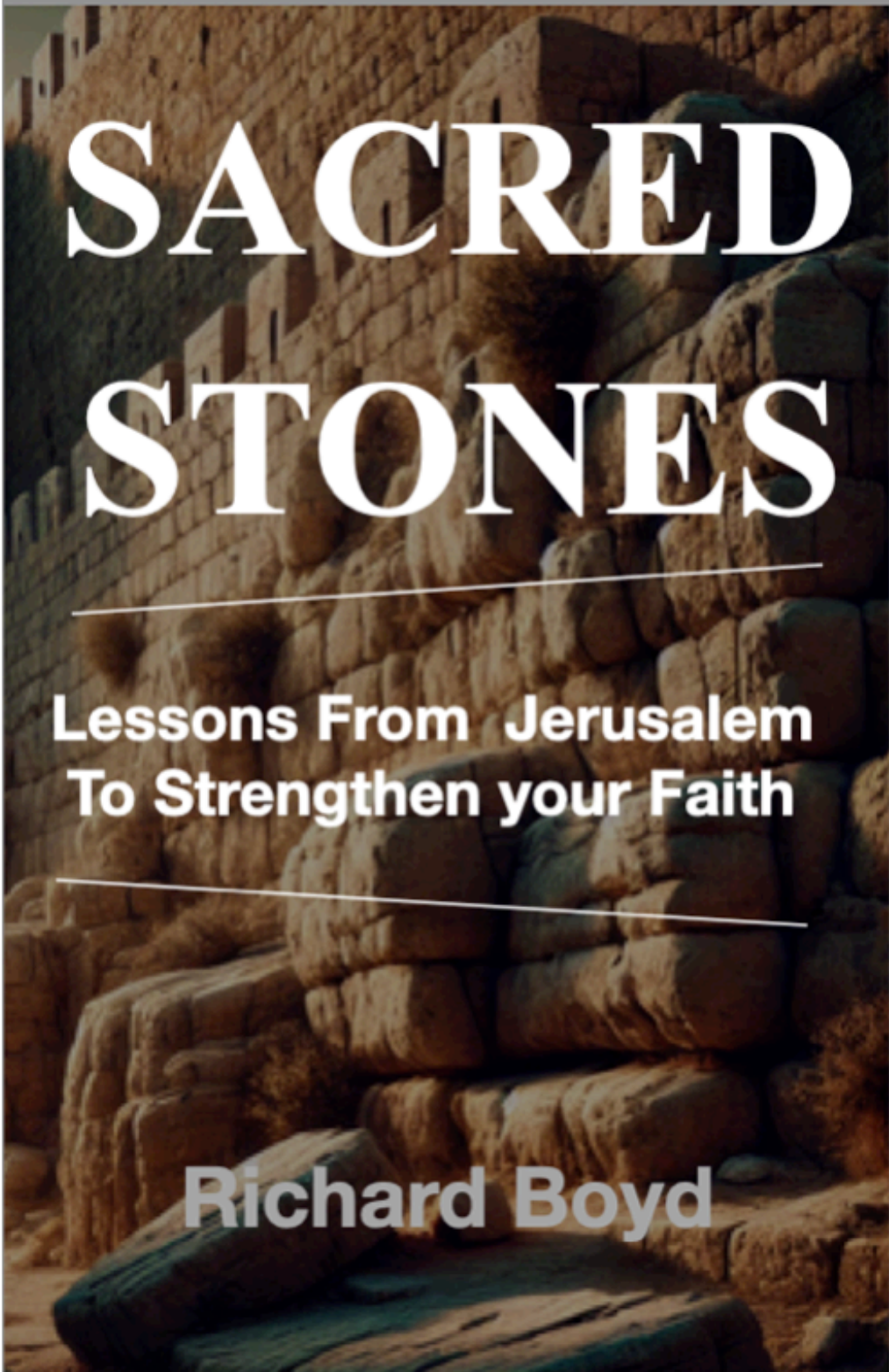


The background of the entire cover is a photograph of ancient stone walls in Jerusalem. The walls are constructed from large, irregular, light-brown stone blocks. In the foreground, there are some dark, rectangular stones or blocks. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with long shadows and a golden glow. The overall texture is rough and historical.

SACRED STONES

**Lessons From Jerusalem
To Strengthen your Faith**

Richard Boyd

Sacred Stones

Lessons from Jerusalem to Strengthen Your Faith

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Formerly Jerusalem Devotional
Revised 2024

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Authors Note

During my first trip to Israel, I felt compelled to write this devotional. My initial intention was simply to record historical facts about the sites in Old Jerusalem. However, as I began writing, I found myself drawn to connect the historical and the spiritual.

This devotional is designed to help readers see how history and faith intertwine, offering deeper insight into both. I have come to believe that history is the past documented, while the spiritual is the past and future working together.

You can choose to read this devotional in one sitting or over the course of thirty days, applying its lessons to your life. As you journey through these pages, you will gain a greater appreciation for the rich history and profound spiritual significance of Old Jerusalem.

