

# STONE HARBOR

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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at [johnny@stoneharborchurch.org](mailto:johnny@stoneharborchurch.org).

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherds heart,  
Johnny

## ***Transformation Card***

*This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.*

Date: Mar 7, 2010  
Series: The Church of God's Intention  
Part: Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be  
Section: The New People of God  
Topic: The Church  
Message Title: **The Church -- The Dwelling Place of God**  
Short Title: The Dwelling Place of God  
Text: Various  
Key Words:

### ***Message Outline***

Series Setting  
The Church of God's Intention  
Part 1 What God Intends the Church to Be

### **The Dwelling Place of God**

- I. The **Garden of Eden** was the First **Dwelling** Place of God with Man
- II. Israel's **Tabernacle** and then Temple was God's **Dwelling** Place with Man
- III. The **Church** of Jesus Christ is God's **Dwelling** Place with Man Today

### ***Related Scripture***

- 1. Rev 21-22
- 2. Gen 1-3
- 3. Ex 25:8, 29:45-46, 33:15-16
- 4. Ex 19:6; Ex. 34:9; Lv 26:11-12
- 5. John 1:1-18; 2:13-25
- 6. Acts 2
- 7. 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19

### ***Memory and Meditation Verse***

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. 1 Peter 2:9-10 NASB

### ***Questions for Thought and Discussion***

- 1. How does the Garden of Eden help us understand the Israelite tabernacle and temple?
- 2. How does the Israelite tabernacle and temple help us understand the church?
- 3. What were some of God's purposes for the Garden and then for the tabernacle and temple, i.e, what functions did those places serve?
- 4. What event has occurred that fulfills God's purposes and His intended functions for the tabernacle and temple?
- 5. In what way are we the temple of God?
- 6. Since we are the temple of God, what does that say about our mission as the church?

***(6) How God's Former Sanctuaries Anticipate Jesus Himself and His Church as the Dwelling Place of God***

This section seeks to understand the Church of today, the new people of God, (NPOG) by understanding its blueprint, foundation and framing represented in the people of God (POG) of yesterday.

The Old Testament (OT) POG have always been the one people-group of all the peoples of the world amidst whom God has dwelt most overtly and most distinctively. Israel was distinguished from all the other peoples of the earth by the very fact that God dwelt with them and not others. In fact, the POG were the POG **because** God dwelt with them. He associated Himself as their God and them as His people. The covenant God made with Israel at Sinai was for the purpose of taking Israel to be His covenant-son and for Israel to take God as their covenant-Father. This taking is much like the taking today an adoptive parent does with their adopted children or the taking a bride and groom do on their wedding day. I take you to be my lawfully wedded wife... "I will be your God and you will be My people." Two separate people now joined, for life!

In what way did God dwell with His people in the OT? In the beginning He dwelt with them in the Garden of Eden. Then He dwelt with them in the tabernacle of Israel's Sinai wanderings as evidenced by His glory cloud which settled above the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. And after that God dwelt with them as evidenced by that same glory cloud in their temple built in the city of Jerusalem.

But we may regard these respectively as blueprints, foundations and framing; all precursors to the final house of God's design. Where does God dwell today with His people? The tabernacle is no more, the first temple was torn down in an act of God's judgment upon the unfaithful nation of Israel. That second temple built by the returning exiles stood vacant of His presence, God's glory cloud never inhabited the space built for it. And even that temple is gone now, destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Does God no longer dwell with man for lack of a temple?

Quite the contrary, God now dwells with His people more completely than ever. Jesus Himself was and is Immanuel, God with us, and therefore while He was living on the earth, as Jesus the Nazarene, God dwelt amongst mankind. Then when He ascended to the right hand of God He sent forth His Spirit upon all mankind – all who would believe in Him as God's Christ – and the temple of stone and the Holy of Holies and the ark of the covenant of former days all found their final expressions in those who are created in the image and likeness of God Himself. **You** recipients of God's saving grace, **you** who have exercised the faith He has enlivened in you, **you** the church of Jesus Christ, **you** are the dwelling place of God

in the Spirit; and therefore **we collectively as the church universal are the temple of God today.**

In our service ahead of us this morning we will look at the blueprints, foundation and framing that we might understand and appreciate all the more the final dream-house God has always purposed. We will do so with a special focus on the ancient sanctuary of God seen first in Eden, then in a portable tabernacle and later in the Jerusalem temple of the Israelite people. We will look at God's intentions for those sanctuaries: who was to gather there, what was to take place there? This will inform our understanding of God's intentions for the Church: who is to gather here and what is to happen here. For the church is not Plan-B, but the more complete expression of God's Plan-A. He is in us completing the sanctuary of His original intentions.

