

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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Built Up As A Spiritual House

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In the Old Testament it was known that Jehovah dwelled within His holy temple in Jerusalem (Ps. 11:4a). At the same time faithful men of God also realized that God could not be contained with the walls of the physical temple. Solomon rightly proclaimed, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27) Yet, where would God choose to abide?

The Jews in the Old and New Testaments foolishly placed their confidence in the physical temple in Jerusalem (Jer. 7:4ff). Stephen rebukes the Jews for their misplaced confidence in the physical temple by asserting, “...the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands...” (Acts 7:48). In John 4:21, Jesus states “...the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain or in Jerusalem, worship the Father.” From this we find that Jehovah is not confined to be worshipped in a single physical location.

With the failure of the physical temple to meet the desire God

had to dwell with His people and receive worship from them, God then revealed His plan of His purposed dwelling place.

In 1 Peter 2:4,6-7, Jesus is described as the precious and chief cornerstone. Peter shows that it is from Christ, our cornerstone, that we are “living stones,” and “are being built up as a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2:5). In this passage Peter is referencing the Church as the “spiritual house” which Christians are being built up into. The word “house” in 1 Peter 2 means “a dwelling place, a house, home, or temple.” Thus, we note the description Peter gives of the Church: it is the dwelling place or temple of God.

The concept of the Church as the dwelling place of God is further emphasized in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians. Discussing the Church that is built on Christ the cornerstone, Paul writes in Ephesians 2:21, “in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” The Church is the now the dwelling place and temple of God.

The Church is not our earthly possession or something that God will grant to us in the future, but it is a present reality. The Lord currently dwells in His “spiritual house” and we as the Church are being built up as that temple as we grow closer to the example of Christ.

It was in the temple that the Jews offered sacrifices and worship to God. Today we offer our tribute and worship to God through the way that He has willed: through His temple. We find that in this temple we also function as holy priests who offer up sacrifices to God (1 Pet. 2:5). Every Christian has been added to that one true Church (Acts 2:47), and through their love and obedience to God they present the sacrifices of their service and lives to Him in His temple, the Church.

We understand that our God does not dwell in temples made with hands, but He does dwell in His Church. May we strive to be built up as that one and true spiritual house we read of in the Bible and to constantly offer acceptable sacrifices to our God