

Series: Isaiah
Title: Look Upon Zion
Text: Isaiah 33: 20-23
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Often, we find ourselves looking at temporal walls and thinking this is the church. How often we behold destruction all around--every ally of hell working together against us. We feel like helpless prey sure to be taken. Such was the case in Jerusalem at this time. City upon city had been consumed by the Assyrians. Now the Assyrians stood examining the walls of Jerusalem. Many who drew near with their mouths only in that earthly Zion began to look at Hezekiah in his weakness, hearing his princes in their weakness, looking at the enemy in his strength and proved themselves to have no stability of Divine Grace in their hearts. (Isaiah 33: 14).

But the LORD directs our focus away from the walls and city of Jerusalem, away from the earthly king and his governors, away from each other, so that we behold the true church and city, the King in his beauty who is reigning and bringing to pass all things in this earth exactly on time in our midst.

Isaiah 33: 20: Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle *that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.*

In Hebrews 12, the apostle Paul is saying the same things said in Isaiah 32, 33, 34 and 35. After the roll call of faith in Hebrews 11, he reminds us of our security in Christ, of the Father's chastening hand in the trial, and he quotes Isaiah, "Lift up the hands that hang down and make straight paths for your feet." Look to Christ in Zion. Zion is the Church of God, the city of God in heaven, the church universal in heaven and earth.

Hebrews 12: 18: For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 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, 23 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, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel.

I. THE CHURCH OF GOD IS FOREVER.

Look upon Zion! Look NOT at the enemy--LOOK UPON ZION! The city "whose builder and maker is God." The church of God is made up of saints chosen by God the Father,

redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, called and assembled by the Holy Spirit, and preserved forever by his grace. She is God's dwelling place. None can destroy her.

The strength of this city is God our Salvation.

Isaiah 26: 1: We have a strong city; Salvation will [God] appoint [for] walls and bulwarks.

Isaiah 60:18:...thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

The city of the living God shall remain for she is the "city of our solemnities."

The church of God is where Christ our Altar is the perfection of the saints of God and our worship comes up to him in perfection. Our Lord shall always have those he has made kings and priests to worship and praise him in song and prayer on the mountains he has established. God shall provide her with pastors to feed her with knowledge and understanding. All those who were baptized in the death of the Lord Jesus shall be called and made willing to confess him in water-baptism "the answer of a good conscience towards God." Our Sovereign Head shall never cease drawing his saints to his table where we remember his broken body and shed blood in the bread and wine, till he come.

Zechariah 2:5: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her

Ezekiel 48:35...the name of the city from *that day shall be*, The LORD is there. (Jehovah-Shammah.)

Isaiah 33: 20:...thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation,

The individual child and the church is the habitation of God in his saints and his saints in God.

Ephesians 2: 22: In {Christ} ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The word "habitation" also carries the meaning of a "fold". Christ is our Shepherd. He said, "they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

The church of God is a secure habitation--a secure dwelling place--a habitation of peace--"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Application: Peace is what we each believer here desires most--with God and with each other. We face many trials, as they did in Isaiah's day--without and within. So it has been in every age. But the Spirit of God keeps his saints united in the quietness and peace of redemption, reconciliation and grace. He lifts our eyes above and says, "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation!" And so it shall be!

Here is the Peace and Security Which God Promises Us

Isaiah 33: 20:...thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

The church of God in itself is a tabernacle--a tent (Isaiah 33: 18-19).

- You shall not see a fierce people-- no people of a deep speech
- We have no carnal weapons
- Not many mighty, not many noble are called
- The tent is not held up by worldly riches
- Not by man's wisdom and strength--

1 Corinthians 1: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: BUT OF GOD ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS.

Christ the King in his beauty is made our Wisdom so that we do not look to our own—our righteousness, sanctification, redemption--so that we do not try to be our own. God has done this on purpose...the feebleness of this tent magnifies the Power and Wisdom of God who keeps us.

So it is that our Salvation, our Walls, our Protector and Provider promises, that his church is:

Isaiah 33: 20: a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

Brothers and sisters, not one of you shall ever be removed because Christ Jesus is our Nail in a Sure Place

John 10: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. 30 I and [my] Father are one.

Not one of the cords shall be broken: Not:

- His everlasting love
- His everlasting covenant
- His everlasting, unchanging Word of Truth
- His eternal redemption
- His everlasting salvation

II. BUT THERE THE GLORIOUS LORD...

Isaiah 33: 21: But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place of broad rivers *and* streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

In Isaiah's day, city upon city had been consumed by the Assyrian army. Against some, they diverted the rivers so the city was without water, thus the city became so weak they were forced to surrender. Wherever the rivers ran close to the cities, the Assyrian came in galleys with oars up to the walls and used ladders to make a breach therein.

All Jerusalem had around it was a dirty, little brook Kedron. But because our Lord Jesus drank of that brook, and because He accomplished the work of making his children one with God--the glorious Lord--the GLORIFIED LORD--is in the midst of his church *a place of broad rivers and streams.*

A MAN SHALL BE--RIVERS OF WATERS (Is 32: 2)

Rivers meant fertile lands and much fruit--by his blood, his children are born again of the Spirit of God and through the Spirit we are filled with fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ.

Application: Our desire is to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit, to walk in the works he has foreordained, that we might adorn the glorious truth of our Lord. Our glorious Lord is able to make us like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth our fruit in its season. Notice--our glorious LORD is a place of BROAD RIVERS AND STREAMS--NEVER ENDING ABOUNDING SUPPLY!

John 1:16: And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

- We are laden with the unsearchable riches of Christ
- We have the One Pearl of great price
- Joint-heirs with Christ
- Lack ye anything? Nothing
- All that we need HE is and provides

The river meant protection--**no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.** This weak tent has many enemies. But to them all our glorious LORD says:

Isaiah 33: 23: Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail:

The gates of hell shall not prevail against his church.

Illustration: The rocks on the shoreline. Our God is the Rock on which every gallant ship is broken to pieces!

Isaiah 33: 23:..then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.

Romans 8: 35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

III. THIS IS SO BECAUSE THE ETERNAL LORD GOD IS OUR SAVIOR.

Isaiah 33: 22: For the LORD is our judge,

All judgment is committed to Christ. He will not slay the righteous with the wicked-- shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? He is able to lead us in the paths of righteousness.

Isaiah 33: 22:...The LORD is our lawgiver,

He writes his law on our hearts. He makes his Word our Rule. He puts his Spirit within us so that we follow Him. His faithful, loving, tender mercy is our Guide

Isaiah 33: 22:...The LORD is our king;

Christ is the King who commands deliverances for Jacob. He is God our King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. Our Savior is the KING of kings and LORD of lords.

Isaiah 33: 22:...He will save us.

Brothers and sisters, this glorious good news is ours right now! He is our Husband and we his bride--inseparably one in Him. Let us "cast all our care" on our great All in All for he careth for us. The LORD is our sure dwelling place. Every trial is ministering to our growth. Every trial is enriching us together in his Divine Grace. Our eyes shall see the King in his beauty. Oh, Look upon Zion!

To you who are asking yourselves, "How can this be said of me this morning?" Trust Christ and all these glorious things that are spoken of Zion shall be yours!

Amen!