We do not, should not, thumb our noses and find Israel or her tabernacle and temples old and therefore irrelevant -- failed experiments, without importance in our day. Rather, with humility and an awareness of the sheer grace of God and with trembling at the responsibility associated with it, we accept the calling of God to be His people today built alongside the prophets of old and realizing the greater fullness of what they portrayed only in part. And further we recognize the huge and distinctly greater enablement that God has given us in His indwelling Spirit. Unlike the OT POG who enjoyed the presence of God amongst them in that He allowed His glory cloud to fill the Holy of Holies in their tabernacle and 1<sup>st</sup> temple – dwelling amidst them but separate from them; we now enjoy the indwelling presence of God in our very persons. We are people enabled as never before by our union with Christ and God's indwelling Spirit to be collectively the full expression of the Israel of God and the temple of God. The OT POG received the promises of God, we have received God Himself!

Let's set ourselves this morning to understanding the Church of today (the NPOG) by understanding its blueprint, foundation and framing represented in the POG of yesterday. First I have a point that is not on the screen or on your Transformation Cards. If you would write onto your cards...

**(a) The Garden of Eden was the First Dwelling Place of God with Man**

(i) Who was to Gather There

*(a) Adam & Eve*

We see plants and animals but the focus is certainly on Adam & Eve. See Gen 2:8

*(b) Adam & Eve's Descendants*

Further, God's exhortation to be fruitful and multiply and fill... the earth implies that the Garden of Eden, had man not fallen and been removed, would have been extended to accommodate growing humanity.

*(c) God*

See Gen 3:8.

*(d) Satan*

Satan was also there but he was clearly cast as an intruder and spoiler, an enemy working against the intentions of God.

The Garden of Eden was designed as a place for God and mankind both to dwell.

(ii) What was to Take Place There

*(a) Mankind was to live there*

(i) God Placed Adam & Eve There

[Genesis 2:8](#) -- The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and **there He placed the man** whom He had formed.

*(b) Mankind was to live there WITH GOD*

Gen 3:8 shows God choosing to be in the garden with Adam & Eve.

[Genesis 3:8](#) -- <sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Certainly God could have created the Garden of Eden and not chosen to be there just as a carpenter can build a house and not choose to live there. But God did choose to be in the Garden of Eden with Adam & Eve.

See also--Lev 26:12; 2 Sam 7:6-7

Man and God were to live there in relationship with each other.

*(c) Man living with God implies Man's Priestly Role*

“Because they met God face to face in a holy place, we may assume that Adam and Eve had a holy or priestly status. Only priests were permitted to serve within a sanctuary or temple.” Alexander p. 25

*(d) God Charged Adam to Cultivate & Keep It*

[Genesis 2:15](#) -- Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

(i) Cultivate

The garden was already there and bearing fruit to be harvested when God placed Adam in it. The cultivation therefore was more like harvesting, pruning and tilling the ground that his own weight may have compressed after a snooze in the shade of a tree God had already caused to be there bearing fruit, than doing the hard initial work of installing the garden from scratch – digging, planting, providing the initial intensive nurture required to grow a garden.

(ii) Keep could Indicate “Protect”

Alexander, Beale and Middleton see that the 2:15 charge “keep” included the **protecting** of the garden from defiling forces. This charge to protect the garden-sanctuary also argues for the Adam and Eve to be seen in a priestly capacity. Alexander says, “...by siding with the serpent the human couple fail in their priestly duty.” Beale says, “When Adam failed to guard the temple by sinning and letting in a foul serpent to defile the sanctuary, he lost his priestly role...” (Alexander p. 26)

*(e) God Purposed to Extend It*

[Gen 1:28](#) -- <sup>28</sup>God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Greg Beale --“As Adam and Eve were to begin to rule over and subdue the earth, it is plausible to suggest that they were to extend the geographical

boundaries of the Garden of Eden until Eden extended throughout and covered the whole earth.” Alexander p. 25

So we see that the Garden of Eden was a place where God and man first dwelt together. I'm coming to see it as a prototype sanctuary of God; and we will see the design lines of Eden in the tabernacle and the temple that followed.

