

Identity Part 6

We (you) are the Temple of the Holy Spirit

1. Review
2. The New Testament unequivocally states that believers both individually and corporately are the temple of the Holy Spirit. There is no ambiguity about it. The language is not metaphorical and the meaning is clear. God lives in His people!
 - a. Many of us have heard this our entire Christian lives. But what does it mean? What does it look like? What are the implications?
 - b. You realize that the implications concern our identity. We are not our own. We do not belong to ourselves any longer. Our lives are not ours to do as we please with any more.
 - c. A temple is a holy place, a sacred building, reserved as a meeting place with God. It is the place where the Presence of God is found.
 - i. While we know God can not be limited to a single building (or person), we also have come to understand that He fills whatever He pleases, including His people.
 - ii. David said, *"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"* (1 Kings 8:27).
 - iii. In terms of the physical building of the temple of Jerusalem, the temple served as a visible symbol of the presence of God, just as the Ark of the Covenant had in the time of the Judges and during the Exodus.
 - d. **History:**
 - i. In the Exodus, Moses constructs the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Ark of the Covenant to serve as a reminder to the people that God's presence was always with them. Think about this...during the Exodus they had very visible signs of God's presence, the pillar of fire at night and the pillar of smoke during the day to lead them.
 - ii. By the time of David, a "house" or "temple" was the dream of King David, even though God told him that it was not necessary. It became the central fixture to the nation for the next 1000 years.
 - iii. Jesus came and not only honored the temple as "His Father's House" but also saw it as a place of ACCESS to God that man was corrupting (when he drove out the money changers). Jesus declares to the Jewish Leaders that if they destroy the temple, he would rebuild it in 3 days. (speaking of his body).
 - iv. God had suggested very early in the bible that it was His desire to "dwell among His people" Lv 26:12 *"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people."*
 1. Ez. 37:37 *"My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people."*
 2. 2 Cor 6:16 *"For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"*
 3. Mt 1:23 *"'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' - which means, 'God with us.'"*
3. The layout of the Temple informed the Israelites that they could only come to God in the way He prescribed. There was no other way. As we will see even more clearly in the following sections, God is using the Old Testament tabernacle to tell us that we, too, must come to Him only through the way He has provided for us — Jesus Christ.
 - a. It was holy and it consisted of 4 distinctive courts
 - i.
 - ii. The Court of the Priests
 - iii. **The Court of the Gentiles** – (also called the "outer court") It was this area that the non-Jews could enter. This was a spacious area, that non-Jews could walk around, be taught

in, etc. It was into these outer courts that Jesus came and drove out the money-changers who had been accumulating wealth by using the Temple as a place of merchandise. Their misuse of this area of the Temple served as a barrier to the Gentiles (Goyim) from being able to approach God.

1. You can notice the area called Solomon's porch. This was an area in which Jewish rabbis (including Jesus) would gather people to teach them. This was a massive religious gathering area for Jews. It was here that Jesus taught, it was here that Jesus was found as a 12 year old asking questions of the teachers
- iv. **The Inner Court** – consisted of the Court of Women, the Court of Israel, and the Court of the Priests. These were the areas for the men (and women, who were separate from the men) to gather while their sacrifices were being offered by the priests. this court was reserved for the priests. You can see the barrier for the non-priests on the diagram, but the offerers could witness their offering being laid on the altar by the priest.
- v. **The Innermost Court**
 1. The Holy Place – was inside a building with a roof, lit only by the candelabra and is where the showbread was placed each day. At its west side stood the sanctuary proper, comprising (from east to west) the porch, the holy place, and the cubical holy of holies. Into the holy place the priests entered to discharge various duties, in particular to offer incense on the golden-incense altar, as Zechariah did on the occasion when an angel appeared to him and announced the forth coming birth of his son John the Baptist (Luke 1:8-23). No ordinary priest could hope that the lot for offering the incense would fall to him on more than one day in his lifetime (if that); the day when Zechariah received the angelic announcement was in any case the red-letter day of his whole priestly career.
 2. Beyond that was **The Holy of Holies**, separated by a thick 4-6" curtain or veil, 60' tall, that no one could pass through, except once a year, when the high priest entered on the day of atonement to offer the sacrifice on behalf of the entire nation

