeared. And this is a great point to bring up to Jews when witnessing to them. So many Old Testament prophecies said that Messiah would come when the temple was still standing - and specifically, when the second temple started by Ezra was still standing.¹⁵ If the temple is gone, then Messiah has already come. They have missed their Messiah.

The Old Covenant sacrificial system disappeared (Heb. 8:13)

And finally, the Old Covenant sacrificial system completely disappeared. Hebrews 8:13 says, “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews was written in AD 66, so when he said that it was ready to vanish away, he wasn't kidding. Within 3-4 years it was gone.

And by the way, Hebrews does not anticipate a resurrection of this sacrificial

¹⁵ Here are a sampling of Scriptures that indicate that Ezra's temple would still be standing when Messiah arrived: Ezekiel 40-48; Dan. 9:24-27; Amos 9 (note that verses 1-10 are pre-Christ, verses 11-12 are while Christ was on earth, and verses 13-15 are the glories of His kingdom); Hag. 2:3-9 (with Heb. 12:25-29); Mal. 3:1-7.

system in the future. Such a sacrificial system (if it were to be resurrected) would completely deny the finality of Christ's sacrifice and would be heretical. I think Hebrews is the best proof that Dispensationalism is completely false. Prior to the late 1800s (when Dispensationalism was invented) no one (not even Premillennialists) believed that temple sacrifices would be reinstated. It was the Schofield reference Bible that promoted that heresy. And they are the ones who scream about this verse. Hopefully after this sermon you will see that they are the ones who violate it.

B. The extent is re-emphasized using language from the Old Testament prophecies of Israel's first exile

Let's finish off verses 22-23. These verses piece together language from Old Testament passages of Israel's first exile. For example, Jeremiah 25:8-10 spoke of an utter destruction of Jerusalem and temple in the time of Jeremiah and ends with exactly the same language as verses 23-24. He is saying that this second exile would be similar to the first. It didn't mean that Israel couldn't come back into the land in the future, but the old city, system, temple, etc would not experience any of this music, craftsmanship, mill, lamp, or marriage. Jeremiah says,

Jer. 25:8 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, 9 behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the LORD, "and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.

Futurists interpret the language of Jeremiah 25 in exactly the same way that I interpret these verses. They are forced to apply them to the exile in Babylon. They acknowledge that it couldn't possibly preclude habitation 70 years later since Jeremiah also prophesied that they would come back, but it says that there won't be anything of the old city and temple left in which these things can ever be done. Chilton tries to show exegetically that all five things mentioned in these verses is tied to the temple.¹⁶ But I don't think you need to go there. I apply it to Jerusalem as a whole. I take it literally. The old city ceased to exist and the Romans forbade Jews from entering the area. Under Hadrian it was rebuilt as Aelia Capitolina, a pagan city, and Jews were forbidden to enter it. It is a fact of history that no musician, craftsman,

16 Chilton says, > These five points mark several important characteristics of the Jerusalem Temple: > 1. Music – the Levitical orchestra and choir (1 Chron. 25) > 2. Craftsmen –cf. Bezalel, Oholiab, Hiram, etc. (Ex. 31:1-11; > 1 Kings 5) > 3. Mill – the Temple itself (the "threshingfloor"; 2 Chron. 3:1) > 4. Lamp – the Lampstand(s) (Ex. 25:31-40; 2 Chron. 4:19-22) > 5. Marriage – the marriage of the Lord and Israel (Ezek. 16:1-14)

food maker, lamp, or marriage happened in the Old City or temple. They no longer existed after AD 70. The Jerusalem that we have today is completely different.

III. Three more reasons for her judgment (vv. 23b-24)

And verses 23-24 end with three more reasons for this destruction. I've already dealt extensively with the first two, so will be brief:

A. Your merchants were the magnates of the earth (v. 23c)

The first reason is “because your merchants were the magnates of the earth.” The Greek word for magnates is *μεγιστᾶνες*, a word that refers to political power or to people who were great because of political power. It was an offense to God when merchants enriched themselves because of statism. So everything I said in my last sermon is being reiterated in that one clause. God hates statist economies, whether they are labeled Mercantalism, Marxism, Socialism, Fascism, Spencerian Democracies or something else. If there is even a whiff of them getting rich through the intervention of civil government, God says it is deserving of judgment. Beale says that this word “implies that the merchants and the system supporting them are to be judged.”¹⁷

B. By your sorcery all the nations were deceived (v. 23d)

The second reason was, “because by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.” I dealt with the occult activities that both the Sadducees and the Pharisees engaged in in order to advance their influence in other nations. Jerusalem was punished because of their sorcery.

C. She was guilty of the blood of the martyrs of the land (v. 24)

The third reason is given in verse 24, “And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, even of all who had been butchered on the earth.” This too dates this whole passage clearly to AD 70 and to Jerusalem. I don't see any way of getting around that. As McKenzie words it, In terms of literal cities, the odious distinction of killing the prophets belongs solely to Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37). Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders of his day that all the righteous blood shed on the land would be required of them (Matt. 23:35-36).¹⁸

17 G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 921.

18 Duncan McKenzie, [The Antichrist and the Second Coming: Volume II: The Book of Revelation](#)1d867551-a252-4a79-be56-0e3185a95e20 (Xulon Press, 2012), p. 281.

Let me go ahead and read Matthew 23:29-39, because it nails down the fulfillment of this verse to Jerusalem in AD 70.

Matt. 23:29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, “If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ 31 “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. 37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ”

IV. Six further applications

Let me end by making a few concluding remarks. First, let’s worship the God who is portrayed in this passage. He is a God who reveals Himself for our benefit. He is a God whose word can be trusted. Every detail of Scripture is inspired and perfect. He is a God who controls history so perfectly that He can predict things like this. Let’s worship this amazing God, and His Son Jesus, who sits at His right hand.

Second, let’s see Revelation as a philosophy of history. Though a huge chunk of it was already fulfilled, it shows us how we can read our own times and know that God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This means that Revelation is a great guide not just for yesterday but also for life today and forever. Just because much of it was already fulfilled does not mean that we cannot apply it to similar situations today. We can.

Third, let’s see Revelation as a book that gives hope. If the church could triumph even during the worst of times in history, it can triumph in every age. If Christ could deal with the powerful Military-Industrial-Complex of that day, he can humble ours today.

Fourth, let’s glory in the fact that God cares about us. He notices when we are persecuted. He vindicates His people. He does not ignore their plight.

Fifth, let’s balance this with the realization that we have a responsibility to take our persecutors to the court of heaven and to ask God for justice. Just as

a human court can't bring justice unless the victim brings the criminal to court, God has willed that His court will declare our judgments (verse 20). The church's judgments must take place, and when they do, God says He will bind in heaven what we bind on earth. This involves prayer; church discipline; using spiritual weapons rather than carnal weapons; singing the imprecatory psalms, and taking spiritual warfare seriously. But if God is implementing the church's judgments (as verse 20 says that He is), then we need to get on the stick and take ownership of these judgments in history.

And last, let's not be satisfied with anything less than a sweeping aside of all idolatry and replacing it with the kingdom realities of heaven. What a beautiful prefigurement of the future this is - nothing of the old remaining. 1 Corinthians 15 says that Christ must remain at the right hand of the Father until all things are placed under His feet and all things are reconciled to Him. So if we want to hasten the Day of the Second Coming (as 2 Peter 3:12 words it), we must be involved in reconciling the world to Christ as His ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 can be our passion as we interact with the world. It says,

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

I love that triumphalistic language - His purpose is "reconciling the world to Himself." May we get on board with that purpose so that we are not part of what is removed from the world. Amen.