

26. A Man Who Loves My Church

The passion of David for Jerusalem is evident throughout his Psalms.

And for the purposes of this study, we will go back and forth seamlessly between David's city and the Church, or as David says, "**the congregation of the righteous.**" We will not consider the present location that God calls, "Sodom."

David, right now, and Abraham, Moses, and Elijah are Christians, filled with the Lord Jesus and members of His body together with us.

The Church. All who trusted in God in Old Testament times became part of the body of Christ, the revelation of Father, from the moment Jesus rose from the dead.

And when we say, "Church," we mean the gathering together inside of Christ of all who belong to Jesus, part of His revelation, whether upon earth inside of heaven or in heaven-only, lacking an earthly form.

Just as in Lakewood Church, maybe 5-6,000 people sat on the "valley floor," with another 5-6000 people on the "slopes above," yet we were all one gathering inside the same Spirit and hearing the same word.

Using the Old Testament. Now, in looking through the Psalms, we see, first, that the Psalmists had no idea of the relationship we have with God or of the salvation in which we live.

For that reason, many of the things they say do not translate directly into our walk with God. Some however, like verses on warfare, can be translated into spiritual meanings - our war against spirits of darkness preventing God's people from knowing Him.

Second, we see that Paul and the writer of Hebrews used many short lines from the Psalms. They often took those verses out of context, used them for very different meanings, and ignored nearby opposing lines.

Why Jerusalem? Jerusalem had been the Caananite town and fortress just north of Bethlehem. It is even possible that David had visited there in his youth. The Jebusites would have recognized Saul as overlord.

Not long after David became king, he and his men captured Jerusalem as their own. I imagine that a massive construction program began immediately.

The thing that made the city so special to David was, I believe, the presence of the Ark of God in David's tent and later the site David purchased for the temple on the north side of the town. - God present with us.

Not of Stone. Now, the Bible is VERY clear about the direct and total transfer of meaning from the natural city to the Church.

First, Isaiah said that God does not dwell in a house made of stone. Second, "Christ dwells in your heart through faith" is a billion trillion times bigger than any experience with God found in the Old Testament.

Then, Jesus said that the temple was His physical body, which became us together as His present body. And James said that the Tabernacle of David was fulfilled in the Church.

A 'God' of Stone. In Galatians 4, Paul says that the natural Jerusalem is a city of bondage and has no place in the inheritance of God.

Finally, the Spirit of God in John's vision will not even name the place, but calls it "Sodom." Today, people claim that the "presence of God" can be sensed - where? By standing in front of a stone wall in that wicked city. They actually sense a demon.

Again, the PRESENCE OF GOD in the heart of the least believer in Jesus is a billion trillion times greater than anything in the Old Testament experience.

Valuing the Church. And so, we know that the beyond-all presence of God is now found inside of every believer in Jesus across the earth, yet magnified immensely as they gather together to love one another.

When Paul says that he carries all the churches of Christ upon his heart above all things, the transfer of David's heart from the old city to the New is complete.

A Christian who does not value the Church of Jesus Christ all across the earth ABOVE ALL JOY, does not know the Salvation of God. Our Jerusalem is ALL who belong to Jesus.

Our Love for the Church. If our Jerusalem is all who belong to Jesus, then their gathering together unto Christ in the fulfillment of Tabernacles IS the purpose and passion of our lives.

Because Paul said that the love of God is already poured out in our hearts, we KNOW that the love David and all the Psalmists had for Jerusalem has become our love for the Church.

In our prayer today, we are calling a God who LOVES the Church, infinitely more than Paul or David could ever express, out from our hearts and into our world. Our study will now build towards that prayer.

Zion and Captivity. In this study, we will draw from all the Psalmists, even those who came after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, because their love for the city of David was just an extension of David's love.

And we will use references to "Zion" as well. Zion is a metaphor of the authority of God given to His sons, coming out from the Mercy Seat, the beating heart of God's new Jerusalem.

Let's start with the final cry towards a lost Jerusalem, written while in the captivity in Babylon, Psalm 137. Our Church is in captivity.

A City Behind and Ahead. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it... How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.

We balance this view with Abraham's. **By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

We Are that City. But before we talk about these things, let's also bring in David's deepest desire, from Psalm 27. **One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.**

Then the strongest verse depicting what all three actually have their focus set upon.

You are fellow-citizens with the holy ones and of the household, the family of God, having been constructed together upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, inside of Whom the whole building, being fitted together, is increasing into a temple, holy inside the Lord. Inside of Jesus, you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God inside the sphere of Spirit (Ephesians 2).

We Are Angry. We start with the backward look of Psalm 137, remembering that which is now lost.

Indeed, we look back across the church through the centuries and we see the fullness of Christ, the dwelling place of God, taken captive by Babylon. And those who dwell in her do not know the Salvation of God in Whom they already live.

Now, the Psalmist says, **Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!** I translate that immediately into the anger I felt when I saw how much we have been robbed in our Bibles.

An Iron Cage. Jerusalem has been robbed and plundered. The Church, the very House of God, built upon a firm foundation, has been taken captive into an iron cage of the mind, imprisoned by 'correct ideas.'

Let your mind run across all who loved Jesus through the centuries. They are part of us, each one, yet they did not know the real meaning of Church.

I think of Michael Severus, a most precious brother in Christ to me, as he was dragged to be burned at the stake by John Calvin for teaching the same union with Christ that I teach. Yet Calvin also was born again!

The Captivity of Babylon. Our focus now is that we see about the same number of believers in Jesus upon the earth as are in the heavens (we suppose), having been taken captive by Babylon.

Indeed, from things Pope Francis has recently said, we could say correctly that Babylon is now placing God's people into the hands of the Beast.

