

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

NEITHER HAMMER NOR AXE

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

I Kings 6:7

Isaiah wrote the testimony of the LORD, when HE said, “*The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (Isa 66:1)* This same testimony was quoted by both Stephen (see Acts 7:48) and Paul (see Acts 17:24) in the New Testament as they declared the eternal habitations of the Absolute GOD (see Isa.57:15) “*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting.*” (1Tim 6:16) Even the very man who was chosen by the LORD to “build” the earthly temple, Solomon the son of David, testified “*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*” (1Ki 8:27)

It is a marvelous blessing that was bestowed upon Solomon to be that one who would build the earthly temple which David his father desired to build with all of his heart. David was denied that privilege so that the LORD might display HIS sovereign prerogative to do with HIS own as HE wills. Yet having said that; we also understand that such an earthly temple was intended by the LORD to be temporary and its destruction was ordained before the first stone was ever laid.

Though it took Solomon seven years to build that temple, its valuable contents were pillaged by Nebuchadnezzar about 350 years later, and its riches taken by him to Babylon in less than a year when he subjugated the Jews. Historically Solomon finished the temple about 832 BC and the final destruction of it occurred in approximately 587 BC, about eleven years after Nebuchadnezzar first pillaged its treasures.

There are lessons to be learned from the construction and glory of this Temple even as there are lessons to be learned from its utter destruction and the fact that there have been no archeological discoveries that pinpoint its location or its materials. Though other Jewish Temples have been built, none could ever match the glory of this one constructed by Solomon, of which it is said, “*neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron*” was heard in it while it was being built.”

The one true and living GOD does not need any temples or edifices of religion fashioned by the hands of men, since HE, alone is the ONE who is eternal and the AUTHOR of all that is made. HE inhabits eternity and cannot in any wise be made the servant of men. The gods of man's imagination have many “needs”, not the least of which is a place to reside. There have been many magnificent houses of “worship” built to honor these gods which are of man's choosing.

The Philistines had their own temple to Dagon, because Dagon most certainly could not build his own habitation or even offer any protection to himself in his own house. (see I Sam.5:2-7) The same can be said of Ashtoreth, Baal, Diana, or any number of others; including the supposed god which bows down before the free will of men, wouldn't harm a flea, and only hopes that some

folks will worship him, and let him bless them. He is the god of this age, who resides in religious Babylon and goes by many names and has followers and prophets of many stripes.

He is a god who constantly stands in need of man's money, time, talents, and service. Many are those who are constantly about the business of enlisting men to come to his aid in one fashion or another. They sometimes tell us that he has no hands but ours and no feet either. Such a god is only fit for a wheelchair or the place of an impotent invalid. This is not the GOD *"Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever."* (Psa 104:2-5) It is impossible that men could in any wise aid HIM who needs no assistance or assist HIM who needs no aid.

Thus when we see this temple being built by Solomon, it was not built to satisfy the needs of GOD, but rather the LORD condescended to allow Solomon to build it that HE might demonstrate the true nature of HIS kingdom and the glory of HIS own habitation. Therefore it was necessary that it be temporary that men might be assured that HE is not affected by the things which men do, however marvelous they may appear in the eyes of men.

This grandiose edifice was returned to the dust from which it was made, even as the flesh of all men shall be brought to the same. The sons of GOD confess that they too, have here no continuing city (or kingdom) but that they seek one which is from above, a temple not made with hands eternal in the heavens. In this we see but a glimpse of that Kingdom which is not of this world, in which the LORD JESUS reigns forever. *"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."* (Rev 21:22-27)

We read that "no sound of a hammer or axe" was heard in the construction of Solomon's temple that we might understand that the LORD is the WISE MASTERBUILDER of HIS kingdom, and cannot be aided therein by men. This is a kingdom of Grace, wherein the right to dwell in it must be bestowed upon every inhabitant that is enabled to enter therein. *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph 2:10) *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Acts 13:48)

This is a Kingdom of Faith. Faith is *"the gift of GOD, not of works lest any man should boast."* (Eph.2:8,9) Faith is the currency of this kingdom and none who is without it shall enter into it, but rather be cast out." Even as the *"fearful and unbelieving"* (see Rev.21:8) *"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"* (James 2:5)

This is a Kingdom of Love. For it is by the manifestation of this LOVE, that this Temple, not made with hands, is constructed of *"lively (i.e.; living) stones"* (see I Pet.2:5); those whose redemption is purchased by the blood of the LAMB without spot or blemish. For while HE inhabits eternity, HE is also pleased to dwell with those of a *"contrite and humble spirit"* (Isa.57:15) No greater love has been or could be demonstrated than this, for HE, having no other compulsion than HIS own love for those who were hidden in HIM from before the foundation of the world did bleed and die, in the plain sight of men, pouring out HIS very life that they as sinners might be justified by the same law which would have condemned them otherwise.

This is a Kingdom of Good works. *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* (Php 2:13) *"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good"* (Acts 10:38)

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