Richard Boyd

Sacred Stones

The title "Sacred Stones" was revised to reflect the heart of what it means for something to be set apart, holy, or dedicated to God, drawing from the biblical context of the term "sacred." In the Bible, particularly in the Hebrew and Greek languages, "sacred" signifies a space or object designated for divine purpose. This understanding is especially true for Jerusalem, a city that holds profound significance as a place chosen by God.

In the Old Testament, Jerusalem gained its sacred status as the site of the Temple, the dwelling place of God among His people. King David established the city as the central hub of religious and political life for Israel, and his son Solomon constructed the first Temple there.

The significance of Jerusalem deepened with the presence of Jesus. In Luke 19:41-42, we see this connection vividly represented when Jesus approaches the city, weeping and expressing sorrow over its fate, saying, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace." This illustrates His deep bond with the city.

Psalms 48:1-2 beautifully underscores Jerusalem's importance: "Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain."

Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon, is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King."

The sacred nature of Jerusalem remains significant as it is the place where God established His name through the Temple and where key events of Jesus's ministry, including His crucifixion and resurrection, unfolded. This intertwining of reports from both the Old and New Testaments enriches Jerusalem's status and highlights the idea of "Sacred Stones," making it a deep concept we can all relate to.

Jerusalem

If I forget you, Jerusalem, let My right hand forget how to be skillful.

Psalm 137:5

Throughout the centuries this city has drawn the hearts of men, a city that has defied constant attacks, a city that has been rebuilt numerous times. Today Old Jerusalem stands as one of the most contested and historical sites since civilization. It is the focus of political and territorial dispute. A city divided at times, but still a priceless pearl in the eyes of men. Jerusalem is divided into two distinct parts, the New and the Old Jerusalem. Home to several key religious sites, such as The Temple Mount, Western Wall, Church of The Holy Sepulcher, Dome of The Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque. These sites stand as great importance to three main religious beliefs. Jews, Christians and Muslims alike all have a great deal of interest in this ancient and historic city. It is a city that draws on the hearts of people from all over the world and continues to be a contested location between Muslims and Jews.

Why have nations and armies throughout history focused on Jerusalem? Old Jerusalem has a unique allure, standing out for its military and personal conflicts. It symbolizes resilience, showcasing an impressive legacy

while longing for a brighter future. The story of Old and New Jerusalem reflects both great achievements and ongoing strife. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Reflection

Is there a certain area in your life that you need to overcome? What will it take for this to happen? What walls have you built to try and keep God and others out?

Thirty Pieces

"The chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is against our law to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.' Then together they agreed to purchase the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Since then that field has been called the Field of Blood." "So it was fulfilled which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet. "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, and gave it for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me."

Matthew 27:6-10

The number thirty holds a very pivotal point in God's numerical system. God is an expert mathematician and has developed numbers as an intricate part of our lives. Case in point; Jesus was thirty years of age at the commencement of His ministry, found in Luke 3:23. John the Baptist began his ministry at age thirty, about six months before Jesus. Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. A typical month is comprised of thirty days making it a monthly cycle in our lives. In 2 Samuel 5:4. David became king over Israel at the age of thirty. So it is safe to say that much of our lives can be connected to this valuable number. In this thirty day devotional we will spend a quiet time with God each day reflecting on certain areas of our lives.

Reflection

Can you remember a recent situation that God used to get your attention?

A New Day

Morning by morning He dispenses His justice, and every new day He does not fail.

Zephaniah 3:5

As the sun rose above the horizon, marking a new day and adventure, my airplane smoothly descended over the sea toward Tel Aviv airport. I caught my first aerial glimpse of Israel, its twinkling lights shimmering below. Despite its long history of conflict and controversy, Israel thrives with growth and opportunity, demonstrating resilience amid political and religious challenges.

Once the plane landed my final destination was Jerusalem; a city that for thousands of years stood as quite possibly the center of the world.

This pilgrimage would prove to be not only a fact finding trip, but one of valuable historical and spiritual connection. Regardless of how one views the conflicts facing this country, the fact remains it is a new day for a nation that has been branded with a violent past and a rich history.

In our life God will never fail if we can understand His faithfulness toward us. We understand that He has only one plan for mankind. This is to bring us into a new

day, where we can live in newness of life. God wants to give us new love, new peace, and a new kind of joy. Conflicts are a sign that man is in need of help and that God who is greater offers a better solution. What is God offering you in your life today? It's up to you to accept!

Reflection

What is God offering you that you are afraid to accept?

Strong Tower

The LORD'S name is a strong tower; where the righteous run to it and are safe.

Proverbs 18:10

The Tower of David, located within the walls of Old Jerusalem, has for many centuries stood as a historical and archaeological site. This fortress, with its additions, offers splendid views of Jerusalem. The site, also known as the 'citadel,' has always been a weak point in the city's defenses, thereby forcing conquering armies throughout history to establish it as the first place to be fortified. An interesting fact is that it was originally built by King Herod as one of his palaces and not by King David; today it is named the Tower of David, and houses a Museum. Upon entering the Jaffa Gate this landmark stands out as a mighty walled fortress.