We are and truly ought to be angry. As Jesus said - **An enemy has done this.** And as we have cast down the seven demons binding the scroll of Ephesians 3:17 from being read, so we are the anger of God against that which has hurt so many.

You Don't Mess with God. Here is what we must reckon with. A God who LOVES His Church, coming through us now, will be a God of war and even wrath as He rescues His people from the destroyers.

Think of the Amalekites who made the incredibly stupid decision to plunder David's short-term town of Ziklag. From the moment they said, "Charge," they were dead.

You don't mess with David by stealing what he loves; you don't mess with God by stealing what He loves. And this is the focus of the Psalms of Zion.

What Do We See? But before we release a God of Love as war into our world, let's consider the Jerusalem of God as He intends her to be upon this earth, in actuality the woman clothed with the sun.

And we are talking about the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in the lives of more than 100 million believers in Jesus across the whole earth.

What, exactly, do we want to see? What does the Jerusalem of God look like during these final few years of this age of not-knowing God? For what we see is what we call into being.

A Critical Viewpoint. I have never before considered the answer to this question as we have just framed it. I am a bit at a loss on what short description we truly need.

We call it like we see it. What do we see? Let's hold that question before God inside our hearts and see what might spring up from there.

But I do see a critical viewpoint from what we have just considered. Contrast two seemingly opposing but equally false definitions. "*Well, God just forgives everybody*" versus "*Jesus is come (again) to destroy men's lives.*"

God's Purpose. Both of those viewpoints spit upon a God having a DEEP and VITAL purpose for all things.

We know God's purpose and that is to prove Jesus as every Word He speaks faithful and true. And we know that the full completion of Jesus is humans on this earth loving one another just as Jesus loves us. For God has set the proving of Jesus inside both the weakness and strength of a woman screaming to give birth in the very face of the dragon.

God wants all creation to witness the incredible might of His rescue of His beloved Church from all evil.

Psalm 110. I am seeing so many wondrous truths swinging into this picture, but I do not want to leave a man after God's heart. These lines are from the passage most often quoted in the New Testament, Psalm 110, a Psalm of David.

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

God Is Coming Through. You and I right now are that Zion out from which comes the rod of His strength.

How do we know that? Easy. We choose to call ourselves so. The proof? Our faith, that is, the absolute confidence that all that Christ Jesus is we are, right now in this world. Look out! God is coming through.

Let's reword the next line out from Strong's. **Your people, Your folk, shall be a free-will offering in the day of Your strength-efficiency-wealth-army.** - May I suggest 1 John 3:16.

We Are Zion. By this we have known LOVE, in that He set forth His soul for us, for our sakes, AND WE ALSO are committed to setting forth our souls for our brothers and sisters.

We are Zion, God's authority in our mouths (Romans 10:8) AND we are **the staff of His mighty strength sent forth**. How we accomplish this mighty victory we will consider in "A Man Who Shows Us Jesus."

Let's go again to this Church whom David, God, and we love with all the Passion/Jesus of our hearts.

Jerusalem as She Is. I have had you read all of Psalm 122 and every line in it is central to this topic, but we have filled our space.

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! - We already live inside Jerusalem as she truly is; we call what does not appear into the experience of all.

The Spirit seems to have limited us to context instead of content. Both are of equal importance. You cannot know the characters of a story without also knowing the setting and plot through which they move.

Reading for Next Time. The next lesson is "A Man Who Shows Us Jesus." For that lesson, read Psalm 69 and Psalm 22. Also read 2 Samuel 15:1-16:14 and 2 Samuel 22. Also Hebrews

In the next lesson we want to look again at how David takes us right into the mind of Jesus and we see that we are just like Him. Here is where we learn what it means to set forth our souls for the brethren.

From My mother's womb You have been My God. Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

Let's Pray Together. We are calling a God who LOVES the Church, infinitely more than Paul or David could ever express, out from our hearts and into our world.

This God of Love comes through in two directions at once, embracing His People into that Love and striking down all who seek to destroy her. As we saw in *The River of Life*, it is the grandest display of rescue ever set upon the stage.

"Father, we know that you love the Church, millions of believers in Jesus all across the earth, with a love far beyond what we could ever comprehend."

Father, Be Love through Us. "Father, we belong to You; we are Yours. Father, we know that Your Heart is planted in ours as one together, and that we are Your entrance into Your creation and into our world.

"Father, come through us into our world as overwhelming LOVE for Your Church.

"Father, we rejoice that we are so privileged to share in Your Love for all who belong to Jesus, yet we recognize that such Love is only You.

"And Father, we know that when You enter our world, You humble Yourself, together with us, for the sake of others. Father, be what You are through us.

A God of War. "Yet, Father, we also respect and honor You in Your purposes in magnifying Jesus as every Word You speak faithful and true and that the accuser of our brethren has set great harm against Your people.

"We know, Father, that in calling a God of Love into our world, we are also calling a God of war coming to set Your people free.

"Father, we are aware of the hard unbelief, the refusal to live inside of Jesus, and all the prostitution with this world, yet we know none of that, for we see our brethren only through Your absolute Atonement, we see them with no consciousness of sins.

The Exuberant Father. "Father, as You come through us, strike down, with Your mighty angels, all who accuse Your precious people with not-Christ and silence all the preachers who persist with their anti-Christ 'gospel.'

"And, oh, our Father, as Your people come rushing out from all their low and empty places into Your great Feast, so rush out from us to them as the exuberant Father, with no thought of grievance, but only outpoured celebration.

"Oh mighty Father, You have given us to share Your Heart and to be Your Love for Your Church. Let it be so as You say, Lord Jesus; it is so."