

## *The Land, the People, the Promise*

“O Jerusalem!”

Psalm 48

25 June 2023

Well, this is it for the first couple of Life Group sessions for 2023. It's time now for a summer break. We encourage you to continue to be in touch with each other over the summer weeks, but it's a good time to break. There's more to come in this current sermon series, so after this week, you can devise your own Life Group questions! Your final questions, like last week, are relatively brief (but relatively heavy).

Pastor Eric

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*Group Sharing:* What comes to your mind when you hear the word, *Jerusalem*?

Jerusalem is home to all kinds of people from all around the world from various faiths, making it a place of great meaning to many. Why is Jerusalem so significant to Christians?

After you read Psalm 48, take a closer look at verses 4-7. Without examining the details of those verse, do you get the impression that the writer is referring to a specific victory Jerusalem enjoyed, or is it just a broad summary of its history of various triumphs? How do these few verses fit with the theme celebrating the greatness of Jerusalem? In your own words, summarize why it is that the writer(s) say that Jerusalem is a great city.

As noted on Sunday, much of the physical characteristics ascribed to the city in verse 2 are not literally true. Jerusalem is not highly elevated, and especially then, it was not the joy of the earth. Neither was it in the “far north.” Why does the writer describe it that way, even though it's not actually accurate?

The writer is presenting an idealized version of the Holy City, not a literal one. But because God chose this city and placed his temple there, God was understood to dwell there in a more immediate sense than he dwelled elsewhere. As a result of that, God's people extolled and longed for Jerusalem, so the idea of *Jerusalem* took on spiritual significance.

For example, look at Revelation 21.2 and notice the vision of an end times new Jerusalem that descends upon a New Heavens and New Earth. How is this New Jerusalem described in verse 2? In the New Testament who is the bride? (Note 2 Corinthians 11.2; Ephesians 5.25-27; Revelation 19.7-9). Somehow, in the end, the church is pictured as Jerusalem adorned as a bride. Why is the church pictured as Jerusalem? (For more insight, read the remainder of the chapter, especially beginning with verse 22). How can it be said that we, the church, are like a new Jerusalem? The longer you meditate on this, the deeper it gets!

What might it look like, in practical way, to live like you are part of the new Jerusalem?