

LECTURES ON EPHESIANS

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE JEWISH TABERNACLE AND SOLOMON'S TEMPLE SHADOWS OF THE CHURCH—THE LIVING TEMPLE (A Supplement to Ephesians 2)

IT HAS already been stated that there is no direct reference in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the church. The kingdom, indeed, is gloriously described in minute detail. Isaiah 11:1-10 is one of many passages describing the kingdom which is to be established at the return of Christ:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fawn together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

The church, however, is not mentioned—much less described. It was set forth in “**shadow**” such as in the formation of Eve from the side of Adam to be his partner, but that is all. Adam was placed into a deep sleep during which his bride was formed from his side. This was only a shadow of the deeper sleep of death into which Christ entered, as a result of which His church, the Bride, came into existence.

In the Old Testament there were shadows of the church given in this way, the meaning of which was not known until after the crucifixion of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit who made known through Paul the mystery concerning the church. The kingdom was made known to the Old Testament prophets and described by them, but the church was not known; it was not revealed to them, as we shall see from Ephesians 3.

For this reason the church is called “**the mystery.**”

A mystery, in the Scriptures, is not something difficult to understand. Rather it is a part of God’s program which He has kept a secret until a given time. Just such a mystery was the church.

The first direct statement concerning the church was made by Christ when He was in Caesarea Philippi:

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:16-18).

Among the shadows of the church in the Old Testament, there are none which present a more interesting study than the Jewish tabernacle and Solomon’s temple. These were the buildings of the Old Testament which could really be called the house of God. God dwelt in them, and filled them with His glory. Concerning the tabernacle we read in Exodus 40: 34-38:

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

This was also true of the temple. The manifest presence of God was in the Holy of Holies and because those buildings foreshadowed the living temple, God gave the plans and specifications for them even to the minutest detail.

Again and again God gave the exhortation to Moses: “**See thou makest all things according to the pattern shown thee on the mount.**” Every peg, every curtain, the boards, and the stones in the tabernacle and the temple have a hand pointing to the living temple, and a voice speaking of the glory of it. Both the tabernacle and the temple foreshadowed the church.

The reason for the two buildings is this: The tabernacle which was erected in the wilderness during Israel’s journey from Egypt to Canaan, and which was pitched as they journeyed through the wilderness, was a shadow of the church down here upon earth.

Solomon’s temple, however, which was erected in Jerusalem and not in the wilderness, and which was built only after their journey had come to an end, was a shadow of the church in resurrection incorruptibility and glory.

What a wonderful study these two buildings present from this viewpoint. I desire to show, at this time, the parallelism between Solomon’s temple and the church as it will be in resurrection glory at the translation of the church.

(1) The first thing to be noted is that David, the father, provided beforehand the material which went into this building, and Solomon, the son, built it with that which he received from his father.

Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold; and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto (I Chronicles 22:14).

Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God. Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, and iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house (I Chronicles 29:1-3).

This is a part of the immense provision that David, the father, provided BEFOREHAND.

A talent of gold is valued at twenty-seven thousand dollars; therefore one hundred thousand talents of gold almost equal three billion dollars. A talent of silver is valued at seventeen hundred dollars; then the thousand thousand talents of silver provided by the father BEFOREHAND would amount to one billion, seven hundred millions. The value of the gold and the silver, therefore, was almost five billions of dollars.

Beside this, there were great stones, an immense amount of cedar wood, glistening stones, and other materials. This was prepared BEFOREHAND and was built by Solomon into the temple.

David, the father, also gave the pattern of the temple to Solomon, the son. In I Chronicles 28:11-12 we read:

Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by die spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things.

When we turn to the New Testament, we find the Lord Jesus saying, **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me”** (John 6:37).

Again and again the Lord Jesus refers to those whom the Father had given Him. **“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom hast given me, that they may be one, as we are”** (John 17:11). We recall also in this regard how in Ephesians 1:4 we read that the church was chosen by the Father **“before the foundation of the world.”**

(2) The second thing we note is that Solomon's building was erected on Mt. Moriah.

Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Oman the Jebusite (II Chronicles 3:1).

The foundations of the temple, so historians tells us, were dovetailed into the rock of Mount Moriah in so marvelous a way that the foundation became actually a part of the rock. Mount Moriah was the place where Abraham offered Isaac who became a type of Him who was to die for our sins and rise again for our justification.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Into this rock the foundations of Solomon's temple were built. Mount Moriah was a shadow of another mount, Mt. Calvary, on which the Antitype of Isaac was offered: **"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."** He is the foundation of the **"living temple"** and this living temple, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, is rooted and grounded into that one foundation even as the foundation of Solomon's temple was rooted and grounded into Mount Moriah, the place where Isaac foreshadowed the death of Christ. With a foundation like this, no wonder the gates of hell **"shall not prevail against"** the living temple.

(3) The third thing to be noted is that Solomon's temple was made of stones prepared before they were brought to the site of the construction so that in the erection of that temple, no sound of a hammer or building instrument was heard.

We read I Kings 6:7: **"And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."**

So it is with the antitype, the church. The Holy Spirit has been erecting a building silently. No noise, no sound of a hammer, and yet, like Solomon's temple, this building is growing into an holy temple in the Lord. Swiftly and silently the Holy Spirit is building living stones into the living temple of God. And just as the day came when the last stone was built into Solomon's temple, completing it, so the day will dawn when the last living stone will be added to the Body of Christ.

(4) The fourth thing to note is that the temple was made of great stones, hewn stones, the dimensions of which were about fifteen feet in every way and must have weighed about two hundred and fifty tons each.

All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court. And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits (I Kings 7:9, 10). (A cubit measures eighteen inches).

