

The Mystery of the Church Part 3 Eph.2:20-22

“The Church Grows Up”

Excerpt:

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Not only are those people around you family, but they are being shaped to fit together with you – and you to them. Not only can you make yourself at home in your local church family – but you must! You are part of a load-bearing wall in the Temple of God. Look at the people around you. You are being chiseled and cut and shaped by the Master Mason to fit perfectly up against them.

Introduction:

We have been studying Eph.2 and we come this morning to v.20. Throughout the chapter Paul has been laying the groundwork to reveal the amazing doctrine of the Church. Jesus Christ has taken care of the considerable problems that were preventing the possibility of the Church, including our total alienation from God and His people and the promises of salvation. All that has been taken care of in the death of Christ. We who were once far away from God, strangers to God’s family and God’s people, without God in the world... We have now been brought near. So this morning we see the Church take form from the ground up. He begins with the foundation.

The Foundation

20 built on the foundation of the

This is what they call a genitive of apposition. The foundation is the apostles and prophets.

Apostles and prophets

And Apostle¹ is someone with delegated authority sent on a mission. For example, in Php.2:25 Paul says **I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your apostle, whom you sent to take care of my needs.** They sent him to represent them and to carry out a task, and so he was their apostle – an apostle of a church. The Apostles of Christ were a group of select men who were personally commissioned by the risen Christ Himself.

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¹ The word “apostle” appears 80 times in the NT, and the vast majority of those it refers to the 12 Apostles of Christ and Paul, who called himself **one abnormally born.** (1 Cor.15:8) Jesus appointed a small group of men to found and oversee the Church, and it consisted of those 13 men. Those men are the Apostles of Christ. There were other men who were also referred to as apostles who were called that because they were sent by some local church on a mission. So they are called the apostles of the church.

² Cor.8:23 **As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives (apostles) of the churches and an honor to Christ.** Php.2:25 **But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger (apostle), whom you sent to take care of my needs.**

And then there are a few others:
Ro.16:7 **Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.**
Acts 14:14 **But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes**

There are a handful of times when the word is used in a broader way, but mostly to refer to those 13 men. There were also false apostles. Paul refers to them several times in 2 Cor.11,12, and Jesus mentions them in Rev.2:2. The way you could tell a true Apostle was by his doctrine and his miracles.

2 Cor.12:12

The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

So the Apostles were men sent by the Lord Jesus Christ as His emissaries with delegated authority and a task. Their authority was absolute.

John 20:21-22

Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. (see also Jn.17:18)

They had the full authority of Christ, so the way you respond to an Apostle of Christ is the way you respond to Christ Himself.

Mt.10:40

He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.

Lk.10:16

“He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

1 Thes.4:8

he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Jesus also promised that the Holy Spirit would inspire them as they taught on His behalf. When they wrote the NT, they weren't just going from fallible, human memory.

John 14:25-27

“All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

What the Apostles taught and wrote was God's Word, it was binding with the authority of Christ, and to disobey or refuse to accept it was grounds for church discipline.

2 Thes.3:6-7

we command you to keep away from every brother who...does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter...Do not associate with him

If an Apostle taught something, it was true. And if an Apostle told you to do something, it was a sin not to do it. They were the highest authorities ever to walk the face of the earth with the exception of Jesus Himself. Another important group was the New Testament Prophets. A prophet was someone who spoke a direct revelation from God. When I preach God's Word to you, I am speaking revelation, but not direct revelation. God revealed His Word directly to the writers of Scripture, and I just pass it along to you. I don't get new revelation. In fact my goal in life is to never teach you anything that's not in the Bible. But the prophets were men and women through whom God gave direct, new revelation – information from God that wasn't already in the Bible. And the way to spot a false prophet is if he ever prophesies anything about the future that doesn't

happen, or if he ever prophesies anything that contradicts Scripture. So God revealed the Gospel (the NT) through those two groups – the Apostles and the Prophets.

Eph 3:4-5

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.

Both offices involved revelation, but the Apostles’ job was broader – it also included other things. And so when Apostles and Prophets are mentioned together, Apostles always come first.

In fact, 1 Cor.12:28 **And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers...**

The Apostles and Prophets revealed the Gospel, and the teachers explain it. That’s why there are no longer Apostles and Prophets today, but there are still teachers. The Gospel has been revealed, so we no longer need anyone to reveal anything. But we still need it to be explained and applied. In fact, by the time 2 Peter was written, the revelation of the Gospel was already being spoken of as a past tense event.

