

JERUSALEM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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I. Introduction

This chapter is inevitably written with mixed feelings. Having lived in Jerusalem recently for a period of three months one is painfully aware of the way in which almost anything that one says on this whole subject is bound to hurt or offend someone: a case could therefore be made for remaining silent. That is not, however, a Christian option: for there is currently a good deal of misinformation on the subject of the New Testament and its attitudes towards the Jewish people in general and to Jerusalem in particular. This needs to be countered squarely. The following is therefore offered in the hope that it will at least dispel some current false readings of the text, and perhaps raise useful questions and possibilities in doing so.

II. Jerusalem in the First Century

The exiles had returned, but the exile was not over. That paradox dominated the self-perception of many first-century Jews. As we see clearly in the Scrolls, but equally in various other writings of the period, there was a common sense that the destruction of Babylon had not, after all, been the end of exile, the fulfilment of the great promises of what Israel's God would do for his people in the end.¹ New 'Babylons' had arisen: Persia, Egypt, Syria. Another false dawn had come and gone in the Maccabean uprising, the Hasmonean dynasty (the last independent Jewish state before 1948). Now, since Pompey in 63 BC, the Romans had taken the place of the traditional enemy. And, at a local level, the Herodian dynasty simply projected the ambiguity of Israel's situation on to a monarchical screen. The would-be 'kings of the Jews' were disliked, distrusted, and disobeyed when possible. National uprisings came and went, their scale difficult to assess but their zeal for God, the Torah and the Kingdom indisputable.²

Meanwhile, in the middle of it all, Jerusalem remained the focal point of everything that the Jews were and did. It is a measure of how far modern Western Christianity has forgotten its roots that most church people can read the psalms and the prophets and blithely spiritualize their meaning without feeling the resonances of geography and local culture throbbing through them. However far away from the Land a Jew might be, the regular reading of the psalms and prophets as part of the Diaspora synagogue liturgy (not to mention the regular prayers and benedictions) could not fail to remind him or her that Jewish identity was bound up with, and focused upon, a single city, and within that city a single shrine. What enormous implications there are, both theological and practical, from the repeated emphasis in the Psalms that the Creator of the Universe had decided to take up residence on the little hill called 'Zion'. However much, as a Christian, one may be well advised to read them in a new light, one cannot avoid their literal meaning as the original basis from which such reinterpretation must start.

The importance of all this would certainly not have been missed by first-century Jews, as can be seen by noting what they habitually did.³ The great majority of Jews went up to Jerusalem for the festivals singing the psalms *en route*; the great majority of Jews heard scripture read regularly in their synagogues. In these ways they acted out, and thereby demonstrated to themselves, their belief that Jerusalem, and its Temple, were the centre of the created order, the place where the creator of the world, who had entered into special covenant with them as a nation, had chosen to place his 'name'.

However, Jerusalem remained ambiguous. Herod had beautified it beyond description: it was 'a structure more noteworthy than any under the sun'.⁴ Yet this was the work of Herod!—a work inspired no doubt by political motives, in order to legitimate himself and his heirs as the real Kings of the Jews, the real temple-builders in the line of Solomon; yet most Jews knew that Herod could not be the true King that would come, the genuine Davidic article. Jerusalem remained a beautiful puzzle. Then again, people at large resented rather than respected the ruling class who dominated public life through the period between Herod the Great and AD 70; yet they continued to come to the Temple with their sacrifices, and to keep the festivals in all circumstances. One of the startling things in Josephus' account of the War is his relating that the daily sacrifices were eventually stopped; for it alerts us to the astonishing fact that, despite the horrendous factional fighting in and around the temple for a long time before this, worshippers had still come in daily with their offerings, and that, even more amazingly, the revolutionary and counter-evolutionary fighters clearly let them past! During this internecine war pilgrims also still came for the festivals.⁵ Seemingly only a total disaster would stop them coming, as indeed eventually it did.

There were, however, some groups at least who refused to join in the pilgrimages. The Essenes are the best example of this, who, as we know from the Scrolls, established a counter-temple movement, regarding their own community as the new temple and rejecting the other one as hopelessly corrupt; like Ezekiel, they cherished a vision of a rebuilt temple, purified, holy, and fit for the living God to dwell in once more; for the moment they themselves were the interim temple, awaiting the great day when God would act to fulfil all his promises.⁶ At the same time, temple-ideology informed other movements that flourished away from the holy city: for example, the Pharisees seem to have attempted to reproduce in their own table-fellowship the state of purity required for priests in the temple, thus producing a religious system logically derivative from, and not intended to replace, the central cult.⁷ In all these ways Jerusalem played a central, if ambiguous, role in the Judaism of Jesus' day.

III. Jerusalem in the Ministry of Jesus

It was in this world that Jesus grew up, and to this world that he addressed his preaching. If we are to understand the thrust of Jesus' ministry, we must project ourselves as far as possible into the worldview and mindset of a first-century Jew.⁸

Thus, for example, Jesus' summons to Israel simply cannot have looked like something that we would recognise as a 'preaching mission'. People did not leave their workplace and go out to the Galilean hills to be told about a heavenly future awaiting them after death. Jesus' challenge must have sounded far more like the founding of a political movement. When Jesus called twelve men, took them up into the hills, and told them that they were his special close followers through whom he wished to operate, anyone hearing about such an event would surely have interpreted it, not as a foretaste of what the church thinks of as 'ordination', but on the model of other groups that collected up in the hills of Galilee to plan their strategy: the λήσται, whom we know from Josephus, the holy brigands bent on assisting God in the bringing of his kingdom.

Thus when Jesus took these twelve to Caesarea Philippi, elicited from them the recognition that he was Messiah, and told them that they were to go up to Jerusalem on a dangerous mission through which 'the Son of Man' would be glorified, they cannot have heard him talking about himself as a divine being whose intention was to act out an abstract atonement-theology, dying for the sins of the world. They must have heard him speak in terms such as these:

If you recognise me as the rightful King, it is time for us to march on to the capital and displace the present usurping crew who are in power there. We will win: you and I together are the new temple, and the present city cannot stand against us. But it's time for resolution: some of us may get hurt, some may die, but God will give us the victory.

