

## 1666 AD – THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON: WHO PITIES YOU?

**“For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee?  
Or who shall go aside to ask how you do?” (Jeremiah 15 v 4)**

### THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON<sup>1</sup>

The **Great Fire of London** was a major conflagration that swept through the central parts of the English city of London, from 2 September to 5 September **1666**. The fire gutted the medieval City of London inside the old Roman city wall. It threatened, but did not reach, the aristocratic district of Westminster, **Charles II's** Palace of Whitehall, and most of the slums.

It consumed 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, St Paul's Cathedral and most of the buildings of the City authorities. It is estimated to have destroyed the homes of 70,000 of the City's 80,000 inhabitants. The death toll is unknown but traditionally thought to have been small, as only six verified deaths were recorded. This reasoning has recently been challenged on the grounds that the deaths of poor and middle-class people were not recorded, while the heat of the fire may have cremated many victims leaving no recognisable remains.

A melted piece of pottery on display at the Museum of London found by archaeologists in Pudding Lane, where the fire started, shows that the temperature reached 1700 °C. The fire, fed not merely by wood, fabrics, and thatch, but also by the oil, pitch, coal, tallow, fats, sugar, alcohol, turpentine, and gunpowder stored in the riverside district, melted the imported steel lying along the wharves and the great iron chains and locks on the City gates.

The Great Fire started at the bakery of Thomas Farriner on Pudding Lane, shortly after midnight on Sunday, 2 September, and spread rapidly west across the City of London. The use of the major firefighting technique of the time, the creation of firebreaks by means of demolition, was critically delayed owing to the indecisiveness of the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bloodworth. By the time large-scale demolitions were ordered on Sunday night, the wind had already fanned the bakery fire into a firestorm which defeated such measures.

The fire pushed north on Monday into the heart of the City. Order in the streets broke down as rumours arose of suspicious foreigners setting fires. The fears of the homeless focused on

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Wikipedia

the French and Dutch, England's enemies in the ongoing Second Anglo-Dutch War; these substantial immigrant groups became victims of lynchings and street violence.

On Tuesday, the fire spread over most of the City, destroying St Paul's Cathedral and leaping the River Fleet to threaten **Charles II's** court at Whitehall, while coordinated firefighting efforts were simultaneously mobilising. The battle to quench the fire is considered to have been won by two factors: the strong east winds died down, and the Tower of London garrison used gunpowder to create effective firebreaks to halt further spread eastward.

The social and economic problems created by the disaster were overwhelming. Evacuation from London and resettlement elsewhere were strongly encouraged by **Charles II**, who feared a London rebellion amongst the dispossessed refugees, issued a proclamation: "*all Cities and Towns whatsoever shall without any contradiction receive the said distressed persons and permit them the free exercise of their manual trades.*" Despite numerous radical proposals, London was reconstructed on essentially the same street plan used before the fire.

### **HOLMES' BONFIRE**

Abroad in the Netherlands the **Great Fire of London** was seen as a divine retribution for **Holmes's Bonfire**, the burning by the English of a Dutch town during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. Holme's Bonfire occurred only three weeks prior to the London fire.

The secretary of Prince Rupert wrote: "*On the 9th, at noon, smoke was seen rising from several places in the island of Vlie, and the 10th brought news that Sir Robert had burned in the enemy's harbour 160 outward-bound valuable merchantmen and three men-of-war, and taken a little pleasure boat and eight guns in four hours. The loss is computed at a million sterling, and will make great confusion when the people see themselves in the power of the English at their very doors. Sir Robert then landed his forces, and is burning the houses in Vlie and Schelling as bonfires for his good success at sea*", thus being the first to use the word "bonfire" for this event, which soon became very common. **Charles II** of England ordered bonfires to be lit in celebration of the victory.

The English accounts of the raid while self-congratulatory when covering the burning of the fleet, turned apologetic as the destruction of **ter Schelling** was described. They emphasized how neat and well-laid out the town was and that it was burnt more by accident than intent, Holmes, according to them, not intending to terrorize the population.

This reflected a changed mood in England. After the first feeling of satisfaction had subsided, a more sober analysis brought many to the conclusion that the raid had done the Dutch much harm, but the English little good.

Although it was to be the largest single loss of shipping ever to be afflicted to the Dutch merchant fleet, 130 ships represented only a fraction of the total number of merchantmen, so the blow was hardly fatal. Nothing constructive had been accomplished; no major prizes taken, nor goods, no permanent base established on the islands. The destruction of **ter Schelling** was seen as a foolish act that could lead to a dangerous escalation. Nobody relished the prospect of the Dutch taking revenge on the defenceless towns of the English east coast.

#### PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH 15 V 4

**“For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee? Or who shall go aside to ask how you do?”** (Jeremiah 15 v 4)

The English showed no pity on the inhabitants of **ter Schilling** when they attacked the little non-military seaside town and set fire to it. The LORD showed no pity on the English and sent a strong East wind to fan the flames of Pudding Lane into conflagration.

The LORD asks ‘**who will have pity on thee, O Jerusalem?**’

When **ter Schilling** burned down relief was provided to her: the Dutch Republic had for the time a strongly institutionalised system of poor relief; and as **ter Schelling** was unable to help its poor, aid was offered by several municipalities, including Harlingen. Also most churches in the province of Holland held special collections of donations; as the rivalling denominations tried to outdo each other in the amount of money given, soon enough funds were available to shelter the poor for the coming winter and make a start with rebuilding the town.

But when London burned down there was no mercy shown to the inhabitants: Pepys visited Moorfields, a large public park immediately north of the City, and saw a great encampment of homeless refugees, "poor wretches carrying their good there, and everybody keeping his goods together by themselves", and noted that the price of bread in the environs of the park had doubled. Charles announced that supplies of bread would be brought into the City every day, and safe markets set up round the perimeter. These markets were for buying and selling; there was no question of distributing emergency aid.

## SPIRITUAL NUMBER ANALYSIS

For a mind that has wisdom please read on. See truth from another perspective.

### PART ONE

Chapter **15** of Jeremiah is the **84<sup>th</sup>** chapter of The Prophets.

The spiritual number **84** means 'Court of the LORD'

To help the poor is the commandment of the LORD. The nation that helps the poor respects the LORD. He will show mercy on the people that show mercy. The nation that does not help the poor despises the LORD. He will not show mercy on the people that does not show mercy.

### PART TWO

Jeremiah **15 v 4** is the **19,321<sup>st</sup>** verse in the whole Bible starting at Gen **1 v 1**.

The number **19,321 = 139 x 139**

The spiritual meaning of **139** is 'Sorcery/Control'

The spiritual meaning of **139 squared** is 'Sorcery/Control' **Magnified!**

The **139<sup>th</sup>** chapter of the Bible is the account of **Balaam** being summoned by **Balak** to curse the tents of the Israelites. **Balaam** is the type of the professional paid minister in the Bible. **Ammon** is the type of the Catholic Church, and **Moab** is the type of the Clergy-centered Protestant Church.

**England** was at war with the **Dutch**. **England** represents the clergy-centered **Church of England**. The Dutch **Puritans** represent the tents of **Israel**.

Balaam is a type of the professional minister, who had four problems: (Numbers 22)

- (1) **Balaam** was a spiritual man – the LORD spoke directly to him – but **Balaam** lusted for earthly rewards of money and prestige – he could be charmed to travel a great distance to offer his gift to any master – however wicked - so long as the bribe was big enough and men he spoke to were sufficiently illustrious;

- (2) **Balaam** was full of his own sense of calling – to the point he did not recognize that people in the congregation beneath him could also hear from the LORD – pictured for us by the donkey who sees the Angel of the LORD and turns aside;
- (3) **Balaam** lacked perception of his own sinfulness – he could not understand why the LORD had brought troubles into his life – he beat his donkey mercilessly;
- (4) **Balaam** offered an offensive sacrifice to the LORD – a ram and a bull burnt at the same time (see Numbers 23 v 1)

**England** was completely sold out to the 'Sorcery Religion' of **Balaam**: all the sins of **Balaam** were 'Exalted' or 'Magnified' in the history of England at this time.

The English said they worshipped **Jesus Christ**, but they also said **King Charles II** was the head of the church: a ram and a bull burnt on the same altar. Even though England was a majority Protestant country, England was so full of its sense of 'destiny' – it never dawned on them their **Puritan** Protestant brethren, with whom they were at war, were more righteous.

**England** could not recognize the hand of the LORD in discipline - the burning of London in retribution for the burning of the town of **ter Schelling**. The **Church of England** is based on a graduated system of bribery where the most gifted men offered spiritual homilies in the cathedrals of the most illustrious nobles. In Holland men in ministry were not well paid and did not serve in cathedrals. The Puritan men of God were humble of heart and the Puritan people spiritual: witness the successful relief charities for the victims of **ter Schelling**.

### PART THREE

Jeremiah **15 v 4** is the **1666<sup>th</sup>** verse of The Prophets starting at Isaiah **1 v 1**.

The number **1666** = **34 x 49**

The spiritual meaning of **34** is 'Man's Religion'

The spiritual meaning of **49** is 'Time of the End'

The Bible states the Sorcery of Balaam – 'Man's Religion' - will bedevil Christianity in the Last Days – 'Time of the End': "**How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.**" (v.18) "**Woe unto them! They have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.**"(v.11)