2 Pe.3:2 **I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.**

So when it says that the Apostles and Prophets were the foundation of the Church, it’s talking about what they revealed: the New Testament. The foundation of the Church is Scripture. And no more Scripture is being revealed, and no more revelation is being given today – there are no more Apostles and prophets, because the foundation was laid long ago. The foundation is never repeated in the building process. It’s laid once. You can’t have any more revelation being given today, because once the building is up, you can’t add to the foundation. They were the foundation...

20...With Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

The cornerstone was the foundation of the foundation. They would cut a perfectly square cornerstone, and use it as a guide for laying the rest of the foundation. It supported everything and was the standard to which everything had to conform. The point of that is the Apostles were perfectly in line with Jesus Christ. Don’t ever think of your NT as having two parts – the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the Apostles. All the Apostles did was teach what Jesus revealed to them – nothing else. If you want, you could put the whole NT in red letters – every bit of it came from Christ. “But I see all kinds of things in the Epistles that I don’t see in the Gospels. Paul taught a lot of doctrines that we don’t read in the Gospels being taught by Jesus.” That’s true, and the reason why is in Mt.10:27, where Jesus said to His Apostles:

What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

All those things the Apostles revealed in the Epistles, you don’t hear Jesus shouting all that in the streets. But He did teach it. It whispered it quietly to the Apostles, and told them to shout it from the rooftops. Everything you read anywhere in the NT was taught to the writer by Christ Himself.

The basis and foundation of everything we do is the teachings of the Apostles (the Apostles’ doctrine) – the Gospel (the NT)... And the reason that’s the basis for everything is because that is a foundation that is perfectly aligned with the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the foundation is laid in v.20, and look what happens in v.21.

Church growth

21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

The whole building

What building? The household of v.19 has now turned into a house. Paul never hesitates to switch metaphors in mid-sentence and mix multiple metaphors in a single thought. We started out as two *nations* in v.14, then we became one *body* in v.15, then we were the dispersed Jews vs. the homeland Jews in v.17... Then we were worshippers approaching the holy of holies in the Temple in v.18... Then in v.19 we were citizens of a country in the first half of the verse, and then members of a household (family) in the second half. And now in v.21 that household has morphed into a house – a building.

This new race of people, the Church, is like a building. Each one of you is like a brick in that building. There are no holy hermits. Our holiness is connected with all the other stones as together we make up the Temple.

The whole building is joined together

This is a reference to the process of cutting a stone to perfectly fit the next stone, joining them internally with metal pegs and sealing the gap with molten iron, given the wall the appearance of one giant stone. When we build a stone or brick wall today, it's a lot easier, because we use mortar. But back then they didn't. They cut all sides of each stone to perfectly fit against the other stones.

I saw a picture of one stone in a wall from before Jesus' time that is still there to this day. It's over 38 ft. long, and weighs 570 tons.² And the stones on either side of it fit so perfectly that at no point can you so much as fit a credit card in between them.

The Holy Spirit is the Builder. He's the one bringing unity and fitting us together so perfectly. But notice how He does it – by bringing you in line with the Cornerstone. We as a Church are being joined together, through Scripture, by being brought into conformity with the plumb line of Christ, the cornerstone. Unity in the Church is not achieved at church primarily. The main way we are brought close to one another is not at the fellowship meals or social events. Unity in the Church is achieved at your house in your favorite chair...or inside your prayer closet. It happens on your walk or in you bed or wherever it is you spend devotional time with the Lord every day... - Time reading your Bible, time in prayer and meditation on God's Word. That's the time when you are being conformed into the image of Christ. And meanwhile we are all at our homes also being brought into alignment with Christ.

When Solomon built the original Temple, according to 1 Ki.6:7 no sounds of chiseling or hammering could be heard at the building site. All that was done at the quarry, so when a stone was brought to the building site it was already perfectly cut. That's a good picture of what God does. The preparation is in secret. That's not to say He doesn't use the ministry of the Church to do it – of course He does. But the chiseling is done in secret – inside your heart in your personal relationship with God. And He does the same work inside us, and the next thing you know we are perfectly fitted together.

We come together for a fellowship meal not to achieve unity but to enjoy our unity. As I commit myself to the spiritual disciplines – learning and meditating on God's Word, prayer, fellowship and worship, I am being chiseled and shaped to fit perfectly up against you. And He's doing the same thing with you. And so when we come together, there is a unity that is closer even than blood relatives.

