

The High Mountain Isaiah 40:9

Sing 139 in the Lloyd Hymnal, or 29 top in the Sacred Harp

Isa 40:9 ¶ O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! 10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

We understand; this text is a prophesy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gathering of all the chosen people of God into the church. However, there is an application that we can make to our lives today.

If you have ever been in the mountains, you can witness with this scene which is revealed. When you are in the valley and look up to the top of the mountain it does not seem as high as it really is, and you can only see one side of it. As you begin to climb up the mountain, your field of vision is expanded, and you begin to see things you could not see in the valley. When you finally reach the top of the mountain, it appears much higher than when you were in the valley. You see that the valley is smaller than what you thought while you were in it. From the top of the mountain there is a completely different picture, and perspective.

From the valley, you could only see one side of the mountain. Your view of the other side of the mountain, and what lay beyond, was blocked by the mountain itself. Now, from the top there is the expanded view in all directions, even upward. Now you are nearer the heavens than you were in the valley. What does this have to do with our Christian lives? Remember, Jesus completed the work of salvation by grace, at the top of the mountain upon the cross.

When you are born again, you become a child of God. However, to become a part of the visible church on earth, you must make that public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. You must join the organized church, be baptized, and then you become a disciple of Christ. Zion is described in the bible as the city of God, and as the mountain of the Lord. Jerusalem is described as the city where the temple of the Lord was built, which contained the ark of the covenant, and was the chosen place where God was worshipped by his chosen people Israel. The bible also teaches that there is a New Jerusalem, which will be the eternal place of worship of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you are born-again, you are in the valley looking upon one side of the mountain, the height thereof you cannot comprehend, and the valley seems so large. As the psalmist wrote: ***Ps 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*** You now understand; the visible church is on an elevated plain above the earth, like being at the top of the mountain, just as, Jerusalem was at the top to the mountain. You are at the bottom of the mountain when in the valley of the shadow of death. However, you can now look upon the mountain of the vastness of the love of our Saviour and Lord, Christ Jesus.

When you enter the church, you begin the struggle to reach the mountaintop for you do not wish to remain in the valley. Satan will make your sins become a mountain. He will try to obstruct your view and discourage you from joining the church and to keep you from climbing up the mountain to reach the celestial view, just as we are reminded in hymn 139 in the Lloyd Hymnal: 1 ***COME, humble sinner,***

in whose breast a thousand thoughts revolve, Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed, And make this last resolve; 2 I'll go to Jesus, though my sin has like a mountain rose; I know his courts, I'll enter in, Whatever may oppose. However, we know that Jesus is the judge, and we can enter into his court and know our sins have been remitted by his completed work on the cross.

From the mountaintop perspective, things look completely different than they did while you were in the valley. Now your mountain of sins, however big they may seem, are remitted by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and you are clothed in the robes of the righteousness of Christ. From the mountaintop perspective, you understand that Christ has given you eternal forgiveness of your sins, and though Satan tries to make them into an insurmountable mountain, you can cast these vain imaginations aside, trusting fully in the completed work of remission of sins and salvation by grace through Christ.

From the top of the mountain, your view of the world is changed. Instead of what can I get out of this world; it is now, wait with patience until I get out of this world. From the mountaintop, you see the big picture, and realize, all that you can get of worldly gain is nothing. Now, your focus is to go on upward, to the New Jerusalem, to forever be with the Lord.

From this elevated view, you begin to get an idea of the greatness, and the vastness, of our Saviour's love. You begin to see, and understand, the hidden fruits of the bible, by the revelations of God's word of truth. You can now behold the abundance of God's grace, as you feast on the glorious gospel of our Saviour, and Lord, Christ Jesus. Your vision is no longer obstructed by the mountain of your sin. Just as the veil of the temple has been rent in twain, through New Testament scripture, we may behold the mercy seat, and see that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour.

As you grow in faith, in trust, and in knowledge of Christ, you are being shaped into the office of discipleship, which Christ has prepared for you to fill. This shaping, in discipleship, is comparable with climbing the mountain, to reach the top. As we begin the journey upward to our eternal home, our knowledge, faith, trust, and love, of Christ will grow, just like your view is expanding, with each upward step as you climb the mountain. Even your understanding of scripture will grow.

This gives you the desire to tell of the greatness of your Saviour, which is the duty of the church, ministerial and laity. Let us look at our text again: ***Isa 40:9 ¶ O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! 10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.***"

Since Jesus has already fulfilled his part in this prophetic scripture in incarnation, and has established the church; the duty, of telling the good news, now falls to the Christian disciples who form the organized church. The church, inclusive of its disciples and its ministers, is to proclaim the good news; salvation has come to earth. Proclaim to sinners: "**get thee up into the high mountain**" come to the church and make the magnificent work, of salvation by the grace of God manifest.

Proclaim to all around you, by your walks and talks, the arm of the Lord is being revealed upon earth. Proclaim, you can have eternal security in Christ Jesus. Proclaim, you can be fed by the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Proclaim, come, and be swaddled in the arms, of the eternal love of Jesus.

Proclaim, come into the land of promise. Proclaim, the land of promise, which is the church, is for us as it was for Israel; a land for which you did not labor, a city to inhabit that you did not build, and a place that is flowing with milk and honey, in the form of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, and the warmth of his wondrous love.

Proclaim, you will only want to be a disciple of Christ, if you have already been born again. Wherefore, if you desire to enter the sheepfold, you must come forward and knock upon the door. Knocking on the door will gain you entrance into the visible church. Proclaim, hear what Jesus has said to you, the born-again child of God: ***Lu 11:9 "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*** Proclaim, return the embrace of the loving arms of Jesus Christ, and rejoice, I say, Rejoice! In the greatness of the love of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Amen!