Translated back into first-century imagery, this reads more or less as follows:

Blessed are you, Simon, for your confession of me as Messiah: and I tell you, you are the foundation-stone of the new temple, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.⁹ Now, if anyone will follow me, let him take up his cross; anyone who is ashamed of me and my words [i.e. my agenda, my programme] will find that the Son of Man is ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels. But remember this: there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come with power.

This reading of Jesus' summons and challenge to his followers, in the context (from their point of view) of a Galilee-based revolutionary movement with intentions to replace the present corrupt Jerusalem system, is reinforced importantly by a consideration of the significance of the habitual actions which (uncontroversially within the present climate of scholarship) characterized Jesus' ministry.

For example, the table-fellowship he celebrated could not have been offensive to anyone if he had been simply acting as a private individual; the reason it caused a stir was that his whole ministry, just as John the Baptist's had done before, presented itself as a national movement of renewal. His table-fellowship looked, therefore, like a bizarre parody of the Pharisaic model: instead of eating in strict ritual purity, he implied that purity came as a result of eating with him. 'Who are my mother and my brothers? . . . Anyone who does the will of God' (Mark 3:33, 35) Israel was being redefined around him. Moreover, if the Pharisaic model was derivative from the Jerusalem/temple

ideology, his could only be seen as a replacement for it. If one was with Jesus, one did not need the restoration into covenant membership which was normally attained by going to Jerusalem and offering sacrifices in the temple: 'Today salvation has come to this house; this man too is a Son of Abraham!' (Luke 19:9)

The force of such sentences is lost unless it is realized that, in making such pronouncements, Jesus was implicitly claiming to do and be what the temple was and did. It is not enough to say, within a normal western-Christian mode of thought, that he was 'claiming to be God'. What he was claiming to do was to act as the replacement of the temple, which was of course the dwelling-place of the Shekinah, the tabernacling of Israel's God with his people. His offering of forgiveness and restoration undercut the normal system; in modern terms, it had the force of a private individual offering to issue a passport or a driving licence, thus bypassing the accredited office. Jesus was offering just such a 'bypass'.

It is in this context that Jesus' warnings about the imminent disaster that was hanging over the head of Jerusalem and the temple can be seen in their proper light. Such warnings were not exceptional in the first century. It was almost predictable that a leader of a new movement would announce the coming downfall of the city that personified (for the Galilean) the southern domination of Judaism and (for the poor) the arrogance and impiety of the aristocratic rich. It was nothing unusual to predict that Jerusalem would be destroyed by enemy action—Josephus claims that he, acting prophetically, did so himself.¹⁰ Such statements were by no means abnormal in the years prior to AD 70.¹¹ The Essenes themselves waited in the desert, confident that their day would come, and with it the end of the present Jerusalem and the building of the new.

The threat-tradition in the synoptic gospels must therefore be taken very seriously indeed.¹² Jesus' stance was based on old prophetic traditions according to which Jerusalem would be destroyed for her rebellion against her God; not for nothing did some in the crowds say he was Jeremiah (Matt. 16:14). Jesus was announcing the way of peace, of loving one's enemies, of marching an extra mile with the Roman soldier; and the announcement was reinforced by the warning, which at one level is straightforward *Realpolitik*, that, if Israel and particularly Jerusalem refuse this path, the alternative will be destruction at the hands of Rome. Where Jesus differed was in his insistence that when this happened it would have to be seen as the wrath of Israel's God against his wayward people.

This line of thought is developed until it reaches its climax in the 'Apocalyptic Discourse' (Luke 21 and parallels). For example, back in Luke 13, the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices would become typical of all inhabitants of Jerusalem who refused to turn from their present way: in other words, Roman aggression would engulf those who insisted on revolt and rebellion. The tree which refuses to bear fruit is given one more year, and then it will be cut down. Then, at the end of that same chapter, Jesus declares, in words reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision of the departing Shekinah:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left desolate to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed in the name of the Lord is the one who comes'. (Luke 13:34-5)

The problem with Jerusalem, and the Temple, is that, though outwardly cleansed, they have not been re-occupied by the living presence of God. The unclean spirit that has been cast out returns to its house, bringing others with it, and 'so will it be with this generation' (Matt. 12:43-45): in other words, the Maccabean cleansing,¹³ had resulted in a clean but empty temple, and the demons would return with catastrophic results. Drawing on the rich resources of prophetic and apocalyptic language, so often misunderstood, Jesus predicted a coming cataclysm which would have to be seen as the outworking of the judgment of God. In one telling phrase he said that, 'where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together' (Luke 17:37), an image that no-one familiar with Roman standards could fail to interpret as predicting the legionary vultures swooping down over the carcass of Jerusalem.

Such a reading of Luke 13-21 produces, in passage after passage, a sustained climactic effect which it is impossible to describe here in detail. For example, the controversies in chapter 20 take on new force: the vineyard will be taken away and given to others; the hierarchy have already (quite literally) bought into the Roman system, and whether or not they are giving God his due they will shortly be giving Caesar his. The Apocalyptic Discourse then needs to be read in this light.¹⁴ Jesus is not speaking in this discourse about a supernatural figure floating downwards on a cloud to bring the space-time world to an end; rather he is speaking, as his use of Danielic imagery should have made clear, about the 'beasts' that make war on the 'people of the saints of the most high', and about the 'son of man' who will be exalted and vindicated over them. The 'coming' of the Son of Man, is emphatically not, therefore, his 'coming' from heaven to earth, but his coming from earth to heaven, in vindication and exaltation over his enemies. Moreover, just as no interpreter imagines that Daniel, or Jesus (or the author of Revelation) envisaged real 'beasts' emerging from the Mediterranean, so no interpreter ought to imagine that the 'Son of Man' can be interpreted 'literally' as a human figure floating on a cloud. The image speaks clearly, to anyone with ears attuned to the first century, of the vindication of the true Israel over her enemies.

