

“Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:2)

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How often do we think about what it will be like in the Kingdom? In this article we imagine ourselves to be among the immortal saints who enter Jerusalem in the age to come.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT what it would be like to be an immortal in the Kingdom of God and to visit the future city of Jerusalem? Have you dreamed of her glory? Have you pictured yourself there amongst the redeemed? Do you mourn for her (Isa. 61:3)? And are you so moved with feeling that you faint with love (Song 5:8)? Can you reach out and touch those things which are invisible (Heb. 11:27)? Has the Truth become a reality in your mind, or is it just sterile doctrines in a musty Statement of Faith?

If we want to be there, we must be like David and exclaim, “this is all my salvation, and all my desire” (2 Sam. 23:5). It is a vision that each of us must engrave upon the fleshly tablet of our heart lest we grow weary and perish (Prov. 29:18). Solomon said, “as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (23:7). What do we think of? What captures the imagination of our heart? Is it business, the vacation that is being planned, the new home we want? Or is it the things of God? For Jesus, it was by “the joy that was set before him” that he “endured the cross, despising the shame”, and “endured such contradiction of sinners against himself” (Heb. 12:2,3). What a marvellous example to follow!

Let us then paint a picture, using our imagination, of that joy that is to be ours in an age that is not too far from hence, for the picture will not be complete if we do not see ourselves there. We must believe that “*Our feet shall stand within [her] gates*” (Ps. 122:2).

Seeing the holy city

When we first set our eyes upon Jerusalem, we were overwhelmed and dazzled by her sight. Here was a landscape, a canvass now complete with all its detail of greatness, magnificence, richness and purity. No longer do we see dimly, but now face to face. No longer do we know only in part; now we know fully, even as we were fully known by our

God. How precious were the promises that sustained us during our dreary sojourn as mortals! And how slow of heart we were to believe all that the prophets had spoken until we came, and with our own eyes had seen her!

And behold, the half was not told us!

It was like a dream, for our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with singing. We were born there, but never set foot upon her soil. We prayed for her peace, but saw only trouble and desolation. We waited patiently for her glory, but our tears ran down like a river day and night as we mourned her deplorable condition. But now, the city of Jerusalem has risen from the dust and has put on strength and her beautiful garments. She has become the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great King. Her triumph shines out brilliantly and her deliverance as a blazing torch. She has become the crown of glory and royal diadem in the hand of God.

As we walked into the midst of the holy city, we saw, as it were, rivers of water, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side of the river was the tree of life yielding her fruit, its leaves for the healing of the nations. Not only were the nations healed of their blindness and ignorance, but the waters that flowed from Jerusalem have made the desert to blossom abundantly, even like the rose. Even the Salt Sea has been healed, and people now stand on its shores from En-gedi to En-eglaim to fish. It has become a place for the spreading of nets, its fish being of many great kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea.

Just as the desert has bloomed and the Salt Sea now teams with life, so do the streets of Jerusalem. We see boys and girls playing. Old men and women dwell there and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. The horses even wear bells that have written upon them, ‘Holiness unto Yahweh’. We also hear the marvellous songs of the temple, like distant thunders or the sounds of many waters. We see a great multitude, which no man could number, crying with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb”. I heard someone

say, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his temple: and He That sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them".

Years of toil ended

It is so incredible to think that six thousand years of labour and toil, vanity and death, vexation and fear, are now gone! From Jerusalem, God destroyed the covering cast over all people and the veil that was spread over all nations. No longer do men walk in the darkness of their imaginations, "for the Lord God giveth them light". No longer do they war one against another, behaving like beasts, for the Great King has made wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. They have beaten "their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks". For God decreed that they shall not hurt nor destroy in His holy mountain.

People now come from the ends of the earth to the house of the God of Jacob to learn of His ways; for out of Zion goes forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. They bring their offerings of silver and gold unto His Name in Jerusalem, to the Holy One of Israel. The sons of strangers build up her walls, and their kings minister unto God. Surely Israel has become the first dominion among the nations; the kingdom

has come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

What was a lifetime of sacrifice and denial in comparison to the glory that is now ours? During our mortal life "we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears". Trouble seemed to beset us continually, and we endured a great fight of afflictions. Our light affliction, though, was but for a fleeting moment. Immortality now surges through our bodies, made strong and beautiful. We run and are not weary, we walk, and do not faint. God has wiped away our tears, our sorrow and crying, neither do we suffer pain any more.

We lived for our God and sought Him early. We waited for Him. It was His Son, Jesus, that bundle of myrrh, that we have borne about in our body that his life might also be made manifest in us. And we were determined to endure to the end. Neither did we keep silent nor give Him any rest, till He established and made Jerusalem a praise and joy in the earth. And now, God has granted us all our desire, for we see the king in his beauty and behold the land that was very far off. Our eyes see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that will not be taken down nor removed, nor a cord ever broken. Our hearts stir with such joy and gratitude that we cannot but spontaneously exclaim, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her", for she is the mother of us all.

The Final Consolation

In the 1885 Christadelphian, Brother Robert Roberts wrote a series of articles entitled, "Letters to the elect of God in a time of trouble", now available from Logos Publications as a separate booklet. Part of the fourth letter is a picture, under the above title, of life as it might be in the Kingdom. The following is part of the introduction.—TB.

Come to the land of promise in the day of its glory—not as you are now—burdened with infirmity, with a nature easily fatigued, eye soon dimmed, power soon spent, and having but scant capacity to rise to the surrounding sublimities of the universe, or to apprehend sympathetically the subtle glories of the Spirit. Come, when it has been said to you, as to Joshua, "Take away the filthy garments from him . . . I will clothe thee with a change of raiment". Come when mortality no longer weighs you to the earth, and when you know the new experience of having "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness". Come when you can step lightly and joyously abroad upon the earth in the freedom and power of spirit nature; when the cup of life mantles full and sparkling to the brim; when the strong, penetrating eye looks out of a glad heart to behold in all things the unfolded love, and wisdom, and glory of God; when every thought is a joy, every movement a pleasure; every breath the inspiration of an ecstasy that can only find fit expression in praise to Him That sits upon the throne.

In such a state, any land, any configuration of country, would furnish suitable sphere. But God puts His jewels in fit settings. He hath called and glorified His children, and "He hath prepared for them a city"—a city having foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.