

Galatians 4: 24-28; “The Jerusalem Above”, Message # 29 in the series – “Christ Has Made Us Free”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on the evening of September 3rd, 2014, at the church.

The last time we were together we looked at the two Covenants. The first one Paul talked about proceeded from Mt. Sinai. This was the Old Covenant because Mt. Sinai was where God gave the Old Covenant; He gave the law to Moses there on Mt. Sinai. This mountain was represented allegorically by Hagar who was the bondwoman. Paul says in verse 25 that this covenant represented the Jerusalem which then was, in bondage with her children. He is referring to the unbelieving Jews of that day who had believed in a salvation by the works of the ceremonial and moral law. They put the Lord Jesus to death; their Savior and Lord, because He told them that they must believe in Him or they would die in their sins. They also had persecuted the apostle Paul and the other apostles who preached the true gospel. The other Covenant of the two covenants is the New Covenant. Paul doesn't tell us here what mountain it proceeded from, but there is no doubt that he means Mt. Zion, which corresponds to the Jerusalem above as we shall see in just a few minutes. The Jerusalem above, he says, “is free” and she is “the mother of us all”.

This is what we want to focus on tonight; this phrase, “The Jerusalem above is free; she is the mother of us all”. What exactly does this mean? In what sense is the Jerusalem above the mother of us all? Well, in the context of the verses before and behind, we see that it means the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is the City of our God which preaches the true gospel of Jesus Christ. And each of us who believe are mothered into that City through the work of the Holy Spirit. When we believe in the promises of the New Covenant through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ we become citizens of this great City; the Jerusalem above. At this hour we want to examine 2 things specifically in relation to this Jerusalem above. 1st – The Jerusalem above is a mother who sets us free from the law. (verses 24-26) 2nd – The Jerusalem above is a mother of many spiritual children; ; a fruitfulness which came by believing in the promise. (Verses 27 and 28)

1st of all – The Jerusalem above is the mother who sets us free from the law.

Verse 26 says: “But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.” Let's turn over to Hebrews Chapter 12, verse 18. “For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.” “For they could not endure what was commanded: ‘And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.’” “And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.’” “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of the sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

When you came to Christ, you did not come to a mountain that could not be touched, and that was burning with fire; to the place that caused so much fear and dread that you did not want to hear the voice of God speaking to you. That is what happened when the law was given on Mt. Sinai. Even Moses himself was exceedingly afraid, and full of trembling. But Paul, who I believe is the writer of the book of Hebrews, says: You have come to Mt. Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. And then he gives a description of what we as believers are being brought to. We are being brought to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above; to a multitude of angels, to Jesus Himself. That is where we will eventually be when we die. But

notice that Paul says that we are being brought to “the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven”. No doubt, all those who are in heaven are registered in heaven, but we need to consider the fact that those who are registered in heaven are also those who have been saved upon the earth. Those who are saved, who are upon the earth, are now living their life unto God by the grace of the Lord Jesus. You have been set free from the law. You now have an entirely new life in Christ. You have died to the law and you are now citizens of the heaven to which you are going.

When you believe in Jesus you are believing in the New Covenant which He established by His sufferings and His perfect obedience to the law on your behalf. Even when you first believe you are made to die to the law that you might live to God. Turn with me over to Romans Chapter 7, verse 1. “Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?” “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives.” “But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.” “So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.” “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

You see, dear Christian, you are free. You are now a part of the Jerusalem above. Therefore you do not need to live for earthly things, but for heavenly and eternal things. Look with me over at Philippians Chapter 3, verse 17. “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.” “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: who end in destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” You will notice the connection between the present reality of faith and unbelief. The person of faith believes in what is most certainly coming, on the basis of present citizenship in the city above.

The person of faith believes in all that is coming, which has been promised in the Bible. The unbelieving person lives for their present earthly and bodily satisfactions. They do not believe that Christ needed to die so that they can be saved. Their glory is in the shameful things that they are doing to forget that they must needs have Christ to have eternal life. The Christian’s focus and his life are set on the heavenly things, the things which are present spiritual realities which Christ died to purchase and apply to their souls. If a Christian is wise, he knows that his citizenship is in heaven, and so, he will have a mind set upon heavenly spiritual things. The Christian who is wise knows that he is a citizen of a heavenly city, the Jerusalem above. He knows that whether you are a Jew or a Gentile you are brought into this heavenly City, the Jerusalem above, when you believe in Jesus.

