

MT. ZION OR GIBEON?

Hebrews 12:22: "You have come to Mt. Zion." We are not marching to Zion, we have come (past tense) to Mt. Zion. We are already there by faith. He identifies Mt. Zion as the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. The book of Revelation identifies the city, New Jerusalem, as the bride of Christ, and Paul identifies the bride of Christ as the church. So you have come to the Church, you have come to Mt. Zion. To understand Zion, we need to go to the Old Testament, to the beginning, when it is first mentioned, and see how it developed into a prophetic model of the coming Church. II Samuel 5:7-9: "David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is Jerusalem, the city of David." II Samuel 6:2: "David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of host, who is enthroned above the cherubim. And then bringing the ark is described. It had rested in a farmhouse for many years before it is finally brought home. David comes with much praise, leaping and dancing and shouting as the ark is brought back. "So they brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent, which David has pitched for it." Now understand, David brings the ark of the Lord back from captivity because it had been captured by the Philistines. He brings it back to Palestine and places it in a tent he built for it on Mt. Zion. He positions the ark on Mt. Zion (Jerusalem) knowing the Lord's tabernacle and priests were in Gibeon, approximately five miles northwest of Jerusalem.

The ark was a symbol of the throne of God. It symbolized the presence of God among His people. It was the place where God would commune and fellowship with the nation. It Represented the glory of the God of Israel. To have a holy place without the ark was to have a nation that did not know the glory and the presence of God. Without the ark there was no glory nor presence of God among the people. The Philistines had captured the ark and placed it in the temple of Dagon. It had been out of Israel for nearly 100 years, since the time of Eli...all during the reign of Samuel the prophet, and during the time of Saul as king over Israel. For more than a hundred years the tabernacle continued its sacrifices without the ark of the covenant. For the last 20 years before David became king and brought the ark to Zion (Jerusalem), the ark had been sitting in a farmhouse in Baale-Judah, while the worship of Israel occurred in Gibeon, in the tabernacle that had come out of the wilderness in the day of Moses. When David brought the ark back, he did not take it to Gibeon, he placed it at Mt. Zion, the city of David.

In placing the ark in a tent David had built on Mt Zion, instead of placing it in the tabernacle five miles northwest of Gibeon, God initiated through David a drastic and unparalleled break from all that had gone before in Israel. The ark had always been in the tabernacle, and in chapter 12 the Hebrew writer is telling us when Christ ascended and God accepted his sacrifice, He intended through Christ a similarly drastic and unparalleled break by telling us in verse

22: "But you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..." An epic change has occurred as a result of Christ's ascension, and for 2,000 years we have missed this change just like the religious leaders in Gibeon missed it.

Zion exists today, but without faith to enter and receive all God has made available to us now in Christ, we tend to wait until we "get over yonder" to enter. Zion exists in the midst of a lot of religious ritualism that is going on with no power and no glory compared to what God has intended for us. In Christ, God has made the believer both Kings and Priests (Rev. 1:6), over 2000 years ago at Christ's ascension, but no religious leader has intervened, by either faith or confidence, to teach about this change, and none of the modern and enlightened religious leaders have the faith or confidence to correct this spiritual course today! Today's church has missed Zion and is content to live in Gibeon.

In Gibeon Israel had the ritualism, the offerings and the sacrifices, the priesthood, the burning of incense that had been going on for generations without the ark and without the glory of God. But when David brought the ark back, and placed it on Mt. Zion, God's presence began to be made known. No wonder David danced and worshiped God when he brought back the ark. It was a symbol of the presence of the glory of the Lord. It meant that the Lord was taking His place in the center of the nation.

"You have come to Mt. Zion." This means You are in the very presence of the Lord. And He has His rightful place in your life. He is the only life living in you. It is in the church that God finds His rightful place in our lives. We have come into His very presence. It is not our works; it is knowing the presence of God. That's Zion. In Zion all is spiritual. Zion represents the presence of God. There is no such thing as the secular and the spiritual. That division is gone. It is all spiritual. And that concept of the New Testament somehow or another we have missed. We still divide life into the secular and the spiritual. We still have our secular lives and our relationship with God. So we have two lives, the secular and the spiritual, but there is no such thing to the Christian. We have come to Mt. Zion; we have come to that which is spiritual, and everything is spiritual. Zecharia 14: 20, 21: "In that day (the day of the Messiah...today), there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses 'HOLY TO THE LORD' and the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar." The bowls before the altar were sacred. They were dedicated and set apart, used only in offering sacrifices. So Zecharia says someday the cooking pots will be like these bowls. Verse 21: "And every cooking pot will be holy to the Lord of Hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts in that day."

