

# THE DESTROYED JERUSALEM

## A SERMON

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By Mister JAMES WELLS

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“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children, together, as a hen does gather her brood under her wings, and you would not!” Luke 8:34

THERE is a twofold current of truth running through the Holy Scriptures, that which is conditional and that which is unconditional. All that is conditional belongs unto the law, and of course the violation of or failure of conformity to the said conditions involves the violators in corresponding penalties. But then there is another current of truth running through the Bible, that of the unconditional, such as the love of God; the love of God is free and everlasting, the choice of God is also free, being entirely of grace; and the Savior also wrought what he did work freely; and the Holy Spirit also is a free Spirit, giving to every man severally as he will. Also, the covenant to which all this unconditional part of truth belongs is a covenant ordered in all things and sure, and in that is included all our salvation. And if we are taught of the Lord we shall be so led as to see that all conditional truths belong to the law, and that we cannot ourselves have access to God by them; we shall be brought to know our need of unconditional truth, of yea and amen truth, of that truth where the Lord says, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” You will therefore, of course, perceive that our text does not belong to the unconditional, but refers rather to the conditional. But without farther remarks I shall at once proceed to bring out of the words before us these three doctrines: First, *the limitation of the enemy*, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent unto you.” Secondly, *Satanic rule*. Thirdly, and lastly, *the negative and the positive of the Savior’s good will towards the people of Jerusalem*.

I notice, then, first, *the limitation of the enemy*. But in so doing I may just notice first what prophets are; what we are to understand as to their office, what their business was; and I shall once more just remind you of their dignity, and of the blessedness of their position, before I step into the department to show the limitation of the enemy, and the greatness of the people’s sin. I observe then, first, the blessedness of their position; because their position is that in which they represent all the people of God; and the people of God are one with the prophets of God. And I do not know that I can do better than once more refer to the eleventh chapter of the book of the Revelation, where the prophets of God are spoken of as two; are called there the two olive trees, and the two

candlesticks that stand there before the God of the earth. Now that position there described, their standing before the God of the earth, that sentence has an allusion, first to the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, and then to the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, and it shows the position of the ministers of the gospel, and, of course, the position of the people of God with them. It refers, first (that position there described, standing before the God of the earth), to the fifty-fourth of Isaiah. There the Lord says this unto the church: "Fear not; for you shall not be ashamed: neither be you confounded; for you shall not be put to shame: for you shall forget the shame of your youth, and shall not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more. For your Maker is your husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." Here is special reference to the Lord Jesus Christ in that eternal relationship subsisting between himself and the people, and in that relationship subsisting between Christ and the people there is no wrath. In that same chapter the Lord said to the ministers and to the people who are brought to understand this eternal relationship between Christ and the people, brought to receive it as a testimony which they see to be essential to their eternal welfare, the Lord said unto such, "I have sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you." Now, then, here is that order of things in which sin is entirely put away, entirely forgiven, and entirely forgotten, blotted eternally out of the book of remembrance. And as this great work of putting away sin, entirely and eternally forgiving sin, and swallowing up death in victory, and putting away the curse, and putting life and immortality to light, as this was done on behalf of all nations, or a people in all nations, it was needful that Jesus Christ, in order to gather in the people for whom he died, should have power over all flesh, which he has; that he may gather out of all nations the people given unto him; "You have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him;" and thus he has all power in heaven and in earth. This, I think, is what is meant by his being the God of all the earth. And the minister stands before the God of the earth; this is just what all that are saved are brought to; they are brought to see their need of this entire destruction of sin, and the bringing in of righteousness by Jesus Christ, brought to see their need of the indissolubility of that relationship subsisting between Christ and the people; when brought to know this they become thus established. And these great truths of what Christ has done, together with their eternal certainty, form the substance of the testimony of the prophets, these unconditional truths, and form the substance of the testimony of the people of God. Now let us hear what is said of these prophets. It is said they shall prophesy a thousand and two hundred and sixty days; which period, of course, is not to be understood literally, but mystically, meaning a long period, which the Lord alone knows the length of; it is one of those times and seasons which it is not for us to know; we must, therefore, understand the words mystically. They are during this time to prophesy in sackcloth; not, of course, in sackcloth literally, but in sackcloth figuratively; as said the apostle Paul, "I was among you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling." He felt what a poor creature he was, and how insufficient he was to stand between eternity and dying man, to stand between an infinite God and poor dying mortals, and minister instrumentally to them the mind of that God, the counsel of that God, the mercy of that God. He was thus clothed figuratively in sackcloth. And this is a very essential matter. No minister can preach effectually if he be a stranger to this trembling and soul-trouble; indeed, it is that kind of experience that prepares the heart of every child of God to receive the truth in the advantages of it. Therefore, he said, "Our gospel came not unto you in words only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

