

“If I forget you, O Jerusalem”: Zion’s Place in Global Christianity

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THE SUBTITLE of Robert Wilken’s *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* reveals what is distinctive about this history of patristic and early medieval Christianity. No other general Church history volume that I know of has consciously presented Christianity as a world religion long before the great missional expansions from Europe and North America to Latin America in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries and to Africa, Asia, and Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the extent that *The First Thousand Years* does. The spread of Christian communities in the first thousand years, Wilken explains, had a leavening influence, not simply upon Latin and Greek culture, but upon Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Slavonic, Armenian, and Arabic speaking peoples—an influence that extended beyond personal religious conversion. The diffusion and adaptation of the beliefs and practices of early Christianity that refashioned—or in some cases created—the cultures of Europe, Asia, and Africa illustrate both Christianity’s cultural diversity and its catholicity. Cultures do not exist in the abstract, but rather in particular places, the geographic space and history of which influence the cultural consciousness and identity of their people. Because of his focus on the global character of the Church, Wilken is more concerned with place and geography than have been other histories that have preceded his. Geography does not function reductionistically to explain how or why Christianity developed as it did. Rather, it provides a structure to the narrative.

In this sense, Wilken is following the approach of the first Church historian, Luke, who used Jesus’ words to the Apostles, “. . . and you shall

be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), to set the geographic framework for his narrative (*diēgēsis*). Indeed, the title of Wilken's opening chapter, "Beginning in Jerusalem," is lifted from Jesus' words with which Luke concludes his gospel and gestures to the Acts of the Apostles, ". . . the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (*arxamenoī apo Ierousalēm*)" (Lk 24:47). Indeed, the third Evangelist uses Jerusalem and the Temple to bracket his gospel, beginning with the scene of Zechariah's performing his Temple duties (1:5–23) and closing with the scene of the Apostles after Jesus' ascension, "And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple blessing God," (24:52–3). So, too, Wilken, having begun with Jerusalem, concludes his narrative thus: "Jerusalem welcomed people from East and West, and if one keeps the holy city in mind, the global history of Christianity will not be forgotten" (359).

Robert Wilken is both too careful a Church historian, thoroughly knowledgeable about the earliest histories of the Church beginning with the Christian Scriptures, and too artful a writer for this parallel to be a happy coincidence. He is also a churchman and historical theologian. History, therefore, is not an antiquarian project that is an end in itself. Rather, it is the source of knowledge for continually edifying the community of faith. To be sure, *The First Thousand Years* is a history of the Church, not a Christian philosophy of History with a capital H. Yet, framing this history of global Christianity with the image of Jerusalem, a place pregnant with significance, theological as well as historical, for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, gives Wilken's narrative a surplus of meaning that reaches beyond the purely historical.

The distinctiveness of Wilken's treatment of Jerusalem is clear when we realize that Jerusalem, though an understandable starting point for a history of Christianity, is not a *necessary* one. Williston Walker begins his classic history (first published in 1918) by situating the Church geographically, but the Mediterranean, not Jerusalem or even Palestine, is the geographic context in which he understands the rise and spread of the Christian Faith. By beginning with the Mediterranean, Walker gives priority to the Roman world and a Hellenistic viewpoint over a Jewish perspective with concern for Palestine and Zion.¹ Kenneth Scott Latourette touches upon Jerusalem and the Temple, in passing, as part of

¹ Williston Walker, R. A. Norris, D. W. Lotz, and R. T. Handy, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 5.

