

Jerusalem

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The ancient city of Salem is where the high priest Melchizedek broke bread with Abraham after he had defeated the kings with his fighting men. Abraham presented Melchizedek a tenth of his plunder from the conflict setting the precedent for tithing in the Law of Moses. Imagine if he had decided to give more!

David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem during his reign and the concept of the tabernacle faded away as Solomon constructed a temple as a more permanent location for the presence of God. After Solomon's reign Jerusalem remained the capital of the Kingdom of Judea when Israel broke away in the north. The Babylonians destroyed the city in 586 B.C. carrying skilled Judeans away from their promised land in an exile.

Cyrus, king of Persia allowed Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after Ezra had been permitted to begin temple reconstruction. Herod the Great completed his temple in time for the arrival of Jesus just before the first century A.D. Jesus was presented to the priest at Jerusalem. He questioned the teachers of the law here when he was a boy. Jesus turned over the money changing tables twice. He taught in the temple courts. He rode the colt of a donkey through the city gate and untimely was crucified near the holy city.

In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was totally destroyed by the Roman army just as Jesus had prophesied. The Jewish people were without a land of their own until after World War II when through treaty the land was again rewarded to a nation that is known as Israel to this day. No temple stands in the city except for the Dome of the Rock Mosque for the faith of Islam. Much archeological work has been done around Jerusalem since the formation of the nation of Israel in the 20th century. Perhaps in our generation there will be a great discovery such as a royal archive of the kings of Judah that can give scholars more information about the Old Testament.