

## INTRODUCTION

1. Referred to as the "Temple of God." The temple of the O.T. was a holy place and very sacred to God's people. It was considered the dwelling place of God among His people. There is no doubt many comparisons between the temple of the O.T. and the church that Christ established.

2. We will give consideration to three things about this new temple of God. First, the material it is made of; second, the worshippers; and third, the worship.

## THE MATERIAL OF GOD'S TEMPLE.

A The foundation of any building is very important and determines how long it will endure.

Paul describes the foundation of God's temple as follows: "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder. I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:10, 11).

Again Paul describes the foundation in Ephesians 2:20-22. "And have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:20-22).

The apostles are mentioned as part of the foundation. This would be the teachings of the apostles. Jesus delegated to them the authority to bind and loose His teachings. Unfortunately many religious bodies today are based on the teachings of a man or a woman rather than on the teachings of Christ. Most have their origin with some man.

Peter quotes from Isaiah as follows; "Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.'"

This corner stone was always the first stone to be laid. It was a perfect square. The rest of the foundation went out from this stone. Christ is the chief cornerstone. Thus the temple of God has Christ as its chief stone.

## The temple of God

2

This is why Jesus could say in **Matthew 16:18** "The of Hades shall not prevail against it." Even his death on the cross could not prevent Him from establishing the temple of God. It is enduring, strong, and steadfast.

**B** This temple is made of unusual stones. "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."

Paul wrote, "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said; "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Thus the temple is made up living stones (**people**) and not material stones. God has never emphasized a material building. After the third century we see emphasis being placed on the buildings that were used for worship.

They were considered sacred are referred to as cathedrals and some are very ornate and costly even to the point of extravagance. Different parts of the building are given special names such as "the **sanctuary, the altar, the chapel, etc**".

**C** God is concerned about the spiritual material than the physical material. Buildings do not have souls, people do.

### THE WORSHIPPERS.

**A** Visualize for a moment the floor plan of the O.T. temple. It was a rectangle which was divided into two section separated by a very beautiful curtain.

**B** About two thirds of the space was called the Most Holy Place. No one but the priests could enter into this part of the temple. The priests were from the tribe of Levi. They performed various duties such as offering prayers accompanied with the sweet smell of incense.

Today every Christian can enter this part of the temple of God because we have become a "holy priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

A common concept of worship today is something like an audience watching a performance.

## The temple of God

3

This is demonstrated in choirs, organ preludes, solos, robes, processions, etc. all of which are very entertaining. But in God's temple there is not place for this kind of demonstrations. Each member being a priest engages in worship. God is our only audience.

**C** One third of the space in the temple was called "The Most Holy Place." Only the High Priest could enter this area once each year to make atonement for the sins of the people. He would sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat for the sins of the people as well as his own sins.

However, the blood did not remove the sins of the people. There was simply a remembrance made each year of their sins.

According to **Hebrews 10:4** the blood of bulls and goats could not actually take away sins. However forgiveness did occur in the mind of God. He forgave their sins because of the coming sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

The actual payment of the death penalty for all sins, including sins during the Law of Moses, was paid by Jesus on the cross "for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant." Thus the blood of Jesus was retroactive as well as reaching forward to cover all sins in the future.

**D** But today's high priest is entirely different. In **Hebrews 3:1-3** the writer calls our attention to the one who is the high priest into the Temple of God today.

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, Inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honor than the house."

Then in **Hebrews 9:11, 12** the writer tells us, "But Christ having come as a High Priest of the good things to come, by the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, nor by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

## The temple of God

4

**E** As priest we can praise and glorify our perfect Great High Priest, Jesus Christ for taking our place on the cross the cleansing us with his own precious blood. How much greater is God temple today than it was under the O.T. period.

### THE WORSHIP.

**A** The apostle Peter sets forth the nature of the worship which we now offer in the temple of God. He say, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). Under Moses' law their worship consisted to a great degree of externals, using material things. Today we worship "In spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

**B** The Hebrews writer wrote, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

From such passages as Acts 2:42, 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Ephesians 5:19 we learn that Christian worship consisted of singing, praying, admonishing, giving and on the first day of each week we approach him in a very special way by partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Such things as organs, incense, images, altars, etc. do not fit the description of worship given to us in the N.T.

**C** In Romans 12:1 we are commanded "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service".

This passage does not teach that everything we do in life in an act of worship. Sleeping is not an act of worship, brushing your teeth is not an act of worship. But everything we do should be in harmony with His will.

### What kind of life do we bring with us and present before God?

If the Jews offered the right sacrifices, but their lives were not right, God did not accept their worship (Isaiah 1:11-18).

If a man worships God, but does not care for his parents, his worship is worthless (Matthew 15:3-9). If a man prays loving prayers, but is unkind to his wife, his prayers are "hindered."

## The temple of God

5

If a man's tongue blesses God, but curses men, hates his brother he is "nothing" and his deeds profit nothing.

**D** We give our bodies as a living sacrifice when we study, teach, and live God's word (**1 Timothy 4:12**).

### CONCLUSION

Are you in the temple of God?

If not then you cannot offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. Only in the temple can they be offered.

Are you a priest of God?

If you are not in the royal priesthood then you are not a Christian for this priesthood is composed only of Christians, children of God.

Would you not like to be a part of this great and wonderful temple by becoming a spiritual stone?

Why not now?