

“In My Father’s House”

***The Theme of TEMPLE from Genesis to Revelation -
What the Bible is All About From Start to Finish***

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Title: Home at Last

Text: Revelation 21-22

Reading: Revelation 21:1 – 22:6

Christ Reformation Church

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Introduction

Home at last. This is the title of this last sermon in this series which we have called TEMPLE – we have arrived at the second “E” – Eden restored and Excelled! The New Heavens and the New Earth – a fitting ending not only to this series, but *to the Bible itself*. I hope that you have taken a firm hold on this grand, overarching theme of the Bible – that it is the story – past, present, and future, of God carrying out this declaration –

Leviticus 26:11-12 ESV

(11) I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. (12) And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

Leviticus 26:11-12 NBLH

(11) 'Además, haré Mi morada en medio de ustedes, y Mi alma no los aborrecerá. (12) 'Andaré entre ustedes y seré su Dios, y ustedes serán Mi pueblo.

Now, as it always the case when it comes to the study of God's Word, we could spend much, much more time here. We have, for instance, not dealt hardly at all with the theme of Temple in the New Testament Epistles – I am only going to briefly mention some of them this morning. Then we will end with the ending of the story – Revelation 21 & 22 – which is really *the beginning*. So then, here we go.

I. Temple in the Epistles of Paul

A. 1 Corinthians 3

1 Corinthians 3:6-17 ESV

(6) I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

(7) So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

(8) He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

(9) For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

(10) According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.

(11) For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

(12) Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw--

(13) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

(14) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

(15) If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

(16) Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

(17) If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Isn't it interesting that not only does Paul use the picture of a builder laying a foundation, he begins with a picture of someone planting and watering seed. The temple is seen as a building, but also as a garden. And we have already seen that Eden was the first temple, then the tabernacle, then the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, and now in this era WE are the temple of God in which the Spirit of God dwells.

B. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 (Also see 2 Cor 5)

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 ESV

(16) What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(17) Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, (18) and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 NBLH

(16) ¿O qué acuerdo tiene el templo de Dios con los ídolos? Porque nosotros somos el templo del Dios vivo, como Dios dijo:

"HABITARE EN ELLOS, Y ANDARE ENTRE ELLOS; Y SERE SU DIOS, Y ELLOS SERAN MI PUEBLO.

(17) "Por tanto, SALGAN DE EN MEDIO DE ELLOS Y APARTENSE," dice el Señor; "Y NO TOQUEN LO INMUNDO, Y Yo los recibiré.

(18) "Yo seré un padre para ustedes, Y ustedes serán para Mí hijos e hijas," Dice el Señor Todopoderoso.

Here, Paul quotes Leviticus 26. Notice that his emphasis here that WE are the temple of God is meant to lead us into holiness of life. No unclean thing is to come into the temple of God.

C. Ephesians 2:19-22

Here is probably the clearest statement of the theme –

Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV

(19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

(20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

(21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

(22) In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22 NBLH

(19) Así pues, ustedes ya no son extraños ni extranjeros, sino que son conciudadanos de los santos y son de la familia de Dios.

(20) Están edificados sobre el fundamento de los apóstoles y profetas, siendo Cristo Jesús mismo la piedra angular,

(21) en quien todo el edificio, bien ajustado, va creciendo para ser un templo santo en el Señor.

(22) En Cristo también ustedes son juntamente edificados para morada de Dios en el Espíritu.

Right now, the Temple has become far, far closer to God's people. He Himself dwells in us. The Church is the Temple. God has brought us into His house.

(See also Colossians 1:6, 10).

D. The Anti-Christ in the Temple? 2 Thessalonians 2

An extremely interesting and much-debated passage that speaks of the Temple of God in this age is found in the second chapter of Thessalonians. Clearly Paul had in mind the book of Daniel when he wrote it –

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 ESV

(1) Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, (2) not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

(3) Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and **the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,**

