

## The City of the Great King

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 48

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### I. Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken (Is 60:1-14; Mt 5:14-16; Rev 21:9-21)

Those who follow Christ and have been united to Him in baptism are Mt. Zion, the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Zion stood as a \_\_\_\_\_ of which the Church is the antitype, the fulfillment. Consider Isaiah's prophecy of Zion:

*"Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious. Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you The City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Is 60:1-3, 13-14).*

How does this promise reach its fulfillment? Does not Jesus tell us? You are the light of the world, you are a city set upon a hill. Isaiah's promise reaches its fulfillment in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.

### II. The City of the Great King

#### A. The Glory of God and Mt. Zion (1-3 cf. Dt 12:5; Jn 4:21-24; Heb 12:22-24)

Verses 1-3 set the theme: the glory of God in Mt. Zion. God had commanded the Israelites to have a central sanctuary. *"But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go"* (Dt. 12:5). In the new covenant, however, corporate worship has been decentralized. Zion is *the joy of the whole earth* not just Israel. The author of Hebrews writes (12:22-24):

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

#### B. The Protection of God and Mt. Zion (4-8 cf. Ps 2:2-3)

God's glory is seen in the way that He *protects* Mt. Zion.

*The church shall never perish! Her dear Lord, to defend,  
to guide, sustain, and cherish, is with her to the end;  
tho' there be those that hate her and false sons in her pale,  
against or foe or traitor she ever shall prevail.*

In the words of Wang Yi, the pastor of Early Rain Covenant Church in China, *"There is no thousand-year empire, only a thousand-year \_\_\_\_\_."*

### C. The Judgments of God and Mt. Zion (9-11 cf. Eph 1:19-23)

God's *judgments* in history reflect His *lovingkindness* toward Mt. Zion and His *righteousness*. Paul prays that the Ephesians may know *what is the exceeding greatness of [God's] power toward us who believe... [The Father] put all things under [Jesus'] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things [for] the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*" (Eph 1:19,23).

### D. The Strength of God and Mt. Zion (12-14 cf. 2 Cor 12:9; 2 Pet 1:3)

God lends His strength to His people so that even in our weakness we can be strong. He does not hoard His strength but shares it. *"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue..."* (2 Pet 1:3).

## III. Application

### A. God loves His Church (Eph 1:4-6; 5:25)

God's love for His Church, ought to fill Mt. Zion with [1] praise (1, 10, 11), [2] meditation (9a, 12-13), and [3] generational faithfulness (13c).

### B. God imparts His glory to His Church (cf. 1 Cor 12:26; 2 Pet 1:3,5-7)

Glorious is our King and so glorious is the City that He rules. Chiefly the glory of the church is increased as God's people strive, by the grace of God, for moral purity, excellence, and joyful love of God and man. Peter commands us, *"for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love"* (2 Pet 1:5-7).

### C. God protects His Church (cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17)

Paul reminds the Corinthians: *"Do you not know that \_\_\_\_\_ are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are"* (1 Cor 3:16-17). Yet we often get distracted by the disparity between the psalmist's vision of Mt. Zion and our local church.

*One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean the Church as we see her spread out through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans. All your patient sees is the half-finished, sham Gothic erection on the new building estate. When he goes inside, he sees the local grocer with rather an oily expression on his face bustling up to offer him one shiny little book containing a liturgy which neither of them understands, and one shabby little book containing corrupt texts of a number of religious lyrics, mostly bad, and in very small print. When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbours. Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like 'the body of Christ' and the actual faces in the next pew....* (C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*)

## IV. Conclusion