

BUILDING THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Psalm 18:1-3

If I should ask you to identify Nymphas, you probably could not. His biblical cup of notoriety is virtually empty. In fact, his name is only mentioned one time in all of scripture. But what is said of him should engage our attention. The Apostle Paul owned him as a believer in the faith. He approved the work in which he was engaged and called him a brother in Christ. **Read with me Colossians 4:15** The Apostle Paul gave him this commendation. *“Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”*

This man was so involved in the gospel he opened his house as a gathering place to worship. He was so concerned that the gospel be communicated to those of his generation he committed his all to its success. Such was the beginning of the church at Laodicea.

Now fast forward a few years and **Read Revelation 3:14-19** *“14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”*

What happened to the Nymphas and the church at Laodicea? How did such a remarkable beginning come to disfavor so quickly with Christ? Is there a lesson here for us? Can we afford to ignore the obvious? *“These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name.”* (John 20:31) What happened at Laodicea was no isolated incident. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, like Laodicea have no church today.

What happened to the church in Laodicea is clear. **(V-17) They appeared to be rich.** (Their spiritual barns were full of good works) **They appeared to be righteous.** (But they were naked; exposed to the wrath of God. All their righteousness were as filthy rags. **They appeared to be regenerated.** (But they could not see.) They needed not because they knew not. **(V-18b)** They knew not because they saw not. They saw not because they were spiritually dead. They loved darkness rather than light. What a tragic end. What began as a good work, at the last report stood in danger of utter failure. The house that engaged their energy in the beginning to build now stands in name only. The same can be said of every one of the seven churches of Asia Minor and us also unless we remain vigilant.

What about your house? What about my house? We all by nature build a house, but not according to the specifications of God's word; therefore it is inadequate to our spiritual needs. Although it looks secure and affords its residents a measure of comfort and peace, it will not shield sinners at the judgment. God's testimony to this fact is stated in the scriptures.

Read Matthew 7:24-27 “24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:27 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Here Christ warns his hearers of the danger of inadequate housing and the judgment awaiting those who fail to heed the warning. Two men build their house. Herein lies the problem; men building their house. Scriptures are filled with these builders: Cain and Able; the praying Publican and the proud Pharisee; the Prodigal son and his brother; the Pharisee and the prostitute; the woman at the well; Nicodemus. All were building their house.

Read Psalm 127:1 “*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*”

Jesus told his hearers in Matthew 16:18 “*I will build my church.*” Men can and have built beautiful edifices to satisfy the desires of those who can afford them but men, by nature have not the where with all to build God’s house. They read and misinterpret the blueprint and specifications and fail to meet the standard of a holy God. Neither do they have the expertise to build this house. “*Salvation is of the Lord.*”

There are two options for those in need of spiritual housing; buy one already built or have someone build you one.

As a former builder if I could give you advice; don’t build. If you can find one already built that meets your needs, **(Not wants)** buy it. **(Trouble is we don’t know what we need)** If you insist on building let me recommend a builder. He has one already built. His house is adequate for your needs. It will stand the test of time and you can afford it. It is to God’s plans and specifications. In this house, in a gated community with one gate are many mansions and “*the gates of hell, (many gates) shall not prevail against it.*”

When you see it, nothing short of residency will satisfy you. When by faith we behold God’s building, like Lot leaving Sodom we will leave our old house and not look back. God makes his house look so attractive and our house so undesirable, change is inevitable and we say with the Psalmist in Ps 84:10 “*For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*”

This is so because God has promised to build his church and Christ can’t fail to save one for whom he died. Though His elect are all by nature living in Laodicea, worshipping in a house built by man, at an altar of self righteous legalism they can’t remain there. **Read Revelation 3:19 again.** “*19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*” God will call out his sheep from Laodicea in every generation and house them in a house of many mansions he has prepared for those who love him and are the called according to his purpose.