(4) who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

(5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

(6) And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

(7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

(8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

(9) The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,

(10) and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

(11) Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,

(12) in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 NBLH

- (1) Pero con respecto a la venida de nuestro Señor Jesucristo y a nuestra reunión con El, les rogamos, hermanos,
- (2) que no sean sacudidos fácilmente en su modo de pensar, ni se alarmen, ni por espíritu, ni por palabra, ni por carta como si fuera de nosotros, en el sentido de que el día del Señor ha llegado.
- (3) Que nadie los engañe en ninguna manera, porque no vendrá sin que primero venga la **apostasía y sea revelado el hombre de pecado, el hijo de perdición.**
- (4) **Este se opone y se exalta sobre todo lo que se llama dios o es objeto de culto, de manera que se sienta en el templo de Dios, presentándose como si fuera Dios.**
- (5) ¿No se acuerdan de que cuando yo estaba todavía con ustedes les decía esto?
- (6) Ustedes saben lo que lo detiene por ahora, para ser revelado a su debido tiempo.
- (7) Porque el misterio de la iniquidad (de estar sin ley) ya está en acción, sólo que aquél que por ahora lo detiene, lo hará hasta que él mismo sea quitado de en medio.
- (8) Entonces será revelado ese impío (sin ley), a quien el Señor matará con el espíritu de Su boca, y destruirá con el resplandor (la manifestación) de Su venida.
- (9) La venida del impío será conforme a la actividad de Satanás, con todo poder y señales y prodigios mentirosos,
- (10) y con todo engaño de iniquidad para los que se pierden, porque no recibieron el amor de la verdad para ser salvos.
- (11) Por esto Dios les enviará un poder engañoso, para que crean en la mentira (en lo falso),
- (12) a fin de que sean juzgados (condenados) todos los que no creyeron en la verdad sino que se complacieron (aprobaron) en la iniquidad.

Now the question of course is, *what is this temple* (and who is this lawless one who takes his seat there)? Many, perhaps most evangelicals today, have been taught that it is a future, rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. A literal building on this earth. But we reject this interpretation, and with much good reason for doing so –

1. Paul is the writer of this Epistle. We have just been seeing that Paul teaches us that the Temple in this era *is not a building, but the Church*. The Church has superseded the physical temple in Jerusalem. Christians are the holy of holies.
2. The Lord Jesus Himself taught this same thing. He said that He was the Temple and that the earthly temple would be torn down and be no more.

Somehow then, this man of lawlessness comes into the Church and exalts himself. Now, notice that the passage indicates that he is doing his evil work *right now*. He is being restrained, but he is active. One day, apparently, the Lord's restraints will be removed from him and he will then be fully revealed for who he is. All of this is in perfect harmony with the Apostle John's frequent warnings about Antichrist. *As you listen to these Scriptures, notice very carefully that the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, IS at work NOW in the Temple of God, and that one day he will be revealed and destroyed (2 Thes 2) -*

1 John 2:18-22 ESV

(18) Children, it is the last hour, and **as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come.** Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

(19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

(20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

(21) I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

(22) Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 2:18-22 NBLH

(18) Hijitos, es la última hora, y **así como oyeron que el anticristo viene, también ahora han surgido muchos anticristos.** Por eso sabemos que es la última hora.

(19) Ellos salieron de nosotros, pero en realidad no eran de nosotros, porque si hubieran sido de nosotros, habrían permanecido con nosotros. Pero salieron, a fin de que se manifestara que no todos son de nosotros.

(20) Pero ustedes tienen la unción (son ungidos) del Santo, y todos ustedes lo saben.

(21) No les he escrito porque ignoren la verdad, sino porque la conocen y porque ninguna mentira procede de la verdad. (22) ¿Quién es el mentiroso, sino el que niega que Jesús es el Cristo (el Mesías)? Este es el anticristo, el que niega al Padre y al Hijo.

1 John 4:1-3 ESV

(1) Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, **for many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

(2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

(3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. **This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.**

1 John 4:1-3 NBLH

(1) Amados, no crean a todo espíritu, sino prueben los espíritus para ver si son de Dios, **porque muchos falsos profetas han salido al mundo.**

(2) En esto ustedes conocen el Espíritu de Dios: todo espíritu que confiesa que Jesucristo ha venido en carne, es de Dios.

(3) Y todo espíritu que no confiesa a Jesús, no es de Dios, y **éste es el espíritu del anticristo, del cual ustedes han oído que viene, y que ahora ya está en el mundo.**

2 John 1:7-8 ESV

(7) **For many deceivers have gone out into the world,** those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. **Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.**

(8) **Watch yourselves**, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

2 John 1:7-8 NBLH

(7) Pues **muchos engañadores han salido al mundo** que no confiesan que Jesucristo ha venido en carne. **Ese es el engañador y el anticristo.**

(8) **Tengan ustedes cuidado** para que no pierdan lo que hemos logrado, sino que reciban abundante recompensa.

See it? He is coming, and he is already here! It is, therefore, a serious and dangerous error to simply believe that the Antichrist is some future figure who will come to power one day. NO! His spirit and his ambassadors are here NOW, *in the temple!* They have come to spread a false gospel, to deny Christ, and to deceive us. Watch yourselves!!