Now, then, this is their position. And they are called candlesticks, in accordance with the character given unto the saints. Hence the seven churches are called seven candlesticks; and these candlesticks contain the light of the gospel. And ministers are called also olive trees. The olive is a symbol, first, of peace; and their message is peace with God; God reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And as ministers have this message of peace, they do instrumentally, as it were, convey the golden oil of God's grace, by which the hopes, and affections, and expectations of the people of God are kept alive; as says the Savior, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Now the lights there, of course, will mean your love, and zeal, and prayer; let them be lively. That, I think, is what is there intended. And thus, the olive is a figure that applies to all the people of God, because it is a symbol of peace. And the olive is also an evergreen; and so, the people of God are evergreens, and they are as olive plants round about the Lord's table. Thus you get the position of the prophets, that they are in close connection with the salvation of Christ, the certainty of God's truth, with that peace, and light, and blessedness, which are by Jesus Christ; and their prophesying in sackcloth means their soul-trouble, their mourning, their downward experience, their earnestness; in a word, everything that fits them for their solemn, and yet at the same time delightful position. Now these prophets were to prophesy in sackcloth only a given time. So, you are to walk in sackcloth only a given time; your troubles are all limited, they will by-and-bye end; by-and-bye the sack-cloth will be put off, to be put on no more; by-and-bye you will be girded with gladness, to be sorrowful no more; by-and-bye you are to be brought up out of the dust of humiliation, to be enthroned in eternal glory. So, then, here is a limitation. But it is said of these prophets that testify of this entire destruction of sin by Jesus Christ, and this certainty of eternal mercy by him, it is said of them that "if any man will hurt them, fire proceeded out of their mouth and devoured their enemies." Now let us explain that, for it wants explaining. The meaning of that appears to me to be this, that ministers bear testimony that all that live and die enemies to Christ, enemies to his truth, and consequently enemies to his people, that such persons must be cast into the fire of hell. So that these ministers devour their enemies testimonially; God will do it executively, they do it testimonially. Hence Jeremiah was appointed to throw down, to pull down, to root up, and to destroy, to plant, and to build, that is, testimonially and prophetically; but God does these things executively. And then it is repeated, "If any man will hurt them," if he is determined to hurt them, "he must" for God's threatening can no more alter than his promise, "he must in this manner be killed." Let us, then, this morning, if we can, raise a song of thankfulness to our God, that while we were once enemies to his true prophets, we love them now; that while we were once enemies to his ministers, we love them now; that while we were once enemies to his people, we love them now; and that while we were once enemies to his truth, we now love that truth; once enemies to his dear Son, but now we love him; once enemies to our God, but now we are reconciled by the blood of the Lamb; and therefore, we would not knowingly hurt any of his people. Here, then, is the dignified position of the ministers and the people of God. And "these" prophets "have power to shut heaven, that it rained not in the days of their prophecy that is, testimonially. So, they bear testimony that there is no rain, there is no mercy, for the unbeliever, there is no mercy for the enemy, there is no mercy for the apostate, until God shall change that man. All the time Saul of Tarsus was so, there is no rain upon you, there is no mercy for you. But if the Lord is pleased to appear, and to bring him down under a sight and sense of what he is, then, as the man is changed, the minister's voice changes towards him. Now that your eyes are opened, now that you are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; now that this change is wrought, you are another man; and now the heavens shall not

