

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

There have been two holy temples designed and constructed. The first one by David and Solomon; the second by the returning Jewish exiles under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua. There are also certain Scriptures that indicate the likelihood of yet a future temple that coincides with many of the end-time Bible prophecies. While the study and speculation on the rebuilding of the temple are certainly interesting and informative, is there perhaps a message imbedded in the Scriptures that speaks to a rebuilding not just of the physical temple, but of God's spiritual temple as well, with specific emphasis on the latter-day Church?

by Jim Rector

The very thought that the temple in Jerusalem might possibly be rebuilt in our time is always an exciting and provocative subject. We are well aware that such a movement has been afoot in Israel for a number of years. There are those who believe that the new temple will be erected soon, and detailed preparations are ongoing even at this very moment in time.

The temple obviously has played a very significant role in the life of God's ancient people. Originally, YHWH commanded Moses to build a tabernacle as a place of holy worship, a place where the Creator Himself would make His presence known. Centuries later, King David desired to build a permanent house for God, and even drew up the

plans, but was forbidden by God to actually build the temple. Instead the responsibility fell to his son, Solomon.

The Solomonic temple was an architectural masterpiece, like an immense precious jewel set on a mountain top. It gleamed and sparkled in the sunshine, and became the center around which

Jewish religious life revolved. In fact, it was the most sacred and revered object, at times almost approach a thing of worship among the Israelites. Detailed and precise instructions were followed in its construction. David himself had previously composed much of the initial music that would be played and sung in the new temple. All of the vessels and furniture that occupied the interior of the building were carefully crafted according to God's specific plans. The first temple was unquestionably a true labor of love.

DESTRUCTION!

Over the years the fervor of Jewish devotion to God and His laws waxed and waned. For the most part, the people grew weary of the holy things God had given them. Sin became rampant and the temptation to turn to the paganism all around them was simply too great to resist. Occasionally, a righteous king or prophet would arise, successfully leading the people back into a repentant state, but they were few and far between. Certain leaders such as Hezekiah and Josiah are highly regarded for their courageous championing of a return unto the true God; and surely we all remember the profound work of prophets such as Elijah and Elisha.

Eventually, however, after many prophetic warnings from God, the inevitable occurred. The

armed forces of Babylon under the command of the Crown Prince Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, and, over a period of some 20 years, succeeded in defeating and taking captive the Jews. In the process, the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, and the very sacred vessels and furniture of temple worship were confiscated by the Babylonian invaders.

The Jews were now in exile, and completely without a temple or place of worship. For years they languished in captivity, but the socio-political scene in Babylon was undergoing momentous change during this period of Jewish exile.

Among the captives was a young man named Daniel who, by God's grace, rose to a position of great prominence and power under King Nebuchadnezzar. He was eyewitness to the decline of Babylon's greatness as an empire, and was actually responsible for informing Belshazzar, a descendent of Nebuchadnezzar and a co-regent, of the impending defeat of Babylon.

In 539 BC, the Medo-Persian armies under the command of Darius the Mede launched a surprise attack against the city of Babylon. The Chaldeans had constructed the walls of the city so thick and high that they assumed the fortifications were impregnable. They assumed wrongly. In a daring military maneuver, the Medo Persian army

diverted the course of Euphrates River which flowed through the capital, thus enabling them to stealthily make their way into the city through following the now dry river bed. In the midst of a drunken feast being held at the royal palace, the Persian invaders took the city by total surprise and slew the eldest son of King Nabonidus, the co-regent Belshazzar.

It is of more than mere passing interest that the Old Testament book of Daniel is so closely related to the New Testament book of Revelation. In fact, Revelation cannot even be properly interpreted apart from the prophecies of Daniel. The book of Revelation contains material from every chapter of Daniel, and there are only two chapters of Revelation that do not have a background in Daniel.

I relate this information at this juncture simply to tie in the method by which the Medo-Persians took the ancient city of Babylon with the ominous Biblical prediction that once again a highway will be opened for the *kings of the East*, and it too is destined to involve the drying up of the River Euphrates (**Rev. 16:12**).

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The successful Medo-Persian campaign against Babylon proved to be a boon to the Jewish

captives, because Cyrus the Great soon issued a proclamation enabling the Jews to return to their homeland with the prospect of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. This remarkable turn of events was actually prophesied and orchestrated by God Himself.

Over 150 years earlier, God has inspired the prophet Isaiah to write the following:

“Thus says the Lord...to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up your rivers: that says of CYRUS, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, You shall be built; and to the TEMPLE, Your foundation shall be laid...For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by name: I have surnamed you, though you have not know me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me” (Isa. 44:27-28, 45:4-5).

Most of us quite familiar with this famous and moving story. A contingent of exiled Jews did indeed return to Jerusalem and began work on the re-building of the temple. They came with merry hearts and high hopes. The Scriptures state that:

“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord...and they sang together by course in

praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid” (Ezra 3:10-11).

The circumstances of these liberated Jews is eerily reminiscent of the newly freed ancient Israelites, of whom it is said that they came out of Egypt with a *high hand!* In like manner, the returning exiles were jubilant and fully determined and dedicated to do the work God ordained for them.

It wasn’t long, however, before the bliss of freedom brought with it some difficult challenges. This is so often the method that God chooses to follow when dealing with human beings. You will recall that upon delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage, the first thing God did was to lead them directly into the harsh and foreboding wilderness. When that happened, the people immediately lost their fervor and joy and began accusing and complaining. Well, it wasn’t all that much different with the returning Jewish exiles.

