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GLORIOUS THINGS OF THEE ARE SPOKEN

John Newton, 1725-1807

“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. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.” (Psalm 48:1, 2, 3 KJV)

Of the many hymn texts by the noted English clergyman, John Newton this one is generally considered to be one of his finest and most joyous. In the Old Testament, the city of Zion was the place where God dwelt among his people. It was a haven or refuge, a treasured place. In our New Testament age, Zion refers to the church, a community of God’s people, a living and dynamic organism. Newton’s hymn refers to God’s strong protection of his people, His promise to supply their needs, and His presence to lead His own by the cloud and fire as He did the Israelites of old.

With all its shortcomings and faults, the local church is still God’s means of meeting the needs of mankind. As Christians, we are to promote the church, supporting it with enthusiasm and finding our spiritual strength and fellowship in it. Then as members of Christ’s universal church, we are commanded to be His worthy representatives to the entire world. We must be actively involved in ministering the “streams of living waters” which “never fail from age to age.”

John Newton, the converted slave trader and sea captain, never stopped praising God for His “sure repose” – “whose Word cannot be broken” – who formed us “for His own abode.”

- ♪ Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God; He whose word cannot be broken formed thee for His own abode: on the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose? With salvation’s walls surrounded, thou mayst smile at all thy foes.
- ♪ See, the streams of living waters, springing from eternal love, well supply thy sons and daughters and all fear of want remove: Who can faint while such a river ever flows their thirst to assuage? Grace which, like the Lord, the Giver, never fails from age to age.
- ♪ Round each habitation hov’ring, see the cloud and fire appear for a glory and a cov’ring, showing that the Lord is near! Glorious things of Thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God; He whose word cannot be broken formed thee for his own abode. AMEN.

For Today: Psalm 87:3; Isaiah 33:20, 21; Matthew 16:18; Romans 12:5

Be thankful for your local church and what it means in your life. Ask for God’s special blessing on your pastor, the board members, and your fellow church members. Allow this hymn to help. AMEN.

*Amazing Grace -366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions
by Kenneth W. Osbeck*

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