But who is the true Israel? Just as the Essenes would have answered 'we are', so Jesus by implication announced, throughout his ministry, that he was. Just as some of Josephus contemporaries had reinterpreted Daniel to fit their own situation (making the fourth beast into the Romans instead of Antiochus Epiphanes),¹⁵ so Jesus reinterpreted the book of Daniel (chs. 2 and 7) so that he was the Son of Man, the true representative of the true Israel, and that the present Jerusalem hierarchy were the 'fourth beast': he would build his true temple, and the gates of hell would not prevail against it

This explains why the Old Testament imagery in the Apocalyptic Discourse is drawn not only from the predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem or Israel¹⁶ but also from the predictions of the destruction of Babylon. There are unmistakable echoes of Isaiah 13

and 52 (and of Jeremiah 50-51) throughout the chapter. Significantly, Isaiah had commanded the people in these passages to flee from Babylon, lest they partake in the great destruction that would come upon the enemies of the people of God; for the destruction of Babylon is to be seen as the coming of the Kingdom of God:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion 'Your God reigns.' . . . Break forth together into singing/you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:7-11).

The proclamation, 'your God reigns', is indeed a theological truth but the historical referent of the same sentence (that which has happened within space-time history which enables the announcement to be made) is the destruction of Babylon. Babylon, the enslaver of God's people, has fallen; Israel may now be sure that her God is sovereign over the whole world.

Jesus now boldly applied all this to himself and his cause (seen together as Zion) and to Jerusalem (seen as Babylon). It is from Jerusalem that the true Israel must now flee, lest they partake in her destruction. It is Jerusalem whose destruction will be the sign that the God whom Jesus has proclaimed is now indeed manifestly the king of the whole earth.¹⁷ According to Jesus, therefore, the real referent of Daniel 7 is the destruction of Jerusalem: the Son of Man will be vindicated but the fourth beast (Jerusalem) will be destroyed. Jerusalem and its hierarchy have taken on the role of Babylon, Edom and Antiochus Epiphanes. They are the city whose fall spells the vindication of the true people of Israel's God. The prophecies of rescue from the tyrant have come true in and for Jesus and in his people. When this city falls they must leave quickly; this is their moment of salvation and vindication.¹⁸

So when Jesus came to Jerusalem he came embodying a counter-system. He and the city were both making claims to be the place where the living God, Israel's God, was at work to heal, restore and regroup his people. Though many people still say that Israel had no idea of incarnation, this is clearly a mistake: the temple itself, and by extension Jerusalem, was seen as the dwelling-place of the living God. Thus it was the temple that Jesus took as his model, and against whose claim he advanced his own.

The action in the temple was therefore inevitable; it forms the exact parallel, within the context of Jerusalem, to Jesus' flouting of kosher and sabbath laws in the context of Galilee. Moreover, seen in this light, the saying about telling 'this mountain' to be 'cast into the sea' (Mark 11:23) must surely be read as referring to Mount Zion; anyone using this language while standing in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives and looking towards the city could only mean one thing, especially in the first century. Jesus' 'trial' then drew together the themes of controversy throughout the ministry, with Caiaphas' most probably hearing Jesus' reference to Daniel 7 as casting him, Caiaphas, in the role of Chief Beast.

So Jesus went to his death, convinced within his own first-century Jewish worldview that Israel's destiny had devolved upon him and that he represented the true Israel in the eyes of God. His death would therefore be the means of drawing to its climax the wrath of God against the nation, forging away through that wrath and out the other side;¹⁹ as a result, all who wanted to do so could follow his way, be joined to his people, and find rescue from the great and imminent disaster, while those who chose to stick to the path of nationalistic militarism would find that such a route led only one way: 'if they do this when the wood is green, what will they do when it is dry?' (Luke 23:31). He applies his last beatitude to the children who will be his age when the great war comes, a generation later: Blessed are the wombs which never bore, and the breasts which never gave suck; then they will begin to say to the mountains 'fall on us' and to the hills 'cover us' (Luke 23:27-31, drawing upon Hosea 10:8.)

The above presentation of Jesus' message differs markedly from much present scholarship and also from many more popular approaches to the question of Jesus and Jerusalem. For example, the sayings about judgment are normally either read as *post facto* rationalizations or spiritualized into threats of *post mortem* hellfire. They are neither. They are the solemn historical warnings, based on Jesus' understanding of himself and his vocation, that the system which now operates in Jerusalem is playing out the role of Babylon, and is ripe for the destruction predicted in the prophets. The beautiful city has indeed become the 'harlot'.

Jesus' understanding of his own death and vindication must be seen in this light. He was drawing together the threads of Israel's destiny, and acting them out in pursuit of one of Israel's oldest goals and vocations, long forgotten in the dark years of foreign oppression: she was to be the 'light for the nations' (Isa. 42:6). God's house in Jerusalem was meant to be a 'place of prayer for all the nations' (Isa. 56:7; Mark 11:17); but God would now achieve this through the new temple, which was Jesus himself and his people. As stated fairly explicitly at the last supper, Jesus on the cross was to become the place of sacrifice; he also there acted out the destruction (the death of the rebel, at the hands of the occupying forces) which he had predicted for Israel, so that his fellow-countrymen might have a way by which to avoid it. Then on Easter morning Jesus was raised to life as the beginning of the real return from exile, the real liberation of the people of God, from the exile which lay deeper than the exile of Egypt or Babylon. All along, to his disciples' shock, he had been fighting the real enemy (not the enemy they expected him to fight); and he had won. Meanwhile, the hanging on a tree of the 'King of the Jews', outside the walls of the capital city, and his burial in a cave with a large stone at its mouth, had strange resonances going back into the Old Testament and into early anthropological symbolism, which spoke of the ritual pollution of the land and its final expropriation. Never again could it be the same.²⁰

IV. Jerusalem in the Early Church: Paul

This understanding of Jesus' message is confirmed as we turn to St. Paul and note his clear awareness that the days of Jerusalem, as he knew it, were strictly numbered. This is

how his conviction must be interpreted that the 'day of the Lord' was imminent. Contrary to the thinking of both scholars and pietists of many backgrounds, Paul was not envisaging the 'Parousia' as an event which had to take place in his lifetime, and which would result in the ending of the space-time order. If that were so, how could he possibly write in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 that the church should not be alarmed if they received a letter saying that the 'day of the Lord had come'? If Paul meant by 'the day of the Lord' the end of the space-time universe, the Thessalonians would presumably not need to be informed of the fact *via* the Roman postal service! Instead, Paul here reflects the early Christian tradition, going back to Jesus himself, according to which Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and according to which that destruction was to be interpreted as the wrath of God against his sinful people. In the same Thessalonian correspondence, Paul asserted that the wrath of God had indeed come upon them 'to the uttermost' (εἰς τέλος, 1 Thess. 2:16.)