Turn with me over to Psalm 87, verse 5. “And of Zion it will be said, ‘This one and that one were born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her.’” “The Lord will record, when He registers the peoples; this one was born there.” “Selah.” “Both the singers and the players on instruments say, ‘All my springs are in you.’” Now, these verses are not simply talking about those who were physically born in Israel in the days of old. They are talking about those who have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is the New Birth that sets free those who are enslaved to sin. Being born from above by the Spirit of God is what sets you free from the bondage to Satan. You are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. When you are made a citizen of the

Jerusalem above, you will agree with all the rest of God's dear people; both the singers and the players on instruments who say: "All my springs are in you."

Let us ask ourselves if all of our springs of joy are in the Christ who has saved us and who has placed us in His Church? Do we realize that we belong to City of the great King? Do we realize that we have been set free from sin to do the will of God? Our Christian life is not a legalistic life. The Christian is no longer in bondage. "The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets, before we reach the heavenly fields, or walk the golden streets." "We are marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion." "We're marching upward to Zion the beautiful city of God." And also the hymn, Glorious Things of thee are spoken, Zion City of our God. Verse 4 says: "Savior, if of Zion's City I, through grace, a member am, let the world deride or pity, I will glory in Thy name: Fading is the worldling's pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show; solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion's children know."

2nd - The Jerusalem above is a mother of many spiritual children; a fruitfulness which came by believing in the promise.

Verse 27 – "For it is written: 'Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear!' "Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor!" "For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband." "Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." Isaiah 54: 1 is quoted here by the apostle Paul to make a point. He is making a point about the Jerusalem above; the New Testament Church. The point is, that under the New Covenant, in New Testament times things would be different quite different than under the legal dispensation. In the Old Testament times God was indeed married to Israel and there were millions who were under the Old Covenant because they were physically born in Israel. But there were not very many true believers in those times under the Old Covenant. The true spiritual Israel among the Jews was comparatively barren and desolate. And the Gentiles were allowed to go their own way, and God did not call many from among them either. But all of this would change in accordance with God's promise of the New Covenant.

Turn with me over to Jeremiah 31: 31 – "Behold, the days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in that day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord." "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people." "No more shall every man teach his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord." "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

I hope that you can see the decided difference between the 2 Covenants, Old and New. In New Covenant times, because of the Incarnation and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the barren and the desolate spiritual Israel would flourish greatly. She would become the Jerusalem above, or the Jerusalem born from above by the Holy Spirit, based upon the finished work and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jerusalem at the time of Christ, which was very desolate because of her priests, scribes, and Pharisees, having once believed in the lie of a works-salvation through their ceremonial and outward moral observances, would now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, poured out on the day of Pentecost, become a mother of many children. There would be this tremendous fruitfulness which would come about because the Promised Holy Spirit would come and baptize the Church with power to preach.

In the New Testament Christ's Church would conceive and bear multitudes of children. This was not hard labor for the Church; it was the fulfillment of the Promise of Christ. Christ's coming and His ministry fulfilled the promise to Abraham. The Spirit's coming and His ministry

fulfilled the promise of the Father to the Son which was conveyed on by Christ, to the apostles before He ascended. Turn with me over to Acts 1: 4 – “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, ‘You have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” Ever since the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been given to Christ Church. Each believer in Christ is baptized into the body, spiritually, and we can rejoice and praise God daily for such a salvation from sin, and such a work as uniting us with His true Church. The Jerusalem above is the New Testament Church. She is a mother of many children; all whom are born of the Spirit, and baptized into the mystical body of Christ. How we should rejoice!

How we should break forth with shouts of joy, that we unworthy and undeserving sinners should not only be called into Fellowship with God and Christ, but that we should become a part of God’s building, His City, and be able to become useful citizens and members of it. As we close let us remember that all of our salvation rests upon the promises of God; of God bringing to pass things which are utterly impossible for us to conceive of doing, both in our hearts and in regard to His Church. That is, it is a truly miraculous thing, the preaching the gospel of Christ; telling sinners that it is by simple faith in Jesus that all of blessings of salvation are theirs; justification, sanctification, redemption, and glorification. The Jerusalem above has many children, all because of Christ’s finished work, and His resurrection power given to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit.