

CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF GOD

Wednesday, April 11

Reading: Psalm 48

Psalm 48:1 *Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. 2 Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.*

3 *God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.*

When I first visited Washington D.C. as a child I was awed by it. The monuments, the museums, Arlington cemetery - it was all so impressive. Walking through the Capitol building and the White House engaged my sense of history and wonder (I didn't know much about the "swamp" of politics at the time).

This sense of awe was even greater for the ancient Hebrews as they viewed Jerusalem. This was the "city of God and His holy mountain" (48:1). The magnificent Temple built by Solomon stood glistening on Mount Zion. But for the faithful, the splendor of Jerusalem had nothing to do with its buildings. They rejoiced in the fact that "God is in her citadels; He has shown Himself to be her fortress" (48:3).

This is another psalm written after God has saved Jerusalem from an enemy attack (possibly the Assyrian invasion referenced in previous psalms). Their enemies came, they saw, and...they fled! The psalmist witnessed this victory and proclaims that "God makes her [Jerusalem] secure forever" (48:4-8). However, we know that God eventually allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed by the Babylonians because of Israel's disobedience and rejection of God.

The picture of the city of God found in this psalm and others look forward to the final city that awaits believers in eternity. It is where we will live with and serve God forever. All who have accepted Christ as Savior are citizens of this city and this psalm gives us some clues for how to live as kingdom citizens.

The city is described as "the joy of the whole earth" (48:2). As God's people, we have the joyous message of salvation - reconciliation with God. The church should be a place filled with the joy of the Lord and people should feel that joy when they enter. Is your life in Christ flowing with joy?

"As we have heard, so we have seen" (48:8). The church is a place where we hear about the great things God has done in the past. But it should also be where we see the great things God is doing right now. There are too many "dead" churches that are resting on past glories and doing nothing to advance Christ's kingdom today. We must thank God for past victories and seek Him to use us in the present and future.

"Within Your Temple, O God, we meditate on Your unfailing love" (48:9). Our lives must be guided and directed by the love of God. We should meditate on it in our daily lives and rejoice in it when we gather together in His name.

"Your praise reaches to the ends of the earth...that you may tell of them to the next generation" (48:10-13). Our ultimate goal is to reach others with the good news of Christ. If we are not reaching out to the community and world around us, then we are not being the citizens of the kingdom that God desires. Are you a good citizen?

THRU THE BIBLE Reading: Judges 13-14; John 5