

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0996

## ***New Jerusalem #6. Mount Zion***

May 11, 2009

The last issue of this series (#03-0995, February 6, 2009) revealed that New Jerusalem is the mother of us all. In Galatians 4, Paul contrasted the present Jerusalem to the Jerusalem above. The earthly Jerusalem is in bondage and speaks of Ishmael, and the heavenly Jerusalem is free and speaks of Isaac, the son according to promise. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus are not associated with the earthly, present Jerusalem but with the heavenly or celestial Jerusalem or, as John described it, New Jerusalem.

Continuing with this thought, let us turn to the Hebrews epistle in which we are told that we have come to the heavenly or celestial Jerusalem.

**But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly [celestial] Jerusalem....** (Hebrews 12:22 NASB [CV])

The first thing to note is that we are not coming to it but that we have come to it. It is a present reality. This is very similar to Paul's encouragement that we have been **blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials in Christ** and that we are **seated together among the celestials in Christ Jesus** (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6 CV). This is a spiritual verity, but to realize its impact on us who believe, we must understand to what we have come.

The second thing to note is that we have come to Mount Zion in reference to New Jerusalem, the celestial Jerusalem. Mount Zion and the city of the living God, celestial Jerusalem, are presented together as if they are synonymous or related in some fashion; something that is found in other verses of the Bible (Psalm 102:21; 135:21; 147:12; Isaiah 4:3; 10:12; 62:1; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 1:14). In a sense, they are the same; however, I believe that when Zion comes into view, it speaks of a much greater spiritual truth than Jerusalem does by itself. Simply, Zion speaks of the heart of Jerusalem in relation to the Lord and His people. We have come to the city of the living God by way of Mount Zion, the very heart of the Lord. An explanation will follow, but first we need to be clear what Zion is not.

Just as New Jerusalem is not of this realm and not the present-day Jerusalem in the Middle East, so is Zion not of this realm and not the present-day state of Israel that was brought forth by the Zionist movement that was revived in the 1800's and led to the formation of the state of Israel in the Middle East in 1948 and the capturing of Jerusalem by the so-called Israelites in 1967. This movement could best be described as one according to the flesh that, ultimately, will be judged and will fail. Today, we hear much about Zionism, especially from Christian Zionists who see the current state of Israel in the Middle East as the apple of God's eye, destined to rule the nations. Obviously, much could be and needs to be said about Zionism, but this is beyond the scope of this issue. Suffice it to say, if you see that God's true Jerusalem is above and is spiritual, then you must see that Zion is likewise. Consequently, we must not relate Mount Zion to the present-day city of Jerusalem located in the heart of the state of Israel or to the Zionist movement. Just as New Jerusalem is celestial and spiritual, so is Zion.

Now, the word *Zion* appears in the Bible 162 times, so it is no small matter. A study of these references will reveal that Zion is spoken of in many ways. However, it appears that when it is joined with the word mount, that is, Mount Zion, it takes on a specific meaning that relates to the King, His kingdom, and the future rulers of His kingdom. After all, the word *Zion* means "sunny mount," and mount or mountain also signifies kingdom, so we could say that Zion speaks of "sunny kingdom."

The first mention of Zion establishes its primary significance, and this is discovered when David, the newly anointed king of Israel, went to Jerusalem with his men to capture the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. The Jebusites taunted David that there was no way that they

could conquer them, for the blind and the lame could turn them away. **Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David** (2 Samuel 5:7; also 1 Kings 8:1; 1 Chronicles 11:5, 7; 2 Chronicles 5:2). Henceforth, Zion became known not only as the city of David but also as **the city of the great King** (Psalm 48:2), **the dwelling place of the Lord** (Psalm 74:2; 76:2; 132:13; Isaiah 8:18; Jeremiah 8:19; Zechariah 2:10), and the place from which will **go forth the law** (Micah 4:2). These verses, and many more, speak to the matter that Zion signifies the King and His kingdom; a fact confirmed by God the Father as He speaks of His Son: **“But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain”** (Psalm 2:6 NASB).

The very foundation of Zion is God’s Son, a fact revealed by the Lord through Isaiah and repeated by Peter and Paul.

**Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.** (Isaiah 28:16 NASB)

**(6) For this is contained in Scripture: “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” (7) This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,” (8) and, “A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.** (1 Peter 2:6-8 NASB; also Romans 9:33)

This is to what we have come. We have come to the precious stone of Christ and the stone kingdom that will crush the kingdom of this world and it becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Daniel 2:31-35; Revelation 11:15). Consequently, Mount Zion speaks of a great mountain, a great kingdom that will fill the whole earth with the glory of God.

As an aside, this is why the Zionist movement of our day is not of God and destined to fail. It has rejected and continues to reject the choice stone of Zion, the Son of God, and our Lord Jesus. To this day, the so-called Zionists of the state of Israel are disobedient to the word, refusing to believe in God’s Messiah. Just as they are not the true Jews or the true Israel of God, so they are not the true Zionists. Only those who believe in Jesus have a claim on Zion, which leads to the last point.

In the Patmos vision, John saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion along with His conquerors, as signified by the 144,000 singing before the throne.

**Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ... and they sang a new song before the throne....** (Revelation 14:1, 3 NASB)

Then, when New Jerusalem came into view, John saw **the throne of God and of the Lamb** in the midst of the holy city as the very source of the life of the city (Revelation 22:1-3). The blessing of Zion is life forever (Psalm 133:3), and all life comes forth from the throne of Zion as signified by the river of the water of life that feeds the tree of life. In fact, we are told this glorious fact in Psalm 87.

**(2) The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. (3) Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah. (5) But of Zion it shall be said, “This one and that one were born in her”; and the Most High Himself will establish her. (6) The LORD will count when He registers the peoples, “This one was born there.” Selah. (7) Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes shall say, “All my springs of joy are in you.”**

When all these images are put together, we must conclude that Zion is the very heart of New Jerusalem. It is the dwelling place of the Lord, the seat of His government, the place of His conquerors, and the source of life. But do not look at it as if it were geographically located in time and space. No; we have come to Mount Zion; we have come to Christ. It is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. This is the Mount Zion of New Jerusalem. Well, this is only a taste of Zion. May we thirst for more!