It is this awareness of an imminent end to the way the Jewish world had looked for so long, rather than an imminent end to the space-time universe, that drove Paul on his mission with such urgency. From his own point of view he lived in an odd interim period: judgment had been passed on Jerusalem, but not yet executed. There was a breathing space, a 'little time' in which people could repent, and in which the message of Jesus could spread to Gentiles as well as Jews (though it always remained, for Paul, 'to the Jew first'). When Jerusalem fell, Jews on the one hand would undoubtedly blame those who had reneged on their Jewish responsibilities, including those Jewish Christians who, like Paul, had been enjoying fellowship with pagans and regarding it as the Kingdom of God and the true expression of the covenant God made with Abraham. On the other hand, Gentile Christians would probably respond by regarding Jews as an odd early stage in the purposes of God, allowed in at the beginning of the new worldwide movement but now destroyed or at least marginalised. It was in order to avoid this double danger, which would mean that the principalities and powers had won after all and that Christ had not after all created a new humanity, that Paul engaged on his mission, with the aim of creating Jew-plus-Gentile churches on Gentile soil before the fall of Jerusalem. This explains both the urgency of his mission and the language in which he expressed that urgency. It also explains the collection of money which he took to Jerusalem: this was not just an example of poor-relief, but a demonstration to Jewish Christians that Gentile Christians were in solidarity with them and a reminder to Gentile Christians that they were a junior part of the same olive tree.

For a more positive view towards Jerusalem in Paul some are tempted to turn to Romans 11. There, in verse 26, he quotes from Isaiah 59:20 ('the deliverer will come from Zion') in confirmation of his statement that 'all Israel will be saved'. Does this refer to a renewed physical Jerusalem and a large-scale last-minute salvation of all Jews (or nearly all)?²¹ No, it does not. For in the crucial passage (Romans 11:25-28) Paul is clearly offering a deliberately polemical redefinition of 'Israel', parallel to that in Galatians (6:16),²² in which the people thus referred to are the whole company, Jew and Gentile alike, who are now (as in chapter 4 and 9:6ff.) inheriting the promises made to Abraham.

The composite scriptural quotation which follows in 11:26b-27 (including the reference to 'Zion') then points in a direction very different from that normally supposed.²³ The quotations used here come from Isaiah 2:3, 27:9, 59:20f. and Jeremiah 31:34. All have to do with God's action the other side of judgment. First Paul combines Isaiah 59:20 f. with Isaiah 2:3 to create the new prediction that the redeemer (not the Torah) will come out from (not 'on behalf of) Zion. These are both passages which speak of the final great renewal of the covenant, the overcoming of the exile, and the blessing which will then flow to the nations as a result of the vindication of Israel.²⁴ We are here very close to the thoughts in Romans 9:30 and 10:13, and this increases the probability that what Paul is here referring to is not the Parousia but the gentile mission; v.26b is explaining v.26a, with reference to covenantal promises of gentile inclusion in the blessings of the people of God.

Next Paul refers to Jeremiah 31, which invokes the whole concept of the 'new covenant'. This new covenant, which God makes with his people the other side of exile and death, is the real reaffirmation of the Abrahamic promises, and is therefore the final vindication of the righteousness of God. Moreover, the new covenant is emphatically not a covenant in which 'national righteousness' (which, as Paul has already demonstrated, was not envisaged even in the initial promises to Abraham) is suddenly reaffirmed. Instead it is the covenant in which sin is finally dealt with. This was always the purpose of the covenant: now at last, as in Jeremiah 31:34, it is realized.

Finally Paul draws upon Isaiah 27:9, which in its context is not about the vindication of ethnic Israel as she stands but about forgiveness of sins the other side of cataclysmic judgment on the temple. Moreover, the ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι in 11:27b enables Paul to include the idea of a recurring action: 'whenever' God takes away their sins (i.e. whenever Jews come to believe in Christ and so enter the family of God), in that moment the promises God made long ago to the patriarchs are being reaffirmed. As a result, the Roman Gentile Christians must not stand in the way of this fulfillment, for in it there is at stake nothing other than the covenant faithfulness and justice of the one God. This is then celebrated in the paean of praise which concludes the chapter (11:33-6).

There is no justification, therefore, for taking Romans 11, as a whole or in its parts, as a prediction of a large-scale, last-minute salvation of Jews. In particular, the reference to 'Zion' has nothing to do with a renewed physical Jerusalem; rather, it picks up the Zion-tradition according to which Zion was to be the source of blessing for the world and claims that this has now come true in Jesus. The Gentile mission of the Jew-plus-Gentile Christian church is, for Paul, the fulfilment of what Israel's God always purposed to do with the place where he had made his Name and Presence to dwell.

In this light we can interpret two further passages which are of considerable significance for a Christian understanding of the Land in general and Jerusalem in particular. In Romans 4:13 Paul says, startlingly, 'The promise to Abraham and his seed, that they should inherit the world.' Surely the promises of inheritance were that Abraham's family would inherit the land of Israel, not the world? Paul's horizon, however, is bigger. The Land, like the Torah, was a temporary stage in the long purpose

of the God of Abraham.²⁵ It was not a bad thing now done away with, but a good and necessary thing now fulfilled in Christ and the Spirit. It is as though, in fact, the Land were a great advance metaphor for the design of God that his people should eventually bring the whole world into submission to his healing reign. God's whole purpose now goes beyond Jerusalem and the Land to the whole world.