Regardless of the situation we might find ourselves facing each day, we must keep in mind that God's name will always be a strong tower to find refuge. It is in His name we can seek protection. Like the Citadel that towers over Old and New Jerusalem, God's name continues to be a mighty tower for us to run into and seek protection. It is God and His word that stands out against the intimidating threats in our lives. Fortresses of old have towers built into the walls, these towers

were used as a look out to see impending attack. When we make God our tower, He is the One who looks out and warns us of attacks.

Reflection

When situations or problems arise, do you find yourself trying to solve it on your own and why? In what area do you need to trust God more?

Pray

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "Let those who love you prosper and be safe.

Psalms 122:6

Ironically the name Jerusalem means 'peace' in Hebrew and 'Sanctuary' in Arabic. It is actually two cities in one. The Old Jerusalem is surrounded by stone walls, and the New Jerusalem is a growing metropolis located outside the walls of the old city. It is two cities, not necessary side by side, but the old is surrounded by the new.

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity all regard Old Jerusalem as a holy city. Established by King David as Israel's capital around 1000 BC, it later saw the construction of the Holy Temple by his son Solomon. Jesus Christ was crucified nearby according to the New Testament.

Throughout its history, Old Jerusalem has been destroyed twice, besieged over 23 times, and attacked numerous times, never experiencing lasting peace.

God calls us to pray so He can change our circumstances. Prayer should come from faith, not mere outward perception. It is a lifestyle that brings continual peace and blessings.

Old Jerusalem reflects our struggles and pain, yet we are called to pray for its peace. To find peace in our lives, we must recognize that prayer is a path to sanctuary and connection with God.

Reflection

Who comes to mind that needs prayer? Is there someone you've overlooked? How many people can you recall who need prayer? What activity can you stop to spend more time in prayer each day? Consider someone who hasn't been in your prayers but needs to be.

New Jerusalem

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven just like a bride beautifully dressed up for her husband.

Revelation 21:2

Outside the walls of the Old Jerusalem stands a city that is growing by leaps and bounds. Today Jerusalem is as advanced as any other major city in the world.

Shopping malls, restaurants and buildings are spreading rapidly throughout the city. It is a city growing beyond its historical boundaries. New Jerusalem has made some excellent progress despite its political and territorial conflicts. Walking the streets of this modern city one can observe that much of the territorial and political problems facing the city, have taken a back seat for the moment as locals and visitors walk side by side.

In the New Testament the Apostle John witnesses a New City coming down as a bride dressed or adorned for a groom.

The New Jerusalem is mentioned in Revelation 3:12 and 21:2, where John, in the Spirit, sees it descending from a high mountain. Unlike today's Jerusalem, the New Testament describes it as a beautiful bride, adorned in a way no earthly city could match.

Only God can beautify His people and His city,
continually transforming us into what is most precious to
Him.

Reflection

Do you consider yourself inferior or is there a certain area that you feel physically unattractive? Do you remember when this started and why? Have you understood the true meaning of God's love and admiration for you?

Gates

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.

Psalms 100:4

The old Jerusalem is comprised of numerous gates surrounding the city. For thousands of years, historical and biblical writings have noted that these gates have served as an entrance and a fortress to the old city. One can still walk through some of them today, and some are still ways in which to enter the old city. Thousands throughout history and to this day, enter through these ancient landmarks. For example the Golden Gate is one of the oldest gates that is still sealed up to this day.

Ancient cities were often fortresses compared to cities of today. During times of war armies attacked the gates of a city in order to gain entrance to the city. Because of the great walls that surrounded the city, gates were the most vulnerable part of the wall.

God's gate is spiritually fortified, ensuring that no enemy can breach it once we enter the kingdom of God. We can always find safety within His city, regardless of the attacks we face outside. If you ever feel overwhelmed by these assaults,

remember that your heart is secure within God's protection. It may be necessary to check your heart and see if you have ventured outside of God's gate. In other words are you in an area where you are not supposed to be?

Reflection

How do you feel about your Christian walk right now?
Where can you improve in your daily relationship with God?

New Gate

I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not see it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19

The New Gate is the most recent gate built in the Old Jerusalem. It was built in 1889 to provide a more direct entrance to the Christian Quarters located in the old city. It is a gate built on the highest point of the walls surrounding the city. With its arched design people enter through this gate on a daily basis. Just outside the gate the newly built light rail train passes in front; a connecting of old craftsmanship and modern engineering.

When one stands outside the New Gate a feeling of accomplishment captures the eyes. To one side one can witness the old city inside the gate, to the other side a new city emerging outside the gate. A blending of old and new as both eras lock together as one. When God says He will do a new thing in our lives, He is not necessarily asking us to let go of the old, but to join together that which we have learned from old by continuing to move forth in a new way.

Never despise old or past experiences; use them as a lesson to improve on a new way of living. Use the examples of our past to make our future a better place.

Reflection

How have you learned from past experiences, regardless if they were good or bad? What is your greatest plan for the future? How do you intend to achieve i

Damascus Gate

'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go to Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been chosen to do.'