**(b) Israel's Tabernacle and then Temple was God's Dwelling Place with Man**

Moving several hundred years forward in the history of the OT POG we come to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob newly delivered by God from Egypt and in route to the land God had promised He would give to them. This people-group would bear the name Israel, the name God gave to Jacob from whom they all descended. Moses was God's appointed mediator between God and the people of Israel. You know the story well enough that God called Moses up Mt. Sinai and there gave him the instructions by which Israel would live as His covenant sons which we know in the summary form in the Ten Commandments.

But, what God ALSO gave Moses was detailed instructions on a tent/tabernacle for Israel to build which would be a place for God to dwell with them. Twelve chapters of the book of Exodus are devoted to recording the design and construction of the tabernacle. Just the amount of instruction and documentation should indicate the importance of the tabernacle to God.

(i) Who was to Gather There

(a) *Israel*

(b) *God*

[Exodus 25:8](#)

"Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, **that I may dwell among them.**

[Exodus 29:45](#)

" I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be **their God.**

[Exodus 29:46](#)

"They shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, **that I might dwell among them;** I am the LORD their God.

(ii) What was to Take Place There

*(a) It was to be a sanctuary*

It was not a country club or a bowling ally or a bingo hall or a barn... it was to be a sanctuary which by definition implies a place wholly set apart for the God and His purposes. See Ex 25:8

*(b) God and Israel were to Dwell there Together*

Its presence was to enable God and Israel to dwell together. See 25:8 again. God had revealed Himself to various key players in Israel's history but He had not chosen to dwell among them to the full extent He was indicating here.

This dwelling together of God with man as facilitated by the tabernacle was not without its problems. God was holy and man was sinful. God's righteous indignation at the sin of man would prove to be a high hurdle. Even while Moses was on the mountain receiving God's instructions for life as covenant-sons, those same sons were below disobeying the very God they had just pledged to obey. As a result God threatened NOT to dwell with them. This thought was terrible to Moses and led him to intercede and plead with God:

Ex 33:15 -- 15 Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. 16"For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"

Ex 34:8-9 -- 8 Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. 9 He said, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession.

In Ex 34:10ff God graciously consents to Moses request and renews His covenant with Israel. In Ex 35:10 ff God calls the skillful men from Israel to construct the tabernacle, even men with God's Holy Spirit (35:30-31). In v. 20ff gifts were received to resource the construction project – even more than was needed (Ex 36:1-7). And thus the God-designed



temple was constructed by skillful craftsmen, and one particularly gifted with the Holy Spirit for the task, using the resources accumulated from the people of Israel to be the place of God's dwelling in their midst. After it was set up Ex 40:34 says, "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." And the concluding verse of Exodus (40:38) records, "For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel."

Regarding the temple 2 Chronicles 7 (cf. 1 Kings 8:10-11) speaks of the Shekinah glory.

"<sup>1</sup>Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. <sup>2</sup>The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house."

God dwelt among His covenant people Israel in the tabernacle and temple sanctuaries. But He did so in an insulated way. Clowney says about the tabernacle and the same was true for the temple: "God dwelt behind curtains, symbolically sealed off from the sinful camp." Clowney p.33.

How else were the tabernacle and the temple used by God?

*(c) They Provided a "Way of Approach" to a Holy God*

"Sinners brought their sacrifices to its great altar; the priests entered with the blood of atonement into the holy place; the high priest, on the day of atonement, went into the innermost sanctuary, the holy of holies, to sprinkle the lid of the ark, the symbol of God's throne, with the atoning blood." Clowney p. 33

*(d) A Distinguishing Mark for Israel as the POG*

"The tabernacle and the later temple declared the holiness of God and the need that his wrath against sin be assuaged through sacrifice. But the erection

of God's house also declared that God had taken his people for his inheritance, that **they were his and he was theirs** through the provision of his grace (Ex. 34:9; Lv 26:11-12). **The presence of God separated Israel from all the other nations** (Ex 33:16). They were a **kingdom of priests, a holy nation** (Ex 19:6)." Clowney p. 33

Now with that said of the tabernacle of Israel the OT POG, let's turn our attention to how this helps us understand Jesus and His church the New Testament (NT) POG.

**(c) The Church of Jesus Christ is God's Dwelling Place with Man Today**

(i) Jesus on Himself as the Temple

(a) *Text – John 2:13-21*

***First Passover--Cleansing the Temple***

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 And He found in the **temple** those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the **temple**, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making **My Father's house** a place of business."