Incidentally, this then helps us to understand the famous question and answer in Acts 1:6-8. When the disciples ask Jesus, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel' they are presumably thinking of the traditional Jewish expectation that the whole world would eventually be subject to Jewish rule.²⁶ Jesus' answer is usually taken as a 'not yet': 'it is not for you to know times or seasons.' Yet Luke surely intended us to read it as a 'yes, but not in that way': 'You will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses. . .to the end of the world.'²⁷

The second Pauline passage relating to Jerusalem comes in the middle of a difficult paragraph in Galatians:

for Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother (Gal. 4:25-6).²⁸

Whether explicitly or implicitly, much of Galatians has been about Jerusalem. Paul has been careful not to imply that he and the Jerusalem church disagree with one another (he and they have been misrepresented by first-century opponents as well as twentieth-century scholars); yet, on the other hand, he cannot but regard the present earthly Jerusalem as enslaved. For it is the place where the Torah keeps Israel firmly anchored to her racial and national identity, a situation which is opposed to the message of the Cross which now denies that these things are the inalienable and automatic marks of the people of God (2:19-21, 3:10-14). Such a situation is no better than slavery, even though Israel, the 'young son' in the illustration of 4:16, is 'heir of all things'; it is the junior version of the full humanity which God intended all along for his people. The implied critique of Jerusalem is thus closely tied in to Paul's critique of Israel's abuse of her status and her misuse of Torah. This is a central theme in Galatians and provides us with the right context in which to understand 4:25ff. In these verses Paul sees the Land, and its focal point Jerusalem, as both in theory and in practice relativized by the death and resurrection of the Messiah. This is then confirmed by the fact that Jerusalem, as Paul knows well from his own experience, is a source of opposition and persecution for the church (4:29). The present Jerusalem regime is thus declaring itself by its deeds to be the descendents of Ishmael, not of Isaac.

At the same time, however, there is a 'Jerusalem above', a 'new Jerusalem'. Although there are only two other references to this theme in the New Testament (Heb. 12:22 and Rev. 21:2), the way Paul casually introduces it here implies that already in the early church there was a well-established idea of an alternative city, a city 'to come', which God would bring to birth at its proper time, and to which his true people would belong. Now this is not a Platonic 'idea' of Jerusalem; 'heaven' in both Old and New Testaments is not the place of non-material reality, but the place of God's present and

future reality. Rather, it is where the coming things are stored up ('in the mind of God' as we say), so that the heavenly reality is the glimpse of God's intended future. Paul assumes in Galatians 4 the reality of a city which is God's city, for which the earthly city Jerusalem had been simply an advance metaphor. This is then a parallel thought to Paul's conviction that the Torah is an advance metaphor for the Spirit, and the Land for the World.²⁹ It also corresponds closely with his statement that 'our citizenship is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20). In other words, the church belongs to the renewed people of God in their corporate identity in a parallel way to the manner in which Israel, dispersed or not, belongs to Jerusalem or in which a Roman colony belongs to the mother city. As a result, if someone were to ask Paul, on the basis of Galatians, whether Jerusalem retained in his mind the status which it had had between David and Herod, his answer would surely be 'no'.

A final point, which confirms this Pauline understanding that the earthly Jerusalem was no longer of any spiritual significance, concerns the way in which, almost casually, he refers to the church, and indeed to individual Christians, as the 'temple of the living God' (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19).³⁰ To Western Christians, thinking anachronistically of the temple as simply the Jewish equivalent of a cathedral, the image is simply one metaphor among many and without much apparent significance. For a first-century Jew, however, the Temple had an enormous significance; as a result, when Paul uses such an image within twenty-five years of the crucifixion (with the actual temple still standing), it is a striking index of the immense change that has taken place in his thought. The Temple had been superseded by the Church. If this is so for the Temple, and in Romans 4 for the Land, then it must *a fortiori* be the case for Jerusalem, which formed the concentric circle in between those two in the normal Jewish worldview.

V. Jerusalem in the Early Church: Hebrews and Revelation

Although the letter to the Hebrews breathes such a very different air from Paul, a similar collocation of themes emerges in relation to Jerusalem. On the basis of Jeremiah's prediction of the new covenant in which sins will be dealt with once and for all, the author asserts that the temple is 'obsolete and growing old', and 'will soon disappear' (8:13), rendering redundant the regular sacrificial system. Not surprisingly, then, he portrays the heroes of faith from the Old Testament as seeking 'a better country, that is, a heavenly one'; 'therefore', he asserts, 'God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them' (11:16). These ideas then prepare us for the thoughts of the final chapters:

You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering. . . We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat. . . Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (12:18, 22; 13:10,12-14)

Once again, this is not Platonism; the perspective of the writer is thoroughly Jewish and eschatological. Thus the 'heavenly' is that which God intends to bring to birth on earth, and which therefore already exists in his intention; the 'city' which he has prepared for them is therefore not simply a 'mansion in the sky', but a human community of the redeemed in the coming Kingdom, when there will be new heavens and a new earth. Yet this city is by no means to be identified with the earthly Jerusalem. A contrast is developed (similar to that of Paul in Gal. 4) whereby the old covenant is seen in terms of Sinai and slavery, whilst the new is seen in terms of the Jerusalem that belongs to God's ultimate reality (i.e. 'heaven'). In order to belong to this city, one must be prepared to leave the earthly city behind, out of the reckoning, taking as one's model the suffering of Jesus outside the city wall. The present Jerusalem (and therefore the Temple and the Land) belong to the created things that will be shaken; the new community to which Christians belong is of the order of things that cannot be shaken, the Kingdom prepared for God's people (12:26-8).

Finally something must be said, despite its difficulties, concerning the book of Revelation. The above presentation adds some weight to the quite controversial thesis that the city which is to be destroyed (the 'great whore' that has become drunk with the blood of the saints) is to be identified, not with Rome, but with Jerusalem. As with any interpretation of Revelation there are problems with this, but there are also some strong arguments in favour.³¹ First, the whole symmetry of the picture of the whore and the bride (the city that symbolizes rebellion against God and the city that exemplifies salvation and obedience) suggests that, if the new city is the New Jerusalem, that with which this Bride is contrasted is likely to be the Old Jerusalem. Second, although it is popular in scholarly circles to see mentions of the persecution of the church as indications of Roman persecution, it remains the case that far and away the best evidence we possess for sustained and regular attacks on Christians in the first century is the evidence for the attacks carried out by Jews, not least by Jews in, or based in, Jerusalem. If the early church heeded Jesus' teaching in any way, and regarded the present Jerusalem as at best ambiguous,³² and at worst as the focal point of that national idolatry which was leading the nation into ruin, then it would be natural for them to share his attitude, according to which Jerusalem had come to symbolize all that was resistant to the gospel and violently opposing the very existence of a counter-Israel, a new people of God; moreover, insofar as the Christians represented one version of a peace movement within pre-war Judaism, they would come in for fierce persecution from the various more militant groups. This provides, not of course the only, but at least a plausible *Sitz im Leben* in which to locate the book. It also confirms again the overriding approach to the earthly Jerusalem in the New Testament, namely that with the coming of Christ it had lost its former significance: the 'new had come'.

