

# The Temple Of God

There are a lot of terms used in the New Testament to describe the Lord's church, and there a lot of insight to be gained from knowing these terms better. One example is the term "temple." The temple is a place where God meets those who worship Him. In the Old Testament, God dwelt in the tabernacle after leading the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage (Exodus 25:8-9; Leviticus 26:11-12; Deuteronomy 12:5; 16:2-6). After a span of several hundred years, God dwelt in the temple built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:12-16). Similarly, in the New Testament, God dwells among His people (Matthew 18:20). Because the church is composed of people who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, it can also accurately be said that God dwells among His church (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Instead of thinking about the church in "brick and mortar" terms, you now, in the New Testament, have to recognize that the church is a spiritual building in which the Spirit of God dwells. God's people are identified as a building in 1 Corinthians 3:9, and if anyone destroys this building, God will destroy him (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

In the Old Testament, the temple was built according to a meticulous plan revealed to Moses in Exodus 25-40. Actually, God had a complete plan for service to Him in the Old Testament (Exodus 25:40; 1 Chronicles 28:10-19; Psalm 127:1). Likewise, the New Testament temple (or church) must be built according to God's plan, and God still has a plan for service to Him. The Hebrew writer said, *"For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount"* (Hebrews 8:4-5). The pattern is critical for Paul said, *"But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon"* (1 Corinthians 3:10).

It is also important to understand that Christ and the apostles form the foundation of this temple. Christ was prophesied as being the foundation of the Temple of God (Isaiah 28:16-17). Paul declared that Christ was the cornerstone and that the apostles formed the foundation. Ephesians 2:20 says, *"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* Furthermore, Paul wrote, *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 3:11). There are have been so many "prophets" since the time of Christ who have claimed equal or near-equal status with the Lord, and who have felt very comfortable directing people back to God as they see fit.

When the New Testament declares that Christ and the apostles are the foundation, no man can rightfully alter the structure.

Christians are the stones which are placed together in the temple. *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 2:5).

Ephesians 2:21-22 says, *"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."* The strength of the building depends upon the stones being securely cemented and built together in peace, love, and truth (Ephesians 4:1-3, 16).

"Church" is not just a place to which you go on Sunday; it is living, breathing temple, composed of members who are dedicated to pure living and building up this glorious temple in an authoritative and scriptural way.

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