Not long after the people began work on the temple, they encountered strong opposition. It came in the form of Samaritan adversaries, those people whom the Assyrians had brought over and settled in the land where the northern kingdom of Israel had

been located. You will recall that Assyrian armed forces defeated the Israelites around 722 B.C. The descendants of these foreign peoples became known as Samaritans, and were mortal enemies of the Jews.

Ezra, writing several generations later, reports the details of what transpired when the Samaritans got word that the Jews had returned and were planning on rebuilding the temple. Notice the following passage:

“Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity built the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as you do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-Haddon king of Assyria, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, You have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us. Then the people of the land WEAKENED the hands of the people of Judah, and TROUBLED them in building, and HIRED COUNSELORS against them, to FRUSTRATE their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even unto

the reign of Darius king of Persia” (Ezra 4:1-5).

So persistent were the Samaritans in their efforts to undermine the rebuilding of the temple, that they drafted an official letter to king Artaxerxes of Persia, accusing the Jews and contending that if the rebuilding efforts were allowed to continue that the returning exiles would refuse to pay tribute to the king. This treacherous act indeed succeeded in causing Artaxerxes to demand that the Jews cease their labor. Ezra the scribe states:

“Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up to Jerusalem in haste unto the Jews, and made them to cease by FORCE and POWER. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia’ (Ezra 4:23-24).

THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE

Although we are by no means through with this compelling saga, before proceeding any farther it will prove helpful if we took a moment and discussed the spiritual significance of what transpired with these newly freed Jews. Their story is a powerful lesson

and pattern for the people of God today! Their unique experiences under Zerubbabel and Joshua at such a pivotal point in their history should speak strongly to each of us in the modern-day Church of God.

The temple was one of the most special and precious aspects of the worship of Israel. It was God-ordained and served a useful purpose. Just as we know that the sacrifices of mere animals could not truly atone for sin, however, neither could the physical temple fully complete God’s ultimate purpose in dealing with His children.

When the Messiah appeared on the earth, He often referred to the temple for various reasons. In one instance, He said:

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and will You rear it up in three days? But He spoke of the TEMPLE OF HIS BODY” (John 2:19-21).

In this somewhat unusual reference, Christ speaks of the temple with respect to Himself. The Jews at first did not grasp the intent of His words, undoubtedly because it was a most unexpected analogy. Yet, this is only one of many Scriptural passages utilizing the temple as a metaphor for something spiritual. I strongly believe that the more we know in detail about the temple itself, as well as becoming more familiar

with the numerous references to the temple in both the Old and New Testaments, the greater chance we stand of drawing out of this information a far deeper spiritual significance and applicability to our lives as believers.

One of the great purposes of both the ancient tabernacle and the later temple was that God intended to dwell there with His people. We know that in the days of Moses and Joshua, this remarkable reality literally occurred. The fact that God saw fit to make these buildings His residing place should touch a responsive chord within each of us today.

God never changes. As He dwelled in the tabernacle of Moses, and as Solomon’s temple had a Holy of holies, so God even to this moment in time still seeks dwell in temples! That may sound rather ludicrous on the surface, but I think you know what I mean. The apostle Paul took the imagery of the temple to its greatest extreme in applying it to the spiritual people of God. Notice the following comment to the Ephesians:

“Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are BUILT upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in Whom all the building fitly

framed together GROWS into a HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD: in Whom you also are built together for a HABITATION OF GOD through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

Notice here that Paul ties in the temple with the saints functioning as important parts of a spiritual building or house. Note further he states that the purpose of this building has to do with God’s presence residing within. This should not be surprising, because that was the very purpose of the physical temple--to be made as a place for God’s habitation.

Once Paul has established the direct connection between the ancient temple and the spiritual congregation of the saints, we have a valid basis for scrutinizing everything contained in Scripture with respect to the temple, because such an analogy allows us the freedom to prudently seek out and rightly apply whatever aspects might pertain to modern-day believers. Such an inspired method as that utilized by Paul helps us to view the subject of the ancient temple in an entirely new and spiritual light.

For a long time, we have known that all of the actual trappings of the temple, even down to its size measurements, the fabrics incorporated into its curtains and veils, the color of various material, the shape of many objects, the several divisions of the layout, among many others,

are literally brimming with symbolic meaning, and especially as they relate to the Messiah. Paul characterization of the temple as relating to believers themselves, however, sheds a whole new and different light on the subject. It opens us an entire field of study that has perhaps gone relatively untapped.

The language used by Paul in the Ephesian passage quoted earlier is, in places, rather similar to some additional words in chapter 4. In the Ephesians 2:21 we read that the building (spiritual temple) is *fitly framed together*, and that it *grows unto a holy temple*. Just a little later in the same book, Paul states the following with respect to believers:

“He (Christ) that descended is the same that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fulfil all things...till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT man, unto the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and from, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...but speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP unto Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; From Whom the WHOLE BODY (temple) FITLY JOINED TOGETHER and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART, makes INCREASE of the body

unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:10, 13-16).

The similarity and connection between these two passages is quite clear. In both of them Paul is encouraging believers to see that they form important and specific building blocks of God’s spiritual temple or house--that they all are equal participants, that they all are uniquely placed by God where He desires them to be, that they all fulfil significant functions, that the building is a process of personal spiritual growth, that the goal is to obtain the fullness of Christ’s stature, and that this can only be accomplished by His living presence and power genuinely at work in the individual believer.

