

## Why People Need A Building To Worship God

'God spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the Children of Israel so they may take an offering for Me. From everyone whose heart makes him willing you will take My offering ... Let them make Me a sanctuary so I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all of its furniture, so you will make it' (Exodus 25:1, 2, 8 & 9).

That sanctuary became the Tabernacle of Moses, which housed the Ark of the Covenant. God gave the Israelites the exact design and material instructions down to the last detail. From that time onwards, God's people have worshipped Him inside buildings. After the Tabernacle, the Israelites built a Temple called Solomon's Temple, once again, designed by God down to the tiniest detail. When the first Temple was destroyed, the Jewish people built the second Temple, which was the Temple where Jesus worshipped. Before Jesus came to earth the Jewish people built Synagogues. The second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD and the population of Jewish people living in Israel were scattered around the world so they relied on local Synagogues to meet together and worship God. When Christianity arose, they built churches, cathedrals and other places of worship.

People need buildings in which they can worship God, but God does not need buildings. He is immeasurable. It is impossible for humans to build a house that can contain God and it should be unnecessary because God can be called on in the deepest parts of the earth or sea. God does not live in buildings, He lives within our hearts. God did not say, "Build Me a dwelling so I may live in it." He said, "Let them make Me a sanctuary so I may dwell among them." The building of the Tabernacle was to draw close to God, to hear His voice and instructions for their lives. The abundant furnishings within the Tabernacle reminds us of God's ability to provide for us. God gave exact and specific architectural blueprints for the Tabernacle and everything inside it plus for the two Temples for the builders to adhere to. God's house had to be perfect. God did not leave the buildings of the Tabernacle and Temples to chance, He gave very specific instructions for the outside and for each piece of furniture and furnishings inside. Moses, Solomon and the builders of the second Temple adhered closely to God's instructions, model, plan and form. We now have the Bible as God's instructions for our lives as He builds up His Body of Believers.

God does not need buildings because Scripturally, there are at least three heavens (2 Corinthians 12:2) and God lives above them all in the highest heaven amongst Cherubim (Psalm 80:1; 99:1). He rides through the heavens on a Cherub (Psalm 18:10). He does not need buildings to dwell in yet He told David and Solomon to build Him a house. David started the huge task and Solomon finished it but Solomon wondered why. He understood the vastness of our Creator God. 'Now therefore, God of Israel, please let Your word be verified, which You spoke to Your servant David my father. Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You, how much less this house I have built' (1 Kings 8:26 & 27). 'Thus says the Lord, heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool so what manner of house will you build for Me? What place will be My rest? My hand has made all these things so all these things came to be' (Isaiah 66:1 & 2). God is there but is unseen so as humans we like to have a visual place to worship our Lord. We like to experience His holy presence and the closeness to Him that only genuine believers can enjoy.

When God gave Moses the blueprints for making the Tabernacle, He also gave instructions how to raise the funds for the project (Exodus 25:2 to 7). This was God working along side His people to achieve His divine will. Raising the funds needed to come from a willing heart, not by force. Having a willing, cheerful heart is important to God. He is our Righteous Judge but He is not a tyrant. 'Let each person give according as they have determined in their heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9:7). In building the Tabernacle, the Temple and rebuilding the second Temple, the freewill offerings had to relate to the building project. People could not give just anything. The detailed list included such items as, gold, silver, bronze, fine linen coloured blue, purple or scarlet, goat hair, red dyed ram's skins, porpoise skins, acacia wood, pure olive oil for lighting, special spices for the anointing olive oil, fragrant incense, onyx stones and other precious stones for the priests garments. These items to make the Tabernacle were some of the items taken from the Egyptians as the Israelites embarked on their exodus (Exodus 3:22). Other items like the acacia wood for the Tabernacle could have been found in the desert where they were wandering. The cedar trees for the Temple were taken from Lebanon, next to Israel. God values every donation, gift, tithe or offering as long as it is given with a willing heart. 'Jesus looked up and saw the rich people who were putting their gifts into the treasury. He saw a certain poor widow casting in two small coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them, for all these put in gifts for God from their abundance but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on"' (Luke 21:1 to 4).

In our day we do not have a Tabernacle or a Temple but Jewish people have their Synagogues, Christians have their churches and cathedrals. We often have home group meetings inside our homes. We draw close to God, not through a building we attend for worship and fellowship, we draw close to God through our

personal daily prayer, fellowshiping with other believers, Bible study, praying in the 'closet', fasting in secret when only God sees. God has given to us a pattern for a close walk with Him. He tells us to give and not hoard, to help the less well off and to love anyone who can be considered our neighbour. Blessings come from God when we willingly submit to His authority, when we obey His plans and purposes for our lives. Buildings bring people together and they make a service meeting much easier. Imagine having to try to have a fellowship meeting outside in heavy rain, snow, sleet, strong wind or dust storm. We need a building to meet in but the building is just a tool so we can fellowship together. It should not be the focus of our relationship with God.

Will there be a third Temple? That is unlikely. The land is there so it could be built but it is possible God is holding them back from building the third Temple because it is not needed now. The Temple was destroyed to stop animal sacrifices because Jesus had come and He was the ultimate Sacrificial Lamb. Animal sacrifices can no longer be used to sanctify people. The Bible is the detailed instructions God has given to us to follow and as God's children we live by His commands as we 'build' His 'house' not made with human hands. It is a Spiritual 'house', meaning it is made up of redeemed people. The Bible explains it this way. 'At the appointed time, Jesus the Messiah appeared as a High Priest of the better things (heavenly things not worldly things) that have come and are to come. Through the greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with human hands, that is not a part of this creation, Jesus went once only, for all humanity, into the Holy of Holies of heaven, not by the blood of goats and calves to make reconciliation between God and man, but by His own blood having secured a complete redemption for us. If the sprinkling of unholy or defiled persons with blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a burnt heifer is sufficient for the purification of the body, how much more surely will the blood of Jesus, Who by His eternal Holy Spirit, His own pre-existent divine personality has offered Himself as an unblemished sacrifice to God, purify our consciences from dead works to serve the living God? Jesus the Messiah is therefore the Mediator of an entirely New Covenant, so those who are called to serve may receive the fulfilment of the promised everlasting inheritance since His death has taken place which redeems us from the transgressions committed under the first Covenant' (Hebrews 9:11 to 15).

Amen and God bless you.

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