The Psalmist David saw the beauty and desirability of this house in **Psalm 18:1-3** and sets forth its particulars. “*I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn*

of my salvation, and my high tower. 3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”

What makes this house special? What makes it desirable? What makes it safe? What about this house makes it affordable? **The house of the Lord is:**

1.a spiritual house. **Read Psalm 18:1a** “*I will love thee O LORD.*” It is a house where love is the only cause and continuance of habitation. David loved the Lord but his love was not the cause of his salvation; it was the evidence of salvation. He was a man after God’s own heart. He loved the Lord because God first loved him. **Read 1 John 4:10** “*Herein is love; not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” It is the “Propitiator’s” house. This is the house God built Christ to be for his people. It is for those “IN CHRIST.” It is where the heart of the justified is eternally housed. 1John 4:19 “*We love him, because he first loved us.*”

Look with me at 1 Chronicles 17:4 David, King of Israel would build the Lord a house. He talked with the Prophet Nathan and told him of his desire to do so. Nathan’s response; “*David, do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee.*”

Read 1 Chronicles 17:4 God spoke to Nathan the Prophet, “*Go and tell David my servant, thus saith the LORD, ‘Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in.’*” **Read V10b** “*The Lord will build thee an house.*” **Remember** David’s deathbed confession in 2 Samuel 23:5 “*Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow.*” I’m glad David didn’t build God’s house. He had trouble building his own house.

Read 1 Chronicles 17:11-15 But God made David a promise.

“*And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.12 He shall build me an house, (Jesus told Peter, ‘upon this rock I will build my church’) and I will stablish his throne for ever.3 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee:14 But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.15 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.* The House of the Lord is a spiritual house.

Look with me at 2 Corinthians 5:1-8. Paul the Apostle wrote of this house.

“*For we know (Somebody knows something) (by revelation and faith given) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (temporary house, physical body) were dissolved, we have a building of God, (death is not the end; it is the beginning) an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.) For in this (earthly body) we groan, (Job 14:1 “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble”) earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house (new body) which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (Many who think themselves clothed will discover too late their nakedness. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.) For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened (We “labor and are heavy laden”) not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (This mortality must put on immortality) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, (who made us fit, Charged us with righteousness and put us in his house) who also hath given unto us the*

earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” (For we walk by faith, not by sight :) *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*”
But as soon as we leave this body we will be present with the Lord.

Here Paul describes this house and if God is pleased to reveal it to you, you will desire it. It is a spiritual house: a building of God. It is not made with hands. It is not temporal but eternal. It is in the heavens. It is infinitely, eternally better and those who own it will not be found naked. (like Adam) It is God's spiritual house, the church.

2. it is a strong house. Read Psalm 18:1b *“I will love the O Lord, my strength.”*

Ps 115:3 “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased, “and nothing can stay his hand.ö Luke 11:21 “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.” That strong man armed is Christ. David says here *“He is my strength.”* He alone is the only one who can save me. *Ex 15:11 “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, (a just God) fearful in praises, doing wonders?”*(And Savior)

Think about the wonders of salvation. The Triune God Head which *“Dwelleth in temples not made with hands,”* stood in eternity past and spoke to an obedient darkness and it fled away. He created the heavens and earth and everything therein. Then he created man in the image of God. But his greatest work, that which required power like none heretofore displayed, and never can be exceeded, justified the ungodly by imputing righteousness before time and made effectual in time to the objects of his love in each successive generation. And in this great display of power he remained holy and just in his actions. Quote Romans 5: 6-10 *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

Why on earth would a sinner reject this power for his own? Only one reason: he doesn't know this God. This God is not his strength. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:5 again** *“Now he that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given us the earnest of the Spirit.”* God has done a work of grace in the heart of those whose strength is God alone. The Earnest of the Spirit is evidence of his Presence. Is the earnest of the Spirit your constant companion? Is yours the strong house?

3. it is a stable house. Read Psalm 18:2a *“The Lord is my Rock.”*

It is a stable house with the only foundation that will endure. **Read 1 Corinthians 3:11** *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* It has a good foundation. My house is set on a rock. **Read Ephesians 2:20** *“and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”*

To Peter's confession of Christ's question, *“whom do men say that I the Son of man am; thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God,”* Jesus replied, *“Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* Remember the two builders

in Matthew 7? One built his house on a rock. *“And the rains came and the winds blew and beat upon it and it fell not.”* **Read 1Peter 4:17** *“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begins at us, (Those in Christ) what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”* The rain and wind is the judgment of God against the house. That house built (**Christ The Rock**) withstood God’s judgment. How? By satisfying every demand of God’s holy and inflexible justice, precept and penalty against every sinner building on this Rock. Based on his satisfaction, God is vindicated for the eternal justification of all for whom he made satisfaction and God is just to justify every resident of his house. His is a stable house.

