

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

St. Luke records many amazing truths regarding God's Son, the Savior of the world. In his account of the Lord's Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he records the prophesy that Jerusalem would be destroyed. He even records prophetic details, our Lord foretelling a military embankment, and the leveling of the buildings in the city.

37 years after He spoke those Words, that which our Lord prophesied came to pass. And it happened exactly as He had said. Roman armies built an embankment around Jerusalem as they laid siege to the city. The city was destroyed. The Temple was destroyed, not one stone left upon another, just as the Lord had foretold.

God's Word is true. The accounts of Holy Scripture are true. They are factual, historic accounts. To a bustling, large, important city the Lord spoke Words calling them to repentance. They did not repent. They arrested Him. They killed Him. Still what He prophesied, although impossible to imagine at the time, came to pass, exactly as He had said. That is true for His arrest, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. And it is true for the destruction of Jerusalem. But they were forewarned.

God saw Israel's apostasy. He warned them. And then He acted on His warning. Imagine what God sees when He looks at our country, at our city. He sees a country in which godlessness and perversion are rampant. He sees a country where the public confession of His Holy Name is prohibited. He sees a country that rejects the truth of Holy Scripture.

He sees a country where praying to the only True God is prohibited in our secular schools. He sees a country where the Ten Commandments are torn from public view, where crosses and Christian symbols are removed, and the proclamation of the clear Word of God is frequently called hate speech. He sees a country that calls itself "one nation under god", but which god the nation believes in has become entirely unclear. As the Prophet proclaimed of Israel, so now does our country walk after gods they do not know. God has warned us.

For their apostasy, God foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass exactly as He said. What should God proclaim of our country? What has the sin and godlessness and perversion and debauchery and hatred and lawlessness of our nation justly deserved? What has your sin justly deserved?

Hear the Prophet Jeremiah: "Amend your ways and your doings!" Pray God that in His mercy He would spare our country the destruction it so justly merits. Pray God that He would be merciful to you, and spare you the destruction your sin has deserved.

In St. Luke's account of the Triumphal Entry he records many amazing truths. But what is perhaps the most amazing truth is easy to miss. Among the vivid and accurate descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem; the account of our Lord's condemnation of the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people, and their sinful reaction; in addition to the fact that they, in response, sought to kill Him; St. Luke records something remarkable, something that transcends human understanding: When the Lord crested the hill outside of Jerusalem, He saw the city and He wept over it.

He saw the city and wept over it. God cried. Profound sadness over the state of the Holy City caused the Incarnate Christ to show forth His disappointment and sorrow. He saw transgression and death. He was, as we say, "heart broken." The account of St. Luke is no anthropomorphism, no assigning to God human characteristics as illustration. Jesus wept.

God has a Body. He had eyes and tears. He had hands that feel pain, a rational soul, shoulders that knew the burden of the gibbet of the cross, lips that learned thirst, a Body that knew fasting and hunger, hardship, brutality, and even death. And by Roman spear point, His heart was truly broken.

But these, as horrible as they are, these are the things that make for your peace. It is by the darkening of His eyes that you can see, for in His death your sins are removed. By His suffering He sanctified Christian suffering, that by it faith is strengthened and God's grace is manifest. By His thirst He gives you to drink of Living Water. By His fasting and hunger He won for you the blessed invitation to His Holy Supper. And by His resurrection, you who are fallen are raised up. In Him you are declared righteous and holy before God.

The One greater than the Temple suffered destruction, that by the breath of God and the removal of your sins your body is made the Temple of the Holy Spirit. He is washed into you together with new life, life in Christ, Christ the Living God. And by His Spirit He leads you to work the very works pleasing to Him. By His Spirit you are grafted into the True Israel, the chosen people of God, the Holy Christian Church. And by His Spirit you confess that Jesus is Lord.

So it is you who are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

In Christ you know the time of your visitation. Christ is with you, for He is Immanuel. His Spirit fills you. And He comes to you, bringing you the washing of regeneration, and bringing you the forgiveness of your sins by the proclamation of His called and ordained servant. He comes to you in the preaching of His Word, as you hear, believe, and your faith eats Christ.

And He comes to you in the Holy Eucharist, to which He invites you this day, to eat His Body, and to drink His Blood. By faith in Him you rightly discern the Lord's Body, eating and drinking to your eternal blessing, and so knowing the time of your visitation.

Jerusalem still lies in ruins. The Temple is gone. But in Christ, the One greater than the Temple, you are reconciled to God. And as He has promised, it is you that will inhabit the true City of Peace. For you who overcome He will make pillars in the heavenly Temple of God. On you is the Name of God written, so it is you who will enjoy the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God. It is you, the Holy Church, from whom God will wipe away every tear from your eyes; and soon there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things will soon pass away.