² Snodgrass, p.138

If you are a Christian, the Church is a place where you fit in perfectly. Many Christians never grasp that. They are so focused on external things or some hang-up they have with a few people that they feel like outsiders in the church. If you talk to them they will say things like, “I feel like an oddball. I just don’t fit in.” And so they stay out on the fringes of the Church community. Others have been hurt in the past and are so afraid of being hurt again that they remain aloof and distant.

But the truth of this passage is that

- regardless of how you feel, and
- regardless of how things look, and
- regardless of what other people might have indicated to you...

If you are a Christian this is a place where you *fit in*. This is your home. Your family. You can walk around here like your Father owns the place. This church is just as much yours as it is mine or anyone else’s.

In your house on Saturday afternoon, when you are relaxed at home with your family, and you sprawl out on the floor, or walk around in disheveled clothes... You’re not walking around thinking “I wonder what everyone thinks of me?” You’re relaxed, and you can just be yourself when you are with family. That’s the way the Church is supposed to be. You should be more comfortable and at ease here than anywhere. This is your home. You can expose your life to us, warts and all, and we will accept you and love you.

The Bible says the people in the Church are your family – brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, daughters, sons... If you have a hard time remembering that, maybe you would do well to just say that silently in your mind whenever you think of someone at church. “_____ my sister.” “My father” “My daughter.” And this image of stones being fitted together takes it even further. Not only are those people around you family, but they are being shaped to fit together with you – and you to them. Not only *can* you make yourself at home in your local church family – but you *must*! You are part of a load-bearing wall in the Temple of God. Look at the people around you. You are being chiseled and cut and shaped by the Master Mason to fit perfectly up against them.

The Holy Spirit gave you the spiritual gifts and calling that fit together perfectly with the rest of ours. The next time you go through something hard and find yourself asking, “Why is this happening to me?”... Maybe the answer is God is doing it to carve some rough corner off of you so you will fit more perfectly together with someone else as you are both being built together into the Temple of God. And look at the result:

And rises

lit “grows”

This is a word that refers to an organism growing. The biological word is put in the midst of the architectural metaphor to illustrate not only that it’s getting bigger but that it is also becoming more mature and getting closer to it’s final, intended state. One reason Paul mixes metaphors so often is because he speaks of realities so wondrous that there is no one metaphor that is adequate. We are like a Temple building, but we also are a living organism that grows. Peter mixes the same two metaphors.

1 Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him- 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Church hasn’t just existed for 2000 years. It’s a building project that has been getting closer and closer to its final glorious state for 2000 years. When Jesus was explaining what the Church would be like in Mt.13, He explained that it would be a growing entity.

Mt.13:31-33

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

God's intention for the Church was that it start small and then grow, and grow and become more expansive and more pervasive throughout the world. At the beginning there was a little group of 120 in Jerusalem. Today you can go almost anywhere in the world and find brothers and sisters in Christ. And the Church has not only expanded geographically. It has also matured.

During the first few centuries of the Church it was primitive in many ways. Just look how much the Church has developed over the last 500 years. At the end of the middle ages the true Church was hopelessly buried within a Roman Catholic system that was run almost completely by unbelievers. Lay people didn't have Bibles, and sound Bible teaching was almost non-existent. And look where we've come today. Look at what the Church has done around the world.

The effect the world-wide Church has had on the world is absolutely staggering. Not only the visible ministries of local churches, and not only all the hospitals and orphanages and humanitarian efforts... But all the influences of all the individual Christians in the world. And it's getting better. It's still growing.

There is a significant emphasis in Ephesians on Church growth. We see it emphasized again in ch.4. In ch.4 starting in v.11 he says that Jesus Christ gave gifted leaders to the Church **to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ... 15 speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

You see the constant emphasis on growth?

**12 the body of Christ may be built up
13 become mature
15 grow up
16 (the body) grows and builds itself up**

And even back here in ch.2 he talks about it growing even when he's right in the middle of another metaphor. Ephesians is a book about Church growth. But if you look closely you'll notice that it's very different from what we tend to think of when we talk about growth. In fact, in some ways it's the opposite. The modern church growth movement has focused almost exclusively on numbers of bodies that attend. And great emphasis is placed on new converts... - So much so that serious Bible study (which they think is only appropriate for mature believers) is relegated to obscure times or not done at all. And now they have figured out that to really get the big numbers they need to do things that attract unconverted people. So the result of all that is the Church is becoming filled up with more and more unbelievers, and the believers are becoming less and less mature, since they aren't being disciplined and fed. You see how that's the opposite of the kind of growth Paul is talking about?

