

William Blake *JERUSALEM*  
initial notes for initial selection  
much in need of annotation and expansion

begin with quotation from beginning of Blake's *Milton*

*Jerusalem* tells the story of the fall of Albion, Blake's embodiment of man, Britain or the western world as a whole. The poetic narrative takes the form of a 'drama of the psyche', couched in the dense symbolism of Blake's self-constructed mythology.

The poem does not have a linear plot. Characters morph in and out of each other. A character can be a person and a place. Jerusalem, the Emanation of Albion, is a woman and a city. Albion, 'the Universal Humanity', is a man and a land (Britain). He contains twelve sons who co-inhere with the twelve tribes of Israel, as well as Four Zoas. Every Zoa (embodying a life principle) has an Emanation (a feminine figure through which the human can become divine).

### Chapter One: To the Public

*Jerusalem's* first chapter tells the story of Albion's fall into Selfhood.

Its overture sets the scene for Los's journey into Albion's interior and humanity's transfiguration in forgiveness of sins. In the first scene, Albion banishes Jerusalem and Jesus, blighting nature, culture and his internal life. Then Los contends with his Spectre, forcing him to work for Albion's restoration. Jerusalem mourns, animating shadowy Vala as Los builds Golgonooza, a city that can open into Edenic Eternity. Urizenic rationality assaults Jerusalem and enshrouds the life of the mind. Los battles against this, mapping Britain onto Israel, but his shadowy Spectre infects him with wrath and shame, stalking Albion's daughters and empowering Albion's warrior sons who banish Jerusalem. Vala tries to seduce Jerusalem. Albion curses them both, and finds himself enmeshed in Vala's deadly veil. He refuses divine forgiveness.

chapter	page number	commentary
1	1	the figure of Los as a night-watchman in golden sandals (83) Watch songs (85) Gothic art as inspiration
	2	recumbent figure of Jerusalem and Liberty in the Sleep of Ulro other figures lamentation below and freedom above
	6	Los with hammer at Anvil, tongs and chain bellows Spectre bat  in Blake's <i>The Tyger</i> 'What the hammer? what the chain, In what furnace was thy brain? What the anvil? what dread grasp, Dare its dealy terrors clasp?'
	(7)	beginning of 7 'A horrible Shadow of Death, among the Furnaces: beneath The pillar of folding smoke; and he sought by other means. To lure Los: by tears, by arguments of science & by terrors ...'
	14	rainbow humanity in deadly sleep Jerusalem in butterfly form Albion in tomb effigy posture Angels at head and foot

	22	Vala and Jerusalem 'And Los beheld the mild Emanation Jerusalem eastward bending Her revolutions towards the Starry Wheels in material anguish'
	25	Albion with 3 female tormenters or are they the Norns, like Sybils  Albion still contains the starry heavens
	26	Jerusalem recoils in horror from Hand parody of Christ and Albion flames of false halo 'Such visions have appeared to me as I my ordered race have run Jerusalem is namd Liberty among the sons of Albion'
<b>Chapter Two: To the Jews</b>		
Blake's Jews co-inhere with bellicose British Druids. In this chapter Los and a host of angelic Eternals attempt to rescue Albion. Los's Spectre and Emanation appear as refugees, fleeing from Albion to tell their version of his fall. Los journeys into Albion's interior where bloodthirsty Vala is worshipped. Then Los sensually constricts Reuben (Albion's son) in an attempt to control his lusts as Jesus imaginatively creates states through which humanity can find forgiveness. Angelomorphic Eternals (cathedral cities) seek to help Albion, but they too get blighted by Selfhood. Los rouses them, but Albion chooses to remain trapped. Vala tramples Jerusalem but wise Erin (Ireland) separates the poem's heroine from Albion in whose body she is infected with bellicose Moral Law		
2	28	theme of regenerative or potentially entrapping unsure whether or not this is from 20: 36-37 where Albion embraces Jerusalem after rending the veil OR 19: 40-47 where Albion 'found Jerusalem upon the River of the City soft repos'd In the Arms of Vala, assimilating in one with Vala the text begins 'Every ornament of perfection, and every labour of love, In all the Garden of Eden, & in all the golden mountains has become an envied horror, and a remembrance of jealousy'
	32	Jerusalem 'Naked Beauty displayed' 36 is flanked by two equally naked daughters as a third leaps upwards or is this Jerusalem's own creative energy that rises Vala extends her veil in an attempt to cover Jerusalem
	37	upper section Albion between palm tree and oak 'sunk down in deep pallid langour' as 'the merciful Saviour in his arms/receiv'd him' palm tree victorious symbol of Christ's arrival into Jerusalem oak tree on which the crucifixion takes place Human existence defined by these trees the winged disc is found on Sumerian seals appears in Jacob Bryant's <i>New System</i> in lower section the deformed Spectre bat-winged with reptilian head and neck hovers over Jerusalem 'And One stood forth from the Divine Family & said I feel my Spectre rising upon me! Albion! arouze thyself!'
	39	bat-winged horseman one of Satan's Watch-fiends (two others are behind this) 'Albion! Our wars are wars of life, & wounds of love, With intellectual spears, & long winged arrows of thought: Mutual in one anothers love asnd wrath all renewing ...'

