

December 29, 2013

So, here we are at the end of another calendar year. I say it's a good time to reflect. What are we doing? Where is all this going?

For over a half-dozen years last past, Beast Obama has been running his lying mouth about "Hope & Change." Hope and change, hope and change – everything is hope and change. And what is that "hope and change?" We are living it. It's not pretty. In fact, it's ugly. And it's only getting worse.

But what about the people of God – what about their hope and change? Actually, those are good Bible concepts. We have a lively hope; that is to say, a hope that is alive and well, and quite active.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3).

And what about our change; what does the Holy Scripture have to say on that?

**"[T]he sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." (Isaiah 9:10).
"[B]ehold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." (Zechariah 3:4).**

We have great hope; and there is a change coming. Today, let's seek a glimpse of that change.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2).

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." (Revelation 21:10).

Please note in these two verses the "new" and "holy" Jerusalem is referred to as a "city" – indeed, a "great city" and a "holy city."

"But ye are come unto mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Hebrews 12:22-24).

These verses in Hebrews clearly – on their face – refer to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If “the heavenly Jerusalem” is one label for that church (as apparent from Hebrews 12:22) we should logically conclude the “new Jerusalem” and “holy Jerusalem” coming down out of heaven, or descending out of heaven (Revelation 21:2, 10), are also descriptors of that church.

In a word, Jerusalem, in the language of these and other Scriptures, is to be acknowledged for the church and spouse of the Lord Jesus.

Now, that church has experienced diverse eras, times and conditions. For example, in her earlier days, she saw prolific growth.

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. . . . Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:41, 47).

Stop and think about that just a moment. Three thousand people baptized and added to the church just in one day. Imagine the administrative challenges of that project, not to mention the on-hand manpower to get the task accomplished.

In contrast, the church also has seen – and is seeing – a declined and harsh state.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.” (Amos 8:11-13).

From what I have seen in recent years of these young men in this church working in blistering heat hour after hour in construction projects, it would indeed require extremely bleak circumstances for them to faint for thirst.

“[A]nd the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.” (Revelation 12:4). That language paints another comparatively bleak picture of the church near the end.

BUT, here in our chief text from Revelation 21, we see the church in a future state and in that context I ask –

WHY IS THE CHURCH CALLED A CITY?

“[A]nd showed me that great city.” (Revelation 21:10).

At the point in time described in these verses the Holy Ghost is pleased to give the church the name of a city rather than any other name such as spouse, woman, cottage, temple, and so on. Why?

FIRST: To show us how great and numerous a people will then be in the church. At times, she has been but a handful, even just two or three. But to be a city bespeaks great store of members and citizens, especially when she is called a “great city.” Think New York, London, Shananghai, Paris, etc.

SECOND: To show us how plentifully the nations and kingdoms of men shall at that day traffic with her – every nation, kindred, tongue and tribe.

“And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.” (Revelation 21:26).

“And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, . . . ” (Isaiah 66:20).

In great cities, you know from experience, are the treasures, beauty and glory of kingdoms and nations; and it is there men go that are desirous to solace themselves therewith.

THIRD: It is called a city to show us how strongly and securely it will keep its inhabitants at that time.

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. . . . Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26: 1, 4).

FOURTH: Last, but in no ways least, the church is here called a city chiefly to show us that now she will be downcast or undermost no longer. “Undermost” is a good but underused word meaning “lowest in position, rank or place; at the bottom.” Babylon reigns today; Jerusalem shall reign at that day.

“And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:8).

A big change is coming, my friends! At that time, she shall have a complete conquest and victory over all her enemies.

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:1-2).

As all the kings, princes, presidents and powers of the world have had their time to reign and have glory in this world, so Christ will have His time at this day, to show who is the only Potentate and Lord of lords.

“Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (1 Timothy 6:15).

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” (Daniel 7:27).

“[A]nd his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” (Zechariah 9:10).

I ran across a nice poem that somewhat captures the spirit of what I am trying to say:

Never has fair weather after foul –

Nor warm weather after cold –

Nor a sweet and beautiful spring after a harsh and nipping winter –

Been so comfortable, sweet, desirous and welcome to the poor birds and beasts,

As this day will be to the church of God.

That little ditty paraphrases Song of Solomon, which I close with:

“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” (Song of Solomon 2:10-13).

I love you. Amen.