Another very interesting and instructive point is that the Body, taken as a whole, is not the only way of viewing the temple analogy. Paul, once again, is responsible for recording this powerful truth, beginning with the following statement in I Corinthians 6:

“What? Do you not know that your body is the TEMPLE of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19-20).

I don’t know how many of us take this admonition as seriously as we should. My sense

is that it is probably one of those neglected areas that is so often overlooked.

In what ways might we dishonor the temple of our bodies? Certainly the example Paul gives is part of the answer. Only a few verses previous to the passage we just read, he speaks of resisting and fleeing from fornication. Quite obviously this forms a major thrust with respect to keeping the temple of our bodies clean and pure. That need not, however, be the only thing with which we ought to be concerned. Virtually anything having to do with the cleanliness and health of our physical selves could easily and appropriately fit into this instruction, and, although this is not the real subject of this article, I would not want to be remiss in overlooking the significance thereof.

In this same first letter to the Corinthians, Paul relates the temple analogy to the individual believer in a most emphatic way by saying:

“For we are laborers together with God: you are God’s husbandry, you are God’s BUILDING...Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire...Do you not know that YOU are the TEMPLE OF GOD, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If

any man defile (destroy) the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which TEMPLE YOU ARE” (I Cor. 3:9, 12-13, 16-17).

Paul continued this same theme in his second epistle to the Church at Corinth. In chapter 6 we read:

“And what concord has Christ with Belial, or what part has he that believes with an infidel? And what agreement has the TEMPLE of with idols? For YOU are the TEMPLE of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (II Cor. 6:15-16).

I sincerely hope that these holy words are strong and clear enough to convince every one of God’s people of who and what they really are. Even though you or I may not, in the natural, feel as though we are part of God’s spiritual house; even though we may not even appear as such; we can and indeed must rest assured that it is God’s perspective that is imperative, not our own. It is God Himself who calls us who and what we are. No matter how small, insignificant, weak, or otherwise defeated, any of us may happen to feel; no matter what our past may have been; none of that changes one scintilla of how God views us. Why? Because His approach to us is not based on human thought, human reasoning, human goodness, human righteousness,

human effort, human ability, or human purposes. When He sees His people, He sees His firstborn Son. He sees each of us through the blood of the Messiah. He sees the righteousness of Christ conferred to us, even though by nature we feel and indeed are unworthy. Our worthiness has nothing whatsoever to do with it-- it is the worthiness of the Savior that counts. That is why He and His sacrifice are so incalculably important to us. We must open ourselves up to the blessing of God and receive and accept what Christ’s standing achieves for those who truly believe.

This powerful theme is continued in the book of Hebrews. Here we read:

“For every house is built by some man, but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over His own house, whose HOUSE WE ARE, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you will hear My voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Heb. 3:4-8).

This passage strongly connects the body of believers with God’s house, giving us both hope, and a stern warning to hold fast to our profession of faith, and

to keep ourselves always open to the voice of God, things which ought to be held by us all in the highest of esteem.

The early apostles all understood quite clearly that the temple of the Old Testament was a type or analogy of the both the individual believers, as well as the entire *ekklesia*. Peter displays such insight in his first epistle by writing:

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisy and envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, so that you may grow thereby; if so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a LIVING STONE, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you also as LIVELY STONES are built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, a 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 Zion a chief CORNERSTONE, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto they were appointed.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:1-9).

This surely must rank as one of the most magnificent passages in all of Scripture! In terms of spiritual growth, the believer who can accept and walk in what is stated in these verses is light years ahead of one who merely professes a certain belief, receives only a form of godliness, and denies the power thereof. It is therefore absolutely incumbent upon God’s people at this time to reach out and wholeheartedly embrace the marvelous relationship that the Father has made available to us. We must come to see ourselves personally fitting into the descriptions of the saints contained in the Bible. This mindset is crucial for us to succeed in this life and calling. Otherwise, we will always opt to settle for less than God’s best. We all appreciate it when others think highly of us and brag on us. Well, you are considered by Almighty God as a **LIVING STONE** in His holy spiritual **TEMPLE!** You are seen by Him as already translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son. You are viewed as sitting in the heavenlies. You are considered to be without condemnation. You are reckoned as having a righteous standing before the throne of God. Now, I ask you, whose judgment and opinion do you value the most--your brother, your friend, your

next-door neighbor--or the great God of the universe Himself? We all need to dwell deeply on this critical question!

THE REST OF THE STORY

God has always had a dwelling place in and among His people. In the beginning, it was actually in the Garden of Eden. In patriarchal times, it might have been a certain named location or a place where God commanded an altar to be built. In the Mosaic era and for several hundred years afterward, it was in the Tabernacle of meeting, and later in the temple of Solomon. God, as we know, allowed that great edifice to be destroyed by the conquering Babylonian armies in 586 B.C. Now, after some 70 years in captivity, the Jews finally are awarded an official decree to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of God.

You will recall that the returning Jewish exiles almost immediately ran into opposition, when they were confronted by the Samaritans. When the leaders of Judah refused to permit the aliens to participate in the rebuilding effort, these enemies sought to hinder and frustrate the work, even going so far as to persuade the Persian King Artaxerxes to issue orders prohibiting the construction. Because of this oppression, the Jews left off rebuilding the temple, and the foundational stages were left unfinished for a long time,

even until the second year in the reign of King Darius.