Acts 22:10

The Damascus Gate is the main entrance located on the old Jerusalem northwest side wall. Another name is the 'Shechem Gate' in Hebrew or 'Gate of the Column' in Arabic. A place where one can find street merchants selling almost anything from clothing to food.

Interestingly, and not too far from the Gate, across the street and a block or two stands the garden tomb, where Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected.

When God calls someone into the work of the Lord, He never gives them a detailed plan of what He desires of them. God desire for those He has called is that they faithfully follow His leading. The Apostle Paul was no different. On his way to bring harm to those who were followers of Christ, he had a 'Damascus Road' experience; an encounter with The Lord himself.

In obedience Paul was told to go to a certain place and upon arriving there he would be shown the first part of God's plan for him. So many times we desire God to give us a full description of what He expects of us, but

the only description we receive is to be faithful each day. In doing so God's plan will be revealed to us as we faithfully obey.

Reflection

Name one thing you need to complete in your life?

Is there one thing in your life that you have accepted as unattainable?

Zion Gate

“The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”

Psalm 87:2

The Zion Gate is one of the eight gates found in the walls of old Jerusalem. It exits on Mount Zion on the southern part of the city. The tomb of King David is believed to be within this area located on Mt. Zion. Today, pedestrians use this gate to enter or exit Mount Zion. Vehicles on the other hand can only use the gate to exit the Old City.

Have you ever had the feeling that God favors others more than you? It is as if God shows favoritism toward others. It seems He has put you aside or always passes you by.

The word 'Zion' means 'fortification.' The Bible declares that Zion is the city of David and the city of God. Having a more spiritual meaning, Zion is also known as God's spiritual kingdom, the heavenly Jerusalem. What we can learn from this is that although God seems like He shows favoritism, He is a God who knows the capability of each of His children. When King David took Zion, it was not for him to dwell in it alone

but for everyone else to receive the blessings of God.

In today's world Zion represents a spiritual state for all in Christ to dwell, so we see that God will use one person to bring about a great victory for all.

Reflection

Have you done something great or expressed gratitude to someone recently? Who's your favorite biblical character and why?

Mount Zion

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Hebrews 12:22

Upon exiting the Zion Gate one enters into Mount Zion. Here there are three important sites. The Tomb of King David, the location some believe Mary died and the Upper Room. Some historians and religious scholars disagree whether this is actually the site of David's Tomb. Nevertheless, David did capture the fortress of Zion, which was originally the name of the ancient Jebusite fortress located in the city of Jerusalem. "Zion" later came to stand not only for the fortress but also for a city in which the fortress stood.

In 1 Peter 2:6 the New Testament writer states, "Look, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame".

When Christ Jesus becomes Lord of our lives, He becomes our fortress and our refuge in whom we can place our trust. Whatever you may be experiencing at the moment, know that Christ is the major foundation in an unstable world. When we build on Christ we are sure to withstand the floods and violent winds. The deeper

the foundation the greater will be our commitment to God.

Reflection

What key ingredient do you feel you can add to your life in becoming a better person for God?

King David

If you walk in My ways, keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David did, then I will lengthen your days.

1 Kings 3:14

King David's Tomb is the name given to a religious site located on Mount Zion, just outside the walls of Old Jerusalem. The site has traditionally been viewed as the burial place of King David, the second king of Israel. Upon entering the tomb, the walls are blackened with smoke from candles that have been lit throughout recent years for memorial and religious purposes.

In any culture a tomb is a tomb, it is place where the dead have been placed into as a final resting place for the deceased. David was a mighty man of God; he was a true King with a heart that craved to worship God in all sincerity. His passion was to follow after God than please the people he led. Isn't it any wonder that today through the pages of history, his voice continues to cry after God?

Living a lifestyle of worship should be the focus of every child of God. We need to have such longing for God, to yearn for Him in such a way that like King David,

our voice will continue to cry out years from now. Set in your heart to adore God with praise and adoration.

Reflection

What familiar song of praise is in your heart at the moment? Why is this song so appealing to you? Do you have a song that you have written to God and why did you write it?

Kidron Valley

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, because You are with me;

Psalms 23:4

The Kidron Valley runs along the eastern wall of The Old City of Jerusalem separating the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. When one looks out from the Old City toward the Mount of Olives, the valley is not immediately visible until you begin to follow the walls of the Old City toward the Mount of Olives; then suddenly this populated valley seems to appear from the bottom of the walls. Lined with many houses and streets below it is a main Arab community below the Old City.

There is something about valleys that we sometimes shudder at; it's as if a valley is only a place of agriculture, a place located at the foot of towering mountains. Yet it is in the valleys water flows, lilies bloom and victory is won. We always seem to prefer a mountaintop experience, but we must remember in order to scale a mountain we must begin in the valley.

Some valley experience can be hard, but many of them are lessons that God uses to equip us for the hike to the top of the mountain. Mountain tops are no doubt an experience of a life time. When one is on top it can be a

rewarding experience, but no one stays on top forever and we must return to the valley in order to reach the next mountain. When we are on top of the world never forget from where God brought you.

