

A Visit to Two Temples

Beni, the Benjamite Jew, Visits the Jewish Temple – B.C.

Beni, the circumcised doctor, walked through the front gate with a perfect lamb. It wasn't for himself but an offering for God. He might bring his tithes too. But that's as far as Beni dared go by law. He gave his offering to the priestly caste. He could tell who they were for they had on clerical vestments and their leader the high priest was clothed in even more glorious clothing. Their heads were covered with hats as they ministered.

From that point on Beni became a spectator for he wasn't consecrated as a holy priest. He was just laity. Beni couldn't put his offering for the Lord on the physical altar. He must give it to the priests to do it for him. He just paid and obeyed.

Beni would never dream of going beyond the outside courtyard through the door into the actual sanctuary – the holy place. It was reserved exclusively for the holy priesthood to accomplish the service of God. Beni would never eat the bread of memorial on the table inside the holy place. Neither would his wife, Leah, for only Levite males could be priests. Beni would never offer incense at the golden altar to his God. The report was that even a great king from Judah's tribe tried and died—with leprosy.

And it would be a nightmare to go beyond the holy place into the holiest through the veiled wall with brodered cherubim standing guard for this is where Jehovah resided. This was the most restricted place on earth. It was a forbidden city. Only one man, on one day, in one way could do so—the high priest on Yom Kippur with the atoning blood of a perfect sacrifice. Beni would never experience intimate communion with God.

But Beni did enjoy the activity at the holy temple as he watched and listened. He was encouraged as he listened to the priest standing high up on a pulpit of wood and masterfully explaining what the law (Bible) meant. As laity he could not teach, but he was glad to listen and in fact, wanted to. So moved was he that he said “Amen.” With hands lifted up, he reverently bowed his face to the ground and worshipped in his heart.

Beni was especially excited when the king himself officiated in his royal robes. The king commanded the priest to offer the sacrifices. The king then directed the chosen Levite “choir” or “worship team” to skillfully play their instruments. So inspiring! The chosen singers then sang the selected songs. His heart pulsated with the sights, sounds, and smells. Beni again bowed his head and worshipped. Beni was then directed to bring more offerings after the special music ended. Beni was thankful in his heart and did so.

The king would lead in prayer, most eloquently, and the people would be guided when to stand and when to sit. Then they were dismissed. Beni, as a humble man, knew the work of the temple belonged to the “professionals”. He'd return home from the temple to do his work and care for his family. His mind had been instructed and his heart moved.

Occasionally, Beni wondered how a corrupt king or priest with such power might affect a whole nation. But it was a fleeting thought, certainly nothing to worry about...for now.

Rufus the Born Again Roman Slave Visits the Christian Temple (Assembly) – A.D.

Rufus heard the gospel of salvation and placed his faith in Christ, Who was sacrificed for his sins and lives as Lord and coming King. Showing his faith as a baby Christian, he was baptized in water. Since he was cleansed from all his sins (without law), the Holy Spirit of God personally resided in his heart. Life and light now flowed in him, producing love to God and to all. Rufus, by Christ's grace, was part of God's holy and royal priesthood. He was indeed a living stone of God's new temple, which is a spiritual house—the church.

So was Rufus's Jewish friend, Dr. Beni, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He and Beni had seen they had, as sinners, equally come short of God's glory. They also saw now that they were equally "*fellowheirs and of the same body*"— brothers! They both had seen the newly revealed "*fellowship of the mystery*"— they were "*one in Christ Jesus.*"

When Rufus and Beni assembled together "*in the church*" with other Christians, none of them were designated with religious clothing or clerical titles. Since all were priests no one had to be distinguished from the rest. Laity had disappeared in Christ. Jesus had said, "*all ye are brethren.*" Yet there was one given a title of glory: the *Lord* Jesus.

As the meeting began there seemed to be no man officiating. In fact, Rufus used this new liberty to give a teaching. Brother Beni used his freedom to give a psalm and someone else exercised their liberty in Christ and prayed in thanksgiving. The living Spirit of Christ was not only in their hearts, but in the midst of the assembled believers leading the spiritual offerings of the priesthood. They were in the holiest — "*a new and living way.*"

The Lord Jesus' written commandments to His church were to control the order of the spiritual gifts in the assembly, not a human leader. Brother Beni told brother Rufus that the assembly reminded him of a proverb from the Old Testament. Proverbs 30:27 told of little but wise locusts that have no king but go forth as a unified band.

Beni took his yarmulke off and was uncovered, acknowledging Christ as his head. Leah, his wife, was covered in public assembly as she silently prayed and praised in her heart. She gladly submitted to the Lord Jesus' headship of the man being her head.

In liberty, Rufus offered a hymn. Every believer sang as one unified voice. The Spirit was leading a melody in every heart. There was no seen "worship leader" but faith saw the risen Lord Jesus promising, "*in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee*".

As the bread and cup were passed, both Rufus and Beni had liberty to eat and drink it in loving remembrance of their Lord. So did their believing wives, Julia and Leah. All are priests clean forever by the one sacrifice of Christ the Lamb. This is the *gospel*. As a result, "*spiritual sacrifices*" of praise and thanksgiving ascended up to God. These priests also gave a material offering at times, but there was no prescribed tithe to give. They had liberty to give according to their means and heart as the Lord directed them.

Some tried to get Rufus to "progress" backwards to Jewish legalism in the church. But one of the elders said, "*Stand fast ... in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*".

{Some Scriptures for the practices of the Jewish temple that describe Benis' experience.

Leviticus 1 / Exodus 28 / Numbers 18 / Leviticus 6:18, 24:5-9 / 2 Chron. 26: 19 – 21 / Leviticus 16 /
Nehemiah 8 / 2Chron. 29 / 1 Kings 8 / Hosea 13: 9-11}

{Some Scriptures that teach Rufus' experience in a NT church meeting: Christ's spiritual temple.

Acts 10:42-48 / 1Pet. 2:5 / 1Cor. 14:23 / 1 Peter 1, 2 / Acts 2, 15 / 1Cor. 2 / Eph. 2, 3 / 1Cor. 1 / Matt. 23:
7-11 / 1 Cor. 14 / Heb. 10:19-21 / 1Cor. 14: 36-38 / 1Cor. 11: 1-16 / 1Cor. 14:15 / Eph. 5:18-20 / Heb. 2:12
/ 1 Cor. 10: 16-21 / 1 Cor. 11:17-34 / 1Cor. 14:26 / 1Cor. 16: 1, 2 / 2Cor. 9: 6-8 / Rom. 7:6 / Gal. 5:1}