his second chapter on Judaism.² But the focus is upon the religious roots of Christianity, of which the Temple at Jerusalem is but one component. Similarly, Joseph Lynch, in his *Early Christianity: A Brief History*, discusses Jerusalem primarily as the location of the Temple and as part of early Christianity's social and religious context.³ Yet, Jerusalem's theological meaning he passed over. Justo L. González's sensibility is closer to Wilken's. His *The Story of Christianity* begins by recognizing the importance of place and time for the birth of Jesus and the Church itself in the mind of the early Christians.⁴ Although he, too, quotes Acts 1:8, it is Palestine, in González's narrative, that is the primary place of Christianity's origin. Jerusalem is just one city—albeit a major city—in the ancient landscape of the Near East. This is understandable. While the community of Jesus' disciples became *ecclesia* in Jerusalem with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the so-called Jesus Movement arose some one hundred miles to the north of Jerusalem in Galilee, and, at least according to the synoptic gospels, the adult Jesus did not come to Jerusalem until his last Passover. From this view of the Church geography, Jerusalem, as the scene of Christ's death, marks the transition in the development of the movement from being the followers of the historical Jesus to being the proclaimers of the kerygmatic Christ.⁵

Among other historians for whom the history of Christianity rightly begins when it becomes a religion separate from Judaism, the narrative might well commence with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Here, Jerusalem is a point of departure marking the "parting of the ways." Then, again, place and context can be largely bypassed, as Eric Jay does in *The Church: Its Changing Image through the Centuries*. This volume presents Church history as a history of doctrine. Jay's text is not just a history of theology, but a history guided by a theological sensibility. Hence, Jay begins his narrative with an analysis of the meaning of Church, *ekklesia*. Jerusalem does not enter the story until the fourth chapter's discussion of Cyril of Jerusalem's catechesis.⁶ By contrast, Wilken's treatment of Jerusalem not only reveals the theological sensibilities that he brings to

² Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), 10.

³ Joseph H. Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History* (Oxford, 2010), 15.

⁴ Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 7.

⁵ See, for example, Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (New York: Living Age Books, 1956), 80–81, 86–87.

⁶ Eric G. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image through the Centuries* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 79.

the study of the ancient Church but also illustrates how those sensibilities allow him to grasp the theological significance of Jerusalem in the worldview of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.

Place, Memory and Worship

Wilken's attention to Jerusalem reveals his appreciation for the interconnectedness of memory, tradition, and place. Before the mid-1970s, "place" was thought of in academic circles almost exclusively in terms of geographical location or regional character. With the publications of Yi-Fu Tuan's *Topophilia* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), his *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), and Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), the subfield of phenomenology called "place theory" or "humanist geography" began to distinguish "space" from "place." Tuan defined "space" as simply "an open area of action and movement," whereas "place" has value and meaning based on human intention and recollection.⁷ Space is geographic context, but place carries a sense of belonging and identity because our sense of place is the confluence of personal memories and the traditions of collective memory rooted in, and often mediated by, place. Charleston Harbor, Cemetery Ridge, Appomattox, Selma, Birmingham City Jail, and Memphis are, to people who have never called the U.S. home, simply spaces, mere names on a map or historical atlas. For Americans, especially those of us who grew up and lived in the Southeast, they are the locations of events with complex meanings in our history. The names of these places are integral to the narratives that shape our sense of "the South" or of being "Southerners."

Drawing on Martin Heidegger's idea of *Dasein* or "dwelling,"⁸ Relph developed a view of authenticity as a consciousness of being "rooted in." Authentic existence carries an awareness of our "rootedness" in a particular place and the way one's life has been shaped, for good and ill, by the places that are the soil of our existence. By contrast, an inauthentic existence, for Relph, lacks any "awareness of the deep and symbolic signifi-

⁷ For a history of the development of place theory, see Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2004).

⁸ Although Heidegger's view of "dwelling" is not directly taken from Edmund Husserl, it reflects "... the genetic phenomenological framework of an embodied being who inherits meaning from its predecessors due to its arising within a world that precedes it ..." (Janet Donohoe, *Remembering Places: A Phenomenological Study of the Relationship between Memory and Place* [Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014], xvi).

cance of places [with] no appreciation of their identities.”⁹ Place is prior to the individual ego because the ego is formed by one’s experiences that are located in various places. Our sense of self is constituted by our personal memories and/or traditions about these places. As Janet Donohoe puts it: “Places are not simply settings for experiences. Instead, many places are embodied in such a way that we carry them with us and they inform our constitution of the world. We do not engage in deliberate attempts to remember such places, but they inhabit our memories in the way in which we move through the world.”¹⁰ Even if Wilken has never read in the area of place theory, more than most Christian historians, he is conscious of how this sense of place, especially of Jerusalem, informed Jewish and Christian identities.