At this crucial juncture, God's patience was at an end, and so He sent two prophets to stir up the leaders and the people. Their names were Haggai and Zechariah, and their words not only fulfilled a great purpose at that ancient time, but are brimfull of instruction and inspiration for believers today.

We read in the book of Ezra, chapter 5 the following:

“Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them”(Ezra 5:1).

The first of these two prophets to come on the scene was Haggai. God's words as delivered through this man were and still are most profound. He begins by saying:

“Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in YOUR ceiled houses, and THIS HOUSE lie waste? Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts; CONSIDER YOUR WAYS. You have sown much and bring in little; you eat, but you have not enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink;

you clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earns wages earns wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts: CONSIDER YOUR WAYS” (Hag. 1:2-7).

My friends, what I am saying to you is what I strongly believe that God is saying to us all in this passage of Scripture. These words were surely directed to the returning Jewish exiles of that time, and undoubtedly pertained to the rebuilding of a physical temple; but let us now allow the import of this prophecy to be lost on us today.

Please remember that we, as believers, are considered by God to be His temple, His house, His building. The usage of the temple as a metaphor has Divine authority and blessing. The instructions and inspiration given to the people of God at that time indeed hold great meaning for us at this time.

Is there a connection between the rebuilding of the ancient temple with the rebuilding of a spiritual temple? I would submit to you that this is precisely the case. I would suggest to you that God has, in our day, allowed His spiritual temple, which had become a mere shell--a shadow of its potential and God-ordained greatness--to be systematically dismantled in front of our very eyes and indeed the eyes of the whole world!

This spiritual temple, like its ancient physical type, had

begun in a glorious manner, only to become polluted and corrupted by men. In the beginning, that spiritual house, like its ancient counterpart, was filled with the glory of God. Christ was at the center of the apostolic Church. But over the years, men took over the affairs of believers, adopting the very same Satanic system that had been employed by the enemies of God from the Garden of Eden onward! Carnally-minded men, desirous of power, money, prestige, and position, forced their will upon the masses, creating the very model Satan the devil originated--that of a powerful elite *clergy* ruling over and exploiting a docile and submissive *laity*! Such a system is the very personification of what the Bible terms as spiritual Babylon. Religion, especially that which masquerades as Christianity, is nothing more than a spiritual harlot, committing fornication and lewdness with everyone and everything she touches.

The ancient temple of Solomon, although dedicated with much honor and pomp, soon became a sham, and, even worse, it became an idol. In the very same manner, the spiritual house of God began with an unprecedented outpouring of the Spirit, only to wind up years later as an object of worship in place of the true God!

It is therefore no wonder that the present-day churches are suffering great upheaval, and even complete destruction. With a loud and alarming cry, God is giving His people today a call to **COME**

OUT OF BABYLON!! He is saying to you and to me, **CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!**

Indeed, God is issuing to His people today the very same charge and challenge as He did anciently. He is saying to us:

“Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and BUILD THIS HOUSE; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the Lord” (Hag. 1:8).

Do you not hear the voice of God ringing in your ears as you read these powerful words? Do you not sense within your spirit that this message fits perfectly with the situation that we face today? Perhaps many at this time will not perceive things in this way, but some of you will indeed hear the clarion call and respond. For some of God’s people, these inspired words with respect to rebuilding the temple are going to strike home and change their lives forever! This is the kind of time in which we are living today--a time of God’s intervention, a time of God’s empowerment, a time of powerful transformation and spiritual revolution!

God encouraged the Jewish exiles to be undaunted by the obstacles facing them. We read:

“Then spoke Haggai the Lord’s messenger in the Lord’s message unto the people, saying, I AM WITH YOU, says the Lord. And the Lord STIRRED UP the

spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the REMNANT of the people; and they came and DID WORK in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God” (Hag. 1:13-14).

Brethren, it is my sincere hope that these words still have the power to stir up the spirit in each one of God’s chosen people today! The fact is that they indeed do have that potential--the key issue is whether or not we have hearts to hear and eyes to see!

Just as God permitted the physical temple to be destroyed and then re-built, so He also has allowed His spiritual house to be dismantled, but not without the prospect of being rebuilt. Right now the words of Haggai and Zechariah are crying out to those who will hear and heed. God is saying to His flock today the same thing He proclaimed anciently. The great temple had been desecrated and lay in ruin. Today, that spiritual temple likewise has been torn down. The people of that former time were recently freed exiles, even as God is delivering many of people today from spiritual captivity. And the command to go and rebuild the temple today is as sure and strong as it ever was in the time of Zerubbabel and Joshua! **THIS IS GOD’S TIME TO REBUILD HIS TEMPLE!** Do not therefore let this momentous window of opportunity to pass you by!

REBUILDING IS NOT EASY

We can learn so much from the Old Testament. It is remarkable how much knowledge is contained in those ancient words. The more we read and open ourselves up to the Spirit of God, the more depth of understanding we receive. This is certainly true in the case of rebuilding the temple.

Remember that when the Jews were given permission to go back to Jerusalem and begin work on the temple, they almost immediately met strong opposition. The Samaritans had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof. They had no real part in this great rebuilding project, and when they were rebuffed, their leaders resorted to conspiratorial means to undermine, weaken, frustrate, and finally cause to cease the work of rebuilding. Indeed the temple foundation lay dormant in waste for many years.

What does this mean for us today? Simply this--there are those who will powerfully oppose God’s rebuilding of His spiritual temple. These opponents will, like the ancient Samaritans, appear to be Godly, and may even seek to ingratiate themselves with the people through whom God is truly working, even as the enemies of Judah attempted to do. If we, therefore, are not careful, we may well fall victim to the same trap as did the Jewish exiles. They were

so hindered by the opposition that they finally capitulated altogether and the work of God stopped dead in its tracks. We, however, are forewarned. Let us therefore pledge right now that we will also be forearmed in moving forward with what God would have us do.

We will have opposition. We can count on it. It is already happening in many quarters at this time, and will only increase as time goes by. Let us then anticipate that the rebuilding project will be difficult and challenging, and that persecution will indeed be a part of what we must face.

When the Jews faced the opposition of the Samaritans, their spirits sank. They began to wonder where God was and could He really accomplish this great undertaking. At first, the people were overjoyed to be involved in the work of God, but soon, they were full of doubt and worry.

You and I are going to face the very same thing in the spiritual rebuilding effort. We can fully expect to face challenges that will try our faith, indeed, that may take us all the way to the brink and beyond! Do not become discouraged. Remember the former times, and refuse to permit any person or circumstances to distract, frustrate, hinder, slow down, discourage, or dissuade you from following the lead of God's Holy Spirit. Remember that just as God told the ancient Jews that He would be with them, so He is

saying the identical thing to us today.

In addition to the enemy opposition and oppression, there was another very significant problem among many of the Jewish exiles. Both Ezra and Haggai make mention of it. First from the book of Ezra, we read:

“And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord...And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But MANY of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ANCIENT MEN, that had seen the FIRST HOUSE, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, WEPT with a loud voice...So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people” (Ezra 3:11-13).

As you can see, there was indeed another problem in the camp. When the foundation of the new temple was laid, many of the people who were older remembered the outward glory of the first temple. They recalled how it shined like a sparkling jewel in the sun. They reflected upon its beauty, its size, its splendor. So great was their longing for the old temple that they burst into tears at the sight of the new, to the extent that it was impossible to distinguish between the shouts of joy and noise of weeping.

This attitude greatly displeased God, and through the prophet Haggai, He addressed the problem:

“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her FIRST GLORY? And how do you SEE IT NOW? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as NOTHING? (Hag. 2:2-3).

What a revelation for believers today! Just as the ancient Jews not only faced strong opposition from without, they also had to deal with a major problem from within. The same will almost surely be true in the rebuilding of the spiritual temple. You and I can expect that there will be MANY who, instead of tuning in to God's wavelength and opening themselves up to the fresh leadership of the Spirit, will look back to the past and long for the *good old days* when they Church seemed to be in its glory.

Why will this attitude be present? For the same reason as it was long ago. Just as many of the Jews unfavorably compared the new temple with the old, so it will be that many of God's people today will follow suit. There will be something about this new temple that they will not like. What will that be? Notice the answer in the book of Zechariah:

“This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, says the Lord of hosts...The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it...For who has DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?” (Zech. 4:6-10).

There is the problem. By comparison with the first temple, the new temple was small. It wasn't as impressive. It wasn't as outwardly ornate. And many of the people could not discern that God was really involved in the rebuilding project.

Do not, therefore, be surprised to discover that during the rebuilding of the spiritual house of God there will be many who look with disdain upon the day of small things--the time of small beginnings, because that is precisely how the new temple is going to outwardly appear. The first temple, by analogy, was physical; the new, a spiritual house. That is precisely why God told the people that the rebuilding would not be accomplished by might or power, but by His Spirit. The very same principle will apply to rebuilding the spiritual temple.

Let us therefore remember this great lesson, and examine ourselves, lest we become of such a mindset that despises the fact that God's rebuilding effort will seem small and perhaps even insignificant to mere human eyes.

GOD NEVER FORGETS!

Although the two prophets were contemporaneous, Zechariah actually began his work after Haggai. His book is one of the most strategic and crucial for believers who are approaching and may well live in the latter days leading up to the return of the Messiah. It appears to have been written over a seven year period, and there is good reason to believe that its message may well be one that covers the final seven years prior to the onset of the Messianic Age to come.

Like Haggai, Zechariah came on the scene at that point in time when the rebuilding effort had been halted. He called for the people to repent, saying:

“Turn you unto Me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you...Be you not as your fathers...turn you now from your evil ways and from your evil doings” (Zech 1:3-4).

It is perhaps impossible to overstate the profound significance of these inspired words as they should be applied to us today. Many will think to themselves, *what have I to repent of? How does such a warning relate to me? After all, I believe in God. I keep the Sabbath and holydays. I never eat unclean foods. I pay my tithes!* But Almighty God is shouting to us in no uncertain terms that things are not rosy and okay--that the

status quo is not what He desires. He is telling us to **WAKE UP** and begin to see the handwriting on the wall!

Why do we suppose God has allowed the old temple to fall? Was it because it had lost its outward shine and brilliance? Was it due to a lack of money or manpower? Of course not! God has permitted the old temple to fall in our day for the very same reasons that were in place when Solomon's temple was destroyed! And those reasons are clearly stated in the Scriptures, and it is absolutely imperative that we grasp the importance and relevancy of the message.

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God described the horrible sins of His own people and the punishment that was coming upon them. That punishment ultimately resulted in the overthrow of the first temple. Please note carefully and seriously the following words of warning and woe:

“This is Jerusalem (type of the spiritual Body): I have set her in the midst of the nations...And she has CHANGED MY JUDGMENTS INTO WICKEDNESS more than the nations (false churches and governments)...Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, am against you, and will execute judgments in the midst of you in the sight of the nations. And I will do in you that which I HAVE NOT DONE, and

whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of your abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of you; and the sons shall eat the fathers; and I will execute judgements in you, and the whole REMNANT of you will I SCATTER into all the wind...Because you have DEFILED MY SANCTUARY, with all your detestable things, and with all your abominations, therefore will I also DIMINISH you” (Ezek. 5:5-11).

We all are aware that these dire words were directed at ancient Israel, and that they were indeed fulfilled as prophesied. There is, however, great reason to believe that the weight and significance of these warnings are directly applicable to God’s spiritual people today as well. When we understand the temple analogy, the discernment of how to interpret the prophecies connected with that temple becomes more clear.

In the above passage, Jerusalem is seen as a type of the spiritual Body of believers. God indicts the people for having changed His laws and statutes. Does this action not strike a responsive chord in your heart? Was not the leadership of the churches of God flush with guilt in committing this very sin? Are they not still doing it even unto this very day?

God predicts that the fathers will eat the sons, and the sons will eat the fathers. How

should understand this prophecy? Notice the following instruction from the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you BITE AND DEVOUR ONE ANOTHER, take heed that you be not CONSUMED one of another” (Gal. 5:14-15).

Perhaps you have not connected this passage with a kind of fulfillment of the ancient prophecy of Ezekiel, but it certainly seems to fit perfectly. Due to the torrent of problems, divisions, hatred, jealousy, corruption, etc., many brethren indeed were turned one against the other. Biting and devouring one another became the rule of the day, and it still continues to this present time! When the Savior stated that those of a man’s own household would become his greatest enemies, I cannot wonder if indeed He did not have this very sad set of circumstances in mind!

Ezekiel has much more to say on this matter, and we would be remiss if we did not review it here:

“In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your ALTARS may be laid waste and made desolate, and your IDOLS may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your WORKS may be abolished...Yet will I

leave a remnant that you may have some that shall escape...and they that escape of you shall remember Me among the nations wither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which has departed from Me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their IDOLS: and they shall LOATHE themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations...As for the beauty of His ornament, He set it in majesty, but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein; therefore have I set it far from them. And I will give it into the hands of the STRANGERS for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it. My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the ROBBERS shall enter in and defile it... Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the POMP of the strong to cease; and their HOLY PLACES shall be defiled...Mischief shall come upon mischief, and RUMOR upon rumor: then shall they SEEK A VISION of the prophet; but the LAW shall PERISH from the PRIEST, and counsel from the ancients. The KING shall mourn, and the PRINCE shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled” (Ezek. 6:6-9, 7:20-27).

This passage of Scripture almost makes the hair on one's neck stand up, so chillingly accurate is it in terms of what has transpired over the recent years in the various churches of God. Indeed, the very problems that brought defeat to the ancient Israelites and destruction to the temple of God, are alive and well today among the body of believers.

Has God permitted His house to be dismantled in our day and time? Has He allowed the robbers to come in and defile it? Has He given it over to strangers and the worst of the heathen? Has this led to mischief upon mischief, and rumor upon rumor? Has the Law of God perished from the priest, the vision from the prophet, and wisdom from the ancients? Has the king indeed mourned and the prince become clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people troubled? Think about it!!

With respect to His holy temple, God continues through Ezekiel by saying:

“He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, do you see what they do, even the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, that I should go far off from MY SANCTUARY?...And He brought me to the door of the court, and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. Then He said unto me, Son of man, DIG now in the wall: and when I had dug in the wall, behold a door...So I went in and saw, and behold

every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about...Then He said unto me, Son of man, do you see what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark?...For they say, The Lord does not see us...Then He brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S HOUSE, which was toward the north, and behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then He said unto me, Have you seen this, O Son of man? Turn you yet again, and you shall see greater abominations than these. And He brought me to the inner court of the LORD'S HOUSE, and behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east” (Ezek. 8:6-16).

In essence, God is saying that the modern-day priests have turned their backs on Him. They have sought to weaken His Laws, corrupt His people, and promote idol-worship; and in the process have utterly polluted His spiritual temple!

Some will say, *What do you mean--idol-worship?* Brethren, the first commandment is explicit that we are to have no other gods before the one true God of heaven and earth. Why is this the first commandment? Simply because it is the most important

single law of all, and also the one that is most likely to be broken first, almost always without the individual even being aware of the offense.

You and I have much to consider when it comes to idolatry. We don't like to think in terms of idolatry at all, particularly with respect to our own minds and hearts. We prefer to relegate that to the ancient times when superstitious men worshiped the elements and made images of stone and wood. What a deceptive mindset!

The first commandment is the easiest of all God's Laws to break. Combine this with the fact that it is almost always done below the conscious level, and you have a very dangerous spiritual condition. To be perfectly honest, all of us have been guilty of idolatry. It is hardly necessary to carve out totem poles or fashion statues of bronze in order to be found guilty of idol-worship. Idolatry is first and foremost in the mind and heart, a place that we, by nature, do not fully understand nor do we desire to go there very often. We would rather gloss over the reality that we, as a matter of routine, put other things in front of our God, and we all know that this is true! In fact, things became so bad that, just like our ancient Jewish counterparts, we too made an idol of the temple itself! It was no longer a place of worship, it was an object of worship! The priests were no longer the servants of God, but the rulers of the

people, corrupted to the core, and indeed corrupting everyone under their sway. The prophets were no longer the spokesmen for God. In reality, their very function was abolished!

Perhaps the most abominable form of modern-day idolatry has been in the form of worshipping men rather than God--of putting the teachings, the traditions, the rules, the regulations, the plans, the desires, even the very whims of mere human leaders ahead of Almighty God and His will for our lives! This has been done on such a massive scale in the 20th century Church that it is almost impossible to express it in strong enough terms. You and I know how horribly real this vile practice has been in our experience. At this point in time, we all are far more the product of men than we are of Christ in us! This is so sad and so alarming to realize.

To say that there is indeed a desperate need for repentance and a return unto God and His purpose for our lives today is the understatement of all time! God is shouting to us in no uncertain terms: **CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!**

The ancient temple was destroyed and the people broken and scattered primarily because of idolatry. We are compelled therefore to approach our whole past religious experience with this reality in mind.

Aside from idolatry itself, the entire Law of God had become watered down by the priests. This was especially true when it came to the Sabbath. We find that Sabbath-breaking was one of the most oft-stated reasons for the decline of that ancient system. Surely we cannot allow the powerful impact of this truth to be lost on us! Have we not been eye-witnesses to this very thing occurring in the Church of today? Are there not, at this very moment, many who have drifted from honoring God by not observing the Sabbath day? Are there not some, even now, who are advancing the notion that Sabbath-keeping isn't really all that important anymore?

We all know that these conditions are alive and well, and have swept away so many believers in recent years.

LATTER HOUSE IS GREATER!

As important as the reasons for the fall of the temple are, we also must remember that God is vitally interested in the rebuilding effort. He is a positive-minded Being, not permitting Himself to be dragged down by an untoward focus on the past. His instruction is to turn from evil, put the past behind, and move on with Him. This is the way He operates. God tells us something that is very significant with regard to the rebuilt temple. This should encourage all of us who are a part of such a marvelous program:

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill THIS HOUSE WITH GLORY, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be GREATER than of the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give PEACE” (Hag. 2:6-9).

God gave the ancient Jews a great promise with respect to the rebuilt temple. As you will recall, many of the people initially reacted in a negative fashion when they compared the new temple with the old one. It just didn't seem as impressive, as ornate, as outwardly big and beautiful. But God told them that He intended that the rebuilt house would be greater and more glorious than the original. Well, the very same thing is going to transpire when the spiritual temple is rebuilt.

No longer will we believers use as our yardstick the efforts and works of men. Never again will we be drawn into the trap of viewing the things of God from a merely human, carnal perspective. The charisma, the charm, the cultured appearance, the extravagance, the opulence, the decadence of the past is going to be swept away and replaced by the glory of God's own presence in the lives of His people. The true

spiritual temple is going to shine with an inner brilliance impossible to attain by a mere outward focus. No longer will God's house be like a whited sepulcher, polished on the outside, but filled with dead men's bones on the inside!

The rebuilt temple to come is going to have a power and a function that is different, better, higher, and greater than the former temple. The temple of Solomon began with a flourish. The presence of God was so powerful that the priests could not even enter to perform their service. But over the years, the house of God became a place of utter pollution and corruption.

The precise same pattern has been followed in the spiritual realm. The apostolic Church was vibrant and alive with the power and glory of Christ manifested in an unprecedented fashion. But soon, too soon, it degenerated into a cesspool of worldliness, carnality, defilement, and degradation.

Now is the time for the rebuilding of the temple of God to occur. We are living in that glorious time. For those who can catch the vision, the opportunity to become a part of that great rebuilding effort is at hand.

The prophet Zechariah, speaking to those of his day who were to become involved in the great rebuilding of the temple, issued this strong admonition:

“Deliver yourself, O Zion, that dwells with the daughter of BABYLON” (Zech. 2:7).

In a spiritual sense, this warning is for God's people today who are to participate in the rebuilding of the holy temple. He is saying that we must come out of Babylon! Yes, that's right--Babylon! It is all around us. It is in every government, every church, every religion, every school, every organization of men. It penetrates into the very recesses of human life, and is the very force that makes the world go round.

Remember that the rebuilding of the temple will not be a time of ease, but of sacrifice and labor on the part of those involved. It will be a time of spiritual and perhaps even physical danger.

At this present time, many of God's flock have been scattered to the four winds. Zechariah was given a vision of four horns. We read in chapter 1:

“Then I lifted up my eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said to the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” (Zech. 1:18-19).

Has such a scattering taken place in our day and time? We know it has, because we have lived and experienced it first-hand. God foresaw this day when He inspired the prophet Jeremiah to write:

“Woe unto the pastors (shepherds) that destroy and SCATTER the sheep of My pasture, says the Lord...I will gather them the remnant of My flock...and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase...My heart within Me is broken because of the prophets...For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness...Thus says the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise Me, The Lord has said, You shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you...The anger of the Lord shall not return, until He has executed, and until He has performed the thoughts of His heart: in the LATTER DAYS you shall consider it perfectly” (Jer. 23).

Note carefully that this ancient prophecy is written expressly for the **LATTER DAYS**. Although there are an increasing number of God's people today who are starting to lose their grasp on the very concept of the end-time, it is undeniable that the Scriptures speak of such an era. I do not wish to be an alarmist, and I certainly do not wish to be predicting something which is really outside my ability or right to do. There is, however, an

abundance of information from the Bible that such a time is coming, and I do not feel that believers today have the luxury of simply ignoring it.

It is very possible, perhaps even likely, that the unfolding conditions and circumstances in this world today certainly qualify this current time period as a real contender for what the Scriptures term the *latter days*. The book of Zechariah, portions of which we have been studying, unquestionably contains a definitive message for the end-time. We know this to be true, because the heralded Second Coming of the Messiah is graphically described in the 14th chapter.

Aside from this fact, the so-called *two witnesses*, spoken of in detail in the 11th chapter of Revelation, are also discussed in the book of Zechariah (chapter 4). I would strongly suggest to every believer that they seriously reflect upon Zechariah's intriguing prophecies from a latter-day perspective. Remember to tie in the end-time language with the rebuilding of the temple, and see what kind of picture emerges.

Immediately following the statement with respect to the four horns that are responsible for scattering God's people, Zechariah mentions four carpenters that appear on the scene. Here is what he says:

“And the Lord showed me four

carpenters. Then I said, What do these come to do? And He spoke, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to FRIGHTEN THEM, to CAST OUT the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it” (Zech 1:20-21).

Once again, we all must remain aware that the thrust of this prophecy had an initial, literal, physical, local, and specific application to the Jews of Zechariah's day. We must never discount the fact that in most instances Biblical prophecies do have a literal, timely, and emphatic fulfillment with regard to the people of the age in question. That fact, however, does not negate the possibility, indeed the distinct likelihood, that a later, second, greater, and often more spiritual application is appropriate. Since Zechariah was ordained to prophesy with respect to the rebuilding of the temple, and since, by its very wording and nature, the message contains a host of very definitive future references, we can confidently use our discernment in rightly dividing the potential meaning of this prophecy as it applies to the latter-day people of God.

At some point, therefore, we can expect that God is going to raise up individuals or groups who will fulfill the prophecy concerning the four carpenters. Those who are guilty of oppressing and scattering

God's flock are not going to get away with it without a scare! In fact, a careful, discerning eye might indeed perceive that many of these spiritual oppressors are already **FRIGHTENED** and running scared! Those whom God raises up to oppose the spiritual taskmasters and dictators should be recognized by the scattered sheep as part of God's intervention to help set His people free from their greedy grasp. Rather than remaining so divided and polarized, all scattered brethren ought to comprehend the significance of where they are at this crucial juncture, of what God is really intending to do. If we can see that the old temple has indeed been dismantled and removed, if we can see that we have been set free, then we must begin to sense that the next step in God's program is to **REBUILD HIS TEMPLE!** This is the way He has worked in the past, and He never changes. What happened anciently will happen again. As surely as the returning Jewish exiles were commissioned to rebuild the physical temple, so are God's people today being given an awakening call to get free from the religious Babylonians that have oppressed them, and submit to the rebuilding of God's spiritual temple.

Just as there are indications that a literal physical temple may be rebuilt prior to the onset of the coming Messianic Age, is it also possible that the spiritual temple of God will undergo a similar rebuilding

process? I believe that the possibility of this occurring is very likely, and that each of us ought to seriously focus on the significance and the impact of what is transpiring right now among the people of God. We are emphatically not living in normal, ordinary times. Most of us already sense that this is so. I urge everyone to begin thinking, studying, praying and communicating with each other from the very feasible perspective that, just maybe, God is presenting us with an incredible window of opportunity right now to be prepared and used by Him in a most powerful and fruitful way in the very near future.

Let us put the past behind us, even as the apostle Paul had to do, in order that it not be permitted to drag us down or hold us back from moving forward with God. Let us draw as close to our Father and His Son as possible on a very personal basis. Let us pray for a full and complete repentance and a positive and powerful return unto God, His Laws, His truth and His will for our lives. Let us yield ourselves totally into His hands for the shaping of Christ in us. Let us pledge our time, our energy, our resources, our abilities, and our experience to the furtherance of God's purposes at this critical juncture in history. Let us let go of everything that is keeping us from going all the way with God; that may even remotely be or become an object of worship or something that comes first in our lives before the will of God. Let

us go boldly to the throne of grace for the strength, determination, courage, faith, and love we need to stand and fight and emerge victorious in the struggle that lies ahead.

Although many of God's people today have endured much in terms of rejection, disappointment, hurt, separation, division, loss. It has not been easy for any of us. Right now, many are scattered and battered, not really grasping how God, or even if God, is working at all. I say to you--do not be discouraged, dismayed, or defeated. These are the very goals Satan wishes to achieve in our lives.

Just as the Scriptures have predicted the present scattering, so also do they portray the re-gathering of God's sheep and the rebuilding of His spiritual house. You and I have the chance of a lifetime to be living at such a time in the unfolding of God's plan. There is going to be a rallying of the believers. There is going to be a powerful outpouring and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. There is going to be a mighty stirring in the camp!

Go to God right now in heartfelt prayer, and let Him know in unmistakable terms how much you need Him and want Him. Tell Him to take you and make you into the image of His dear Son. Only by Christ life in us and living freely through us can we have a viable part in the rebuilding plans of Almighty God. Remember that

you are **LIVELY STONES**. Therefore, let God place you, according to His will and purpose, as a meaningful part of His holy and restored temple.