

The greatness of God seen only in Zion.

Sunday, September 17, 2006

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King...As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish it for ever. Selah.”

Psa. 48:1-2,8.

“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, (namely,) the heavenly Jerusalem.” Heb. 12:22.

“Unto the church of the Thessalonians...And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” 1 Thes. 1:1,9-10.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Eph. 3:20-21.

(Two sentences from Sept. 10 sermon outline: “Praise, and honor and glory”).

John Owen: So the meaning of the apostle (“Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, (namely,) the heavenly Jerusalem) is, that by the gospel believers are come into that state wherein they have an interest in, and a right unto, all the blessed and glorious things that are spoken in the Scriptures concerning and unto Zion. All the privileges ascribed, all the promises made unto it, are theirs. Zion is the place of God’s especial gracious residence, of the throne of Christ in his reign, the subject of all graces, the object of all promises, as the Scripture abundantly testifies. They have a vested interest in all the promises of God made unto Zion. They fit nobody else. The things spoken of Zion were never accomplished in the earthly Zion, except typically. Spiritually, and in their reality, they belong only to us in the New Testament church.

Hence, the multitude of comforting words and promises made to Zion, are expressly made to us. In every condition we may plead them with God. Right there is all our security and safety to be found. These promises – made to us by a sovereign, Almighty God – assure our final deliverance from all oppressors.

John Owen: “Be their outward condition never so mean and destitute; be they afflicted, persecuted, and despised; yet all the glorious things that are spoken of Zion are theirs, and accomplished in them in the sight of God. But the excellent things whereof – under this notion of Zion – they are made partakers – are innumerable.”

“Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.”

Psa. 129:5.

Why the New Testament church is called Zion.

To know the true reason why the apostle calls the state of believers under the new testament by the name of Zion, we may consider some of the things that are spoken of Zion in the Scripture. These sayings about Zion are multiplied throughout Scripture:

1. Zion is the place of God's habitation – where he dwells for ever: Psa. 9:11. "Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the people his doings. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them; he forgetteth not the cry of the humble." And, Psa. 76:2. "And his dwelling place is Zion." And, Joel 3:21. "For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."
2. Zion is the seat of the throne, reign, and kingdom of Christ: Psa. 2:6. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." And, Isa. 24:23. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." And, Mic. 4:7. "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever."
3. Zion is the object of divine promises innumerable: Psa. 69:35–36. "For God will save Zion...and they that love his name shall dwell therein." And, Isa. 1:27. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." And, Isa. 59:20. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."
4. From Zion does the gospel proceed, and the law of Christ come forth: Isa. 40:9. "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain...lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities...Behold your God!" And, Mic. 4:2. "For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."
5. Zion is the object of God's special love, and the place of the birth of the elect: Psa. 87:2,5. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah."
6. Salvation and all blessings come forth out of Zion: Psa. 14:7. "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." And, Psa. 110:2. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." And, Psa. 128:5. "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life."