When Isaiah wrote, “. . . look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug” (51:1–2), the prophet was exhorting the Israelites living in captivity in Babylon to preserve their hope for deliverance by remembering God’s faithfulness to their forefathers and mothers. In the memory of their history lay the key to their identity and cultural integrity as a people living in a foreign land. Writing in the same era, the author of Psalm 137 attached cultural memory to a place. The psalmist captures the pathos of conflicting emotions. The Jews living in exile hung their lyres upon the grasses growing along the Tigris and Euphrates because they could not bring themselves to sing the “songs of Zion”—the pilgrimage psalms sung in procession to the Temple in Jerusalem—knowing that Solomon’s Temple had been reduced to rubble and Mount Zion was a wasteland. Yet this lamentation in exile, like Isaiah 51, carries the exhortation—albeit a painful one—to remember, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither . . . if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!” (137:5–6). In Relph’s terms, the psalmist was exhorting his fellow Jews to live authentically as Jews by recognizing that their identity lay in the tension between Babylon, the place of exile, and Jerusalem, the place of promise and home. The act of memory, a looking to the past, is, for the psalmist, how the people of God look forward into the future even in exile. Jerusalem, the city of God, was their place of origin and the place to which they would return, their destination. Remembering Zion in song was a confession of their covenantal identity and their holding fast to the hope of restoration.

⁹ Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 78, quoted in Cresswell, *Place*. Kindle edition location 736.

¹⁰ Donohoe, *Remembering Places*, 3.

Place functions as an object of memory or a source of what Ed Casey calls *reminiscentia*, artifacts of experience that prompt our recollection.¹¹ Jerusalem was important as both an object of recollection and a source of *reminiscentia* for preserving Israel's and the Church's history-formed identity, and for constructing its cultural niche in the ancient world. The Romans knew this also. After the failed Bar Kochba rebellion of AD 132–135, the Roman obliteration of old Jerusalem and the construction of the pagan city of Aelia Capitolina on top of the ruins expunged Jerusalem from the memory of later generations of inhabitants of Judea (110). Without the place, the memory was lost; without the memory, so too was the messianic hope that caused the Jewish insurrection. This, at any rate, was the goal of the Roman strategy.

For Christian travelers from the third century on, Jerusalem became a place of pilgrimage—a place to which one returns in order to remember and be reformed by that memory. To the ancient pilgrims in Jerusalem, this place was their “tangible link” to Jesus (109). As such, Jerusalem was more than simply a location; it was a place to remember the Rock from which the Church was hewn. It was the touchstone to the past, to their saving history, because it was the place where the saving work of Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection was accomplished. Jerusalem gained a sacred significance in the imagination of early Christians as the place where the transcendent God touched the earth and dwelt as a creature among his creation, as a son of man sojourning in the city of God. Not surprisingly, Jerusalem took on the quality of a holy relic that connected the pilgrim with Jesus in such a way that the pilgrim participated in fellowship with the risen Christ who walked its byways, taught in its public spaces, and ultimately died and rose again outside its city walls. The place created a physical connection between the pilgrim and God. Its stone streets and the view of the city from the Mount of Olives across the Kidron Valley were, in Casey's language, the *reminiscentia* that evoked Christian pilgrims' recollection of Jesus' life and God's saving work, preserved in the Church's collective memory either through the narrative of Scripture or the ritual performance of the liturgy.

¹¹ Donohoe draws upon Ed Casey's idea that the narratives retrieved from memory and by which memories are passed on to others are not independent or spontaneous but are prompted or triggered by *reminiscentia* that are in a place or associated with a place. *Reminiscentia* is an important idea for Donohoe for correcting Paul Ricoeur's focus on narrative and memory without sufficient attention to bodily elements, such as place, upon which narrative and memory depend. *Remembering Places*, 30.

