

**“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.”
Heb. 12:22.**

Mount Zion, the City of the Living God, and the Heavenly Jerusalem – all three are the same – three names for the same place. John Owen (1616-1683, “The greatest British theologian of all time.”) “*But 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.*” Indeed, the many instances should dispose of the matter to any honest seeker after Bible truth; to wit:

(1) Zion is the place of God’s habitation, where He dwells for ever – *“The Lord also will be a refuge (or, high place) for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. 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 (or, the afflicted). Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.”* **Psa. 9:9-13.** And so, Zion is the place of God’s habitation, where He dwells for ever, and where He is seen to be actively engaged in conducting an INQUISITION FOR BLOOD, that is, gathering evidence to be used in building a case against all those who have persecuted His servants while on earth. These are His “doings” which His saints joyfully “declare” in song and praise; to wit: *“Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the people His doings.”* **Psa. 9:11.** Zion is also the place where God takes up the conditions of His suffering saints on earth and plans and executes their deliverance; to wit:

“Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.” (Psa. 9:13)

“The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD DWELLING IN ZION, MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, ...But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for THE LORD DWELLETH IN ZION.” (Joel 3:16-21)

Zion is the place – according to these and many more like passages – where the Lord dwells for ever. Zion is where His authoritative decrees are issued forth, binding upon the whole earth; to wit:

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon MY HOLY HILL OF ZION. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” (Psa. 2:4-7)

Here we have another picture of the high and holy activities transpiring where the Lord dwelleth in Zion, including publishing God’s eternal decrees, orders, commands, statutes, judgments, and all things necessarily involved in the detailed management of a universe. Great power is implicit; hence, *“The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice out of Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake.”* Joel 3:16.

Just think, Beloved. God Almighty is running His amazing universe from His habitation, or dwelling place, which is to say, from mount Zion, which is to say, His humble church.

(2) Mount Zion is also the seat of the throne, reign, and kingdom of Christ. ***“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.”*** Isa. 24:23. A future era of time is alluded to, in which the moon shall be confounded, as being perplexed when it received no light from the sun, and hence, having no light of its own, and so, cannot shine at night. But why and how is the light of the sun suddenly cut off and thereby ashamed when it must of necessity deny light to the moon? The context may give answer to the dilemma. It may be that the dear Lord Jesus has – BY THEN – returned in power and glory, with a dazzling light from His own person such as that on the mount of Transfiguration; to wit:

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them; and HIS FACE DID SHINE AS THE SUN, and his raiment was white as the light.” (Matt. 17:1,2)

“And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and HIS COUNTEenance WAS AS THE SUN SHINETH IN HIS STRENGTH.” (Rev. 1:16)

Furthermore, we read of a beautiful land and city, all bejeweled and splendid, where there is no need of the sun, ***“for the glory of God did lighten it;”*** where none but the saints and angels dwell forever with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; to wit:

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination (i.e., sodomites), or maketh a lie; but THEY WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE.” (Rev. 21:23-27)

And so, Beloved, back to the last verse of our text, which fixes the time era of the doom of this evil world, and the glorious beginning of the next world; to wit: ***“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. [Isa. 24:1] ... Then the moon shall be confounded”*** – (because, the moon’s ancient source of reliable light – the sun – is no longer reliable) – ***“and the sun shall be ashamed”*** – (because, the sun’s unrivaled supremacy as original light-giver has now been superseded by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ – ***“I am the light of the world;”*** – and new principles of renewable energy, so to speak, have replaced all other concepts; to wit:) ***“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.”*** [Rev 22:5] It is as though the sun’s services were no longer needed – all of which would likely occasion great shame and depression in the sun, so to speak, figuratively speaking. And all these things shall come to pass ***“when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, AND BEFORE HIS ANCIENTS GLORIOUSLY.”*** Isa. 24:23. ***“His ancients”*** are all God’s Elect, and include the great cloud of witnesses surrounding us; to wit: ***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the***

sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” Heb. 12:1,2. Also included among “his ancients gloriously” over whom Christ reigns in mount Zion are those righteous antediluvians to whom Noah and Enoch preached; to wit:

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” (Jude 14,15)

Also included among “his ancients gloriously,” over whom Christ reigns in mount Zion, are those 144,000 born-again Jews identified in chapters 7 and 14 of The Revelation; to wit: *“And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” Rev. 7:4.*

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. ... These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Rev. 14:1,4,5)

Also included among “his ancients gloriously,” over whom Christ reigns in mount Zion, are those innumerable saints of God who came out of great tribulation and go to Heaven, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; to wit: *“[a]fter this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. ... And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Rev. 7: 9-17.*

Furthermore, another distinct group of God’s Elect strangely appear at the time of or shortly after the Lord’s resurrection, numbering perhaps tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands. They are mysterious, and I have long felt that studying those blessed people – and meditating upon what Scripture says of the incident involving them – would yield rich spiritual rewards. Here is the event, in its doleful context, as it occurred; to wit: *“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” Matt. 27:50-54.*

Sunday, October 31, 2010

Sermon Outline...page 4

The operative words of this amazing event are these; to wit: ***“AND THE GRAVES WERE OPENED; AND MANY BODIES OF THE SAINTS WHICH SLEPT AROSE AND CAME OUT OF THE GRAVES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, AND WENT INTO THE HOLY CITY, AND APPEARED UNTO MANY.”*** Think of it, Beloved. Certainly there were many thousands if not hundreds of thousands or more of saints in their graves, eligible and qualified to be raised from the dead at the time that ***“many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his (i.e., Jesus Christ’s) resurrection, and went into the holy city (i.e., Jerusalem), and appeared unto many.”*** Matt. 27:52,53.

This was a proof of Christ’s power over death and the grave, by dying; when he through death, destroyed him that had the power of it, and abolished death itself; and became the plague of death and the destruction of the grave. Not that the saints arose at the time of Christ’s death. The graves were open then, the mighty earthquake shook, as it seemed, the whole world, thick darkness covered the earth, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the rocks were rent. But the bodies of the saints did not arise until after Christ was risen, for Christ himself must be the firstfruits of the resurrection from the dead; indeed, the first-begotten of the dead, and the first-born from the dead; for HE WAS THE FIRST THAT WAS RAISED TO AN IMMORTAL LIFE; FOR THOUGH OTHERS WERE RAISED BEFORE HIM; INDEED, BY HIMSELF; YET THEY ONLY TO A MORTAL LIFE.

This unique and novel passage about the dead saints arising after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and appearing to many in Jerusalem, is said to be the fulfillment of the prophesy of Isaiah at **Isa 26:19**; to wit: (with it’s comforting context): ***“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. (i.e., shortly after a great multitude of dead saints arise from the dead and walk the streets of Jerusalem) Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”*** Isa. 26:19-21. The last verse of the foregoing passage (**Isa. 26:21**) is most ominous indeed for the wicked, and most comforting indeed for the righteous; to wit:

“For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; THE EARTH ALSO SHALL DISCLOSE HER BLOOD, AND SHALL NO MORE COVER HER SLAIN.” (Isa. 26:21)

The time is the end of the world. The subject is God Almighty’s punishment of the wicked because of their bloody persecution of His people while on earth. A holy INQUISITION shall be held, whereby every, least, particle of saints’ blood shall be disgorged, however cleverly hidden; and every reprobate’s part fixed, and eternal punishment therefore assigned. A companion passage is found in **Psalm Nine**; to wit:

“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.” (Psa. 9:11,12)

Beloved. The message here is that our God – all without DNA – will track down, and ferret out, and eternally punish everyone who lifts a hand against us.

I love you. Amen.