VI. Jerusalem: The New Testament and Today

Finally, what does this mean for Jerusalem today? Such a question, involving as it does the application to the present century of these New Testament insights, is an enormous

one, but still it must be asked. Moreover, there are certain key points that can and must be stated firmly in our reply.

In this regard, some helpful insights emerge from taking as our hermeneutical model³³ one in which the early church saw history as a five-act play, with creation, fall and the story of Israel as the first three acts, and the drama reaching its climax in the fourth act, the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth. The early church itself was living in the fifth act, where the actors are charged with the task and responsibility of improvising the final scenes of the play on the basis of all that has gone before.

Yet the very end of the play, the final goal to which it is all the time progressing, has also been adumbrated in advance. According to Romans 8 all creation will be renewed; according to the final chapters of Revelation, there will be a marriage of heaven and earth, as God dwells with humankind; according to Hebrews 12 there will be a great celebratory gathering of the whole people of God. God's intention for the end of the play is clearly, not that certain humans should live in a disembodied state of bliss, but that the creation itself should be renewed, should be flooded with the love of God as the waters cover the sea. With this goal in view it is possible then to work backwards towards our present tasks, whilst at the same time working forwards to them from the New Testament. But what does this imply about Christian attitudes to Jerusalem?

This difficult question, on closer examination, proves to be quite close in some ways to the set of questions which Paul addresses in Romans 9-11. As indicated above,³⁴ this central text can easily be mis-read, and there are definite parallels between such misreadings and the ways in which those chapters are often read and the ways in which Christians often answer the question, 'what then about Jerusalem?'

First (as an equivalent to Romans 9:6-10:21) it must be stated clearly beyond any shadow of doubt that there can be no basis in the New Testament for a vestigial remainder of 'holy-city-ness' lingering on from the period before Jesus. The New Testament is unequivocal in its interpretation of the fall of Jerusalem as being inextricably linked to the vindication of Jesus and his people. Jesus' whole claim is to do and be what the city and the temple were and did. As a result, both claims, the claim of Jesus and the claim of 'holy land', can never be sustained simultaneously. Any attempt to claim that they can (on the basis of a supposed 'literal' meaning of the many Old Testament promises of restoration, as yet supposedly unfulfilled) has failed to reckon with the total New Testament reading of those promises, according to which, as Paul says, they have all come true in the Messiah (2 Cor. 1:20). This is no simple 'spiritualisation'. Rather, these promises, seen now through the lens of cross and resurrection, have been in one sense narrowed down to a point and in another sense widened to include the whole created order.

Modern attempts to revive such a geographical nationalism, and to give it a 'Christian' colouring, provokes the following, most important, theological reflection: the attempt to 'carry over' some Old Testament promises about Jerusalem, the Land or the Temple for fulfilment in our own day has the same theological shape as the attempt in

pre-Reformation Catholicism to think of Christ as being re-crucified in every Mass.³⁵ If, as suggested above, Jesus was claiming to be, in effect, the new or true temple, and if his death is to be seen as the drawing together into one of the history of Israel in her desolation, dying her death outside the walls of the city, and rising again as the beginning of the real 'restoration', the real return from exile, then the attempt to say that there are some parts of the Old Testament (relating to Jerusalem, Land or Temple) which have not yet been 'fulfilled' and so need a historical and literal 'fulfilment' now, or at some other time, is an explicit attempt to take something away from the achievement of Christ in his death and resurrection, and to reserve it for the work of human beings in a different time and place. The work of Christ is once again 'incomplete'. The analogue for this in Paul's writings is perhaps best summed up in Galatians 2:21: 'if justification came by Torah, Christ died to no purpose'. Only when would-be 'Christian Zionists', or near equivalents, can show that they have taken Galatians fully into account (and for that matter Rom. 1-4 and 9-10, 2 Cor. 3, Phil. 3 and Hebrews) can their claim to be acting in accordance with scripture be taken seriously.

Moreover, if we grasp the nettle of the significance of AD 70 in this way, it is not only 'Christian Zionism' which is cut off at the root; it is also, most significantly, 'Christian anti-semitism'.³⁶ If the wrath of God spoken of by Jesus and Paul was truly *finished* with the awful events of AD 70, then the only appropriate attitude in subsequent generations towards Jews, the Temple, the Land or Jerusalem must be one of sorrow or pity.³⁷ Naturally, this has not stopped Christians from thinking and acting in ways totally at variance with the New Testament; nevertheless, to grasp the significance of the fall of Jerusalem in this way is to cut off all the spurious legitimation that can be offered for would-be 'Christian' anti-semitism.

Beyond this important reflection, however, there are possibilities for some further exceedingly cautious moves. Some might prefer to stop with the argument thus far, but that would be somewhat like stopping at the end of Romans 10. Now, since, as argued earlier, it is my view that Paul in Romans 11 is expressing nothing other than the continual desire of God that some Jews in every generation should come to believe the gospel, the analogue to Romans 11 within my present argument would certainly not be any idea of the reconstitution of the land, or the city, as a 'holy land' or 'holy city' once more in virtue of some inalienable geographical right; but are there other options?

The responsibility of the church in the present age is to anticipate the age to come in acts of justice, mercy, beauty and truth; we are to live 'now' as it will be 'then'. We can only do this, of course, insofar as we have got quite clear in our minds that there is no going back to the old lines that demarcate human beings (race, colour, gender, geography, etc.). That is to say, among other things, that there can and must be no 'Christian' theology of 'holy places' (on the model or analogy of the 'holy places' of a religion that has an essentially geographical base), any more than there can be a 'Christian' theology of racial superiority on the model or analogy of a religion that has an essentially racial base. To that extent, 'Christian Zionism' is the geographical equivalent of a *soi-disant* 'Christian' apartheid, and ought to be rejected as such.