	41	incarnation of Despair as giant Albion or Hyle male fairy indited reverse on a scroll 'Each Man is in his Spectre's power Untill the arrival of that hour, When his Humanity awake And cast his Spectre into the Lake'
	46	The Sage and his Inspiration as Elijah in chariot of flame, composed of Serpent of Nature drawn by human-headed Bulls of Luvah interpreted as Albion and Jerusalem fading and distressed the bulls are crowned with laurel to suggest romantic agony of Petrarchan tradition, quill pen in hand of rider Bulls from Assyrian in Bryant riders are from Hindu god Garuda 'Bath, mild Physician of Eternity, mysterious power\Whose springs are unsearchable & knowledg infinite. Hereford, ancient Guardian of Wales, whose hands Builded the mountain palaces of Eden. stupendous works!
<p><b>Chapter Three: To the Deists</b></p> <p>Blake's Deists create more violence than the Christianity they critique. When the chapter begins Albion's rational Moral Law infects Los, Albion falls yet again, and Vala's bellicose erotics encompass humanity. Urizen builds what he thinks is a redemptive Druid temple and Jerusalem works in Satanic mills where, infected by industrial chaos and Albion's morality, she can barely perceive Jesus and divine forgiveness. Vala melds with the rational beast, spreading war throughout the world, and her daughters enjoy human sacrifice. The peace of 'heavenly Canaan' still hovers above Ulro's chaos, but Los fallibly builds Golgonooza which becomes the structure of 'Religion Hid in War'. The harlot-dragon reigns.</p>		
3	53	winged figure blocks sun, wears triple tiara, or more probably fourfold image is from Hindu art, (using Moor's Hindu Pantheon) she is the vegetative universe the lower figures are a pietà and a resurrection again the sea of spacetime from line 15 'Here on the banks of the Thames, Los builded Golgonooza. Outside of the Gates of the Human Heart, beneath Beulah In the midst of the rocks of the Altars of Albion. In Fears He builded it. in rage & in fury, It is the Spiritual Fourfold London: continually building & continually decaying desolate! In eternal labours: loud the Furnaces & loud the Anvils ...'
	59	theme of weaving (Blake's father and brother were hosiers) the looms of generation from the Spirit to the Body and what about the three Norns line 50 'Men understand not the distress & the labour & sorrow That in the Interior Worlds is carried on in fear & trembling Weaving the shuddering fears & loves of Albions Families Thunderous rage the Spindles of iron. & iron Distaff Maddens in the fury of their hands, Weaving bitter tears The Veil of Goats-hair & Purple & Scarlet & fine twined Linen' (partly from Exodus 35)
	70	the Moon seen through a gigantic cromlech line 13 'thence issuing the Giant-brood Arise as the smoke of the furnace, shaking the rocks from sea to sea. And there they combine into Three Forms, named Bacon & Newton & Locke, In the Oak Groves of Albion which overspread all the Earth.'

