

A Tour of Two Temples

The Jewish Temple. As we walked up to Jerusalem, there it was – the temple of the one true God, Jehovah. Scintillating gold met our eyes as we beheld Divinity: His cloud of glory was residing over it. God’s presence was there. It was indeed a most holy place.

The foundation supporting the holy place was hewn of very costly and massive rock. It was solidly inset deep in the ground. Many perfectly cut stones formed its walls resting on the foundation. The stones were exactly measured and crafted before they became part of the temple. So perfect were they that when they were framed together they required no human tool. It was a silent work.

Walling them in, the expensive cedar boards caused the stones to disappear from human sight. This earthly wood came from Gentile forests and through the seaport of Joppa into the city of God at Jerusalem. These cedar boards had carvings of fruitful life—open flowers. Yet the wood was not seen either as it was covered with pure gold. This caused the flowers to gloriously display their fruit of life. Only the gold was seen.

At the large brazen altar in the courtyard we saw offerings ascending up to God. The continual fire on the altar was consuming the perfect lambs that were a daily offering unto the Lord. It was a place where people were *bringing* to the Lord, and bringing what He desired. We also witnessed a cloud of prescribed incense ascending up before the Lord. We saw holy priests offering sacrifices unto the Lord. It seemed it was all about the Lord and His desires.

The priests were clothed in fine linen garments clean and white. “*Holiness to the Lord*” was engraved on a mitre. The service of God was only for those born in the right family, washed, clothed, blood-sprinkled, and anointed. It was not their education but their consecration that qualified them to serve as holy priests in the house of God.

Inside the holy place, shut out from the world, we saw the priests drawing near to the table of God. It had memorial bread and strong wine upon it. One day a week the priests would eat the bread before the Lord Himself – expressing fellowship with God. This was not an open table for all. It was only open for the priests. Certain defects or uncleanness could even disqualify them from this privilege until they became clean again. Yet at the same time it was open to all those who had met His requirements of consecration.

We noticed the priestly activity for God was not dictated by popular consensus, tradition, or even the king. Naturally, since it was the Lord’s house, the Lord was the authority. His instructions were conveyed by written commandments in a book.

There we heard the strains of musical notes wafting up from the sweet psalmist of Israel. The chosen Levitical singers in their robes of white joyfully sang His praises.

And what is this? Money tables are being overturned. Religious sellers are being driven out. Someone is saying the house of prayer has become a house of merchandise.

Christ's Temple. As we open our eyes of faith, there it is. The Spirit of the Lord Jesus in the midst is filling it. God's presence is there. It is indeed a most holy place.

The foundation supporting this holy temple is a *living* stone. It is the chief cornerstone, elect, chosen of God, and most precious. Behold, it is a living person! It is Jesus Christ the Son of God; He is the once for all perfect sacrifice for sin and the living, eternal Lord.

Look! Built upon the one foundation are many other *living* stones. They are sinners saved by grace, apart from their works, with Christ now in them. Purchased with precious blood, they are "*fitly framed together*" with different spiritual gifts growing "*unto an holy temple in the Lord.*" A spiritual house where God resides on earth!

These living stones are global and international. They're exported from every nation on earth and imported into Christ seated in the heavenly Jerusalem. (Like the first temple, it involved the seaport of Joppa where Peter was first directed to bring this saving gospel to the Gentile nations). All believers are equally "*accepted in the beloved,*" forming one temple. Hidden in the glorified Christ, these stones yield "*the fruit of the Spirit*".

Then we saw *every* one of these *living* stones making up God's holy priesthood. They are born into the right family – born again of God Himself. Clothed in white robes they are washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. They are righteous and completely spotless. Also, they are anointed with the Spirit of God as He equally lives within each believer.

We then saw this holy priesthood offering up sacrifices *unto the Lord* – spiritual sacrifices. Amazingly, there was no laity in this temple for all were God's holy priests by the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus. Priests – not by education but salvation. They are *all* involved in His temple with praise (orally and silently), bringing their offerings to Him and also serving with their gifts. It seems it is all about the Lord and His desires.

Shut out from the world's eye, we see these holy priests meeting together to draw near to "*the Lord's table*". There these priests on the first day of the week eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. This expresses fellowship with God and each other based on their mutual Savior Who died for them. This is not an open table for all. It is only open for the priests. Others can witness it but not partake. Even a priest (Christian) can disqualify himself for this feast by sin until it is corrected God's way. A temple is holy!

We noticed the temple activities are not dictated by popular consensus, tradition or a gifted prophet. Since it is the Lord's house, the risen Lord Jesus is the authority. He conveys this by His written commandments in a book – the New Testament.

There we heard psalms and songs flowing from the orchestra of the Spirit through the instrument of every melodious heart. Prayers also were ascending up to the Lord.

And what is this? One is protesting that man is receiving the glory that is only God's in His temple. Surprisingly, titles and names are being given to man in his human wisdom!

{Some Scriptures for the Jewish physical temple.

1Kings 5;17 / 6:7-22 / 2Chron. 2:16 / Exodus 28, 29, 30 / Leviticus 21, 22 / Num. 28:7 / Exodus. 25:29, 30 / Leviticus 1 and 24 / Deut. 12 / 2 Chron. 29 / John 2:14-17}

{Some Scriptures for the church: Christ's spiritual temple. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you". May the church regain her temple calling and character.

1Cor 3, 5 / 1 Peter 1, 2 / Rev. 5:9, 7:14,15 / Acts 10:32, 11:5 / Heb. 12: 22, 23 / Eph1, 2, 5 / 1Cor. 14 / 1Cor. 10, 11 / Acts 2:42 / 1Cor14:37 / Eph. 5:18, 19 / 1Cor. 1-3}