

## Trinity 10 - 08/25/2019

*Texts: Jeremiah 7:1-11; Luke 19:41-48*

August is an interesting month. Historians call August the month of catastrophes. World War I began in August. It was in August that Hitler gave the order to invade Poland the next day and start World War II. The atomic bombs were dropped on Japan in August. The Berlin Wall was built in August. Iran invaded Kuwait in August. Katrina happened in August.

And on August 10, A.D. 70, the Romans finished their siege and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem by going into the Temple complex and the Temple itself, razing it all to the ground. Down came Jerusalem, God's city. Down came the Temple, that sign to all of Israel that the Lord was present among them, that they were His people and He was their God. No more sign. No more hope. **"Not my people"** He said.

And this was all warned. This is what the Lord Himself had predicted, as we hear today. **"For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you..."**

This was the last of the promises and predictions that the Lord gave to His people Israel. We heard some of His threats in the reading from Jeremiah today, too: that the Lord would let His people dwell in this place – that is, in Jerusalem, in Israel – so long as they would continue to hear the word of the Lord and worship the Lord and live according to His ways, in repentance and faith.

We heard last week from St. Paul, who was talking about all the things that Israel did in the Old Testament and what the Lord therefore did because of their unfaithfulness and wickedness: **"Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come."**

In other words, the desire of God that His people would listen to Him, would believe Him, would live our lives according to His will and not in wickedness and selfishness and idolatry, and His threats against those who would instead continue to live in sin and evil and go after other gods and idols; the Lord's desires and promises and threats, all these are for us, too. These are spoken to us to instruct us.

What does this mean? *We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things*, simply put. We should not think that because I am baptized or because I am confirmed that therefore I can do whatever I want. We should not think that because the Lord by His abundant grace forgives our sins that therefore we can continue in sin that His grace may abound all the more, that we can keep on sinning because He loves to forgive us. By no means!

In fact we should pay attention to what happened to Israel and recognize it as a sign of the Lord's wrath over sin and unbelief. Jesus predicts the terrible destruction of Jerusalem would come about. And why does this happen to them? Yes they are sinners. Yes they live wickedly. Yes they have lived unjustly towards their neighbors, towards the poor and the immigrant. But, Jesus says, they are utterly destroyed **"because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

It is not sin that damns. It is unbelief. It's not the sin of Israel that dooms them but instead their rejection of the Lord and His promises and His Christ. And also you and me, and the whole world. We are born in sin and unbelief, and by God's grace He rescues us out of it in the waters of baptism, by His promise of forgiveness and salvation for the sake of Christ's death and resurrection.

Jesus is at Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world. Oh that they would recognize this! Oh that they would turn from their wicked ways and trust in this promised Messiah! Oh that they would have made the temple a house of prayer instead of a den of robbers.

Alas, they did not. God's judgment comes.

There's another detail in the reading I want to make sure we see. When Jesus draws near to the city and sees it, what does He do: He weeps. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. God weeps over death and unbelief. He does not want it. He wants sinners to repent, turn from our ways, and live!

The destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the unbeliever is the work of God. Over and over we see it in the prophets, the Lord sees the pride of a nation, even of His own people, and He promises to destroy it, to wipe out the people or the nation or the city. The Lord will destroy every attempt of man to be god or to reach up to god. He has pride in His sights and He shoots it down in every place and every land.

God is not some nice guy like the world likes to think of Him. He is holy, and so He is angry at sin and unbelief and pride, and He, over and over in the Scriptures, threatens to destroy pride and punish sin and pour out His wrath on all idolatry and ungodliness.

But He doesn't want to. God will destroy all forms of unbelief, but this makes Him sad, in fact it makes Him cry. This is why Jesus is weeping over Jerusalem.

Jesus came to save, not destroy; to rescue, not ruin. He came so that the wrath of God over sin could be poured out on Him and not on His people. Jesus came to be killed, not to kill, but the people would not have Him, and so they fled from the refuge so graciously provided and rushed head-long into their own destruction.

So we are warned that unbelief will not remain unpunished, and that the Lord hates pride. But more than that, dear saints, we are comforted. Comforted by the tears of our Lord Jesus because in them we see His heart, what He wants and desires most of all, and that is our salvation.

**"This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."** Those are Paul's words to Timothy, and they are the truth about God and about what He wants. God wants your salvation. Jesus wants you to live forever with Him. This is why Jesus came, why he lived and died, why He went into Jerusalem: to take away the Sin of the world.

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