

How many times has Jerusalem been destroyed?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jerusalem-destroyed.html>

Jerusalem, the “city of peace,” has certainly known its share of sorrow and war. Since it sits at the crossroads of the ancient world and is held in high esteem by three major religions, it has been involved in wars throughout most of its 3,000+ year history. When archaeologists first began excavating in the city, they were surprised to discover layer after layer of rubble, indicating that parts of Jerusalem had been destroyed at least 40 times. The layers of rubble in some places are more than 60 feet deep!

According to Eric Cline, in his book *Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel*, Jerusalem has been the subject of at least 118 conflicts over the years, beginning with one in 1350 BC between Abdi-Heba, the ruler of Jerusalem, and a people he called the “Habiru.” In his letter to the king of Egypt (one of the Amarna tablets), he asks for help because all of the surrounding country has been captured by the Habiru. This corresponds well with the record found in Joshua 10 and frames the beginning of Israel’s control of Jerusalem. Cline states that the city was completely destroyed at least twice, once by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8-10) and again by the Romans under Titus in AD 70. The Mongols destroyed at least a portion of the city around AD 1260, and the Roman emperor Hadrian destroyed it in AD 135. In addition, the city was captured at least 40 times and besieged at least 23 times.

For much of its history, the armies that encompassed Jerusalem wanted to control the city, not destroy it. Even today there is a struggle for the control of Jerusalem. From the days of the British Mandate (formed by the League of Nations in 1922) to the present, the question “who rules Jerusalem?” has been a hot potato of world politics. The city has been claimed by Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and the oldest portions of

the city have long been divided into the Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Quarters. After the 1948 war which brought independence to Israel, West Jerusalem was captured by Israel, while East Jerusalem was captured by Jordan. In 1967, Israel captured East Jerusalem and annexed it, though the international community still views it as Palestinian land under military occupation.

Though the Jewish people are currently living in and controlling the city of Jerusalem, the Bible is clear that the Gentiles will continue to struggle over the city. We know that there will be at least one more time when Jerusalem will be overtaken in battle. Zechariah 14:2-5 describes the horrible destruction of the city as the nations lay siege against it in the last days, but then the Lord will return and fight for His city. Several prophecies (Joel 3:16-20; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Zechariah 12:6) describe the final peace that will reign when Jesus Christ finally destroys all the enemies of His people. Until that day comes, we are commanded by God to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6).