

GOD'S PATTERN

CHURCH

We will be beginning a series in this meditation subtitled God's pattern church. The burden specifically, is to speak in the Lord's word to His people, as He has revealed it to us. We have in the previous twenty-two editions (which are contained in the book Living letters from the Book of Revelation) shown that from the same holy beginning of the church history, two histories developed; the one in unfaithfulness charting an earthly course, and the other in faithfulness charting an heavenly course. We found in all of those ministrations what results from faithfulness and what results from unfaithfulness.

Now, in taking these series and this edition are merely an introduction, we would like to suggest that we come with open minds. Because that which God will do, he will bring unto completion. We expect that God will shine His light more and more on His word only those who submit to the dictates of His word will be relevant in the divine scheme of things in the years ahead.

We begin with a reading from Revelation 21:22. The passage in context discusses the New Jerusalem. We have seen that this is the church in perfection, or putting it more correctly, the church being brought to perfection. We are also shown in the finished picture, what the church is when she is brought to the perfection of the image of Christ. And still talking about this holy city, verse 22 says

“...And I saw no temple therein for the Lord GOD Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. ...”

This is important. When you come to the city of God, the holy city, this New Jerusalem, we are told there is no temple found in it. Then it goes on to say that the temple therein, is the Lord

God Almighty and the Lamb. Not the temples but the temple of the city has two great expressions: The Lord God Almighty in His power and great glory makes the church a supernatural organism. The Lamb element indicates that called to serve in the city of God, must have the same character structure that they find fully developed in Jesus: vicarious sufferings, selfless service, ministering to the people in the interest of God, not taking advantage of God's calling and graces to exploit the people. So, the temple is a two-fold description: The Lamb of God and The Lord God Almighty. The temple service in the city of God is not patterned after the Levitical order of the Old Testament church.

This should arrest us very powerfully, because this is the day when there is an increase in rituals and ceremonies, even in Pentecostal assemblies. When we read and understand this in the light of what Jesus said in John 2, our understanding will be more fruitful. He was speaking to the Pharisees, and he said unto them, destroys this temple, and I shall raise it up the third day. And it was said later that he spoke of the temple of his body. Let us distinguish between the "*house of God*" and "*the temple of God*", two terms used to describe God's church.

Now, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ can be described as the house of God, when the emphasis is the services that the church fulfils towards the visible world, although it includes the idea of her devotions to God. But when we call it a temple, the main emphasis is the devotions of the church to God. It is something that becomes characteristic of all her services as she comes to adulthood in the Lord. Even when ministering to men, there is a continuous reflection of credit to the character and glory of God. So that in worship, or teaching and preaching, it is all in the same vein; the character and glory of God is ministered to.

We here day that, '*the house of God*' is the church in the early stages of her growth, and the temple of God is the church when she comes into the full scheme of things as God has designed it to be.

Now, let us turn to Exodus 25:8. You will recall that when God's power went forth through the ministry of Moses and Aaron to deliver the children of Israel from the Land of Egypt, they were brought out into the wilderness of Sinai. There, God manifested Himself to them. In Exodus we see God coming to dwell with His people. In Leviticus, God shows how man, in whom He dwells, can receive more and more of the glory of His life. In the book of Numbers, we are shown how God judges His people in the Light of the unveiling of Himself to them.

In Exodus 25:8, we read something that is interesting. There He says, "***...and let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. ...***" God commanded Moses to make Him a tabernacle, a sanctuary, since He desired to dwell among the people. And from Exodus 25 to Exodus 40, those sixteen chapters describe the details of this great structure that God commanded Moses to build. We are told God cannot and does not dwell in building made with hands, even though He once commanded Solomon to build him a temple (Acts 7:48). He dwells in buildings

that are fashioned by the power of His Spirit. Jesus was God's temple, and the church today, the Lord's people, is the temple of the Living God. When this emphasis becomes clear at the beginning, it will assist in delivering others and us from so much error and deviations from God pattern for His church.

Now, you know in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul was writing to the Christians, and he said to them, ***"...know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ..."***. A little later, he said, ***"...know ye not that your body is the temple of the Living God..."***. So God's emphasis at this last hour is the church, His people, these Living Stones through whom He is raising up an invincible, mystical sanctuary for the blessing of humanity. This is important. That is the first thought that should sink into our minds as we enter into these series of teachings.

Now, let us go to 1 Peter 2, which is quoted from Isaiah 28. From Peter's inspired pen, one readily sees that the prophecy in Isaiah 28, which we began to examine in the last edition, speaks concerning the church and the events of this last hour. In 1 Peter 2, beginning from verse 1 and taking note of verses 4-6, particularly, we read,

"...WHEREFORE laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.

If so be ye have tested that the Lord is gracious.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but choosen of God, and precious,

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded...."

The church is a word used to interpret the Greek word "*ekklesia*". It is that Christians are called out of the world and invited unto the inheritances that are spelt out in scriptures. The meaning of *ekklesia* is "*called out*". In Philippians 3, Paul tells us of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. We are out of the world, from among men to become divine in its finished picture. And here in the figure of a building, we are told that the church as God's house has Christ as the chief corner stone. All parts of the building take their characteristic lines from him. This being so, the house is to be built in a continuous reference to Christ. But if the builders reject Christ, what house could they be building? But the stone, which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner, the chief corner stone.

We know in this last hour, the Lord will clean up the church and lay the foundation again, in the unveiling of Himself, and must have all things done according to His will.

It is clear that there is a confused picture of what the church is supposed to be... because you only need to run your eyes through ten, twenty denominational churches, and you will find great contradictions and conflicting signals. But God has not left us in the dark to just grope for light and to try to do things to the best of our human knowledge; God's pattern for His church is clearly revealed in the scriptures. God is in this last hour demanding a return to the pattern His wisdom has graciously provided for the church. When the Lord Judges the various assemblies of His people, He does not meet any operating in full conformity with His mind. But those who begin to repent and open up to His instructions and corrections and begin to pattern their affairs according to that which is revealed receive a further help. A change is a must to obtain the change that brings in perfection and glory.

That God in the midst of the religious confusion of the present hour desires to constitute a people according to His will is indicated in the letter God commanded John to write to the church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13). We will not be doing a full expository consideration of it now, but it is important that we go into it.

Of seven churches, only two churches had the mark of divine approval, nothing was condemned in these two church types: the church in Smyrna and the church in Philadelphia. The letter to the church in Philadelphia contain much of what will assist our minds to understand the things that God wants reproduced in His church. When that is read and considered side by side with the history of the early church as set forth in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the teachings of the apostles, in the epistles, we find the picture coming out clearly of how the Lord will have His church operate. We would find the things that make for the heavenly growth of the body and what the true inheritances of the church are.

Now let's move to Revelation 3:7. We are challenged to see that as it was then so it could be now. In the midst of today's religious confusion, a local church can operate in harmony with God's will. No assembly, with open mind, should say, "*We are already operating in that*". But if we seek to pattern ourselves increasingly according to that which is revealed, while yet not claiming to be that church, but evermore seeking God in humility and holding unto him, it may be that the glorious promises made to these seven churches will be fully realised in us. And thank God that there are things already happening that are evidences of God's commitment to bringing

about a great church revival in this last hour. We will just take the reading before rounding up the message.

“...And unto the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write;

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Because thou has kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the church. ...”

In the next edition we will be looking expositively at this passage. And we will spell out certain key things, which answers to the Lord’s mind and receive the Lord’s approval. The Lord bless you, the Lord strengthen you, and increase His son in you. And he will do away with so much of what is called the refuge of lies. And we are better be prepared for a great shake-up, for that must come, in Jesus name. Amen.

