



FOR this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. ²⁶ But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷ For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. ²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. ²⁹ But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. ³⁰ Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Galatians 4:25-31)

I must admit, I have wanted to write about this mystically majestic hymn for many moons but did not have the courage. Well, courage comes with age when there may be less to lose, so, I will give this one a go. This hymn is considered the unofficial national anthem of England and is the very favorite of England among all other hymns. Written by William Blake in 1804, the hymn is sung at most sports events and academic graduation balls.

England, Scotland, and Wales mark a unique people of Europe that embraced the Christian faith from before the advent of Augustine. Later, Ireland would be added to those three peoples. Many legends, and some bona fide histories, emerged from those peoples who desired to become a part of that Heavenly Jerusalem of the Bible. The Stone of Scone is an example and is used for the coronation of the Kings of Great Britain.

Though the lyrics remain unchanged, the music originally composed by Sir Hubert Parry to spur the war effort of the Great War has undergone some minor orchestration changes by the notable Edward Elgar in 1922. It is this final version that has motivated the people of the English nation for many decades past.

William Blake is considered the greatest artist of England, and his poetry, similar in nature to the writings of Tolkien and Lewis but more romantic, seeks to capture the spiritual essence of the English nation in rhythmic quatrains of profound imagery. The England of His day represented the Christian faith that surged throughout the island and even Europe, as well as many distant lands.

Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold
Bring me my arrows of desire
Bring me my spear! Oh, clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire
I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Til we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land!

And did those feet in ancient time Walk upon England's mountains green? And was the holy Lamb of God On England's pleasant pastures seen? The enthusiasm and earnestness with which the British Isles received the Gospel of Jesus Christ is abundant evidence of the Lord's visitation to the land. His people in those Islands. Christ is wherever His people are found, and they were plentiful in England ere the Roman pontiff laid claim to those pristine islands. Certainly, Christ visits His people with, or without, the visitation of Joseph of Arimathea.

And did the countenance divine Shine forth upon our clouded hills? And was Jerusalem builded here among those dark Satanic mills? The Industrial Revolution was sweeping the European landscape during Blake's day. Their chimneys and stovepipes marred the beauty of the hills and pasturelands of England and this vexed Blake who viewed that progress as ugly and demeaning. Of course, the Heavenly Jerusalem is built already in Paradise. There are two different Jerusalem's – the one is embittered by war and religious hatred; the second is pure and pristine beyond the gates of splendor. It is the latter that Blake envisioned as a spiritual Jerusalem on his beloved island.

Bring me my bow of burning gold Bring me my arrows of desire, Bring me my spear! Oh, clouds unfold! Bring me my chariot of fire. There events that require manly courage, strength, and warlike determination. But such qualities are empty unless inspired of Heaven. When the clouds of doubt and wonder subside, one can clearly see the righteous goal set before him. When the desires of the warrior are not personal but imbued by God, nothing can stop his ascent to victory in a spiritual Chariot of Fire.

I will not cease from mental fight Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand Til we have built Jerusalem. In England's green and pleasant land! Every nation whose heavens are brightened by the Light of God seeks to build its own Jerusalem in the midst of the Land. The America of our Founding Fathers has its City of Lights on the Hill. It is this Jerusalem in type, that Blake envisioned. The people of England were so

enlightened by the Gospel that they willingly suffered martyrdom and hard persecution rather than forsake that faith. The British people have propagated the Gospel in many far-flung lands, in which smothering darkness had previously prevailed, by sending missionaries to Asia, Africa, and America. One strong feature of this last verse: the saint can never relax his grip on the Sword of the Word. We can witness, in our own day, a growing hostility toward the Word of God and its adherents. Those enemies are not only outside, but INSIDE, the Church itself. We must not let down our guard until we receive the New Jerusalem: *10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;* (Revelations 21:10-11) If you would like a further description of that Heavenly Jerusalem, read further in Revelations 21.

Long may Albion's poet be remembered, but more importantly, may her spiritual testimony be re-established in the land of the British Isles.