For Paul, Church growth is when the Church is progressively growing spiritually – becoming more mature. The Church growth movement should be called the Church decline movement, because they are taking the Church down the path of impurity and immaturity. We are called to feed the sheep, not to entertain the goats. So the foundation is laid, the building is being built... Let's take a look at what this building turns out to be.

The Sanctuary of God

21 it rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

There are two words for “temple.” The more common one is *hieros*, which refers to the whole Temple complex including all the courts. The other word is *naos*, which is more specific, and it refers specifically to the Holy Place – the Sanctuary inside the building. The *hieros* is the place everyone came to worship. The *naos* is a place no one came to worship. Lay people could never even go in there. When the people thought *naos* they thought “dwelling place of God.” The word in v.21 is *naos*. You and I are stones in the glorious building that is the Sanctuary – the holy place itself.

The final dwelling place of God in eternity will be the most glorious Temple yet – the Church. This is why it’s so important to me that we constantly work toward a worship atmosphere that has a sense of transcendence – other-worldliness. Our worship music shouldn’t be like turning on KLOVE. It should be more profound than pop Christian entertainment. When you walk in here on Sunday you are walking into the Holy of Holies, and it should feel like it.

Whenever you read about the presence of God appearing somewhere in Scripture it always causes trembling and awe. There should be a sense of that in our worship. That’s not all there is to worship. There is also the more celebrative side, and that’s important too. Both are important. The worship time is a time to celebrate our joy in the Lord, but if this passage is true, and the gathered community of the saints is the dwelling place of the presence of God... Then there should be some “shock and awe” (that’s what the Bible means by “fear and trembling”) like there *always* was in the Bible wherever the presence of God is revealed.

A lot of things come to mind when you think of contemporary worship, but shock and awe isn’t one of them. But shouldn’t it be? Shouldn’t the Church be a place where people can walk out thinking, “Wow – whatever else I think of that place, one thing’s for sure, I encountered God there.”

“How does that happen?” We are constantly trying to figure out things we can do that will make our external procedure reflect those truths more and more. But one thing we can say is, if it’s going to happen, it’s going to have to happen in the Lord.

In the Lord

Lit. into a temple that is holy in the Lord.

The point of that is that it’s only in the Lord Jesus Christ that this Sanctuary is holy. There is nothing about the Church that makes us the holy place, the dwelling place of God, other than our close association with Jesus Christ. It’s not the individual holiness or greatness of the people that makes us a holy sanctuary. It’s not the wonderful things the Church does in the world that makes us a holy sanctuary. It’s not our traditions or heritage or prestige or organization or leadership or anything like that that makes us the holy sanctuary of God. It is simply our close connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

The present tense and the word “into” (*eis*) show that while we are already the dwelling place of God, the more we mature, the more we become His dwelling place. God’s presence in the Church is more pronounced the more we grow.

by his Spirit.

Lit in the Spirit

It is by the Spirit God does the dwelling (His Spirit is who is present in the Church)

The Presence of God

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of God's presence? One the one hand, we know that God is everywhere present. Theologians call that the omnipresence of God. When the prophets of Isaiah's day thought they could hide their inner thoughts from God He rebuked them:

Jer.23:24

Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

Ps 139:7-10

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

So God is everywhere present. That's not to say everything is God or that God is the sum total of all things – that's pantheism. God is distinct from the creation. And it's not that God is just so big that He encompasses all of the creation. If that were the case, only part of God would be present in each place. But it's not that part of God is present in every place. God is *fully* present in *every* place. The reason He can do that is He does not have spatial dimensions. There is no sense in which God is limited by space, and He has no extension in space. God is a being who is without size or dimensions. He cannot be contained by any space, no matter how large.

When Solomon built the Temple, at the dedication he said to God: 1 Kings 8:27

The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

No amount of space could contain God. So if that's true, and God is fully present everywhere, what does it mean when we talk about the presence of God in a certain place or a dwelling place for God? Scripture very often talks about God's presence being in a certain location. For example, God walked with Adam in the Garden. And His presence in the OT was in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies in a way that He wasn't present in the outer courts or anywhere else. If God is everywhere present, how can that be true?