What is he saying? The expression "HOLY TO THE LORD" was inscribed on the miter of the high priest. The high priest alone could go

and enter into the presence of the Lord and stand in His glory. He could do this only once a year, on the day of Atonement. When the High Priest went in, written on the miter was "Holy to the Lord." Zechariah is saying the day is coming when "Holy to the Lord" will be written not just on his miter, it will be written upon the bells of the horses. That is quite a jump from the Holy of Holies ^{to} the bells of the horses. Further, he is saying, the day is coming when the people of God are going about their daily business, when they are driving through the streets, when they are cooking in the kitchen, they would be described as those living within the veil. They are living in the presence of God. Holy to the Lord something that is only found in the Holy Place by the priest. Holy to the Lord is found on the bells of the horses when you are plowing in the field. Holy to the Lord is found in your cooking pots in the kitchen whenever you are cooking dinner. You are in the very presence of God. You are living in the presence of God every day of your life, and in every activity of your life. You have come to Zion; you have listened to and understood all the prophecies that are made about Zion. You don't have to go to the tabernacle (church) to be in the presence of God.

It doesn't really matter whether Trump or someone else wins the Presidency, or what happens in Washington. There is no such thing as spiritual and secular anymore. We are living in the presence of God and God is over all and whatever happens around us doesn't matter because on the cooking pots and horses' bells is written Holy to the Lord. We have come to Mt. Zion and are living in the midst of Zion. The Hebrews had to be told they had "come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Are we any more aware of this truth than they were, and does it really make a difference? "You have come" means "God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies (spiritual realm), in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). And that "His divine power has granted to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (II Pet. 1:3), And we have received the Spirit which is from God that we might know the things freely given us by God...we have the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:12, 16). The problem is the religious world does not believe this. They have been told all the blessings come after we die, and we cannot realize any here and now. We are not "marching to Zion" we are already there, and we are not "going someday to the city of God" we are already dwelling in it. Abraham looked for it, the prophets spoke of it, the Psalmist sang about it, the Hebrew writer describes it as a reality, and Revelation describes it in symbols. The problem of conservative Christianity is we can't believe we have come to Mt. Zion, the city of the Living God. Paul makes it plain in Romans 8:23, 24 that our hope is not something we realize when we get to heaven when we die, but our hope is that God will raise us from the dead as He raised Christ and will redeem this body along with the redemption of the earth from the curse placed upon it when man sinned.

To be a part of Mt. Zion means we are not a part of the old system represented by Gibeon. Mt. Zion represents something which to use Paul's description of God's ability in Ephesians 3:10, Mt. Zion represents something that is "exceedingly, abundantly beyond all that we can even ask or think." We can't even begin to describe

what Mt. Zion is, especially when we try to compare it with Gibeon. Mt. Zion is the fulfillment of all that God has been doing from the book of Genesis to the book of Acts. It represents the whole plan and purpose of God which He started in the garden. It is the fulfillment of all happenings from then until the day of Pentecost.

He said: "You have come to myriads of angels in festal array." In the Old Testament the angels were instruments of judgment, but in the New Testament they are simply said to be our servants. "They are sent forth to minister to those who inherit salvation" (2:14).

"And you have come to the firstborn ones who are enrolled in heaven." Our names are written in a book. Moses, for example, begs God to not blot out the names of the children of Israel from His book. John sees a book of life in Revelation and indicates the names of believers are written in it. "The names of the church of the firstborn ones are enrolled in heaven." This simply refers to the fulfillment of God's sovereign choice and election of His people. He knows who they are. He has called them, and He has chosen them. They are a part of His plan and purpose.

Then he says, "You have come to God, the judge of all. The emphasis is upon "all" and this is saying God is dealing with all people, both Jews and Gentiles. Mt. Zion is not restricted, and God is dealing with all people. He is the judge of both Jew and Gentile, believer, and non-believer.

"You have come to the spirits of just men who are made perfect." He has stated, when talking about the promise of God in chapter 11, that all these he mentioned died in faith without receiving what was promised, because God has provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. God speaks proleptically of them (God speaks of things yet in the future as if it has already happened). They along with us will be made perfect when we all receive our new bodies (I Corinthians 15). "You have come to the spirits of just men made perfect." Zion in contrast to Gideon (still in Sinai), God has justified us and accepts us as perfect, but the flesh is not yet perfected. So, Zion speaks of that which is spiritual, not physical and God is going to give this righteous spirit a new body.

And last, he says: "We have come to Jesus. The mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel." Zion represents the new covenant; the covenant God made with Abraham of which Paul states: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say 'And to seeds' as referring to many, but rather to one, and to your 'seed,' that is Christ." (Gal 3:16). He continues in verse 29: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." And what was the promise God made to Abraham and his seed? Romans 4:13: "And the promise made to Abraham or to his seed that *he would be heir to the world* was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith." No wonder Jesus said: "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

"And we have come to his blood, his sprinkled blood which speaks better than the blood of Able." His blood speaks of redemption and forgiveness. That's the meaning of Zion!

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