Reflection

Currently do you believe you are at a mountaintop experience? Can you remember a recent valley experience?

Mount of Olives

On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west.

Zechariah 14:4

The Mount of Olives, or Mount Olivet, is a mountain ridge consisting of three peaks running from north to south. It was so named for the olive groves that once covered its slopes. The religious significance of the mount is alluded to in the book of Ezekiel the Prophet "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city."

Ezekiel 11:23.

It was on this mount Jesus stood when He wept over Jerusalem, and when He ascended to heaven as written in the book of Acts 1:9–12.

There are places we hold close in our hearts; it could be a special place we find peace, or a place we feel comfortable in. The same goes for God, He too has a special place that He desires we meet Him. A special place where we can go in order to spend a time of intimacy with Him. When Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives and looked over at Old Jerusalem, it was the

result of that special time He had with God.

The mountain represented a place where Jesus met with God at times for special occasions. It behooves us to find that special place with God where He can enjoy our presence.

Reflection

Take some time with God, and reflect on what you hear Him saying to you.

Via Dolorosa

Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull.

John 19:17

Via Dolorosa is the Latin word for the 'Way of Suffering'; the street so named is actually found in the Old City and is divided in two parts. Historically it is believed the Via Dolorosa is the street Jesus carried His cross on His way to being crucified. Today the street is lined with shops and street vendors selling clothing and souvenirs, as tourists and locals gather to witness the significance of its name and purchase items for sale. This was most likely the same environment that prevailed during the time of Jesus.

Upon arriving at the Via Dolorosa one's mind is taken back to a street where merchants and vast numbers of people conducted business as it is in any major city. To be honest, not much has changed on the street that is said to be the place where Jesus was whipped and forced to carry the cross. When one walks on the street you get a feeling of what Christ told His disciples in Luke 17:26. "Just as it was in Noah's day it will also be in the days of the Son of Man."

People were going about their daily activities as if

nothing important had happened. This is the feeling you get when walking down the Via Dolorosa. To many it's a holy site, to others it is just an ordinary street. Make sure we do not ignore the important things God is showing us today.

Reflection

Is there something God continues to impress upon your heart and are you ignoring it? Do you believe it's time to act upon what God has asked of you?

Christian Quarter

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

Acts 11:26

The Christian Quarter is one of the four quarters or communities located inside the walls of the Old Jerusalem. Like the three other quarters which are the Jewish, Muslim and Armenian, the Christian quarter contains about forty Christian holy places or sites. Throughout history and until this day the sites located within it continues to represent the beliefs of many Christians around the world.

Most outsiders are not aware of the four quarters comprised in Old Jerusalem. Like many cities and towns of today, we as humans always seem to develop a special area exclusively for ourselves. Communities where we can gather, live together in similarity, places that we can identify as our own community.

The New Testament states the disciples were called Christians; they were identified as being connected to Christ Jesus. Do people identify you as connected to Christ or do they see you as an ordinary person? If they needed help with life's problems could they recognize that you are a true disciple of Christ, one who is faithfully following Him?

Reflection

Do others see you as a faithful follower of God and why?

Is there someone you know who is living a proper Christian life and how has it impacted you?

Muslim Quarter

O God, you are my God; early will I seek you.

Psalm 63:1

This quarter is the most populated in Old Jerusalem. It is home to Muslims who live and conduct business. Like any other religious area, it also has its holy places. Each day one can hear the Muslim call to prayer (or the Adhan) as the Mosque's loudspeakers announce the Adhan in the streets. On the streets of the Muslim quarter and outside in the New Jerusalem, one can witness Muslim men bowing in prayer.

Although there is a need for us to pray more, we do not seem willing to make a time for prayer. Case in point; I have made decisions in my life without asking or seeking God's advice. I have discovered that in most decisions where I did not seek God in prayer it did not work out as well. Sometimes we as Christians can learn from others, especially those who have not claimed Christ as Lord of their life. We can learn the fact that all religions pray at least most of them do and some make it the most important ingredient in their life.

What would happen if all of God's children rose up to seek God first in prayer? Take time and make prayer a call on your life and an important part of your daily walk,

Reflection

Explain one improvement that would enhance your prayer life?

Jewish Quarter

I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew and then the Gentile.

Romans 1:16

The Jewish Quarter (הרובע היהודי), (in Hebrew HaRova). Is home to thousands of Jewish residents and an important synagogue in the city. When walking the streets of this quarter you will observe orthodox Jews on their way to prayer at the western wall.

Located within the central area of this quarter is The Hurva synagogue, which was destroyed and rebuilt during 1864, 1948 and now finally rededicated in 2010. Today young Jewish people line the streets of there quarter, passing by this synagogue with a sense of confidence as they proudly reclaim their religious heritage.

