



Volume 15 Issue 18

May 3, 2020

HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,’” John 4:20-24. While we are very grateful to be able to be back together worshipping today, let us remember that it is not the location or the physical place which makes our worship meaningful. Place and location

have very little to do with the spiritual focus of our true worship towards God who is in heaven. The writer of Hebrews makes this clear that the true location of where our spiritual hearts and minds enter is in the heavenly realm where God dwells. “For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, ‘If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.’ And so terrible was the sight, the Moses said, ‘I am full of fear and trembling.’ But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the

general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.' This expression, 'Yet once more,' denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable worship service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire," Hebrews 12:18-29. This kingdom which cannot be shaken is the realm where our spiritual souls connect with God who resides in heaven, in heavenly Jerusalem. Paul teaches us that upon our

salvation, this is where God in fact lifts us up to feel our new exalted position with Him, elevated from the things of this earth. "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus," Ephesians 2:1-7. We have been seated in fellowship not in any physical location on this earth, but regardless where we remain physically here, in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus. This is where our souls unite with Him in heavenly Jerusalem in the general assembly and church of

the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven. Jesus even hinted when He partook of the Passover meal where He instituted the Lord's Supper that He would partake of it from then on with them in the kingdom, which does not reside in physical places here, but is the spiritual mount Zion in the heavenly places. "When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, 'Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes,'" Luke 22:14-18. As we partake of the Lord's Supper this day, finally together, physically in one place, let us remember and truly realize ultimately our spirits partake of this supper with our Lord who is in Heaven, as we are all united in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus where He resides. "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His

right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all," Ephesians 1:19-23. – Daniel Ruegg



"Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."
1 Cor. 13:8-11



DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Quarantine Bible Study Challenge

Genesis 8:15-19 *"Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 'Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth.' So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark."* As Noah and his family exited the ark, the world looked very different from when they initially entered the ark. As our world has been affected by Covid-19, things are going to look much different around us for quite a while even as things start opening up and shelter in place orders begin to be lifted. The bible is full of such experiences for people, nations, families, where new chapters and new beginnings mark new territory for them to walk through. How many examples in scripture can you find throughout this month of those new beginnings for various people? What new beginnings will this mark in life for us?

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Isaiah 6:1-8

"In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.' And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.' Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and whom will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"