4. The Veil

- a. The word "veil" in Hebrew means a screen, divider or separator that hides. What was this curtain hiding? Essentially, it was shielding a holy God from sinful man. **Whoever entered into the Holy of Holies was entering the very presence of God.**
 - i. In fact, anyone except the high priest who entered the Holy of Holies would die.
 - ii. Even the high priest, God's chosen mediator with His people, could only pass through the veil and enter this sacred dwelling once a year, on a prescribed day called the Day of Atonement.
- b. The picture of the veil was that of a barrier between man and God, showing man that the holiness of God could not be trifled with.
 - i. God's eyes are too pure to look on evil and He can tolerate no sin (Habakkuk 1:13).
 - ii. The veil was a barrier to make sure that man could not carelessly and irreverently enter into God's awesome presence.
 - iii. Even as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he had to make some meticulous preparations: He had to wash himself, put on special clothing, bring burning incense to let the smoke cover his eyes from a direct view of God, and bring blood with him to make atonement for sins.
 1. (omit?) *"But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance."* (Hebrews 9:7)
- c. The presence of God remained shielded from man behind a thick curtain during the history of Israel.
 - i. However, Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross changed that. When He died, the curtain in the Jerusalem temple was torn in half, from the top to the bottom.

- ii. Matthew 27:50 *“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.”*
- iii. Only God could have carried out such an incredible feat because the veil was too high for human hands to have reached it, and too thick to have torn it. (The Jerusalem temple, a replica of the wilderness tabernacle, had a curtain that was about 60 feet in height, 30 feet in width and four inches thick.)
- iv. Furthermore, it was torn from top down, meaning this act must have come from above.
- v. As the veil was torn, the Holy of Holies was exposed. God’s presence was now accessible to all.
- vi. Shocking as this may have been to the priests ministering in the temple that day, it is indeed good news to us as believers, because we know that Jesus’ death has atoned for our sins and made us right before God.
- vii. The torn veil illustrated Jesus’ body broken for us, opening the way for us to come to God. As Jesus cried out “It is finished!” on the cross, He was indeed proclaiming that God’s redemptive plan was now complete. The age of animal offerings was over. The ultimate offering had been sacrificed.
 - 1. *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body ... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.”* (Hebrews 10:19-22)
 - 2. The Holy of Holies is a representation of heaven itself, God’s dwelling place, which we have access now through Christ. In Revelations, John’s vision of heaven — the New Jerusalem — also was a perfect square, just as the Holy of Holies was (Revelation 21:16).
- 5. In light of this, let us celebrate what Jesus did on our behalf, after which we will apply the meaning of His Presence in the temple of our bodies.
 - a. Communion celebrated!
- 6. The temple of Jerusalem was to be a place of prayer - cf. Mt 21:13; *“And He said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER';”*
 - a. Until Jesus rose and ascended to the Father, and gave the Holy Spirit, the physical temple was the only manifestation upon the earth of God’s presence. But once the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the bodies of every believer became a temple of God, and a house of prayer.
 - b. Our Innermost man, our spirit, is where the Holy Spirit dwells. Our spirit is the Holy of Holies, because that is where God the Holy Spirit dwells now.
 - i. It is here where we meet with God in intimacy and holiness.
 - ii. That is why spiritual counterfeits and substitutes like witchcraft and spells are to be despised.
 - iii. The Perfection of God Himself dwells in our spirit. Our spirit is the Holy of Holies and it is here we have unhindered access to the presence of God Himself!
 - c. **Just like the physical temple, we come to God in differing levels of intimacy = outer court (praying before a meal, casual contact with God); Inner Court – when we come to church or sometimes pray for others (formal contact with God). Innermost Court (Holy of Holies) – is the equivalent of absolute intimacy with God, surrender of time, self and abandonment to God. It is the place where true spiritual intimacy takes place.**
 - i. When Dr. Purvis was here, he guided some of us into a more intimate encounter with Jesus by using scripture and then having us ask Jesus to speak to us in a particular setting. It involved us focusing solely upon Jesus and seeking Him with our whole heart. Intimacy with God is something that takes effort, time and desire. You gotta want it more than you want that tv show or even sleep at night!