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy **this temple**, and in three days I will raise **it** up."

20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this **temple**, and will You raise **it** up in three days?"

21 But He was speaking of **the temple of His body**.

(b) *Comment*

- Jesus regarded Himself as a temple!

- Jesus regarded the contemporary use of the temple at the time of his ministry as an abuse!
- The tearing of the temple curtain (Mat 27:51) at the time of Jesus death is widely regarded as indicating the obsolescence of the physical temple in light of the atoning work of Jesus upon the cross who now Himself provides the way of approach to God.
  - John 14:6 -- Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."
  - Acts 4:12 -- "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
- The destruction of the temple which Jesus forecasted (Mark 13:2, 14-20; Luke 21:20-24) is widely understood as an act of judgment from God on the OT POG who did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah. The temple in God's advancement of His redemptive purposes "went away" so that the perfect and ultimate temple (Jesus) would be the final dwelling place of God and way of approach to Him.

## (ii) Ephesians 2:19-22

*(a) Text*

**19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,  
but you are fellow citizens with the saints,  
and are of God's household,  
20 having been built on the foundation  
of the apostles and prophets,  
Christ Jesus Himself being the corner  
stone,  
21 in whom the whole building,  
being fitted together,  
is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,  
22 in whom you also are being built together  
into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**

*(b) Comment*

- This letter to the Ephesians was intended to cycle through to the 'largely Gentile' churches in the region surrounding Ephesus. Earlier (cf.

1:13) Paul had spoken of his readers as having heard and 'believed' the gospel and having been 'sealed' in Christ 'with the Holy Spirit of promise.' So in this passage he is addressing the church comprised of those who have heard and believed in the gospel and who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. That is the church – the assembly of the redeemed!

- The words of 19-22 indicate Paul's understanding of both a universal church (verse 19's "fellow citizens with the saints...") and a local church (verse 22's "you also...").
- Paul is using construction imagery
  - The materials: Holy Spirit sealed believers ('you'); and the components of the foundation: the apostles, prophets, Christ Jesus
  - The outcome of the construction: "a holy temple in the Lord" "a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
  - The 'foundational' importance of Jesus: "Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone"
    - "all is built on Christ, supported by Christ, and the lie or shape of the continuing building is determined by Christ, the cornerstone." Alexander p.62 citing M. Turner, "Ephesians" in New Bible Commentary (21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition) p. 1233
- God is already dwelling in this new temple built not with physical stones but with living stones, i.e., people.
- The church/temple is considered both built (20: "having been built") and being built (21: "being fitted together"; 22: "are being built together"). The work that Christ has done on the cross has built the church and that built church is still being built. More people are still being added to it.

### (iii) Eph 3:14-19

#### (a) Text

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,  
<sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth

derives its name,<sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

*(b) Comment*

- Alexander sees Paul alluding by his use of “filled up...” to “the image of the tabernacle and temple being filled with God’s glory.” P. 63 We have already seen how after the tabernacle was set up the glory of the Lord filled its sanctuary (Ex 40:34-35) and the same was true of the temple. (1 Kings 8:10-11, 2 Chron 7:1-2)
- Paul prays that the church would be filled up with the presence of God – here with the triune presence of God (Spirit, Christ, God)
- The church is to be the sanctuary and dwelling place of God

(iv) Eph 5:18-21

*(c) Text*

<sup>18</sup>And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,<sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;<sup>20</sup> always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;<sup>21</sup> and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

*(d) Comment*

- Paul commands the 1<sup>st</sup> century church to be filled and then shows them how. This would indicate to me that we are not only the passive recipients of the presence of God in the Holy Spirit, but secondarily we are also to participate in that presence by: speaking...singing...giving thanks... and being subject to one another.

- Example of Chris' emails

(v) To the Church In Corinth

(e) 1 Cor 3:16-17

<sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

Paul says to the local church in Corinth: you are a temple of God ... the Spirit of God dwells in you! God says to every local church including Stone Harbor, “You are a temple of God and ... the Spirit of God dwells in you.”

If we are to be the church of God's intention we will recognize that we (the people of the church) are a temple of God and the dwelling place of the Spirit of God and we must not teach each other down but build each other up.