Some people misunderstand the Gospel's message of love, particularly those who don't know Jesus Christ. While some see it as a threat or a message of hate, the term "Gospel" actually means a celebration of good news and a proclamation of God's love for all humanity. We must make sure people understand why we share the Gospel before we dwell on the how to

share. God's love towards all mankind is the good news of Christ Jesus. If we claim the Gospel is good news to us, shouldn't we take the celebration of its news to others?

Reflection

When did you last share God's good news, and what was the response? Do you need to share the Gospel more, and how will you do that?

Dome of The Rock

Truly He is my rock and my salvation;

Psalm 62:6

The Dome of the Rock is a shrine located on the Temple mount in the Old Jerusalem. The Dome sits on Mount Moriah, the place where it is believed Abraham met God upon taking His son Isaac to be sacrificed. To Muslims it's the place where Muhammad the Prophet, who wrote the Quran (Muslim's Holy Book) ascended to heaven. The location has always been a holy place to Jews, Muslims and Christians. Many religious leaders, historians and scientists hold this as the geographical center of the world. It is also believed to be the place of Solomon's Temple, and the center or proximity of the central part of the Garden of Eden. Below its base is the Western Wall, one of the holiest sites in Judaism.

As we have mentioned in a previous devotion, prayer is extremely important in our lives. Sometimes we allow prayer to become a task instead of it being a natural part of our daily activities. When asked how to pray, Jesus disciples were asking for an effective way to reach out to God. Jesus taught them a simple but efficient way in praying to God our Father.

He revealed God's relationship with us, showing God as 'Father,' not just a distant, holy being we must reach. Prayer is fueled by understanding God's love, not place. It's a relationship between a perfect God and imperfect humans.

Reflection

In your own words, write out a short prayer from your heart to God!

The Western Wall

May the LORD bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Psalm 128:5

The Western Wall is located in the Old Jerusalem at the foot of the western side of the Temple Mount. The remains are what is left of the ancient wall that surrounded the temple's courtyard, and is one of the holiest sites to Jews today. For centuries it has been a strategic site for Jewish prayer and pilgrimages. Upon capturing Old Jerusalem in 1967, the Israeli people once again hold control of the wall and the surrounding areas.

During the time of King David's reign his heart's desire was to build a dwelling place so that God's presence could reside on the earth. I'm sure many times David looked over Jerusalem and spoke blessings to his people on behalf of God. Eventually Solomon, David's son, built a holy place for God, a place where David spoke blessings a number of years before the Temple was actually built. Today we too can survey our family, friends and cities and speak God's blessing upon them. Speak over your life and watch God bring it to pass.

As you read this devotion, thousands have gone to the Western Wall praying that God would once again restore

the Temple. How much more do we need to pray in faith for God to restore our homes?

Reflection

Write out a special prayer for your home, and read it out loud throughout your house!

The Upper Room

He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished.

Luke 22:12

The 'Upper Room' is the name of the place used, according to the New Testament, where Jesus Christ gathered with His disciples for His final supper. Interestingly it is located almost above the site of King David's tomb outside old Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

It is also thought to be by many Christian historians the site of the resurrection appearance of Christ to His disciples, where Mathias was chosen as the Apostle who would take the place of Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Jesus, and where the Holy Spirit descended during the day of Pentecost.

In order for us to have a deeper relationship with God, one must always give Him a special place in our hearts. We must be willing to prepare our lives each day so that God can come and fellowship with us. In doing this we make ready our inner heart as a place where God has freedom to reside, and allow Christ the privilege to live in our hearts!

Reflection

How can you make a special place for God in your home and in your heart?

A Garden Tomb

Mary stood outside the tomb crying.

Weeping, she bent over to look into the tomb.

John 20:11

The Garden Tomb is situated just outside Old Jerusalem, near the Damascus Gate. Many Christians believe it to be the burial and resurrection site of Jesus Christ. Crossing the busy streets filled with Arab vendors leads to the iron gates of the Garden Tomb, where a peaceful tranquility replaces the outside bustle. Except for some of the modern upgrades, the garden tomb in many ways remains a picture of what it was during the time of Jesus. It is also known to the many thousands who have visited it as a wonderful place to take communion.

There has been much speculation whether this is the actual location as to where Jesus Christ's body was laid. Yet what has made the most impression on the minds of those who have entered, is a garden that sprouts to life, while all the while hiding as it were the tomb itself.

In this garden, many from around the world gather for communion, celebrating where Jesus likely walked after His resurrection. Remember, it was Mary Magdalene who asked a man she thought was the gardener about Jesus'

body, only to discover it was Jesus Himself, who called her name. God knows your name and is lovingly inviting you to trust Him as He leads you to the peace you long for in your life.

Reflection

In your own words can you explain what peace is to you and how can you receive it?

The Face Of Golgotha

They came to a place called Golgotha.

Matthew 27:33

Golgotha or Calvary, as it is known in the New Testament, was the place where historically Jesus Christ was said to be crucified. Also known as the place of the skull, this hill in some ways is shaped like the face of a skull. Peering out from the rocks one can discern an eye and nose type shape carved into the hill. Today it lies on one side of the Garden Tomb, overlooking a busy bus station in New Jerusalem, outside the old city walls.