be shut up; now the heavens will be open to you; now mercy and blessing shall descend upon you until there shall not be room, as it were, to contain it; now that the change is wrought, you shall be filled with all the blessings of everlasting love. And it is said, "They have power over waters to turn them to blood." Waters there represent the comforts of this life; and the waters, as the representation of the comforts of this life, would convey that idea more vividly to those who live in countries of drought than it would in our country, where we have a plenty of that provision. Turn waters into blood; blood is the symbol of death. And the minister tells the pleasure taking man that his pleasures must soon run dry; the minister tells the Pharisaic man that his self-gratulations and false consolations will soon run dry; the minister tells the man who is pulling down his barns to build them again, and thereby heaping up, as he thinks, treasures and consolation for a long time to come, the minister tells him these must die. And thus, the minister testimonially turns all these consolations of the world into blood; the waters being the symbol of consolations, blood the symbol of death. "And to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will;" that is to say, testimonially, that is the way they do it; God will do all these things executively. Hence what the prophets and apostles bound and loosed on earth, God bound and loosed in heaven; what they testified on earth, the blessed God does or executes accordingly; for "holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." See, then, the position of the ministers and of the people of God. They stand by the God of the whole earth; they stand by that Jesus Christ that has by his mediatorial work wrought the entire destruction of sin, and has confirmed the covenant, which is immutable, and not a particle of wrath left. And standing thus with God in this covenant, see what power they have; they shall overcome their enemies, but their enemies cannot overcome them. In all their tribulations, whether temporal, or political, or circumstantial, whatever enemies may have dominion over them, they can never conquer them spiritually; the people of God always stand on their spiritual vantage ground; there they cannot be conquered.

But let us look, in the next place, at the limitation; "You which kill the prophets." These are the prophets, then, that are made one with the new covenant, that stand by the universal dominion of Christ, that stand by the certainty of his eternal truth. Let us look at the limitation. The question arises, if they killed the prophets, what was the good of sending them if the people killed them? and if the people stoned the prophets, what was the good of sending them? These are the questions that arise; and through the Lord's mercy we can answer them very satisfactorily to ourselves, and to all who know the truth, 11th chapter of the Revelation: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them. I will not enter into the remainder of the chapter; it would take up all our time this morning if I were to do so; I will only go thus far. "When they shall have finished their testimony." So that though these prophets were slain, they were not slain till they had done their work.

John the Baptist was slain very early; he had preached only about three years, but a great work was done during that three years. His testimony was finished, his work was done, and all the souls that God intended to convert by the ministry of John were converted; and when there was not another to be converted, then God in his sovereignty allowed Satan to break in upon John, and to destroy his life, and thus to kill the prophet; but it was not done till John's work was finished. So, if we go to the Old Testament, Abel was slain but he was not slain soon enough, Satan set Cain on, and said, "Kill that Abel at once but he was too late. Abel had his testimony to finish, and Satan should have got Cain to have slain Abel before. Abel brought the sacrifice, opened heaven, obtained witness that he was righteous, and has left the testimony upon record. Satan," for his own

purpose in this matter, was too late, seeing that Abel could not be slain until he had finished his testimony. And so, of all the after prophets and people of God that were slain, not one could be slain until he had finished his testimony. Let us, then, rejoice in this entire limitation of the enemy, how he is under the Lord's control. And I would just say here, I speak now to you that are Christians, I do not speak to you that are hypocrites, some of you are that, no doubt; nor to you that are dead in sin; I speak to you that are real Christians, that the Lord has a work for you to do; you may not see what that work is. Why, if in twenty years' time, that is a long time to look forward to, the Lord has ordained that you shall give a cup of cold water to a disciple, and so help him, you can't die before you have done that. What? say you, am I to wait all that time for that? Yes, all that time, if the Lord wants you. Every private Christian has his work to do. There is some testimony for you to bear to the truth; some work for you to do towards the increase and furtherance of the gospel, and you cannot die until you have done it. There is some practical decision for you to show for God's truth and vital godliness, and you cannot die till that is done. You will some time meet with a person that will oppose you very much, and you perhaps may say but little to him, and perhaps what you say to him may be no blessing to him. That person goes away, and says to another, "I met with So-and-so; he is a very high Calvinist, dreadfully high; what do you think he said to me? Why he said so-and-so to me." And the second man may not be benefited by it; but he may tell a third man, and it may be made a blessing to his soul; so that the last man shall be blessed by that which has done the middle man and the first man no good whatever. It may be the third man, or the fourth man, or the fifth man. As a man said to me some time ago in the country, he said, "Some of your expressions, when you were down last time, we have banded them about, and they are gone from hand to hand I don't know how far, to godly and ungodly, some of them." So that you must live till your work is done. Let us then bless our God that he is interested in every one of his dear children, in all their affairs, all their circumstances. Think not that the Lord thinks nothing of your services, nothing of your testimony, nothing of your doings; he thinks a great deal more of them than you ought to think of them; you ought to think nothing of them; so that you may be prepared at the last to say, "Lord, when saw we you hungry and thirsty?" Your doings are so poor and feeble, and mingled with so many faults, that you are ashamed to look at them; but still the Lord receives them. We are to depend upon his doings, and glory in them. "Not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends,"

