

GOD IS BUILDING A HOUSE

NATURAL Vs. SPIRITUAL

I remember as a small boy asking my mother about God and Heaven. She explained God as being everywhere yet sitting on a throne way up in the sky in a place called "Heaven". She went on to explain, how He could hear everyone everywhere all praying at the same time. And if we asked Jesus into our hearts and be good boys and girls, some day we could go to Heaven.

She depicted Heaven as a place where we each one, if we were born-again Christians, would go when we die or were fortunate to be alive when Jesus returns and takes His children back with Him. And, that we each one would have our own "glorious mansion" to dwell in all by ourselves. That there were gold, silver, and precious stones in abundance, and even the streets were paved with gold.

This scenario I have drawn is the average Christian's hope for the future. Now, I love my

mother very much and I believe she is with the Lord. (*To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord—II Cor. 5:8*). She lived her 66 years never wavering from her hope to go to Heaven and be with Jesus. However, today I believe she has a more perfect understanding of what the “hope” is.

Throughout the first twenty years of my life this was my hope also. I can truly say that today that is no longer the case. Uh-oh!! Now, before you throw this booklet down and denounce me as a loony heretic, let's take a closer look than you may have possibly taken before at what the Bible has to say.

Col. 1:26-28 reads: *“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope** of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”.*

Dear ones, the “hope’ is **“Christ in you”**. For the purpose of presenting every man/woman perfect in Christ Jesus. There you have it! Said and done, okay? Well, I wish it were that simple. It will take more convincing than that.

First, most of us have had concepts formed in our minds by sincere and well-meaning teachers who have presented them from an accepted traditional point-of-view. I have found that most eschatology from a traditional viewpoint has been rendered from the “carnal” (natural, earthy) mind. Apostle Paul says in Rom. 8:6,7—*“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God”*.

So, concepts that are interpretation of scripture by the “carnal” mind are a ministration of death and not life. It actually becomes the enemy of God. Think of it! In another place it says, *“...that the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life”*—II Cor. 3:6. It is saying that the literal written word interpreted literally brings death. The Word of God must be spiritually discerned. To carry the thought further, I Cor. 2:14 tells us that the natural man cannot receive

nor understand the things of the Spirit of God. Yet, we see many Christians with a very carnal concept of God's house.

A SPIRITUAL HOUSE

Heb. 3:1,6 says that we, the holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling are the **"house"** of Christ Jesus. This word "house"—oikos [Greek]--#3624 in Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament—means "a dwelling", a "family":--home, house (-hold), temple.

I was once visiting the Bible Museum at the Great Passion Play Village in Eureka Springs, Arkansas where they have various Bible exhibits. They have many historical bibles and manuscripts. Their display of the Geneva Bible (an early English translation) was open to the Gospel of John, chapter 14. It literally reads like this. *"In my Father's house are many dwelling places:... (John 14:2)*, as also the Amplified Bible reads. The word mansion in the King James Version is mentioned only once in the entire bible. It was translated from the Greek word—mone—(#3438 Strong's) which means a

“staying”, i.e. “residence” (the act or the place): -- abode, mansion. To put it simply, “dwelling place”. The biblical meaning is totally different than what most of us have been taught.

If we are the house of God collectively, then individually we are a “dwelling place”. We are a place for God’s dwelling. This is not talking about Jesus going to Heaven and building each member of the Body of Christ a mansion all of his/her own to inhabit for all eternity. No beloved, that would be carnal and earthy thinking and not at all heavenly. After all, my wife and each one of our children would have their own mansion. It would get awful lonely living in my mansion all by myself. We will not need a refrigerator or food since we won’t be getting hungry. We won’t need a bedroom since we will not get tired. We will not need bathrooms since our glorified bodies will not function the same as they do now. We won’t get dirty in Heaven so there’ll be no need to take a bath. So, what do I need with a mansion anyhow? Do you see how carnal this type of thinking is? I have heard of some that go so far as to say that when we pray we are releasing building materials so Jesus can build our mansion.