Pr.15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked

If God is everywhere present, how can He be far from the wicked? Col.2:9 says all the fullness of the deity dwells in Christ in bodily form. But if God is *fully* present everywhere, isn't He fully present in the heart of every unbeliever? And if so, what's the big deal about Him being present in Christ? Wayne Grudem has expressed the answer to that question in a very helpful way. He points out that while God is fully present everywhere, He acts differently in different places.³ God is present in hell, but He is present there only to punish. God is present at the bottom of the ocean and on the other side of the Galaxy and throughout Creation *to sustain* (that is, He is present keeping that part of creation in existence). But there are only certain locations where God has chosen to be present *to bless*.

Also, while God is present in every place, He does not reveal His presence the same way in every place. There are some places where God is present, but His presence cannot be perceived by us, which means there can be no interaction with Him in those places.

³ Grudem, Systematic Theology p.175

In other places God chooses to reveal His presence in a way that can be perceived by us. So while in Gn.2 God was present everywhere in the world and everywhere in the universe, He made His presence *perceivable* and *knowable* to man in the Garden. And that what where He was present to bless. At the time of the giving of the Law when God descended upon Mount Sinai and the mountain shook and there was thunder and smoke, etc... God was present on every other mountain, but He chose to make His presence known to man on that particular mountain. And He was present to sustain everywhere, but only there was He present to bless by giving His Law. At the time of the Temple, God was present in all the outer courts and in every home and every city and every square inch, but His presence to bless and to be known was localized in the Holy of Holies. The vast majority of the time in Scripture, when God talks about His presence being in a certain place, it refers specifically to His presence to bless. Unless the context calls for it to mean His presence to punish or His presence to sustain, then it means His presence to bless. So in Pr.15:29 when it says God is far from the wicked, it means His presence to bless is far from the wicked.

Now, back to Eph.2. When Paul says we are being built into a building that is the dwelling place of God... - that means God's presence to bless, and the place in which He reveals Himself in a way in which man can interact with Him is localized in the Church. We are the new Holy Place, we are the new Ark of the Covenant, we are the new Mt. Sinai, and we are the new Garden of Eden. The presence of God to bless, and the place in which He reveals Himself in such a way that man is able to interact with Him is localized in only one place: you (plural) – the Church.

Is God present to bless and to reveal Himself in the individual Christian? Or only in the corporate gathering? The answer is there is a very real sense in which God is present to bless and to reveal Himself in you as an individual (if you are born-again). 1 Cor.6:19 says one reason why it's important to stay sexually pure is because your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:23

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me...My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Every true Christian has the Holy Spirit residing in Him, and therefore enjoys the presence of God. However, there is a much greater sense in which God's presence to bless and to reveal Himself is in the gathering of the Church. In 1 Cor.3 Paul is rebuking the Corinthians for causing divisions and problems in the local church.

1 Cor.3:16-17

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

That's talking about the assembly as a whole. The local church gathering is the Temple of God, and so if you do something to harm the local church God will harm you. And we see the same thing in our passage in Eph.2. It's not saying the individual people are each a Temple, but that each person is a stone in the building that is the dwelling place of God. God is present in you as an individual Christian, but there is a greater sense in which His presence to bless and presence to reveal Himself is in the gathering of believers in the local church. If you want to approach God, worship God, interact with God, receive blessing from God... There is no place that will happen like it will happen in church.

Very often people get fed up with the other sinful people in a church and decide to just bail out on church altogether. They say, "I'll just worship God in my living room." Not only are those people in direct disobedience to passages like Pr.18:1 and Heb.10:25... And not only are those people failing to follow Jesus' example (Luke 4:16 **He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.** – Can you imagine what it was like for Jesus to try to find a synagogue He liked?) - But people who stay away from church are staying away from the primary place of God's presence to bless and reveal Himself. The headaches and heartaches of dealing with sinful people in the

Church are worth it. They are worth the blessing you get from God when you come here, because this is the dwelling place of God.

The Church today (and I'm talking about the true Church, including only genuine believers – not the phonies who have infiltrated)... - the Church stands in this dark world as a glorious, gleaming, breathtaking Temple. Her walls soaring skyward, lined up with Christ, holy... The dwelling place of the Almighty. The presence of God to bless in this world. A place of refuge. A place where you can come and find forgiveness of sins. The only place where there is real peace. A place where you can find God.

Benediction: 1Ki 8:56-61 "Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people ...57May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. 58May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways... 60so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other.

Review Questions:

1. What are the implications of this passage on the question of whether there are Apostles, Prophets or new Scripture being revealed today?
2. What are the implications that we are stones in a building in which Christ is the Cornerstone?
3. If God is everywhere present, in what sense is the Church the dwelling place of God that is different from how He dwells in all places?