But let us look for a moment at the greatness of this sin, Here is a sin here, the greatest sin; I don't know that it does not embody the sin against the Holy Ghost, which some reckon unpardonable, which I have different views upon, as some of you are aware. The greatness of this sin; what is it? Slay Abel; what for? Because he testified of the perfection of the priesthood of Christ, and of the grace of God thereby. Slay the prophets, who testified of the same thing; and slay the apostles, who testified of the same thing. Well, all those were direct aims at the blessed God himself: to slay a prophet was virtually to slay God; to slay an apostle was virtually, as it were, to slay God, deicide; what's done to them is done to Christ, Presently they embody all their crimes in one, and crucify the Son of God. And the Lord, in all solemn, righteous judgment, speaks like this: "You have sought to slay me; you have sought to destroy me; and now, upon the principle of retaliation, I will sweep you from the earth, and with the besom of destruction I will sweep you to hell; there you shall be punished with everlasting destruction from my presence and from the glory of my power. The greatness of the sin of thus slaying the prophets of God, and of slaying the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no sin can be greater, because there are no counsels of God's will so dear to him as salvation counsels; there is no person so dear to him as his dear Son, and the people are represented

as being loved with the same love. Thus, then, the adversaries are limited; “Hitherto shall you come, and no farther;” and we see that the sin of these adversaries is great beyond description. And this the apostle Paul knew: he never forgot what he had been; it was a grief to him up to his dying day, that he should have been such a fool as he was; that he should have been such a persecutor and murderer as he was. All his sins together were to him as nothing in comparison of his malice against the Christ of God, against the truth of God, and against the people of God. He stood amazed, and he says, “That he might show forth in me a pattern of all longsuffering.” As though he should say, He may well send me to the worst of men; he may well send me unto the Gentile world; as though the apostle should say, It is literally impossible for me to meet with a greater sinner than myself; and when I meet with a greater sinner than myself, then I could say there is no hope for such; but I cannot meet with a greater sinner than myself, and as grace has saved me, it can save anything. I am fully aware that every minister is sent in this spirit, and that every Christian, when in his right mind, walks in this spirit, and is consequently willing to say, “Are we better than Saul of Tarsus? Yes, in no way, for who makes us to differ, and what have we that we have not received?”

Secondly, I notice *Satanic rule*. And this is to us, as far as God’s sovereignty is concerned, a great mystery. God, in the deeps of his sovereignty, suffers Satan to rule. Let us look at the essence of his rule and see whether we are under his rule or not; if we are, dying there we shall be lost. The apostle is very clear upon this, what it is to be under Satanic rule; he is as clear upon it as A, B, C. he says, “If our gospel be hidden” the gospel we have stated this morning, as set forth in the 54th of Isaiah, “it is hidden to them that are lost;” that is, they are in a lost condition; “in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” So that if the gospel is hidden from us, and be not attractive to us, it is because we are under the powers of darkness; dying in that state, we shall be lost. The apostle says, “Even unto this day, when Moses is read” (and Moses spoke of all these things), “the vail is upon their hearts.” So that here was Satanic rule, in hiding this blessed gospel, in its various essential details, from their minds. The veil is upon the heart. But “when it shall turn to the Lord,” that is, when the heart shall turn to the Lord, that is, to the Lord Jesus Christ, then “the vail shall be taken away.” Certainly so, when you are turned to Jesus Christ. Now I see the end of the law and of sin; now I know something of vital experience; now I know what is meant by the new covenant, and of his being the Mediator; now I know what justification is, what righteousness is, what superiority and perpetuity are. So says the apostle, “We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of our God.” Now, then, Satanic rule thus keeps men from seeing, believing, and standing out for this gospel. But it does not stop there; that is only the basis of his rule; the great essential with Satan is to hide the real gospel; when he does that, then he goes on farther, as our text shows, to blind them in other respects, and to get them to slay and ill-use the prophets and people of God.

