

Why Jesus Wept Over Jerusalem—and Why You Should Too

I write this article on the 9th of Av, the day of mourning the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:2). Two people are recorded in the Bible as weeping over Jerusalem: Jeremiah, in Lamentations 2:11, 18; 3:48; and Yeshua in Luke 19:41: “When He approached and saw the city, He wept over it, saying, ‘If you only knew today what would make for your peace.’”

While there is not much detail about Yeshua’s feelings, Lamentations has five full chapters about Jeremiah’s. Lamentations may be seen as an extended prophetic description of Yeshua’s feelings as well. Luke 19:41 summarizes in one verse the weeping and mourning of the book of Lamentations.

Yeshua and Jeremiah had much in common, and were perceived so by the crowds (Matt. 16:14). One reason is that they both prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple—Jeremiah before the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.) and Yeshua before the Great Exile (A.D. 70).

Jerusalem is the capital of Yeshua’s kingdom and the seat of His earthly government. When Yeshua prophesied its destruction, He did so with tears of grief and pain. For Yeshua, the destruction of Jerusalem was the destruction of His own capital. He prophesied this event repeatedly:

Matthew 22:7: “burned their city with fire.”

Matthew 23:39; Luke 13:35: “Behold your house is left to you desolate.”

Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2, Luke 19:44: “Not one stone will be left upon a stone.”

Luke 19:43: "Your enemies will build an embankment against you ... on every side and level you to the ground."

Luke 20:16: "He will destroy the vine keepers and give the vineyard to others."

Luke 21:20: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is near."

Luke 21:24: "They will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles."

This was a central event of biblical history, similar to the exodus from Egypt and the flood of Noah. There is a profound parallel between the destruction of the temple and the crucifixion of Yeshua. May God grant us grace to understand the significance both of Jerusalem's destruction and its restoration!

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