

# Zion, God's Habitation

by George Warnock

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*Zion is the place of God's throne and temple, where His people can experience His power and strength through fellowship with Christ and union with Him.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 9:11, Psalm 20:1, Psalm 48:2, Psalm 50:2, Psalm 51:15, Psalm 132:8, 1 Corinthians 15:57, Hebrews 7:3, Hebrews 12:24

**Topics:** "Spiritual Strength", "Christ's Victory"

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## Description

George Warnock preaches on the significance of Zion as a place of rest, righteousness, power, joy, holiness, beauty, and praise. He emphasizes how Zion represents a spiritual stronghold where believers can find strength and victory through Christ. Warnock highlights the transformation of weakness into strength, the anticipation of sharing in Christ's victory, and the eternal significance of Zion as a symbol of the completed and finished Sacrifice of Christ.

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## Transcript

"Arise, O LORD, into thy rest;

Thou, and the ark of thy strength.

Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness;

And let thy saints shout for joy... (See Ps. 132:8-14.)

Zion is not only the place of God's throne, it is the place of His temple, and therefore the habitation of His priesthood. For when men come into fellowship with Christ and into union with Him, there is an effectual priesthood. Many of the psalms of David therefore speak of the throne of God and the priesthood in the same breath. (See Ps. 110:2, 4.) The Son who now reigns in Zion is a King-Priest on a throne which knows nothing of heredity, racial distinctions, temple rituals, and sacrifices. And those who anticipate sharing a place on the throne with Him in the Melchizedek order had better forget about their racial heritage. The Melchizedek order knows nothing about that. (See Heb. 7:3.)

### 4. Zion, The Place Of Power

"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; The name of the God of Jacob defend thee; Send thee help from the sanctuary, And strengthen thee out of Zion" (Ps. 20:1-2).

The fortress of Zion which was once occupied by the Jebusites became the fortress of David--the place of his kingdom, and the place where he set up the Tent of David. But first David and his men had to scale the craggy heights of Zion and drive out the enemy. So it was that our Lord Jesus Christ wrestled with principalities and powers, and "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them" in His Cross (Col. 2:15). Notice this beautiful characteristic of Zion: the place of weakness, the place of our battle, the place of our struggle... God intends that this shall become the place of our strength. Let us take courage in this, for as we come into the victory of the Cross, those very areas of our weakness and humiliation become a place where we can rejoice:

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Lk. 11:21-22).

God would teach us that Zion, that formidable obstacle that once scoffed us and put us to shame, can become our fortress and our strong tower as we walk in the victory of the Cross. We are enabled to rob Satan of "all his armour" (Gr. panoplia), as we put on "the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:11, Gr. panoplia). We must discover that these weapons are not "carnal," but totally a spiritual battle-dress, and effectual to the casting down of the strongholds of the enemy.

#### 5. Zion, The Joy Of The Whole Earth

"Beautiful for situation, The joy of the whole earth, Is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, The city of the great King" (Ps. 48:2).

The joy of the whole earth! Not now, but it is going to be. At present we have to bear the reproach of Jeremiah, as he beheld the heathen conquerors of Zion wagging their heads and saying, "Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" (Lam. 2:15). Zion soon lost her reputation as the joy of the whole earth as her citizens became alienated from God and walked in disobedience. But David foresaw the day when all creation would rejoice in Mount Zion:

"Let the heavens be glad, And let the earth rejoice: And let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth" (1 Chron. 16:31-33).

#### 6. Zion, The Mountain Of Holiness

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised

In the city of our God,

In the mountain of His holiness" (Ps. 48:1).

"But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, And there shall be holiness" (Obad. 17).

The holiness doctrine has been around for a long time. Once it was a living, cleansing, purging Word that went forth to God's people. Now it remains as a doctrine of the Church with very little life in it, a legal document of do's and don'ts. But God will yet cleanse and purge His people from all defilement. May He hasten the day when "holiness" will no longer be just a doctrine of the Church, but a "highway" on which His people will travel to the City of God.

## 7. Zion, The Perfection Of Beauty

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined" (Ps. 50:2).

