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## DEDICATING THE TEMPLE

– JULY 25. – 1 KINGS 8:22-30. –

WHAT THE TEMPLE TYPIFIED – DOUBLE ANTITYPES – THEIR DEDICATION – KING SOLOMON'S PRAYER – GOD'S PERSONALITY – HIS DWELLING – PLACE IN HEAVEN – "THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TEMPLE" – ITS ANTITYPE.

**"My House shall be called a House of prayer for all people." – Isaiah 56:7.**

POSSESSED of reverence for the Lord, full of zeal for Him, full of appreciation of the Divine promise that King David's successor should build the House of the Lord, the Temple, for which David had for years made preparations of money and valuables, we find King Solomon speedily giving attention to this matter. In the fourth year of his reign, preparations had reached such a development that the construction of the Temple was begun; and seven and a half years later the scenes of this Study were enacted – when the Temple was ready for dedication. Strange to say, it was dedicated about a month before it was completely finished. Doubtless this contained some important typical lesson, which we may some day more fully understand.

Built of white marble, the Temple must have been a very imposing structure, although not lofty. It was of but one story; nevertheless, its position on the mountain top surely gave it a very commanding appearance, its glittering, white walls overtopping the entire landscape. But we are interested in the Temple of Solomon more than in any other building because it was a type, as well as a reality. Let us note the Apostle's references to it [R5713 : page 189] and his declaration that its antitype is found in God's holy

people – the Church. We read, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "For ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." – 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16.

## **PREPARATION OF THE LIVING STONES**

In the picture which the Apostle thus brings to our attention, the Church corresponds to the Tabernacle rather than to the Temple. As God was with the Children of Israel from the time they entered into covenant with Him until the Temple was dedicated by Solomon, He indicated His presence by a manifestation of the Shekinah Light in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. And so with us now as Christians: from the time we become sons of God – from the time of our consecration, justification, sanctification and begetting of the Holy Spirit – our bodies are tabernacles, or temporary dwelling-places, of God's Holy Spirit. His Spirit in us is represented originally by the begetting influence which we receive as the start of our new existence as New Creatures in Christ Jesus; and that light, or holy illumination, spread abroad in us fills us with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God more and more. The Tabernacle in one sense of the word was a temple – in the sense that any place where God is would properly be called a temple, a holy place. But, as suggested, it is preferable that we think of our fleshly bodies as tabernacles of God – His temporary dwelling-place. In a fuller sense, by and by, there will be a great transfer. The Lord's saintly ones will be changed from flesh to spirit by the power of the First Resurrection, and will thus be more perfectly represented by the beautiful Temple which Solomon built.

But there is a still more beautiful thought brought to our attention by St. Peter. He tells us that the various members of the Church of Christ – the saints – are living stones, which are in process of chiseling and polishing, preparatory to the uniting of all

these in one grand, glorious Temple of God beyond the Veil. (1 Peter 2:5,9.) Any not enduring the chiseling and polishing will be discarded as unfit for the glorious Temple.

The bringing together of these living stones beyond the Veil will be by the Resurrection Power, beautifully illustrated in the erection of Solomon's Temple, of which we read that its stones were prepared at the quarry and then finally assembled for the construction of the Temple, and that they were so perfectly shaped and marked for their various places that they came together without the sound of a hammer – without need for chiseling or for other labor upon them at the time of the construction. So, St. Paul says, the Church is God's workmanship. (Ephesians 2:10.) And His work will be so perfectly accomplished that there will be no need of rectification or alteration beyond the Veil.

It is this viewpoint that is especially interesting and profitable to the Lord's people. Such of them as can realize that they have been called of God to this High Calling, to membership in the Temple, can fully appreciate thereafter the necessity for the trials and difficulties of life which are shaping them, fitting them, for Heavenly glory, honor, immortality. These are the "all things" working together for good to them that love God – preparing them for the spiritual blessings and services of the future. – Romans 8:28.

## **WORK OF THE GLORIFIED CHURCH**

When we think of the Church as the Temple under construction, it impresses upon us the thought that there is a future work to be accomplished. Why construct a Temple, and then not use it? Serious injury came to us through various errors of the past: for instance, the thought that the Church alone is to be saved and all the remainder of mankind to be lost; and a further thought, that at the Second Coming of Christ the world is to be burned up, and the Divine Plan ignominiously terminated. With such a view, the

construction of the Church as the great Temple would seem to be a waste; since there would be nobody to be blessed by it.

However, as our eyes of understanding open more and more clearly, we begin to see beauty in the Divine Plan and arrangement. So far from God's Plan terminating at the Second Coming of Christ, it will merely begin there, so far as the world is concerned. The Church, in one figure, will be the Royal Priesthood for the blessing of all the families of the earth. (Galatians 3:29.) In the other figure, the Church will be the great Temple through which all the world of mankind may have access to God and return to harmony with Him.

Thus, eventually, this glorified Church, or Temple, will be the House of Prayer for all people, all nations – not that they will pray to a house, but that they will [R5714 : page 189] approach God through the glorified Church, in which His Presence will be manifested and His mercy will be available to all. From this viewpoint, the Temple with its Shekinah glory represented the Church in the glory of the future, in association with Christ; and God will dwell in and operate through that glorious Church for the blessing of the world, represented by all those who will worship God looking toward His Holy House.

## **DEDICATING THE TEMPLE OF GOD**

There is an important thought in connection with a dedication which some seem to overlook. It was necessary for the Tabernacle to be dedicated, or set apart to God, before He deigned to recognize it and to use it. Similarly with all of God's people; it is necessary that they should positively and formally dedicate themselves to God and to His service before being recognized of Him and filled with His Spirit. It is not enough that they should know of Him and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and be persuaded of these things – not enough even that they should know something of the glories of the Coming Age as revealed in the Word of God. It is necessary, also, that they make formal dedication of themselves to God, fully surrendering

their own wills that God may come into them by His Holy Spirit and, accepting their sacrifices, constitute them thereafter His tabernacles.

When the Temple was ready for dedication, Solomon presented it to God with the prayer which constitutes the basis of today's Study – a prayer beautiful in simplicity and indicative of King Solomon's perception of the great truth that God is a personal God, whose dwelling-place is not everywhere, but in Heaven. It shows us that the king fully understood that the Temple which he had made, like the Tabernacle before it, merely represented God's power and grace amongst His people. The presence of the Temple indicated that there were sinners who needed to be atoned for by its arrangements, and that mercy and forgiveness would be needed and that prayers toward God would be appropriate. "Hear Thou in Heaven Thy dwelling-place; and when Thou hearest, forgive."

So during the Millennium, all the world will have the opportunity of approaching God through His great Temple of which Jesus is the Chief Corner-Stone, and the Church the living stones under His Headship. And God will hear the prayers thus properly presented, and will forgive the sins of the people; and as a result the **[R5714 : page 190]** work of Restitution will progress to a grand completion.

As Solomon dedicated the Temple, so the Church of Christ will be dedicated, formally presented to the Father. The great Antitype of Solomon will do this; namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting us all as His members, as the Temple which is His Body, reared up on the Third Day – the Third Thousand-Year Day from the time of His death – the dawning of the Great Sabbath. (John 2:19-22.) As a result of the dedication, the glory of the Lord will fill the House. The fact that the typical Temple was filled with the glory of the Lord before it was entirely completed seems to imply that at this present time there will be some manifestation of God's

favor toward His Church in glorification while yet the work of construction is not quite finished. However, it is difficult to read prophecy in advance of its fulfilment. We must wait to see what will be the fulfilment of this feature.

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

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