

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)

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New Jerusalem #12.

September 1, 2009

According to Isaiah's Vision

I think it is safe to state that when most Christians read the Old Testament and see the word *Jerusalem*, they universally think of the old or ancient city of Jerusalem in Palestine, as well as the modern-day capital of the state of Israel in the Middle East. In other words, all references to Jerusalem are seen in light of a physical city on earth. So, we hear Christians declaring that we must pray for the peace of Jerusalem (on earth), for this is where Jesus will set up His throne and rule the nations through a Jewish people, according to the flesh, who for the last 2,000 years have rejected Jesus as Messiah.

I too once held this view until my eyes were opened to the great danger of what is called Christian Zionism. Needless to say, I have repented of such thinking and have moved on to what I see as the truth of Scripture regarding Jerusalem.

Simply, God is not building an earthly city of dead wood and stone adorned with gold; He is a building a celestial city of living, precious stones adorned with the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). In other words, God's Jerusalem is a company or, more explicitly, a body of celestial people, and they are called New Jerusalem.

Isaiah clearly prophesied of a day in which Jerusalem will have a new name that will come forth from the mouth of the Lord.

(1) For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. (2) The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate. (3) You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. (4) It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; but you will be called, "My delight is in her," and your land, "Married"; for the LORD delights in you, and to Him your land will be married. (Isaiah 62:1-4 NASB)

Being true to the word of God, our Lord Jesus has told us this new name and even promised to give it to all who conquer. Not only will the conquerors have the name of God on their foreheads (Revelation 7:3; 14:1) but also New Jerusalem and the Lord's name as well. What assurance is given to those who conquer!

And I will write upon him, the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my name. (Revelation 3:12 TT)

Many translations place the article *the* before new Jerusalem; the King James Version leaves out the article but inserts the words *which is*, making it read *which is new Jerusalem*. Previously, I have made the point that New Jerusalem is the proper name of the city; therefore, the article is not needed. See issue #03-0992, January 16, 2009, *New Jerusalem #2. The Name*.

At any rate, just as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus Himself has given us the name of the city of His God.

Moving three chapters ahead in the book of Isaiah, we learn that Jerusalem is also joined with God's new heavens and new earth.

(17) For, behold, I create new heavens and new earth. And the former things shall not be recalled, and they shall not go up on the heart. (18) However, be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. For, behold, I create in Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. (19) And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people. And the voice of weeping and the voice of crying shall no longer be heard in her. (Isaiah 65:17-19 LITV)

Isaiah was given the word of the Lord that, one day, there will be new heavens and new earth; however, John actually saw it. John's description is nearly identical to Isaiah's. But instead of Jerusalem being on earth, it came down out of heaven; that is, it is heavenly in its constitution; it is not constituted of earthly materials. John confirmed that what he saw is exactly what Jesus promised to the conquerors—the name of the city of His God, the holy city, New Jerusalem.

(1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea no longer is. (2) And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God with men! And He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. (4) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no longer, nor mourning, nor outcry, nor will there be pain any more; for the first things passed away. (Revelation 21:1-4 LITV)

Through Isaiah, we are told that Jerusalem had been forsaken and desolate, but one day, she will be married to the Lord. Isaiah's reference to *your land* that is *forsaken* and *desolate* is a reference to mortal bodies destined for corruption. The new land that will be married to the Lord is a company of glorified people in resurrected, immortal bodies in the image of the Celestial One (1 Corinthians 15:49 CV). These bodies are **a building from God** (2 Corinthians 5:1), and together they are the bride, the wife of the Lambkin.

(9) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb [Lambkin]” (10) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, (11) having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. (Revelation 21:9-11 NASB [CV])

Notice that, at this point, John does not refer to the holy city as New Jerusalem but simply as Jerusalem. It is as if the Holy Spirit wants to make sure that all understand there is only one Jerusalem in the heart and mind of God. The earthly Jerusalem is no more, just as the old covenant is no more. All is new, for **“Behold! I make all things new”** (Revelation 21:5).

Also, take note that through Isaiah (62:3), we are told that the city with the new name is a royal diadem (crown) in the hand of God. John saw this diadem on the head of Christ as He appeared out of heaven. Christ is the Head of His body of conquerors, and together they are *the* Christ, *the* Lambkin, *the* holy city, New Jerusalem.

His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. (Revelation 19:12 NASB)

It should be abundantly clear that there truly is only one Jerusalem that satisfies the heart of God. As Paul confirms to us, the present Jerusalem is in slavery (Galatians 4:25) and cannot be holy, for, as John heard, she is mystically called Sodom and Egypt, and she is aligned with the great city, Mystery Babylon (Revelation 11:8; 18) that is destined to fall in one hour. The Jerusalem above is free; she is the true mount Zion and the celestial Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). **For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet.**

Thus, the visions of John and Paul are the same as the vision of Isaiah. Only one Jerusalem is in view in God's purpose. Let us not yoke ourselves with the present earthly Jerusalem. As Paul exhorted, let us cast out the bondwoman and her son, which means we must cast out the present Jerusalem. The Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother (Galatians 4:26, 30). Conquerors are born from above!