But lastly, *the negative and positive of the Savior’s good will towards the people of Jerusalem*. “How often would I have gathered your children together!” Here you observe that the rulers are spoken of as fathers, and the main body of the people are spoken of as children, because they were principally under the tuition of these fathers or teachers. Let us look, then, at the negative and positive of the Savior’s good will towards the people of Jerusalem. First, at what it does not mean. Does it mean that there were sheep there that he couldn’t obtain possession of? Does it mean that they had made void the faith of God’s elect? Does it mean that some that were ordained to eternal

life should come short of that life? Does it mean that those who were the children of promise should come short of that promise? Does it mean that there were people that the Savior would have saved, but they wouldn't be saved? Does it mean that? If so, what do you do with the new covenant? Why, the Savior says, "My sheep," you know how he speaks of them; time does not permit me to quote it; "other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." Now it doesn't mean this. You Wesleyans, you tell us it means that he would have saved them all, but they would not be saved. Why, you Wesleyans are as wrong as the Lord Jesus Christ was right. It has nothing at all to do with it. What does it mean, then? I will give you the meaning in a very few minutes, and bring it home to you if I can, and then you will understand it. Now many years ago in this country, as you are aware, ecclesiastical, connected with parliamentary tyranny, put the people to death for their religious belief in certain doctrines; and one of our martyrs at the stake said, "O England, repent!" England did repent; she repented of her persecuting spirit, England came out of that persecuting spirit, and adopted that position of liberty which we now enjoy, which the blessed God grant may continue to the world's end. Now we will suppose that England at this present time, its government, were in the same attitude of tyranny and of persecution; and we will suppose that there were a few ministers willing to gather the people together and preach the gospel to them, but the government will not allow it; and we will suppose the Lord did not intend mercy for England; then what would be the result? Now the Lord says, Since you know not the day of your visitation, a subject time does not permit me to touch this morning, your enemies shall compass you on every side, and they shall cast a trench about you, and there shall not be left in you one stone upon another. Your great metropolis, all your towns, and cities, and villages shall be given up to the ravages of the most savage enemies around that shall come in upon you, and such misery shall come upon you as never came upon any nation before, nor ever can again. Now we will suppose a man who sees this, a prophet who sees this; we will suppose that prophet to be a thorough Englishman; he feels for his fellow-country-men, he feels for his country, he weeps over it, he sees the destruction, he is unhappy to the last degree. Suppose by his preaching the people should repent; suppose like Luther and some others, Jonah at Nineveh, he should succeed, and the people should repent of this persecuting spirit, suppose they repented as a nation. Suppose the Lord turns round and says, Now I see you have humbled yourselves; you have repented of your persecuting spirit, you have abstained from that; you are willing that my people shall worship me according to my direction and teaching; and therefore the evil which I have thought to do unto you, I will not do it; instead of adversity you shall have prosperity; instead of being under your enemies you shall be over them all; instead of poverty you shall have plenty; instead of intestine wars you shall have peace within your borders, and you shall be a happy nation. Don't you think that some credit would be due to such a prophet, as an instrument of such a salvation as this? I think so. But that kind of national salvation of which I am now speaking, that saving from national destruction, and keeping the nation in peace and prosperity, that and eternal salvation are two very different things. Now it was one part of the mission of the Savior to preach to the Jews, and to aim at their repentance; he began saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And if they had repented, ceased to persecute him, and let him agonize his life out and atone for sin without their murderously dealing with him as they did; suppose they had done so, and let his apostles alone, why, the Jewish nation might have been a happy nation unto this day. But alas! Alas! these things essential to their welfare were now hidden from their eyes; they were therefore determined to go on to their own destruction, and the very steps they took to save their nation destroyed it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen does gather her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and

verily I say unto you, You shall not see me,” in a way of mercy, “until the time come when you shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” His mission, just hear me in conclusion, his mission in eternal matters was positive, was certain; no uncertainty about it; but his mission in a national sense was temporal and conditional; and so, though he wrought such miracles as Jonah never wrought, therefore it is that the Ninevites, the Queen of Sheba, shall rise in judgment against this God-hating, truth-despising, and church-persecuting people. Thus, then, “Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together!” You can now understand the difference between that part of Christ’s mission in which he came to obtain eternal redemption, and that part of his mission which would have saved the Jewish nation temporally, if they had repented. I have not made it so clear as I could wish; but though I shall not have another sermon upon this text, there is another text very much akin to this, upon which we will have a sermon as soon as we can.