What Christ Jesus did by dying for mankind makes many shudder in fear and disbelief. How could anyone willingly give their life for a world full of hate and injustice? How could a man who healed the sick and raised the dead then go and lay down his own life for all nations? As far as we know Jesus' blood was shed outside the walls of Old Jerusalem; it is because of His love for us and the power of His shed blood that makes us free. Never underestimate the power of Christ's blood that has up to this day brought us out of bondage into freedom.

Reflection

Is there an area of your life that you need freedom?

What will it take on your part to receive this freedom?
Have you allowed God to deal with your freedom His
way?

Empty Tomb

They saw the stone rolled away from the tomb

Luke 24:2

Located in the Garden and near the hill Golgotha is a tomb comprised of two chambers within. Upon entering the tomb one will see an iron fence installed to preserve the main part of the tomb. The fence erected within divides the tomb into two chambers. Behind this fence is where families of old would lay one or more of the bodies being buried. The other side of the fence where one enters is said to be the place families would stand and mourn for the dead while the body is being laid to rest.

There is of course speculation whether this is the actual place Christ's body was laid to rest. But one thing is perceived once one stands in the tomb, that wherever the actual place was, His body is not there; He has risen from the dead. As powerful as the Crucifixion on the cross was, it would be useless if Christ had not resurrected.

Tombs located in and around Jerusalem houses the bones of the dead or at least the remains of the dead. Nevertheless only the tomb of Christ remains empty. Know the power of Christ's resurrection and apply it to your life. We serve a living God!

Reflection

Stop and think where you can apply the power of Christ's resurrection in your life?

Mount Moriah

God said, "Take your only son, you love, Isaac and go to the region of Moriah. And sacrifice him.

Genesis 22:2

The importance of Jerusalem still remains a mystery as to why is it that God from the beginning of time chose this city for His special purposes. In Old Jerusalem stands Mount Moriah which dates back to the time God requested Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain.

Mount Moriah is not a single peak as geologist have determined, but an elongated ridge rising southward from the Kidron Valley. Archaeological evidence, and according to some historians, hold the claim that the crucifixion of Jesus was really located somewhere on the top of Mt. Moriah between or near the Damascus Gate, or close to the Garden Tomb. It is here on this mount the Dome of the Rock sits directly above the Western Wall, a mountain range considered holy to Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

When Abraham obeyed God and took Isaac to the mount, he couldn't foresee the long-lasting impact of his actions. He named the place 'The LORD Will Provide,' signifying God's

provision not just for him but for all humanity.

Sometimes, God asks us to give up things, even those He once gave us. Though obedience can be difficult, God always offers something greater in return. Have you been asked to let go of something for a better blessing?

Reflection

Have you given up those little things that hold you back in life? Name something you gave up previously that has brought about victory in your life?

Chambers of the Past

God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never be forgotten.

Psalm 9:18

The Holocaust is a genocidal event which occurred during World War II where approximately six million Jews were slaughtered. Out of a population of over nine million Jews residing in Europe at the time, it became a systematic approach by the Nazis in the killing of the Jews.

During this time of horrific proportions, over a million Jewish children were also murdered by this diabolical ethnic cleansing. Although Jews made up the majority of people murdered during that time, many other people of various ethnic backgrounds were also put to death. The Holocaust will always be a picture of pain embedded on the minds of the Jewish people.

Upon entering the museum that display past holocaust events, one is immediately drawn to the way in which this time in history affected families and people. The blood-stained clothes; photos of abuse and torture seem to illuminate us to the hate that can dwell within the heart of man. God has said only He can truly know our heart. 'The

heart is deceitful and desperately wicked: who can know it?”. Jeremiah 17:9.

Only God can avert the wickedness and hate that is within us. It is important we allow God to cleanse our heart so that evil cannot reign in our life.

Reflection

Now would be a good time to stop and ask God to help you, by exposing the evil that might be hidden in your heart.

Outside The City

Then they went outside the city, and came unto him.

John 4:30

Yemin Moshe is a well established area just outside the Old Jerusalem. Named after the man who formed it to ease overcrowding in the Old City during the later part of 1800, it is an upscale neighborhood surrounded by lush gardens and a panoramic view of the walls of Old Jerusalem. Today it is known as an area for musicians and writers. Situated opposite Mount Zion, it represents a place of old world charm and modern ambitions.

When God's people have given their all and it seems as if there is no way out, and we find ourselves at the end of our rope, it is important to understand that we still have a place we can call home. God hears the cry of His people and He will never leave us to stand alone during attacks in our life. He will always protect and stand with us as we encounter times of hopelessness. The disciples always knew where to find Jesus when there was trouble.

Despite their failures, fears and worries, they knew how to call on Him for help. If it meant going out of the way or out of the city, they knew how to find Jesus in times of need.

Sometimes we have to go beyond our city limits to find refuge and help in God.

Reflection

Name some places you can go to find God in times of need. When last have you been there?

The Roman Road

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a rule that a census should be taken of all the Roman world.

