

WHO and WHAT IS ZION?, part 2 quotes

1 The literal city of Jerusalem, the Temple, and Mount Zion became corrupted and ruined because of apostasy.

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house [Temple] as the high places of the forest.” Micah 3:9-12.

“The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces...Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity: but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment....the mountain of Zion, which is desolate...” Lamentations 2:7, 14, 5:18.

Even while this great apostasy was going on, the corrupt priests were teaching the people that God was still in their midst, that the Temple could never fall, and that they would be delivered from all their enemies if they would just remain within Jerusalem and not separate from her. But Jesus Christ had commanded all His followers to separate from her (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Luke 21:20-22).

But even in their destruction, the Lord shows a distinction between all three! Zion—was plowed and became desolate, the city of Jerusalem—was laid in heaps, and the Temple upon Mount Moriah—was leveled without one stone remaining upon another (Luke 21:5-6). So from their beginning and all the way through to their end, Jerusalem, the Temple, and Zion were not one in the same, but were distinct!

Because of their rejection of God's Son Jesus Christ, God stated that “he will no more regard them” (Lamentations 4:16). Jesus Christ Himself made this sad fact clearly evident, because He chose to ascend, not from Jerusalem, not from the Temple on Mount Moriah, nor yet from Mount Zion; but from a higher mountain east of Moriah called Mount Olivet (see Acts 1:9, 12). When Christ returns in the air, he will not return to Jerusalem, nor to the Temple on Mount Moriah, nor to Mount Zion, but to the same Mount of Olives from whence He ascended (Acts 1:11-12). This clearly reveals that none of these three literal sites, including Mount Zion, has any further significance in the plans of God because He regards them not!

2 What could be the Biblical representation to the literal city of Jerusalem in a spiritual sense for today?

The disciples asked Jesus: “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3. In reply, Christ blended all these events together without giving distinction between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end or destruction of the world. This reveals that Christ was connecting Jerusalem and the world together. Thus the Biblical representation of the city of Jerusalem would symbolize the world today in a spiritual sense.

3 What could be the Biblical representation to the literal Temple of Jerusalem in a spiritual sense for today?

As the Temple of Jerusalem was the place where God’s professed people met together to worship Him anciently, so the various churches and denominations of today are the modern place where God’s professed followers meet together to worship Him.

But just as the stone Temple was built in union with the heathen, so not everyone who worshiped at the Temple of Jerusalem were really true followers of God. You had those who outwardly appeared true, but who were really corrupt and wicked heathen at heart (Matthew 23:1-33); and these were mixed together with those who were honestly serving God with all their heart! So today not everyone who gathers in all the various denominations and churches to worship God are really true followers of God at heart. If Christ personally came to all the various denominations and churches of today — including the Seventh-day Adventist church, would He not set about to cleanse them all just as He set about to cleanse the Temple of Jerusalem? Thus the Biblical representation of the Temple of Jerusalem would symbolize all the various churches and denominations today in a spiritual sense.

4 What could be the Biblical representation to literal Mount Zion in a spiritual sense for today?

As Mount Zion was God's favorite choice of habitation, His holy mountain and the place which He loved to dwell in, so only those who have truly accepted God as their Father and Jesus Christ as their Saviour; only those who have completely embraced the new covenant and have been born again; only those who have fully surrendered themselves to follow God and keep His word and commandments in His strength; only those who are honestly walking uprightly in all the light and truth which God has allowed to shine across their pathway; only those who truly love God and His Son Jesus Christ with their entire soul, mind and strength; only these people are His Mount Zion of today! Their hearts have become God's favorite choice of habitation, His holy mountain, and the place which He loves to dwell and abide in!

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings...And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." John 14:23-24; 1 John 3:24.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit...For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness...For if we live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:1, 6-10, 13-14.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:14, 16-19.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another....If we love one another, **God dwelleth in us**, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit....Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” 1 John 4:10-14, 15-16.

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them....They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God....For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.” Psalms 84:5, 7, 11-12.

These verses reveal that the Biblical representation of literal Mount Zion — the dwelling place of God — would spiritually represent the soft humble hearts of those who are true and faithful to God, and not the stone hard proud hearts of the unconverted. This spiritual representation of Zion goes beyond the boundaries of all denominations and churches, and includes all followers of God who truly love and follow Him with all their being regardless of nationality, race, church membership, and gender.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God....put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Colossians 3:1-3, 10-11.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:27-29.

5 Before the Temple on Mount Moriah was first destroyed, the ark, along with the presence of God, was removed and was never returned (2 Maccabees 2:4-5). Even when the Temple was rebuilt, the ark, along with the presence of God, was not found there. God's presence only briefly returned to the Temple in the person of Jesus Christ when He walked into it. This clearly reveals that the presence of God today is not to be found permanently residing in any temple or church, no matter how sacred or righteous their calling, no matter how high or magnificent the structure, because the presence of God can only be found through Jesus Christ.

"...David; Who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit **the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands...**" Acts 7:45-48.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, **dwelleth not in temples made with hands**; Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth...That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being...he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Christ] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he had raised him from the dead." Acts 17:24-28, 31.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my [Jesus Christ's] name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20.

It is only the presence of Christ that can constitute a church of Christ, and this church of His knows no bounds of denominationalism, nationality, race, or gender! If Jesus Christ is not found abiding in the heart, then that individual is not a true follower of God — no matter who they may be; no matter what outward appearance they may display; no matter by what exalted name they may call themselves by; and no matter what denomination or church they belong to! Profession alone is nothing with God! God's true church, His spiritual Zion of today, is not any denomination or church or professed people, but it is only those who truly love God and therefore obey Him completely and fully from an honest humble heart, and thus have Jesus Christ abiding with them!