They were taken out of immense caves under Jerusalem. These caves can be seen today and there are in them even to this hour some stones which were left half cut, never finished; consequently they were not built into the temple. These stones which were used in the building were “**drawn**” out of the great caverns; they did not get out by any effort of their own. Had they not been drawn out, they would never have seen the light of day. Someone had to go down into those dark caverns and hew them, then draw them out to the light, then give them a place in the temple of dazzling splendor and beauty.

And so it is with the living temple. Those stones were only shadows of what the living stones are by nature. Before the Lord Jesus Christ “**drew**” us out, we were in the quarry of nature, “**dead in trespasses and sins.**” Yes, just as dead, just as useless as those stones, nor could we ever have gotten out through any effort of our own. Jesus said in John 6:44: “**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**”

Had Christ not come into the cavern of this world of sin to hew and draw us out not one of us would have known the light of salvation and holiness. Paul, in Ephesians 2:5, 6 says, “**Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**”

The raising of these stones out of the caverns under Jerusalem was a shadow of what has been done for believers in making them living stones.

(5) The fifth thing to note is that the stones were encased in silver; a plaster of silver was placed over the walls into which the stones were fitted.

Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal (I Chronicles 29:4).

The thousand thousand talents of silver were used for this purpose.

Silver in the Word of God is a type of redemption. Atonement money was paid in silver. In Exodus 30:15 we read: “**The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.**”

The atonement money paid in the Old Testament was a shadow of the price which the Lord Jesus was going to pay for our redemption when He would die on Calvary. The stones covered with silver spoke of the fact that the members of the living temple would be redeemed—“**bought with a price.**”

(6) The sixth thing to note is that the stones covered with silver were then encased in cedar woods.

“So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.”

The remarkable fact about cedar wood is that it is never worm eaten. A genuine piece of cedar wood cannot be destroyed by worms for there is something in cedar which destroys worms. The stones covered with silver, then in cedar, picture believers in resurrection incorruptibility.

The cedar points to the time when this **“corruptible shall put on incorruption.”**

In other words, the cedar speaks of a body, not subject to decay, which we shall receive at the coming of the Lord.

My friend, you and I do not possess the cedar wood body yet, nor will we have it until the Lord comes. We shall continue to have aches and pains; the saints of God will continue to grow old and decrepit and die until the Lord comes. The believers now are **“encased in silver”**; that is, we have been redeemed, but we have not yet obtained the cedar wood body.

That will take place when Christ comes for the church, as Paul says in Philippians 3:21: **“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”** At that time this **“corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality.”** **“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory”** (I Corinthians 15:53, 54).

(7) The seventh thing to note is that the cedar was then carved in conformity to the door, and there was placed upon this cedar wood, “carved cherubs, palms, and flowers.”

Compare the two following passages of Scripture:

And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without (I Kings 6:29).

The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees (I Kings 6:32).

The door, of course, represents Him who said, **“I am the door,”** and the cedar wood placed around the walls of stone being carved in conformity to the door, foreshadowed what will take place when the church is translated into glory.

We read in I John 3:2, **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”**

As we bear now the image of the earthly, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly. Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote to Andrew Bonar of Scotland requesting a photograph.

In response to the request Bonar, who was then eighty years of age and had upon his body marks of time, wrote a letter accompanying the photograph which said, “Dear Brother Spurgeon: I am sending you my photograph in response to your request. This picture is the best I can do until the Lord comes. When He comes, I shall not look like this. I shall be like Him. Until that day dawns, you will have to be satisfied with this picture of a gray-headed old man.”

Andrew Bonar meant that when the Lord came, his body would not only be made incorruptible (**the cedar**) but would also be made in the likeness of Christ, the “**door**” placed upon it. Every believer will be not only a Christ-bearer, but a Christ-wearer as well.

(8) The eighth thing to note is that the stones, encased in cedar wood, carved with the image of the door were then covered with gold:

So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold (I Kings 6:21, 22).

David says, “**I have prepared for the house of the Lord one hundred talents of gold and the gold was used for this purpose.**”

The gold, however, placed on the cedar wood, did not obliterate the beautiful carving. It was rather fitted into the carvings so that the image of the door carved into the cedar wood stood out in surpassing splendor. Gold, in the Word of God, is a type of glory and when He shall appear, we who are now redeemed (**the silver**) shall not only put on incorruptible bodies (**the cedar**) which shall bear the likeness of the Son of God (**the carvings like unto the door**), but we shall be sharers of His glory.

Let us note also that the gospel of grace is illustrated in the building of these stones into Solomon’s temple.

Not one thing did they do for themselves. They had no part in their hewing or drawing; they did not cover themselves with the silver or encase themselves with the cedar wood; they had no part in the carving work; they did not dress themselves in gold. All of this was done for them. And so in Ephesians we are constantly reminded that we are God’s workmanship, that He hath done all these things for us “**according to the good pleasure of his will.**”

My friends, there will be no boasting in heaven. We shall give glory to Him for all that we are or shall be.

(9) What was the purpose of Solomon’s temple? Why was it built?

It was built in order that it might be for the glory of Solomon throughout all of the countries—the expression of the wisdom of Solomon. You will remember that the Queen of Sheba came from the South to hear about Solomon’s wisdom. When, in Jerusalem, she saw the things and heard his wisdom she said,

“Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard” (I Kings 10:7).

The purpose of the living temple is the same. It is to be in eternity not only a memorial of God’s grace, but also of the kindness and the love of One greater than Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 2:7, the apostle says, **“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus,”** and in Ephesians 3:21 he says, **“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”**

In Ephesians 3:10 he says, **“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”**

These scriptures set forth the purpose of God’s family, His people, His Body now being fitly framed together and growing into an holy temple, being builded together, through the Spirit for an habitation of God.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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