Warning! *“The Thessalonian Christians, and WE, must not think that the Antichrist’s deception will come only when he appears in final fleshly form, but we must be on our guard NOW in order not to be deceived by his unusual invisible coming into the new covenant temple through his corporate emissaries, the false teachers! Paul is saying that even now the false teachers that have been prophesied by Daniel and Jesus (see Matt 24:4-5, 23-24, etc.) are with us. This means that the end-time ‘great tribulation’ has begun in part! The prophecy of the ‘apostasy’ and coming of ‘the man of lawlessness’ into the temple of the new covenant church has started fulfillment.”* [G.K. Beale]

YOU will fall if you are careless and drifting! You Will! Listen further –

“The practical relevance of this discussion for the contemporary church, the temple, is that the spirit of the Antichrist may already be found hovering in its midst when its leaders change God’s word and contradict its meaning. For example, many church leaders today say that we need to be accepting of other faiths, contending that sincerity in any kind of faith may be a legitimate path to God. ‘Who are we to say that we have the only truth?’ To many, the exclusive claim of Christianity sounds narrow and

harsh. Yet Jesus himself said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.' His follower, Peter, said, 'there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.' Such teachings represent the lawlessness of the Antichrist prophesied by Daniel to pollute the end-time temple. True believers need to be on the alert not to be deceived by such eschatological corruption, in order to keep the temple of God doctrinally and ethically pure. Indeed, it should not be assumed that the 'spirit of the Antichrist' influences only unbelieving false teachers. Leaders who are true Christians and those under their guidance are susceptible to this influence and can be caught up in worldly ways of thinking. All in the church to one degree or another are confronted and tempted by this worldly influence. This is why we continually need to be alert to resisting it." [Beale]

E. The Temple in Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews is filled with Temple. For example, 8:1-5, 12:22-29; 13:15-16. In these verses and others, Hebrews teaches us that the earthly temple forms have always been pictures of the real heavenly temple that will one day fill the redeemed and renewed universe. *Christians therefore must focus on the INVISIBLE Zion, Jerusalem, temple and new creation, which have broken in from the future into this old age. In this, we exercise faith and see what awaits us.*

F. The Temple in Revelation

We have already listened to the “end of the story” (which is really the beginning) this morning, Revelation 21:1 – 22:6. We heard the account of the New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven to earth. This is the Omega Point to which all of Scripture has been moving – God come down, dwelling with and among His people and they with Him, as it was, as it is in part now, and as it ever shall be. The New Heavens and the New Earth joined forever. THIS is home! And of this home we have spoken much in these past few weeks and months.

What of it – How Shall We Live Then?

Alright, we are the temple. We are kings and priests and prophets. What does this mean right now? How shall we live every day in this earthly life in light of these truths? Well, we are to BE priests, and kings and prophets. WE are to do what the first Adam failed in and what Christ has accomplished – *be a holy nation, a royal priesthood, taking and showing the knowledge of God throughout all the world.* The Church, the temple, is growing and expanding as it has been for centuries and the gospel is being preached – by us!

As believer-priests, we are to –

1. Believe and obey God's Word ourselves
2. We then spread this Word in the world so that as its seed is planted and watered, God gives the increase and Satan's kingdom is diminished.
3. As priests, we must pursue holiness because God is holy.
4. As priests we must pray. People in Scripture always came to the temple to *pray*. We pray without ceasing.
5. We offer sacrifices, only not like those of the Old Testament. Our sacrifices are –
 - a. Our own bodies – living and holy, well-pleasing to God
 - b. We sacrifice ourselves by suffering in this world when we stand for Christ, confess His name, and are hated by worldlings
 - c. We mediate between God and the world – shining the light of His truth that they might come to it
 - d. We make sacrifice pleasing to God when we give of our material resources so that the gospel might be taken out into the world in all kinds of ways

In summary, listen to Beale once more –

“Thus, extending the boundaries of the temple by witnessing and strengthening those receiving witness is a priestly sacrifice and offering to God. God’s presence grows among his priestly people by their knowing His word, believing it and by obeying it, and then they spread that presence to others by living their lives faithfully and prayerfully in the world. For example, a persevering and joyous faith in the midst of trial is an amazing priestly witness to the unbelieving world. The main point of this book is that our task as the covenant community, the church, is to be God’s temple, so filled with His glorious presence that we expand and fill the earth with that presence until God finally accomplishes the goal completely at the end of time. This is our common mission...May the church, the true Israel and true temple, experience the priestly blessing pronounced on Israel from the tabernacle –

*The Lord bless you, and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26)*