(f) 1 Cor 6:19

<sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

(g) 2 Cor 6:16

<sup>16</sup>Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

“(D)I WILL (E)DWELL IN THEM AND (E)WALK AMONG THEM;  
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

“...the apostle evidently understands God's presence in the church as much more than a type of the divine indwelling in the old sanctuary or the fulfillment of the prophecy that God would again dwell with his people after the exile, for he supplements the LXX verb ‘walk among’ with the much stronger verb ‘live in’. In other words, God no longer dwells *with* his people in a sanctuary which they make for him; he dwells *in* them, and *they* are his temple.” Emphasis in original. (McKelvey, *New Temple*, p. 95 as cited by Alexander p. 64.)

See also (1 Cor 14:25, 1 Cor 5, 2 Cor 4:16-5:5) as discussed by Alexander p. 65

(vi) 1 Peter 2:4-6

*(a) Text*

<sup>4</sup>And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, <sup>5</sup>you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For this is contained in Scripture:

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE  
STONE,  
A PRECIOUS CORNER stone,  
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM  
WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

*(b) Comment*

- Like Paul, Peter understands the church to be a “spiritual house” which although he doesn’t use the word temple in the above passage, seems to imply the same thing. So the church is a spiritual house. And who is to live in that house? A “holy priesthood.” And what are the priestly functions of that holy priesthood? They are “...to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” And what are those sacrifices? They are NOT animals offered for atonement at the physical temple – that work has been once for all fulfilled in Christ’s Passover sacrifice of Himself. They perhaps are better seen as every costly act of love towards God and neighbor that springs from your transformed nature. Because of the goodness of God extended toward us how can we not love Him and His people in return?

***Message Conclusion***

God instructed Israel to build a tabernacle and then temple according to His design using the human and material resources He provided to have a place to dwell with man and a way for sinful man to approach Him. Both tabernacle and temple carried design features of the Garden of Eden because it has always been God's intention to dwell with man in intimate communion. Both tabernacle and temple were only types of meeting places with God where that meeting could occur in part.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the tabernacle and temple function as He is Himself God with man and in His sending of His Spirit into those joined to Him by faith, the people who are His church, He has now built and is still adding to the ultimate temple of His intention.

This temple of the church of Jesus is growing as each of its members live their transformed lives as new creations in Christ and thereby shine the light of the gospel in the darkness of the world thereby bringing life as God intended. The gathering and adding to the church will continue until Jesus returns. If we are being the church of God's intention we will be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with the knowledge of God. To what end? Where is this all heading? That the whole world and all of creation would be the sanctuary of God, this is the picture of the new heaven and the new earth from Revelation 21 and 22.

Each of us must start with Jesus and our personal union with Him. But we are not complete as individual stones strewn around the building site of God's church/temple. We must be joined not ONLY to Christ the cornerstone, but also to the other stones of the foundation – the prophets of OT and apostles of the NT – AND to the other “living stones” of our local church – that is each other; all the time recognizing that our local church is itself just a part of the universal church comprised of Spirit sealed believers in Jesus all over the world that will itself one day be renewed to be His finished and final sanctuary.

What does this call us to? It calls us to be the temple. Joined to Christ by faith and His indwelling Spirit and gathered together in His name we are the temple of God.

Therefore we should expect and live in awareness of the presence of God. This is a spiritual reality accessed by faith. And faith is built in us as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God transforming us into the image of Christ – forming Christ in us.

Therefore also when people join us gathered in His name they are coming into the very presence of God who dwells within us and they should here find access to Him. Is this in any way true of those who join our gatherings? It is true only to the extent we have been transformed from the



old man into new creations in Christ. It is not true to the extent we are going through the motions but still living as the unredeemed unregenerate natural man.

As we prepare to take communion I pray that we would die to natural selves that remain alive and instead live in the newness of life that Jesus has redeemed us for. Rightly regard the redemptive work Christ has done. You are a new creation in Christ. Live no longer as if you have not been redeemed. Rightly regard each other – corporately we form a local church and are thus the dwelling place of God. Bring no grudge against your brother or sister to this table. Neither bring any sin you are living in. Journey in your own thoughtful repentance to the cross of Christ and laying down your sin and your misunderstanding of Him and regard Him, yourself and your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ rightly: He is the cornerstone of the new temple of God which is the church, you are the redeemed gifted with the Holy Spirit and your brothers and sisters so gifted and sealed by the same Spirit are the objects of your love and service.

Go to the cross and then come to the table.

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