	73	Los at his forge creates the sun from line 2 'And Los's Furnaces howl loud: living: self-moving: lamenting With fury & despair. & they stretch from South to North Thro all the Four Points: Lo! the Labourers at the Furnaces ...'
	76	pathos of a crucified Jesus and sublime Albion crucifixion on oak tree Albion's hand open palms up in self sacrifice or openness
	77	white cliffs of Dover a child finds its way following an unraveled ball of string begins: 'To the Christians I give you the end of a golden string, Only wind it into a ball: It will lead you in at Heaven's gate, Built in Jerusalem's wall. and at line 36 England awake, awake! awake! Jerusalem thy Sister calls! Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death? And close her from thy ancient walls. and Ad now the time returns again: Receive the Lamb of God to dwell In Englands green and pleasant bowers.'
<b>Chapter Four: To the Christians</b>		
Now universal humanity awakens to forgiveness. Jerusalem finally melds love with wrath, confronting shadowy Vala whose daughters weave death. As Los sings, Jerusalem appears tri-locational, emanating angelomorphic and descending as a city and a woman. Sexual contentions obstruct Los' work and Vala thrusts her wrath cup upon Jerusalem who is devoured by the dragon to rise again. Los keeps building, freeing himself from gender disputes. Time ends. The Breath Divine breathes. Albion awakens, and sees that Los is Christ and Christ is Los. He throws himself into Los's fires which become fountains of living water. Fragmented Zoas reunite in wars of love, in the Song of Jerusalem. All living things become a great Divine Body.		
4	(78)	
	81	Gwendolen addresses Cambel and the other ten Daughters. Cambel is in the attitude of the Medici Venus pudica while the body language of Gwendolen's crossed legs indicates that she too denies eros. In her left hand she holds a Falsehood announced in 82 lines 10-21 'The Twelve Daughters of Albion attentive listen in secret shades On Cambridge and Oxford beaming soft uniting with Rahabs cloud While Gwendolen spoke to Cambel turning soft the spinning reel: ...' 'Along the Island white. among the Druid Temples, while Gwendolen Spoke to the Daughters of Albion standing on Skiddaws top.'  'So saying she took a Falsehood & hid it in her left hand: To entice her Sisters away to Babylon on Euphrates. And thus she closed her left hand and uttered her Falsehood: Forgetting that Falsehood is prophetic, she hid her hand behind her, Upon her back behind her loins & thus utterd Deceit'
	84	The boy is leading the old man progressing past the state religion of domed St Paul's in the direction of Westminster's Gothic spires and the true Christianity

96	<p>Britannia and Albion have become one and are ascending            96, lines 2-6            England who is Britannia entered Albions bosom rejoicing</p> <p>Then Jesus appeared standing by Albion as the Good Shepherd            By the lost Sheep that he hath found &amp; Albion knew that it            Was the Lord the Universal Humanity. &amp; Albion saw his Form            A Man. &amp; they conversed as Man with Man, in Ages of Eternity            And the Divine Appearance was the likeness &amp; similitude of Los'</p>
97	<p>lines 1-4            'Awake! Awake Jerusalem! O lovely Emanation of Albion            Awake and overspread all Nations as in Ancient Time            For lo the Night of Death is past and the Eternal Day            Appears upon our Hills: Awake Jerusalem. and come away            the figure of Los having discarded his main clothing with his glass ball of energy'</p>
99	<p>lines 1-6            'All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth &amp; Stone. all            Human Forms identified. living going forth &amp; returning wearied            Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days &amp; Hours reposing            And then Awakening into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.</p> <p>And I heard the Name of their Emanations they are named Jerusalem            The End of The Song of Jerusalem'</p>
100	<p>Los in posture of Apollo            his globe carried away on his right            Enitharmon on his left doing the work of generation with distaff in her left on her            right blood red shower to crescent moon and green earth            in the background Stukely's serpent Temple at Abury altered to appear like parts of            Stonehenge, the Druidic Temple for the millennial Jerusalem on Earth</p>