The Perfection of Beauty! This is God's work, beloved! Let us not excuse ourselves from appropriating God's desire by saying, "Of course if you are talking about perfection, just leave me out... I can't be perfect..." We are not talking about any kind of perfection that you and I can bring forth. We are talking about the New Covenant that Christ is mediating for His people... by which He shall bring us into His own perfection. We are talking about the creative masterpiece that God is bringing forth out of the clay fields of fallen humanity. He the great Master Workman knows how to bring forth vessels unto honor and glory. And He bids His watchmen on the walls to continue in their intercessions, day and night, until this happens:

"Keep not silence, and give Him no rest, Till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."  
(See Isa. 62:1-7.)

## 8. Zion, The Mountain Of Praise

"Sing praises to the LORD, Which dwelleth in Zion: Declare among the people his doings" (Ps. 9:11).

Throughout the history of Israel there had been the occasional song of victory in the camp; but here in the Tent of David the song of praise is introduced into temple worship for the first time. Not only was the ark placed in the Tent in the midst of great rejoicing and praise, but Asaph and his brethren were appointed to minister before the ark. But something else very noteworthy happened. David even appointed singers to minister in the old Tabernacle that Moses built, which was now on the hill of Gibeon. No doubt it was very beautiful, and blessed the hearts of the people who ministered in that old structure. But the ark of God's presence was not there, nor would it ever return to that old structure. In vain will any of God's ministers ever restore the ark of God's glory and presence to the old structures that have had their day, and which God lays aside when He brings forth the new. But God will always be faithful to minister to those whose hearts are open, wherever they are. And He was faithful to send Levites to Gibeon, with songs of praise, that they might hear through music and song the wonderful thing that God was doing in Zion.

And yet it is important that God's people who have caught the vision of Zion do not look down upon those who seemingly do not have that vision. There are people all over the earth singing about the glory of Zion, and many of them do not have the slightest understanding of what they are singing about. But God often works that way! Who knows? Perhaps many of these will be more ready for the next phase of God's temple, than some of those who have come out of the old order, and into the new. God just will not allow His people to glory over the knowledge they have, the understanding they have, or in the fact that they have come out of Babylon. As one minister said, "I used to tell people to come out of Babylon... but one day He told me that He wanted to get Babylon out of me!"

There is a solemn lesson for us all in what happened on Mount Gibeon and on Mount Zion. Abiathar the priest who clung to David in his rejection, and ministered on Zion, failed to qualify for ministry in Solomon's Temple. And Zadok the priest, who was sent by David to minister in the old Tabernacle on Gibeon, became the high priest of that new and glorious temple that Solomon would build. Selah! Let us meditate on these things.

After the dedicatory burnt offerings and peace offerings that were offered on Mount Zion there is no record that blood-sacrifices were ever again offered here in this place. The old rituals would continue in the Tabernacle of Moses on Gibeon; but Zion was to become an institution that was new and distinct... and was based on a completed and finished Sacrifice, the Sacrifice that was perfect, and could never be repeated. Zion would therefore take on eternal significance; and when we come to Zion, "the city of the living God," we also come to the "blood of sprinkling," which is the once-for-all Sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 12:24). David recognized this new order, as he sang:

"I will praise the name of God with a song,

And will magnify him with thanksgiving.

This also shall please the LORD better

Than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

The humble shall see this, and be glad" (Ps. 69:30-32).

Before we leave this subject, let us be sure we understand what true praise really is. It is not just a big noise that we make to try to make an impression on God. Yes, there is the shout of victory in the camp of the saints, but true praise involves much more than that. Read the book of Psalms carefully and you will discover that in every line, in every sentence, in every praise that is uttered: there is wisdom, there is knowledge, there is exaltation, there is teaching, there is instruction, there is exhortation, there is repentance, there is a yearning after holiness and purity, there is a longing after God, there is a desire toward God's people, there is lamentation for the desolation of Zion, there is prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, there is perplexity in trial, there is rejoicing in triumph, there is condemnation of sin, there is a pressing forward unto righteousness, there is expectation of His glory, there is proclamation of His Kingdom. The soul of the psalmist is made bare before the LORD as he searches his heart--as God searches his heart--as he shows forth the praises of the LORD and extols His excellencies, in all of His doings toward the children of men.

Lord, teach us to praise You as we ought... lest it be said of us as was said of a disobedient people of old:

"This people... honoureth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8).

But may our sacrifices of praise be tempered with the oil of a broken and a contrite heart, as David prayed:

"O LORD, open thou my lips;

And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice;

Else would I give it:

Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

A broken and a contrite heart, O God,

Thou wilt not despise.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:

Build thou the walls of Jerusalem (Ps. 51:15-18)."

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