

ZION'S BIRTH

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Isaiah 66:7 describes the birth of “a man child” before the mother “travailed” and “before her pain came.” This is very unique, as expressed in the questions of verse 8: “Who has heard such a thing? who has seen such things?” Isaiah 66:8 explains the type of birth this passage is talking about: “Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” This is describing the birth of a “nation,” in a very sudden and dramatic fashion. The “mother” of this nation is identified as Zion.

The city of David

Immediately after David was anointed king of all 12 tribes of Israel (2 Sam 5:1-5), “the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless *David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.* And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward” (2 Sam 5:6-9; see also 1 Chr 11:4-8). Thus, physical Zion had its identity as the capital of Israel, as founded by the greatest king that Israel ever had, David the son of Jesse, the man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). Zion's significance to Israel of old is well captured in the words of Psalm 48:1-2: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”

Zion remembered

This physical Zion was “plowed like a field” by the Babylonians because Israel forsook the Lord (Mic 3:12; Jer 26:18). After this, when Israel went into captivity in Babylon, Zion became her lamentation. Psalm 137:1-4 says, “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?” God made physical Zion a figure of the eternal spiritual kingdom that would be established by his Son Jesus Christ.

Zion's chief corner stone

In Psalm 2:6-9, the Father speaks of the Son on the day of his resurrection: “*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash

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(continued)

them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This is quoted in Acts 13:32-33 and Hebrews 1:4-5 in the New Testament. Christ rules over spiritual Zion. This is also affirmed in the oft-quoted prophecy of Christ in Psalm 110:1-2: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*" Isaiah 28:16 also foretold, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*" This is applied to Christ in the New Testament (1 Pet 2:6; Rom 9:33; 10:11). Isaiah 59:20 says, "*And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord,*" which is identified as a prophecy of Christ in Romans 11:26-27.

The eternal Zion

Christ's establishment of his church is referred to as spiritual Zion in Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment. Isaiah 2:1-4 says, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: *for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This prophecy is also repeated verbatim in Micah 4:1-3. Joel 2:30-32 says, "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." This passage was quoted by the Apostle Peter on the very occasion that the church was established in Acts chapter two. Daniel 2:44 prophesied that "the God of heaven" would "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Jesus said, "I will build my church," which is that eternal kingdom (Matt 16:18-19). That same church is also referred to in Hebrews 12:22-23 as Zion: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." God truly did send his Son Jesus Christ to cause the birth of this *spiritual* Zion, the church, which is the "holy nation" (1 Pet 2:9), the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16). This is the mount Zion where Christ's redeemed will dwell forever and ever (Rev 14:1-5).