

**Galatians 4: 21-28; “The Jerusalem Above is Free”, Sermon # 29 in the series –
“Christ Has Made Us Free”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
September 11th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

In verse 26, Paul says that the Jerusalem above is free, and she is the mother of us all. What exactly does he mean by this? In what sense is the Jerusalem above the mother of us all? Well, if we will look at the context of the verses before and after, we see that it means that the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is the City of our God. Christ’s Church preaches the true gospel of His grace. And by faith in that gospel God saves people from their sins. And Christ by His Holy Spirit brings them to be a part of this New Jerusalem.

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. I want to give you 3 observations on 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. (verses 27 and 28) And 3rd – The Jerusalem above will someday come down from heaven and be established on earth, in the New Heavens and the New Earth. (verse 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.” I would like you to turn over to Hebrews Chapter 12, verses 18-24. “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.”

Now, I hope that you can see here that when you came to Christ, you did not come to a mountain that could not be touched, and that was burning with fire. You did not come to a place which causes so much fear and dread that you do 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 says: You have come to Mt. Zion, to the city of the living God. You have come to the heavenly Jerusalem. And then he gives a description of what we as believers are being brought into. Because you have the Spirit of Christ in your heart, because you are spiritually a part of the kingdom of heaven, you are being brought into the reality that you are part of the number of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above.

Even though we do not yet see a multitude of angels, and even though we do not yet see Jesus Himself, whom we long to see, yet we do spiritually behold Him by faith. We have sweet fellowship and communion with Him day by day in our heart and our mind while we live upon this earth. Yes, I know that the New Jerusalem of the saints in heaven is the place where we will eventually be brought to, when we die. But notice that Paul says that we, even now, 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 also includes all those who have been saved, who are still upon the earth.

Those of us who are saved, who are here upon the earth, we are now living our life unto God by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. 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 a citizen 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 on your behalf. You are trusting in His perfect obedience to the law on your behalf.

And even when you first believed you were made to die to the law that you might live to God. You are free from the bondage of legalism.

Turn with me over to Romans Chapter 7, verses 1-4. “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.”

So you see, dear Christian, you are now, indeed free. You are now a part of the heavenly Jerusalem above, even though, for now, you still live here upon the earth. This is a spiritual reality for all who believe in Jesus. The application of this truth is this: You should not be living for earthly things, but for heavenly and eternal things. Look with me over at Philippians Chapter 3, verses 17-21. “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: whose end is 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 their 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 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 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 me ask you if all of your springs of joy are in the Christ who has saved you and who has placed you in His Church? Do we realize that you are a citizen of City of the great King? Do you realize that you 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.” Remember, 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." Yes, it is a very blessed privilege to be a citizen of the New Jerusalem, and a child of the King. **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. They would be 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 looking back, it is hard for us to tell how many true believers there actually were 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. It does not appear that God called many people 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: 31-33 – “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.” I hope that you can see the decided difference between the two Covenants, Old and New. In New Covenant times, because of the Incarnation and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the barren and the once desolate and un-spiritual Israel would flourish greatly in the time of the apostles. Because of Christ, God writes His law on our hearts. Therefore we are free from condemnation. We are set free, and we love His law, and we serve Him by His grace.

On the Day of Pentecost the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ would begin to be seen as the Jerusalem above, or the Jerusalem born from above by the Holy Spirit, based upon the finished work and ministry of our Christ. The literal physical Jerusalem at the time of Christ was very desolate because of her priests, scribes, and Pharisees, had believed in the lie of a works-salvation, through their ceremonial and outward moral observances. But now, the Jewish apostles and others, would become a mother of many children by the power of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them. 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 to the disciples 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 who are 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. 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. The Jerusalem above has many children, both here and in heaven, all because of Christ's finished work, and His resurrection power given to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit, to apply it. Should this not be a great motivation for us to continue to evangelize this community here, and to expect that God will do great things which we will glory in, because He is the author of them. This leads me to give you my final observation on the Jerusalem above.

3rd – The Jerusalem above will someday come down from heaven and be established on earth, in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

I have shown you in this message that the City of God is the people of God; those who are found in Christ in their living their life with Him and for Him. And then in their joyfully and expectantly looking forward to being with Christ in time of their dying. As it says in Romans 14: 7 and 8 – “For none of us lives to himself and no one dies to himself.” “For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.” “Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.” But we can also expectantly look forward to this; that the time will come, when the New Jerusalem shall come down out of heaven in the time of when Christ will re-create the world.

We need to understand that the City of God, the Great City, the holy Jerusalem is not only the people, God's saints, but it is also the place where Christ is, and all of His holy people with Him. The Bride and the Bridegroom will someday descend out of heaven from God. Let me read this to you, first from Revelation 21: 1-3 – “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” “Also there was no more sea.” “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.’”

And then verses 9-12 – “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.’” “And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.” “Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” “Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.”

Then listen to verses 21-24 – “The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl.” “And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it.” “The Lamb is its light.” “And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.” All this eternal glory is coming in the future, after Christ returns. There will be New Heavens and New Earth in which righteousness dwells. And if we believe in Christ and hold fast to Him, we will be in that place with Him forever.

So let us rejoice that will be so. The Jerusalem above is free, and she is the mother of us all. Let us remember the importance of prayer in relation to this spiritual Jerusalem, the City of God. Isaiah 6 2: 6 – “I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night.” “You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”