Luke 2:1

Today when walking in the Jewish Quarter Street on the way to the Western Wall, one will come upon a street located below the city called Cardo Maximus. During the 7th century, Jerusalem fell under Muslim rule; the Cardo became a marketplace for Arab style vendors. Ancient maps have revealed that the Roman Cardo was the main artery through the Old Jerusalem running north to south down the center of the Old City. Careful work and craftsmanship have gone into excavating sections of the road. Modern stores have been added to a small part of this street, making a mixture of old and new.

Walking along the Cardo evokes a sense of what Jesus experienced. With its tall columns and blend of old and new stones, it's easy to imagine the bustling street filled with people from across the Roman Empire. Merchants sold livestock, garments, spices, and precious metals. Yet, how many recognized the Messiah walking among them? In our own lives, do we overlook the One who can make everything right as we get caught up in our daily events?

Reflection

Are you very busy trying to do so much you find yourself achieving very little? How can you adjust your time better so that you can hear the voice of God?

CITY ON A HILL

A city that is built on a hill cannot be hid.

Mathew 5:14

Once the sun sets and night begins to fall over Old Jerusalem, the walls of the city begin to glow from lights strategically placed around them. The Tower of David, Dome of the Rock and Church steeples all compete for attention in the night sky.

At night, Jerusalem dazzles with its splendor. People roam freely, with the shopping mall bustling and restaurants attracting those eager to explore new flavors. From above, the city shines, claiming its place in the modern world. Old Jerusalem sparkles like a jewel amid the glimmering lights and twilight attractions.

Old Jerusalem can be recognized from almost any area outside the walls. As I stopped and took a look at this old city one night, my mind began to wonder how this city might have looked centuries ago. Modern technology has illuminated the city, but in times past was this city just as visible?

I realized that this city must have stood out at night, just as it does today, as Jesus reminded His disciples that they

are a city shining on a hill. Even before electricity, cities were visible at night. As children of God, we should illuminate His light to a dark world, shining with His love like a city on a hill. Let your light shine today.

Reflection

In what way can you improve your walk in life, so that others will see you are truly a child of God?

King Triumphant

A king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule in justice.

Isaiah 32:1

The world today presents a complex tapestry of beliefs and attitudes, particularly among some Christians who struggle to fully embrace the reality of the Kingdom of God in their daily lives. While many have welcomed Jesus Christ as their Savior, there is a notable reluctance to acknowledge Him as the Lord of their lives. This disconnect is especially significant; they may rely on His saving grace for eternal security yet fail to submit to His authority in their present lives. This phenomenon reflects one of the greatest deceptions of our time—the idea that the Kingdom of God and Jesus' lordship are something to be anticipated only in the distant future, rather than being a present reality.

During my recent journey through the bustling streets of Old Jerusalem, I was struck by a profound tradition that seems to resonate across diverse faiths. As I navigated the vibrant avenues filled with life and energy, filled with the sounds of merchants and the sights of pilgrims, I couldn't help but feel the weight of history embedded in the very stones beneath my feet. Many of the people I encountered were

not only interested in the sights but were also touched by a shared belief—the conviction that Jesus once walked these very streets centuries ago.

It is astounding to think how this belief transcends denominational divides, drawing people to the city in search of connection, meaning, and a tangible encounter with the sacred. As I stood near significant landmarks, I reflected on the transformative power of faith and how the life of Jesus continues to inspire millions. It is a reminder that the message of His love and sacrifice is alive, echoing through time and into the hearts of those willing to embrace Him fully not only as their Savior but as their sovereign Lord.

In this context, it becomes essential for all believers to re-examine their faith. Are we living out the fullness of that relationship with Christ? Are we allowing His rule to guide our decisions, to influence our actions? The streets of Jerusalem, rich with the history and legacy of faith, serve as a call to action. It invites us to recognize that the Kingdom of God is not merely a future hope but a present reality that we can engage with today. In doing so, we can foster a deeper, more authentic relationship with Christ that transforms not only our lives but also the world around us.

There is no doubt in the minds of the number of tourists who come that He existed, as history has proven. The important question is He really the King of Kings to millions of people who claim they believe in Him? His very existence has been proven by historical records and much of where He traveled has also been documented. His death is another proven reality in the pages of history, He had followers who walked beside Him and served Him with their lives.

Nevertheless today there remains strong resistance and a prevailing doubt that forces many to document Jesus as a historical figure instead of a Triumphant Savior. A King who is sitting on an eternal throne and is The King of Kings forever and ever. The fact remains that when He walked the streets of Old Jerusalem He spoke of a Kingdom and of Him being the King of that Kingdom. A Kingdom not visible to the naked eye, but it would supersede and permeate all other kingdoms.

Jesus is asking us to step into a realm of faith that would reveal to us exactly who He is. It is imperative we recognize that He now reigns on the throne of the universe as the absolute King, absolute authority and those who have accepted Him by faith are part of this great Kingdom. It is important that we live our lives every moment believing He is the total and complete Lord of our life!

Christ Ministry Training
christministrytraining.org
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Jerusalem Devotional 2012 First Printing

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Revised 2024