Once that is grasped, though, new possibilities emerge. There might be other ways of articulating a different call within the purposes of God, a call for some peoples to develop one type of culture, beauty and experience and others to develop differently. This might function as a corporate version of the body of Christ metaphor. There might also be a place for a different Christian theology of 'holy places' along the following lines: a double-edged theology of place, in which one both looks backwards with grief and gratitude, and yet also looks forward with hope.

First, it looks back. Inescapably, as Christians, we focus on one time and place as the temporal centre of world history, forming a chronological analogue to the old idea of Jerusalem being at the centre of the world. This is a non-negotiable part of a genuinely Christian worldview. In other words, it was no accident that Jesus lived and died when he did. This is not to say that first-century Jews were ideally pre-*pared* to appreciate his teaching (part of Paul's puzzle in Romans is that that was clearly not the case). Rather, it is to say that God's plan had always been to save the world through Israel; and in Christ it becomes clear that God, in making that plan, always intended that he would come himself to represent Israel in person. He called Israel to a task which he would eventually perform himself: Isaiah (59:15-20) says as much. Christians are right, then, to look to the geographical locations of this fulfillment as special, to be approached with gratitude.

At the same time, we must also approach them with grief. For, on the one hand, there is a proper Christian grief for the folly of the crusades and the sin of continuing to treat so-called 'holy places' as the private property of this or that denomination or tradition.³⁸ Yet, on the other hand, there is also a proper grief for something which has gone, never to return, a natural mourning for a beautiful earlier stage in God's purposes, which went on its course with ambiguity and ended with deepest tragedy. If, then, there are 'holy places' in the land for Christians to visit, they must be regarded, in some senses, as one might regard the grave of a dearly loved friend, perhaps even an older brother.

Yet, if we look back with gratitude and grief, we also look on with hope. If it is our experience that particular churches can become 'holy places', this does not require us to return to some quasi-Jewish theology of 'sacred turf'; rather, it is because one day the *whole creation* will be sacred, will throb and thrill with the presence of the living and loving God, and because at certain points 'where prayer has been valid' this can be seen as it were in anticipation.³⁹ To that extent, the church is called to worship the God revealed in Jesus and by the Spirit in every corner of the globe, and so to claim it for his wise and healing rule. In this process, moreover, there are clear indications of God's ultimate purposes: he intends to establish his new city, new Jerusalem, as the place where he will live with his people for ever. If, then, we are called to anticipate what God is going to do in the future with our acts now (for example, we are called to implement already the justice which will be perfectly worked out in the age to come), we should surely also be seeking to create societies in the here and now, which will anticipate the nature of the renewed and healed Jerusalem. Not that we could ever ourselves build or bring about the New Jerusalem itself; such thinking leads to delusion and ruin. Rather, we are called, while forswearing all racial, cultural or geographical imperialism, to create

communities of love and justice out of which healing can flow to others. What better place to do this than in the old city of peace, Jerusalem?

This may be a romantic dream. It may be that, if we are to imagine any sort of earthly locale for a renewed Jerusalem, it must be found somewhere so totally different from the present one that there will be no danger of confusion. Nevertheless, it must surely be God's will that those Christians, who find themselves in positions where they can influence what happens in the actual physical Jerusalem today, should use that opportunity in a thoroughly Christian way, working together without geographical pride or renewed emphasis on race, to create a community in which justice and *shalom* for all will flourish and spill over to the world.

In this way 'holy places' might be created anew, not so much by association as by anticipation, not so much by memory as by new meaning. If some of those newly-reborn holy places happened to coincide with those already hallowed by grief and gratitude, there would be a certain appropriateness. It might be a sign that the Easter which is celebrated in the church of the Holy Sepulchre is also good news for those who wait at the foot of the Western wall, and for that matter those, too, who worship on its Eastern side.

¹ See e.g. Neh. 9.36f.; Baruch 1:15-3:8; 1 Enoch 85-90; 2 Mace. 1:24-9; *Damascus Document* 1:2-2:1; and many other primary sources. These are discussed, and this point made, in e.g. O.H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT 23: Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1967); D.E. Gowan, 'The Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic', in *Scripture in History and Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam* (ed. A.L. Merrill and T.W. Overholt: Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 17, 1977) 205-23; M.A. Knibb, 'Exile in the Damascus Document', *JSOT* 25 (1983) 99-117; N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh and Minneapolis, T & T Clark and Fortress 1991) 141 and elsewhere; idem. *The New Testament and the People of God* (London and Minneapolis, SPCK and Fortress 1992), ch. 10; J.M. Scott, "'For as many as are of works of the Law are under a curse' (Galatians 3:10)", in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. J.A. Sanders and C.A. Evans (Sheffield, JSNT Supp 1993).

² For differing views see M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the period from Herod I until 70 AD* (Eng. transl., Edinburgh, T & T Clark 1989). and R.A. Horsley, 'Josephus and the Bandits', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 10 (1979) 37-63; 'The Sicarii: Ancient Jewish "terrorists"?' *Journal of Religion* 59 (1979) 435-58; 'Popular Messianic Movements around the time of Jesus', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 (1984) 471-95; 'The Zealots: their origin, relationships and importance in the Jewish revolt', *Novum Testamentum* 28 (1986) 159-92; R.A. Horsley and J.S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the time of Jesus*, (Minneapolis, Winston Press 1985); M. Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: the Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome AD.66-70* (Cambridge, CUP 1987).

³ Many studies of the period base themselves too closely upon the written texts that have happened to come down to us from the period, such as the Pseudepigrapha or the Scrolls. Vital though these are, we cannot tell how many Jews of this period read (say) 1 Enoch privately, or how many would have secret copies of (say) 1QM hidden away in a cupboard; the answer is probably not many

⁴ Josephus: *Antiquities*, 15. 412.

⁵ This is evidenced, for example in the fact that John of Gischala was able to smuggle his men in to the inner court during such an occasion: see Josephus, *War*, 5. 98-105.

⁶ E.g. 1QS. 8:5-11; see the discussion in E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE - 66 CE* (Philadelphia and London, TPI & SCM 1992) 357 ff.

⁷ See the discussion in Sanders, *op. cit.*, chs. 18, 19; N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, ch. 7.

⁸ In recent studies of Jesus, see S.C. Neill and N.T. Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986* (2nd ed., Oxford, OUP 1988) 379-403; on this whole section see my forthcoming *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London, SPCK, 1994).

