

The Church, A Temple

From 'God's House' to 'God at Home'

2 Chr. 7:12 *Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice."*

Solomon's temple held the Ark with God's Word inside. You become God's dwelling place when Christ's Word lives in you. Hallelujah!

The Christian Church is called "the temple" because we now do what the Old Testament temple pictured. In the old temple, sacrifices were offered to God, 2 Chr. 7:12. Now, through Christ, we ourselves are the temple where God dwells, 1 Cor. 3:16.

When Jesus said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up", He was not talking about Solomon's building. John 2:21 says that He was speaking about his body. The Old Testament temple was a shadow. In Christ, God now dwells in His people, His living temple. Besides the offering of sacrifices, what made

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that temple ‘heavenly unique’ was the presence of the box (ark) which served as the symbol of God’s power among His people because it contained the commandments of God (2 Chr. 6:41).

The aforementioned Scripture has shown that the power to hold the temple, whether in the shadow or preparatory document of the Old Testament (biblically speaking), or in the substantial or fulfilled document of the New Testament, is the Word of God. Any vessel or human being in whom the word of Christ is found is powerful; he can do “all things” or face all conditions by the power that is only resident in Christ (Phil. 4:13). Hallelujah!

Such a life is a life named after the covenant of God. Just as that ark was the ark (box) of the covenant (containing God’s word), the individual is ‘a person of the covenant’ because he allows the doctrine of Christ to direct his life.

When the word of God departs God’s throne in heaven, it is accompanied with myriads of angels in heaven deployed to guard it. That is done so that principalities through demons in the heavenly places or realms will not destroy its

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efficacy. Any heart, therefore, that opens its door to house the word of God has received power, security and all graces supplied by God. God's word will secure the place in which it is accepted as a principle of life. Indeed, who can harm those that follow that which is good (1 Pet. 3:12-13)?

God is always mindful of, and also secures whatever goes out from His throne to the earth, and the place (temple) such treasure from heaven is admitted will surely enjoy the same security and maintenance. In conclusion, if the word of Christ is found in any person as a guide to life, such a person is the temple of God. It is the presence of God in His word that makes it a temple because, through the life of the person, God is to be made known (John 14:8-11).

The sacrifices of prayers, offerings of hospitality, evangelism, etc. which we undertake daily are the fulfilments of the sacrifices which took place in the temple made with human hands in the Old Testament. If God does not live in church buildings, as some of us errantly believe, but rather lives in believing people and reveals Himself through individual believers, then let us stop prioritising spending on church buildings

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and instead prioritise the relief of poverty and the provision of assistance to human believers, who are the true temple.

This is not against beautiful meeting places. It is against empty living spaces. Let us build both, but people first (1 John 3:17; Acts 4:34-35). So, beloved brethren, let us consider giving more attention to the place in which God abides than to the material shelter in which we fellowship intermittently (1 John 3:17-19; 4:20-21). I pray that God blesses you with His grace.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. We just learnt that we are a temple God has built in Christ. What are the building materials?
 - * Living stones: people (1 Pet. 2:5).
 - * Foundation: Apostles and Prophets.
 - * Cornerstone: Christ (Eph. 2:20).
 - * Mortar: the Holy Spirit – “built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).
 - * Not marble, but men. Not gold, but grace.

2. What is God’s important treasure in this God’s building that always attracts God’s insurmountable security?
 - * The Word of God – the “ark” in you. When the word of God departs God’s throne it will not return void (Isa. 55:11). There may be opposition (Dan. 10:12-13), but it will prosper to achieve its purpose.
 - * “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.” (Ps. 119:89)
 - * When that Word dwells in you (Col. 3:16), you carry heaven’s most protected asset. Result: “Who shall harm you?” (1 Pet. 3:13). Security follows the Word, not the walls.

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3. What evidence enables us to conclude that some of God's buildings (human beings), God cannot complete and inhabit because He has been resisted?
- * Resistance to the Word: "You always resist the Holy Spirit." (Acts 7:51)
 - * Uncrucified flesh: "Amalek alive" (1 Sam. 15:9) – sinful nature indulged (Gal. 5:24).
 - * Love of world: "Friendship with the world is enmity with God." (Jam. 4:4)
 - * Infancy when should be teachers: debris not purged (Heb. 5:12).
 - * No fruit: "Every branch that does not bear fruit He takes away." (John 15:2)
An incomplete temple has "Ichabod" written on it – "glory departed" (1. Sam. 4:21).
4. According to Jam. 4:1-4, do children of God fight their war of righteousness from outside them or from within them?
- * From within: "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" (Jam. 4:1)
Your war is with the Amalek within – cravings, pride, lust (Eph. 6:12). The real battlefield is "in your members" (Rom. 7:23). Kill it within, and you win without (Gal. 5:16-17).

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5. If Abraham had to separate from his earthly relatives to walk with God, what are we expected to separate from to be God's temple?
- * Father's house = Old nature: "I have been crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2:20)
 - * Place / Country = World system: "Do not be conformed to this world." (1 John 2:15)
 - * Kindred / People = Sinful cravings and customs: "put off... former conduct" (Gal. 5:24, Eph. 4:22).
 - * Separation is not geography. It is government. Who rules you – Christ or culture?
6. To please God, Saul had to kill all in Amalek with none to remain (1 Sam. 15:1-3). How many acts of our sinful nature are we expected to crucify likewise before qualifying to be God's temple, as in Gal. 2:20, 5:24 and 1 Cor. 9:27?
- * All. "Utterly destroy all... do not spare..." (1 Sam. 15:3). Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Not 99%. All.
 - * The list: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath,

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selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries...”.

“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection.” (1 Cor. 9:27)

- * Why? Because partial obedience = full rebellion (1 Sam. 15:22-23). A temple with Amalek alive is a “shrine for idols” (Acts 17:16).

Prayer

Holy Father, I know Your temple is not made of marbles. She is made of men (believers). She is not made of gold but of grace and I am a substantial part. I receive grace to be just that. May I know that the separation You recommend is not geography but government and that Christ should rule me and not my culture. Amen.