It is no wonder the majority of the "Church" is in an immature childlike condition. For this type of thinking prevails throughout most of the nominal, fundamental, and charismatic type churches. *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"*—I Cor. 2:9, 10. As a child growing up I often heard the first part of this scripture quoted, but not the second part. I believe the reason for this was because it didn't go along with the carnal picture they were painting. Gold, silver, precious stones, and mansions of marble and grandeur have and continue to enter the heart of man. But, what God has prepared for us is revealed to us by His Spirit. The heart of man cannot comprehend this. It is revealed and understood by the Spirit. (See I Cor. 2:14)

GOD IS BUILDING HIS HOUSE

I am a firm believer that scripture interprets or confirms scripture. (I Cor. 2:13) So, I will be

using several scriptures in reference to what God is saying about His house.

In the book of Genesis, chapters 15 and 16, God appears to Abram (later called Abraham) and promises to make His covenant with Isaac, the only son of His wife, Sarai (later called Sarah). Abram had asked for an heir seeing that he only had Eliezer, a manservant born in his house as an heir. But God promises that out of Abraham's own loins by his wife Sarah would come forth a son (Isaac), an heir.

Now, when a covenant (contract agreement) is made it benefits both parties concerned. Not only would Abraham have a heritage left after him, but also God would obtain a house in the deal. God appeared to Abraham because he was looking for a building site and Abraham was just the right kind of ground He was looking for (figuratively speaking).

So, for six thousand years God has been building a house for His habitation. God told Abraham that through his seed that all of the nations of the earth would be blessed. He spoke not of seeds as many, but of one seed, Christ

(Gal. 3:16). Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise. Through Jesus' obedience of laying down His life, the price was paid for the whole building. Jesus himself being the chief corner stone (Isa.28:16, Acts 4:11, Eph. 2:20) and foundation (I Cor. 3:11).

Paul's prayer was (Eph. 1:17,18), *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"*. Paul was saying that there is a need for the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened. That takes spiritual revelation of the "word" by the Holy Spirit. We must have spiritual ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"* (Matt. 11:15, Rev. 3:22).

Eph. 2:19-22—*"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens 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*

corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”.

Here we see that it is God who is building the “house”. It is **us** who are built. We have spent so much time and energy trying to build something for God and many times fail to see that He just wants us to **be** the building that He is building. We in the past have focused on Jesus building us a “house”, but the “house” is for Him. He is not building it for a vacation home for occasional visitation, but He is building it for a habitation, a place to live and dwell permanently. *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”—Psa.127:1.*

God is so vast and awesome that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Yet, He has chosen Zion (a people) for His habitation. God is an invisible Spirit that needs visible vessels for His expression. He can’t live in a house as a man does. Solomon expresses this in I Kings, chapter 8 that the heaven of heavens could not contain God, much less the house he had built for Him. Let us consider these scriptures: *“In Salem*

also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion". (Psa. 76:2), "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory". (Psa. 102:16), "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it". (Psa. 132:13, 14) Think about it! The universe cannot contain Him, yet, He can abide in a people. His ways are past finding out. Hallelujah! Glory to His name!

THE CITY OF GOD

This segment will probably rub the doctrinal fur the wrong way and raise a few hackles. But, that's okay. I am not going to say anything that the scripture doesn't say. First, let's turn to Rev. 21:2,3,9,and 11. *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God...And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked*

*with me saying, Come hither and I will shew thee **the bride, the Lamb's wife.** And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me **that great city, holy Jerusalem,** descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God:"*

First, John says he sees a city prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Then in verse 10 he says that the Lamb's wife is the holy new Jerusalem. Hey, wait a minute! I was always taught that is where we are going to receive our mansion. How can this be that Jesus is marrying a city? Well, to put it bluntly, we are that city. We are the Lamb's wife. We are the Bride of Christ.

I know many have been anxiously waiting for a geographical city to literally descend physically out of the heavens, but, that is not going to happen. God has been placing each one of us in our particular place as part of that city. When John states "coming down from God out of heaven", it has nothing to do with physical travel. Paul states in Eph. 2 that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Beloved, you are a part of that holy city Jerusalem.

John goes on describing this city throughout the rest of the chapter and says something very similar as Paul did in Eph. 2 about the foundations of the city and about God being in midst of it. Folks, God is bringing forth the bride, a city that we are being built into. And God is going to dwell there, and we shall be His people and He shall be our God. The Tabernacle of God is with man. Praise His Glorious Name forevermore. Amen.

F. Lee Houk

