



Zion: The Place of Worship

by Pastor Steve

In Revelation 14 we are introduced to another revelation of Jesus Christ that produced worship in those who were given insight into the mystery.

Then I looked and behold a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

Revelation 14:1-3

As we look at this passage we must keep in mind that John was relaying what he saw in terms understood by his Christian Jewish readers. For instance, the Jews understood about the Lamb. They had been taught about the initial Passover supper and how the lamb was sacrificed and its blood used to save them from death. Earlier visions shared by John established Jesus as the Lamb and the one who had paid the price to redeem their lost inheritance. They not only knew the identity of the Lamb but no doubt understood the significance of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion.

Though the early church didn't have the convenience of the New Testament as we know it today, they did have the teaching of the apostles, prophets and the psalms. Isaiah spoke of Zion and gives us prophetic insight as to its importance.

Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily..

Isaiah 28:16

The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord.

Isaiah 59:20

Both Paul and Peter quoted Isaiah in their letters to establish that Jesus was the redeemer that God had raised up in Zion. The Psalms also evidence this fact. *Yet I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to me, You are my Son, today I have begotten you.* (Psalm 2:6) Another translation renders that verse this way. *I have installed my King upon Zion, the hill of my holiness.*

The vision given to John further establishes the identity of the Lamb and that God is the one who has placed him on Mount Zion. What is the importance of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion? Why not Mount Sinai where the law was given? Why not Mount Gibeon where the Tabernacle of Moses was during David's reign? Why not Mount Moriah where Solomon's Temple was built? A brief history of Mount Zion will reveal the mystery.

Mount Zion was a stronghold in the city of Jerusalem. David captured it from the Jebusites and made his home there. It was known as the city of David. Zion was also the center of two important entities. It was the judicial and spiritual capitals of Israel. From Zion David ran the government and also established a perpetual order of worship. It was this order of worship for which Mount Zion was most famous.

The center of worship in Mount Zion was the Tabernacle of David. After becoming king David had a great desire to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant was representative of God's presence among his people. It was above the ark that God's manifest presence dwelt.

David's first attempt to bring the ark to Zion was halted when Uzzah was killed after putting out his hand to steady it. For three months the ark stayed in the home of Obedom until David could inquire of the Lord as to the proper way for the ark to be transported. When the day finally came for the ark to be brought to Jerusalem David, the elders, the captains, the high priests and Levites joined with singers and musicians to form a grand processional. The ark was brought to Mount Zion and placed in a tent that David had prepared for it to rest. Once the ark was placed in the tent David established the order of worship.

The order of worship established by David for the Ark of the Covenant was very organized. He gave order for the Levites to appoint their brethren to be singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed

instruments, harps, and cymbals (1Chronicles 15:16). Chenaniah was the Music Master (1 Chronicles 15:27), and Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun were appointed as the Chief Musicians/Singers. Worship around the tabernacle of David was a family affair. David and the captains of the army appointed some to the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun to be singers and musicians. Their main function was to prophesy with harps, stringed instruments and cymbals (1 Chronicles 25:1).

These Levites were to minister before the Ark of the Lord as every day's work required. Twenty-four courses of twelve worshipers each, a total of 288 skilled musicians (1 Chronicles 25:7), plus an additional 4,000 musicians (1 Chronicles 23:5), were established so there was worship in the presence of God twenty-four hours a day. Was it any wonder that God enjoyed hanging out on Mount Zion? The scriptures document God's affection for Zion.

But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.

Psalm 78:68

His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Psalm 87:1-2

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

Psalm 132:13-14

The tribe of Judah and Mount Zion are treated as one and the same in the Psalm 78. The word Judah means praise. Judah was the tribe which David belonged to and the tribe from which the Messiah emerged. It is not a coincidence that John's vision pictures Jesus the Messiah on Mount Zion. The prophet Isaiah prophesied years before, *In mercy the throne will be established; and one will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness.* (Isaiah 16:5)

The order of worship David set up in Mount Zion and the order of worship in Revelations are strikingly similar. In Revelations we have the twenty-four elders worshiping with harps and leading the host of the redeemed in a new song of worship. In Mount Zion there were twenty-four courses of singers appointed to worship. In Revelation there are 144,000 worshipers standing with Jesus on Mount Zion. Around the tabernacle of David we find numerous multiples of 144 incorporated in the service of worship.

Mount Zion and the tabernacle of David were places of worship and represent the worshiping church today; the true Israel of God. Peter wrote to the church, *...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* (1 Peter 2:5) Paul concurs in his letter to the Ephesians, *...in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.* (Ephesians 2:22) The worshiping church is now the habitation of God; it is his resting place. He inhabits the praises of his people (Psalm 22:3).

Several years ago a prophet spoke to a worship team I was leading and said, "You are the tabernacle of David and you should open up and let the glory of God out to the people." I believe this prophecy applies to every worshiper of God. Look at the words of the prophet Amos. *On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnants of Edom and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this thing.* (Amos 9:11-12) Notes: In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) the word Edom reads mankind. James quotes Amos in his speech to the Jerusalem council to validate the work of God among the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-17).

God has been restoring the proper order of worship in the church for the past several years. His desire is for all men to worship him. Jesus stands in the midst of Mount Zion; his worshiping church. He has told us, *If I am lifted up I will draw all men unto me.* (John 12:32) Jesus not only enjoys our worship, as we exalt him he is drawing all men to himself. David may have said it best when he wrote, *He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise to my God. Many will see it and fear and will trust in the Lord.* (Psalm 40:3) May the church stand with Jesus in the place of worship and let the glory of God out to the people. May our desire be to see all men worship him.