

The House of the Lord

"I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!" (Psalm 122)

The singer has turned his gaze away from the miseries of Meshech, and lifted up his eyes to the hills. His help does not come from the hills but the Eternal unchanging Creator, the Keeper and Preserver of Israel, Who never sleeps, Who is also the Keeper of our souls. He now has his hope fixed on his help: The Lord Who made heaven and earth. (Ps. 121) Our foot shall not be moved.

Now he discovers his foot has been standing within the gates of Jerusalem, the "house of the Lord". The house of the Lord is, of course, not a meeting house, but a people. It is a blessed truth that the redeemed and regenerated sinner is added to the church, his feet are made to stand within its gates before he consciously "joins" it. That is why he receives with joy and gladness the invitation to "*come on in!*" Let us note seven salient truths about the church of the living God.

"A city compact together". This is the *ekklesia*. It is not a mere "assembly" of folks who got together. No, these are all called out, separated and sanctified to Christ. That is why they are one. They are compacted together by the Power of God in regeneration and conversion.

It is universal. *"Where the tribes go up"*. The tribes of the Lord are gathered from the ends of the earth. Not a single tongue or nation shall be unrepresented in that glorious church Christ purchased with His blood.

It is "The testimony of Israel", the pillar and ground of truth, the light of the world, a city set on a hill for a witness and testimony of the Almighty. It is not here to "make a difference" in society, but to testify of the difference between the darkness of men and the Light of God that is in Jesus Christ.

It is a house of gratitude and worship. Composed of people who have been humbled, brought low and lifted up by the grace of God, His praises and adoration ever reverberate within its walls. The boasting of men is ended. All glory and praise goes to God alone.

It is a kingdom. Described in the gospels as the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, thrones are set there. People reign with Christ. We are made to triumph with Him under Whose feet are put all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but in that which is to come (Eph. 1: 20-23).

It is a house of prayer. Although its origin, life, and destination is from heaven, it sojourns in an evil and wicked land. Its life on this earth is one of "evil days". Our portion in this earthly sojourn among the enemies of our Lord is promised to be those of tribulation in which the powers of heaven are shaken, seasons in which the blood of the saints reddens the earth, and often the light of the sun and moon are darkened. How shall suffering saints survive these days? We have a mercy seat, where we meet and receive succor, comfort and aid. Yes, the church is imminently a company where constant supplication and intercession is made.

Finally it is a city of peace. In a world torn with strife, wars, division, hatred, and wrath, here is an island of peace. Its entrance is peace with God. Its children are all taught by the Lord "*and great shall be their peace*" (Is. 54:13). We have now put far behind us the strife of the "tents of Kedar".

-C. M.