⁹ I owe this reading of the 'gates of hell' to Dr Colin Brown of Fuller Seminary. The recognition that the 'stone' imagery belongs with the 'new temple' theme is made by B.F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London, SCM 1979).

¹⁰ War, 361-420.

¹¹ Hence, for example, Josephus (*War*, 6. 300-309) speaks of another Jesus, son of Ananias, who during the war went about Jerusalem announcing its imminent fall, and who was scourged for his pains.

¹² See M.J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the teachings of Jesus* (New York, Toronto, Edwin Mellen Press 1984), though this present paper will go beyond Borg in some significant ways.

¹³ This was still powerfully present to the minds and imaginations of first-century Jews; see W.R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus: an inquiry into Jewish nationalism in the Greco-Roman period* (New York, Columbia University Press 1956). The word 'house' would automatically mean 'temple' to a Jew of this period.

¹⁴ For this understanding of apocalyptic (especially Mark 13), see G.B. Caird's brilliant short work (often overlooked): *Jesus and the Jewish Nation* (London, Athlone Press 1965).

¹⁵ Josephus. *War*, 6. 312-15; see N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 312-14.

¹⁶ E.g. Jer. 21:7, cf. Luke 21:23f.

¹⁷ This is perhaps the best way to interpret Mark 9:1.

¹⁸ Cf. Jer 51-26 with Mark 13:2; Isa. 13:10, 34:4 with Mark 13:24; Isa. 52-llf Jer. 51:6, 45 with Mark 13:14-17; Jer. 51:46 with Mark 13:7f.; Zech. 2-6 (in context) with Mark 13:27; and Dan. 7:13f. with Mark 13:26.

¹⁹ Cf. N.T. Wright, 'Jesus, Israel and the Cross', *SBL Seminar Papers*, ed., K.H. Richards (Chicago, Scholars Press 1985) 75-95.

²⁰ Cf. e.g., Josh. 8:29, 10:26f. I do not know of anywhere where this theme has been explored further, though it would repay such study.

²¹ Space forbids a full discussion of this vital question. Different traditions of interpretation have invested so much in this issue, and therefore the following may sadly cause frustration or pain; I myself took the opposite view for many years but now regard it as exegetically unfounded.

²² Those who insist on reading the Galatians passage as if it refers to an exclusively Jewish-Christian group should consider the way in which such an interpretation undoes at a stroke the entire argument of the rest of the letter.

²³ The rest of this discussion depends closely on ch. 13 in my book, *The Climax of the Covenant*.

²⁴ Within the Old Testament, this blessing could be thought of in terms of Torah going out to the nations (e.g. Mic. 4:2f.); for Paul, what the Torah could not do is now done in Christ and the Spirit. Hence the replacement of Torah's outgoing by that of 'the Redeemer'.

²⁵ For this meaning in Gal. 3, and Rom. 5-8: see my book. *The Climax of the Covenant*, chs. 2, 7, 8.

²⁶ Josephus (*War*, 6. 312-15) tells us that a prophecy to that effect was the most popular passage during the revolt; it is often assumed that he means Dan. 7.

²⁷ The attempt of D.R. Schwartz, in "The End of the ΓΗ" (Acts 1:8): Beginning or End of the Christian Vision?", *JBL* 105 (1986) 669-76, to suggest that ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς means 'to the end of the land' (i.e. the borders of Israel), is extremely tendentious.

²⁸ The well-supported reading (τὸ γὰρ Σινῶ) best explains the other variants in v. 25, and makes best sense in the context. The word πάντων ('of us all') in v. 26 may be a later addition, but has certainly caught the sense Paul intends.

²⁹ Paul makes it clear in 2 Cor. 3 that to see Torah, Land and Jerusalem in this light in no way disparages these entities but rather ennoble them.

³⁰ Note too the similar theme of 'indwelling' (e.g. Rom. 8:9).

³¹ See M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London, SPCK 1991) 49 and elsewhere.

³² Christians continued to use it as a natural place of worship in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1, etc); we are not told whether they stopped offering sacrifices, but Eusebius (EH. 3.5.3) does suggest that the church evacuated the city as the war drew to its climax.

³³ This model is expounded and defended in my recent article, 'How Can the Bible be Authoritative?', *Vox Ev.* 21 (1991) 7-32; cf. also *The New Testament and the People of God*, 139-44.

³⁴ See n. 23-25 above.

³⁵ Even if not the view of many mediaeval theologians, it was certainly a popular view, and one to which the Reformers reacted vigorously.

³⁶ Both of those 'labels' are ultimately contradictions in terms.

³⁷ Indeed Paul insists in Rom. 9-11 that this always was the most appropriate attitude.

³⁸ Surely nothing else so damages Christian witness in Jerusalem and elsewhere as this persistent attitude. Quoting the Old Testament, Jesus said of the Temple, 'my house is a house of prayer for all the nations'

³⁹ This alone seems to explain the phenomenon of entering a strange church for the first time and sensing that the living God is there already, loved and worshipped.

Jerusalem in the New Testament Times - 1st Century A.D. Click on the picture to enlarge. The city of Jerusalem has a long history; it is first mentioned in the Bible as Salem in Genesis 14:18, when it was under the rule of Melchizedek, "king of Salem", who met with Abraham and blessed him. The new rebuilt city was divided into seven districts, it occupied the territory of ancient Jerusalem, only leaving the southern part of it outside the walls; the Jews were excluded on pain of death. Despite the many and massive buildings (temple of Jupiter Capitolino, perhaps on the site of the ancient Temple, temple of Aphrodite, theater, baths, etc.), the political and cultural importance of the city was very humble, and much lower than Caesarea. Plan of the city of Jerusalem in New Testament times. The solid lines indicates the probable site of walls and buildings that are no longer there. The dashed lines represents the present wall of the old town and the railroad tracks indicate the probable course of the main access roads. Click here to see a cross section of the modern city of Jerusalem as seen from the south, with some Biblical locations. Jerusalem in Smith's Bible Dictionary. Jerusalem (the habitation of peace), Jerusalem stands in latitude 31 degrees 46' 35" north and longitude 35 degrees 18' 30" east