Wilken quotes Paulinus of Nola's observation, "No other sentiment draws people to Jerusalem more than the desire to *see* and *touch* the places where Christ was physically present, and to be able to say from their own experience, 'We have gone into his tabernacle, and have worshipped in the place where his feet stood [Psalm 132:7]'" (quoted in *First Thousand Years*, 115). What is striking about Paulinus' use of Psalm 132 is that the pilgrim to Jerusalem in the fourth or fifth centuries could not say in any literal sense, "We have gone into his tabernacle," since Herod's temple—the temple where Jesus drove out the money changers and taught the infuriating parables of the Kingdom that led to his arrest and crucifixion—had already been demolished. But the pilgrim could worship "where his feet stood"—where the Word made flesh tabernacled among his people (Jn 1:14). They could do so because Jerusalem, the city that was home to Jesus in his last week, was itself a temple that housed the Son of God. The images and sounds of the city gave concrete form to the Church's memory of Christ that allowed Jerusalem to function as a memorial that drew the distant past into the present through memory (115).

Memory has a transportive power that allows the moment of recollection to be a moment of participation. As Donohoe puts it, "Memory is the *revitalization* of some moment or moment of the past, collecting those moments into the present again."¹² As the city mediated the Gospel to the pilgrim by making the history as vivid and as tangible as the Jesus who walked its streets, it created a unique place to participate in, to enter into communion with Christ through worship. For, as the images of the place formed the pilgrims' imagination and re-formed their memory of the Gospel narratives, their experience of worship was animated by the city itself. In another deft use of ancient sources not often cited in Church history textbooks, Wilken quotes the fourth century pilgrim Egeria's account of arriving in Jerusalem during Holy Week: "What I admired and valued most is that all the hymns and antiphons and readings and all the prayers . . . are relevant *to the day* which is being observed and *to the place* in which they are used" (113). For the pilgrims, the *reminiscentia* of Jerusalem revitalized the Church's collective memories, making the events of the Passion so alive in the pilgrims' memory that Christ was present to them in their worship in a strikingly different way than in their worship experiences before coming to the holy city.

¹² Donohoe, *Remembering Places*, 1 (emphasis added).

A Place of Contested Meaning and Competing Soteriologies

For the Jews of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, Jerusalem was a place to which they would *return*. As Wilken explains in the opening chapter of *A Land Called Holy*, Jewish identity was tied to God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would be a great nation and would possess the land. Yet, as people living in a diaspora community—either in Egypt or Babylon or Rome—exile was a symbol that God's promise to Abraham had not entirely been fulfilled.¹³ Through the covenant, God adopted the sons and daughters of Israel as his chosen people, but they did not yet “possess the land.” God's redemption of Israel meant restoration or repatriation of Judea. Then, and only then, would they “possess the land” and would God's promise be fulfilled. It was during their sojourn as strangers in a strange land that Jerusalem became the center of their hope. Originally, Jerusalem was not a place of any importance in Israel's tradition, since the city did not come into Jewish control until relatively late in Israel's history, when David seized it from the Jebusites and made it his capital in the tenth century. Yet, in the thinking of homesick exiles in Babylon, Jerusalem came to include not just the city's precincts and immediate environs, but all the Promised Land. As such it gained an exalted status—the symbol of restoration and redemption. Wilken makes the point in his typical elegance that is worth quoting in full:

Jerusalem lived on in the memory of the captives in Babylonia. Banished to a foreign land far from the city they had loved and cherished, their collective dreams created a new and more splendid image of the city, transforming the torn and tattered recollections of past glory into a vision of future majesty. . . . The exaltation of Jerusalem in the exilic prophets is a quantum leap beyond anything said of the city in earlier tradition. (10)

Isaiah merged the symbol of Jerusalem into the traditional soteriology of “possessing the land,” when the Lord announced, “He who takes refuge in me shall inherit the land, and possess my holy mountain” (57:13). Although Ezekiel spoke of Zion in cosmic terms as the nexus of heaven and earth, of the Divine and the human, Jerusalem never became for the Jews a mere symbol or figure of God's redemption. It always remained a specific, concrete place to which Israel would be restored.

