

Zion's foundations

by Douglas E. Cox

Isaiah said that in Zion, God will lay a stone, a sure foundation, a precious corner stone.

Isaiah 28:16

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Paul identified Jesus as the chief corner stone of God's temple; the apostles and prophets are included in its foundation. He wrote:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: [Ephesians 2:19-21]

God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the foundation of the Gospel. Paul said, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." [Galatians 3:8]

At Bethel, where Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels of God ascending and descending on it, the land he was promised became a symbol of revelations of God. [Genesis 28:11-22] Jacob anointed his pillow stone, and said it would be God's house. Bethel was one of the holy places in Israel. But mount Zion became a far more significant holy place. Psalm 87 says:

Psalm 87:1-3

His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

Other psalms say:

Psalm 69:35

For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah.

Psalm 102:16

When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

Psalm 147:2

The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

David called mount Zion "the city of the great King," and "the mountain of his holiness," or "his holy mountain." He called it "the joy of the whole earth."

Psalm 48:1-2

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Jesus, alluding to this psalm in his Sermon on the Mount, said Jerusalem is the city of the great King:

Matthew 5:34-36

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

The Psalmist wrote:

Psalm 137:4-6

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." [Matthew 5:14] He meant that his disciples were "the city which cannot be hid," and "the light of the world."

David wrote:

Psalm 2:1-7

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 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.

In the New Testament this psalm is quoted twice, in Acts 13:33 & Hebrews 1:5. At Pentecost, after his resurrection, Jesus Christ was established as king in the heavenly mount Zion, and has reigned upon the throne of David since then, confirming his covenant with his saints and his Church.

Isaiah wrote of Jerusalem:

Isaiah 2:1-2

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Jesus represents the "mountain of the Lord's house." He was God's only begotten son. He was raised up, and established "in the top of the mountains," in the throne of his Father, in heaven. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus ascended to heaven. Jerusalem and mount Zion were raised up to heaven in a spiritual sense. Since then, the Old Testament prophecies about Jerusalem and Zion apply to the heavenly city, not the earthly city, which was cast out, and identified with Hagar the bondwoman. [Galatians 4:24-31]

Paul wrote of Christians, "Ye are God's building." [1 Corinthians 3:9] He continued:

1 Corinthians :10-11

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The temple is now being built. Prophecies about Jerusalem and mount Zion apply to the Church, the heavenly Jerusalem. Mount Zion is no longer natural, but spiritual, and "cannot be touched." [Hebrews 12:18] The saints in all nations are "lively stones" of the temple of God. Peter wrote:

1 Peter 2:5

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Isaiah encouraged everyone who seeks God to consider the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful.

Isaiah 51:1-3

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

The woman who flees to the wilderness in Revelation 12:6 & 14 represents the Church. The promise that the wilderness will become like the garden of Eden, and joy and gladness will be there, and thanksgiving, and the voice of melody, applies to the Church, and probably refers to the satisfaction and comfort that the saints experience when they recognize Bible prophecy being fulfilled, and their role in it.

The heavenly Jerusalem is the city that Abraham sought.

Hebrews 11:8-10, 16

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . . But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Abraham looked for an eternal city made and built by God. [Hebrews 11:9-10] Its foundation is Christ, a sure foundation. Paul said, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." [2 Corinthians 1:20]