

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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God's holy temple

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Who among us has not cherished the moment when walking where the famous once walked, or tried to fathom the meaning of actually standing in the rooms where the renowned once lived? Those who travel to the Near East long to walk where Jesus walked, or stand where Paul stood. To be where they once were is a glorious experience.

We should not be complacent, but rather thrill in the thought that God's authoritative presence abides today in the church of our Lord. Writing to the church in Corinth Paul rhetorically asks, “Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16).

The word “temple” is paralleled to the inner sanctuary or most holy Place of the temple in the Old Testament. This was where the ark containing the law was placed, and where the cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat. It is most holy because God's glory was manifested there. The “holiness” of the temple is in Paul's mind for he adds, “If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the

temple of God is holy, and such are ye” (I Corinthians 3:17). In us, the church, is where God dwells. For a moment, meditate upon how being God's holy temple should affect us.

First, Paul warns that God will destroy anyone who destroys the temple of God. The word “destroy” conveys the idea of destruction through corruption. Presenting doctrines not found in, and contradictory to the gospel of Christ is a destructive perversion that must not be tolerated (Galatians 1:6-9). Following after men and their teachings is destructive to the unity that should prevail among God's people. (cf. I Corinthians 1:10-11, 3:1-3). Woe be to anyone that begins to lead God's temple, the church, away from the doctrine of Christ and glorying in men. Do not they know that the temple of God is holy?

While the church, in its collective sense, is a holy temple, each member that comprises the church is also a holy temple. Combating the sin of fornication Paul writes, “Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which he have from God? And ye are not

your own” (I Corinthians 6:19). What a powerful thought to strengthen us in times when the Devil tempts us through our passions. How can I allow my body to be used in an illicit act when I am impressed with the fact that God's Spirit is to dwell in me. My body belongs to the Lord, not my selfish desires! My body is Holy. My actions will thus magnify this wonderful thought.

The holiness of God's temple is also a “growing together” experience. Paul writes, “...each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:21-22). God has chosen to fitly frame each member “together”, not “apart.” Our growing in holiness is not to be accomplished in some monastery on a secluded mountain, but with each member that comprises the church.

We should look at the church as God does, his dwelling place. We should therefore keep it holy. May we always uphold unity in the one faith, keep our physical bodies pure, and grow together in holiness.