¹³ Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 3–4.

It was, and for many still is, a symbol of God's faithfulness to his chosen people and of their restoration to the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. For early Christians, however, the exilic prophet's vision of Jerusalem, especially after the destruction of the second Temple, carried a very different meaning.

Wilken uses Christian views of Jerusalem to illustrate the division and conflict between Jews and Christians during the first millennium. The destruction of Herod's temple by Titus's legions in AD 70 and the demolition of the whole city in AD 135 were clear signs, in the mind of early Christians, of God's rejection of unbelieving Israel. As Chrysostom put it, "You Jews crucified him. But after he died on the cross, he then destroyed your city . . ." (quoted in *First Thousand Years*, 124). The elimination of the Temple, which rendered the Levitical codes in the Torah meaningless in any literal sense, proved that Christ's one, perfect sacrifice on the Cross for the sins of the world had rendered sacrifice in the Temple unnecessary. Forgiveness of sins was secured through faith in Christ, not through Temple sacrifice proscribed by Torah. God had indeed, as Paul said, "broke off" or "cut off" the Jews (Rom 11:17–22) from the covenant and had given it to the Church, the true Israel, through the New Covenant. Incorporating early Christian art into his narrative, Wilken uses the Madaba Mosaic of the Holy Land to illustrate how early Christians reconceived Jerusalem geographically to represent the Gentile Church's supplanting of the Jews. Jerusalem is the labeled "Holy City," but its centerpiece is the rotunda of the Church of the Resurrection around Christ's tomb located outside the walls of the ancient city. By contrast, the empty Temple mount represents "that old and deserted city" of the Jews (116). Wilken uses the conflicting interpretations of Jerusalem—as a hopeful symbol of restoration or sign of rejection—within ancient Jewish and Christian polemics to illustrate the highly competitive relationship between Judaism and Christianity. The symbolic significance of Jerusalem for converts in this contest between Jews and Christians was not lost on the emperor Julian, who planned to rebuild the Temple for the Jews precisely to undercut Christian claims to God's approbation (124–125). Indeed, Christians recognized the threat that the rebuilding of Jerusalem would pose in weakening their supersessionist argument. Even worse, as a sign of God's favor, it would galvanize Jewish efforts at proselytizing and would draw converts to Judaism.¹⁴

Jerusalem in *The First Thousand Years* is not merely used as a heuristic

¹⁴ L. H. Feldman, "Proselytism by Jews in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Centuries," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 24, no.1 (June 1993): 1–58.