4. it is a secure house. **Read Psalm 18:2a** *“The Lord is my rock and my fortress.”* A fortress is a house built on a rock. A fortress is impenetrable. It is secure and no one can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect because God has justified. No one can condemn because it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again. And is even at the right hand of the Father, who also maketh intercession for us. *“A mighty fortress is our God; a bulwark never failing.”* Nothing can separate me from the love of God. My house is secure.

5. it is a sinners house. **Read Psalm 18:2b** *“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.”*

Jesus told his disciples in John 14:2 *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

This house is for sinners who have been delivered. He has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. **Read Psalm 54:6-7.** *“I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good.7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: The accuser of the brethren can do no more than accuse because *“mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.”* Through faith given, under the preaching of the gospel, I have seen Christ’s desire (destruction) upon my enemy.*

Like David of old, in **1Samuel 17:37** *“David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. (typical of false religion) And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.”*

Satan can only accuse. No one can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect.

Not only has he delivered me from mine enemies, he has delivered me to his house.

Like Noah when he entered the Ark, God shut the door. God brought me to a house I knew nothing of. He brought me inside a house I wanted no part of. He discovered to me a danger disguised as a blessing in my former house and gave me an urgency to abandon that house and in the day of his power made me want his house above all houses. **Read Ephesians 1:13-14** *“13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”* This house is for sinners only.

6. it is a sacred house. **Read Psalm 18:** *“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. It is a sacred house, for therein dwells our Lord. (“Where two or three are gathered together) Who is this Lord of his house?”*

He is my Buckler. A buckler is a small shield, approximately 30 inches in diameter worn on the opposite arm of the hand with the sword. It is a defensive tool, protecting the vital organs of the body in combat. **Read Ephesians 6:16** *“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (Every accusation Satan hurls our way is quenched by our Buckler. He can’t make one charge stick.) You know why: Because Christ put away my sin, past present and future by his death on Calvary. He effectively disarmed the devil as to his hindering God’s elect from entering God’s house. Every charge against me was discharged and satisfied, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and the shield of faith are an unbeatable combination against Satan’s forces.*

Do you have a buckler? No man can live without one. If you dwell in God’s house you do. Don’t engage Satan without this One. Him who would surely destroy us if it were possible cannot go beyond God’s bidding against us. Our Buckler shields us from temptations, doubts, fears and accusations and even guilt of daily sin and preserves us alive in Christ. How so?

He is my horn of salvation. Here the Psalmist uses the metaphor of a horn to describe Christ. A horn is an instrument of communication. In its earliest form the bugle was used in battle to instruct the army. The call to charge and retreat were critical to victory. To insure all understand orders the trumpeter must sound clear sounds. **Read 1 Corinthians 14:7-8** *“And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle.”*

Paul’s subject here is communicating the gospel clearly. To this he concluded in **1 Corinthians 14:19** *“Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”*

In his office as Prophet, Christ communicates completely, the voice of God in spiritual matters of salvation by declaring his righteousness imputed as all the sinners salvation. To this end Christ is our Cornucopia, a horn of plenty. Nothing is left to chance and nothing else is needed. (John 8:26) *“I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.”*

There is another sense in which Christ is our horn of salvation. Read Luke 1:68-69 *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.”*

A horn is a part of the anatomy of an animal by which he either attacks or defends himself from his enemy. Christ is our horn of salvation by virtue of his victory over sin and the Devil. He has fought to the death the devil and his minions of death. He has crushed Satan’s head a death blow by his own death, which was payment in full to a holy God for all charges against every sinner for whom he died. Every requirement I owed he paid in full, removing them as far as the east is from the west. If God can’t condemn me, who can? *“I am persuaded.....”*

My horn of salvation had defeated my enemy. But He’s more:

My horn of salvation is my defender. He is my high tower.

No sinner is safe and secure without Christ as his high tower. Towers were placed at strategic locations around the city and were manned by faithful sentinels, ever on guard against the enemy. These towers were safe havens for those who retreated to them for refuge when the enemy attacked. Satan cannot circumvent God’s providential will concerning those who abide in Christ’s house. As their sentinel he is ever on guard against danger to the household of faith. Not

only has he “visited and redeemed his people,” he never liveth to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

Read Ephesians 2:14-22 14 “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Is this house your dwelling? It is IF: **Read Hebrews 3:1-6**

1 “ wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. 3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. (Christ built Moses house) 4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. 5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

The Apostle Paul said in **1 Corinthians 3:10-17** “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. 14 If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

God has built and is building his house even today. Is there a room for you in his house? He has made provisions for anyone who will live in his house. Remember Laodicea.

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