7. John 2:19-21 Jesus answered and said to them, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" Then the Jews said, "*It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?*" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.
- a. They were looking at the physical structure (Heb. Mikdash) of the temple but Jesus said, "Destroy this temple" He used the word in Hebrew 'Mishkan' which was the word used in the Old Testament of the Presence that lit the holy of holies on Yom Kippur in the tabernacle or temple. **Jesus said I am the temple (Mishkan) of God.**
 - i. When the glory (Heb. Sh'chinah) would come down like a tornado or funnel right through the roof of the holy of holies and the Presence would manifest on the mercy seat between the cherubim after the blood was sprinkled, that was the mishkan.
 - ii. That Presence was what Jesus said dwelt within Him.
 - iii. And in fact Paul said about the church, "**Do you not know that you are the temple (Mishkan) of God?**"
 1. We, as the body of Christ, have the same Presence dwelling within us.
 2. God doesn't dwell in buildings now but within His people.
 3. Rmans 10 says that "**If you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Yaweh and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.**"
 4. It's that easy.
 - a. At that point you become the Mishkan of God.
 - b. When God said, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them,"
 - c. He literally said 'in' them. God's ultimate goal has always been to dwell within His people and to put His Spirit within us.
 - d. When you accept Jesus you become the Mishkan of God.
 - e. Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord?
8. Finally, in what condition is your "temple"?
- a. Is it a place where God, Jesus, and the Spirit can reside?
 - b. Is your body and mind "a place of prayer", one that brings glory to God?
 - i. **The early African converts to Christianity were faithful to pray. Each one reportedly had separate spots in the thicket where they poured out their hearts to God. The several paths to these spots became distinctly marked; and when any one began to decline in prayer time, it was soon apparent to others. They would then kindly remind him, saying, "Brother, the grass grows on your path."**
 - c. Or have you allowed the mundane things of life to so preoccupy your "temple" that it isn't holy (set apart) to God?
 - d. Defilement: In Matthew 15:17-20 *Jesus said, Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.'* For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean';"
 - i. Defile: v.t. [Defiled, Defiling], [ME. defoulen; Ofr. defouler, to tread underfoot, insult; influenced by ME. filen, to foul < AS. fylan, to make foul <ful, foul], 1. to make filthy; dirty; pollute. 2. to make ceremonially unclean. 3. to corrupt. 4. to profane; sully, as a person's name. 5. [Archaic], to violate the chastity of; deflower. —SYN. see contaminate. —Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition ©1962
 - ii. I Corinthians 6:18-20 "*Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*"

1. The acts of fornication and adultery are essentially the same sin: both are sexual acts outside the sanctity of marriage; fornication is a sexual act without benefit of marriage, while adultery is a sexual act with a person to whom one is not married yet one or both parties are married to others.
9. What condition is your temple in?
 - a. Is it a house of prayer?
 - b. Have you been defiling it or keeping it spotless and holy?
 - c. The measure of the Spirit you possess depends upon these things. Your consecration to God and to your meeting with Him in prayer.

- d. 1Cor. 6:19 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”
- e. 1 Cor 3:16-17 “16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”
- f. 2CO 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.
- g. 1CO 6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?
- h. MT 23:25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. [26] Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.
- i. RO 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. [2] Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.
- j. 1TH 5:23 May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- k. Ephesians 2:21-22 “In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”
- l. John 2:19-21 “Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”
- m. Luke 21:37-38 “Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.”
- n. Rev 21:22-27: "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple... Nothing impure will ever enter it."
- o.