device to describe the divide between Judaism and the Church. Rather, Wilken uses it to call the Church to reconsider the significance of place in our soteriology. Even after the disastrous failure of the Bar Kochba rebellion, Jews did not separate the idea of redemption from the idea of restoration as rebuilding Jerusalem or inheriting the Promised Land. For Christians, on the other hand, “Jerusalem” and “Zion,” as spoken by the psalmists and prophets of the Exile, became disconnected from the city itself and were taken instead as a symbol of our heavenly commonwealth. Melito of Sardis, though not entirely dismissive of the earthly Jerusalem, clearly lessens its value within Christian cosmology and soteriology: “The Jerusalem below was precious, but it is worthless now because of the Jerusalem above” (quoted in *First Thousand Years*, 109). Here, Wilken is building upon a theme he developed at great length in *A Land Called Holy*. In the third century AD, Jewish commentators interpreted the resurrection imagery in Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (Ez 37) to refer to the restoration of Jewish political autonomy and dominion over Judea.¹⁵ Among the ranks of Christian commentators from the third century on, the predominate tendency was to treat Jerusalem either historically as the place of Christianity’s origin or figurally as a type for the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The Jewish idea of *Or LaGoyim* (“light unto the nations”), from Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6, that God’s election of Israel had as its goal drawing the Gentiles to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was commonly reinterpreted Christologically by early Christian exegetes. Christ is the light who draws pagan Gentiles from darkness to truth and salvation.¹⁶ For Cyril of Alexandria, in his discussion of Isaiah 60:3 (“Kings shall walk by your light and nations by your brightness”), Jerusalem is a figure of unity and division between Jews and Gentile Christians. On the one hand, the Gentiles whom Christ draws to himself offer their worship in place of the unbelieving Jews of the earthly Jerusalem, who “slight the Redeemer, and turn away from his love and bring ruin on themselves.” On the other hand, Cyril interprets Isaiah’s account of the calling of the Gentiles to refer to the creation of a new Jerusalem through “the union of two people in Christ.” The two people united by faith in Christ are “the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church . . . initially composed of Jews, for they were the first to believe.”¹⁷ Even as Paul, in Romans 2:28–29, says that a

¹⁵ Tertullian, *Res.* 30.2, cited in Wilken, *A Land Called Holy*, 70.

¹⁶ See Origen, *Commentary on Lamentations* 1 and Ambrose in *On the Holy Spirit* III 2.10.

¹⁷ “The children of Jerusalem will be not only Israelites by blood, but also people

real Jew is one who bears not the marks of outward circumcision alone, but the circumcision of the heart, Cyril claims what makes Jerusalem the city of God is not its location or buildings but the indwelling presence of the glory of God. Commenting on Isaiah 52:1 (“Awake, awake, O Zion! Put on your strength, O Zion, and put on your glory, O Jerusalem, the holy city”), Cyril says that “Zion” and “Jerusalem” do not refer “solely to the city built from stone”; rather, they denote the community of faith, the Church, “formed from both Jews and Gentiles.”¹⁸ For, their strength is in good works that are the product of their conformity to Christ’s divinity and their participation in the Holy Spirit, and her glory is the glory of the Lord. Cyril’s notion of the Church as the “spiritual Jerusalem” where Jews and Gentiles of faith are united, argues for the fulfillment, and thus the relevance, of Isaiah’s prophecy. Whereas for Jews of the fifth century, Jerusalem has been destroyed and is no more, for their Christian contemporaries, Jerusalem endures in the people who, in the light of the Spirit, have beheld the glory of the Christ and who, being changed from glory unto glory, reveal the Lord’s glory to the world. Yet, by reconceiving Jerusalem in spiritual terms, Cyril has reduced Jerusalem (as a place) to its historical significance as the city of origin, rather than as a place of return. Redemption, for Christians, entails not possession of the promised land of Canaan or the restoration of the city of Jerusalem, but citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem. Jerusalem as a place belongs to the Church’s past, not its future.

Not all early Christians, however, separated the significance of Jerusalem as place from their theology of redemption. For Justin Martyr, if the Gentiles are Abraham’s heirs through faith akin to Abraham’s, then their hope lies in possessing the land that God promised to Abraham. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin says, “Many nations will flee for protection to the Lord and they will become to him a people. . . . We will inherit the holy land when we receive the inheritance for an infinite age being children of Abraham on account of faith.”¹⁹ Writing some fifty to seventy years after Justin, Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies*, preserves the Jewish connection between inheriting Jerusalem and God’s redemption of Abra-

from every nation and land called to be the light of Truth through faith,” (Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Isaiah*, quoted in *Isaiah*, trans. R. Wilken, *The Church’s Bible* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007], 463).

¹⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Isaiah* (PG 70:1144A–1149A), quoted in *Isaiah*, trans. R. Wilken, *The Church’s Bible*, 402–403.

¹⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 119.5, quoted in *A Land Called Holy*, 58.

ham's children. More specifically, the bishop of Lyons, like the Tertullian's North African Jews, integrates the eschatological hope of the resurrection with the "glorification of Israel." He interprets Paul's claim in Galatian 4:26 ("Jerusalem above is free and she is our mother") to mean that, at the resurrection, Jerusalem on earth will be rebuilt patterned after Jerusalem above.²⁰

The penultimate sentence of *The First Thousand Years* is Isaiah 2:2, "all the nations shall flow . . . to the mountain of the house of the Lord." Wilken's emphasis on the global character of Christianity over the first millennium requires an attention to place conceived of geographically and existentially. Historically, Jerusalem is the geographic starting point of the Christian Church. Jerusalem, however, is more than the spatial context of early Christianity. Through the example of Christian pilgrims, Wilken shows that Jerusalem is a place, the locus of memory, of hope, and thus of identity. Writing as a churchman and a historian, Wilken uses Isaiah's call for the Church to remember Jerusalem, not simply as its geographic origin, but as our eschatological home. Following Irenaeus, Wilken challenges us to see the interconnection between the place Jerusalem—the Promised Land to be possessed—and the promise of the resurrection of the body. If we take seriously our eschatological hope of the resurrection and glorification of the body, then we must take the place to which the body is restored seriously as well. Wilken notes that there is a tension within Christianity between the Jewish concern for Jerusalem itself and the Johannine transcendentalism expressed in Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman at the well, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . The hour is coming and is now when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:21, 23). This is a tension Wilken does not resolve; such would be beyond the scope of this book. Yet, by calling us to remember Jerusalem, he calls us to be conscious of that tension and so live authentically aware of how our past and future are tied to the holy city. For, while the Church, led by the Spirit to spread outward from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, is not confined to any geographic space, Jerusalem is our home, a place inscribed in our consciousness by the Church's most profound and precious memories: a foolish king dancing before the ark, a twelve-year-old conversing with priests in the Temple court yards, streets strewn with palm branches, a cross-crowned hill, an empty tomb, and a house filled with a mighty wind and tongues of fire.

²⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.35.2, cited in Wilken, *A Land Called Holy*, 61.

When we think of Jerusalem as place, rather than merely geographic space, Jerusalem retains its specificity in our memory and in our hope, while at the same time taking on a global significance of “home” for all resident aliens of the Christian diaspora.

How may the Church reconcile the competing interpretations of Jerusalem? Let me end with one possibility that we might draw from reading *The First Thousand Years*. Even as Isaiah and Ezekiel expanded the boundaries of “Jerusalem” to encompass not just the city on Mount Zion, but all the Promised Land, so might the Church, in its figural reading of the Church as the spiritual Jerusalem, imagine itself connected to the historic place from whence the glory of the Lord shone. A model for such thinking can be found in Cassiodorus’ interpretation of Isaiah 2:3–4: “Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Cassiodorus, a fifth-century Roman senator and lay exegete, is explicit that Jerusalem is to be understood in its historical sense: “It is within this city that the mountain gleams like gold metal on pure hearts. . . . Jerusalem is a revered city, a holy hilltop; we can rightly call that notable dwelling of our King the earthly citadel.” Then he invokes the image from Genesis and Revelation of streams of water; for the place to which Christ called the Gentiles is now “the place where his teaching flowed over the bounds of the whole world as from a clear and abundant stream.”²¹ If the Church’s sense of mission is guided by our Scriptural imagination, then Jerusalem is the central place in the narrative foundation for our missional identity. We should then see our proclamation of the Word as the flow of living water from Jerusalem that draws all the nations into Jerusalem’s wide bounds and makes a home for Jew and Gentile before the throne of the one God who is the fount of living water. By giving such attention to Jerusalem in the first millennium of the Church, Wilken has revitalized a too-often neglected feature of our historic landscape, and in so doing, he may revitalize our vision of the Church’s mission into the future. N&V

²¹ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of Psalm 49 (50)* (CCSL 97:441–2), trans. P.G. Walsh, quoted in Wilken, *Isaiah*, 41.