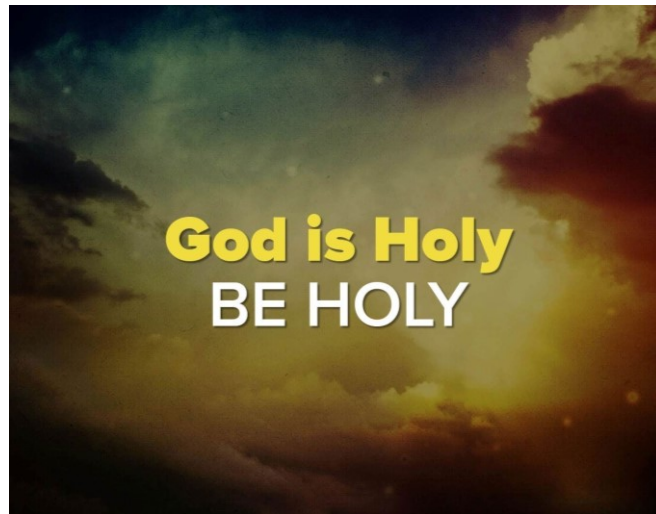


The House of Holiness



Peter McArthur

All that God does is holy because it's His nature. He is a holy God doing holy things for a holy purpose. Holiness adorns everything He does. "**Holiness adorns your house YHWH, forever**" (Psa 93:5). Simply put, holiness means "to be separated" for divine use.

We might say that God "built" the universe then separated part of it, the earth, for a particular holy function, to house Mankind. The very first "house" that God "built" was Adam. He was a man set aside for a special purpose in a special place. Note the 3-fold sequence in that: a special man in a special place for a special purpose.

The Hebrew word used to describe Adam's creation is "yatsar" which has the understanding of "**being formed with a predestined purpose**". After Adam, God formed Eve (Gen 2:18-23). The Hebrew word describing her creation is "asah" which means "to work, to labour, to build, to construct, to refine". The idea is of God fashioning, and then refining, a created object. Biblically speaking, Eve was fashioned out of the separated holy man Adam to fulfil a holy function alongside him; she would "refine" the man. Interesting to note how that still happens in marriage! That's a good case against same-sex marriage.

So right from the beginning we see that the idea of "being separated" (made holy) is established. As new covenant believers we have been seeded by Abba, whose name here means "source". We are NOT of this world just as Jesus was not of this world (John 17:14). By the new birth we have been separated and made holy to our source, Abba Father.

It's plain from this that our lives are meant to be a reflection of He who seeded us and who has separated us unto Himself. Nothing less than holiness of life is required by God, and nothing less will get us through to maturity. Salvation is by grace; maturity is by our holy character.

The House of the Lord is described as a "holy" house. This is a term which denotes those for whom it's being prepared. Only the holy will dwell in this House, for He for whom it is being built is **The Holy One** Himself! He is surrounded by holiness and the cry that incessantly goes up before Him is just that - **Holy, holy, holy** (Rev 4:8).

It was in the Holy of Holies, that God spoke from between the cherubim. **"Now Moses....heard the voice of One speaking to him....from between the two cherubim"** (Num 7: 89). In Hebrew the Most Holy Place was not a "place" at all, but a Person! It's better translated as **the Holiness of all Holinessess!** This describes a Person, not a place.

The Father wants us in His House, close to Him, just like a natural son is close to his natural father. Jesus, who is THE Son has gone to be close to His Father, and since He is our forerunner (Heb 6:20) we also should expect to abide intimately with our Father. It's in the House where we find this intimacy, and those who understand intimacy and act intimately have a maturity about them. And it is **mature people who make a way for God's presence**. The more we grow into maturity the more we shall see God's presence remain amongst us. This is holiness!

Too often in our modern church services we think that the presence of God will descend in our meetings by some kind of "anointing" or if the "atmosphere" (whatever that is!) is right, or if our faith or music or worship is "real". First of all it's got nothing to do with any of those things, for **"where two or three have gathered in my name, I am there in their midst"** (Matt 18:20). Second, when we do gather **"in his name"** (note the very specific condition), He will look upon the state of our hearts corporately, because we are a Body gathering as a unity.

Note in the following text how Paul emphasises the ONENESS of it all.

Therefore I the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4:1-6).

We are called to **"worship YHWH in the beauty of holiness"** (Psa 96:9). There's a very special beauty when the brethren gather in an attitude of holy character knowing their holy calling and when they are diligent to **"keep the unity of the Spirit"** (Eph 4:3).

So it's not God's desire that we only mature as individuals. It's His desire that we come to maturity **as a body!** All our striving and aiming for maturity must bear this in mind. We are not out to spiritually develop ourselves so we can be seen as great men and women of God. We're part of the Body and must work together to build a House of holiness, intimacy and maturity:

So that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love (Eph 4:15-16).

Whatever isn't holy in us needs dealing with (2 Cor 7:1). God wants His house to be adorned with beautiful and precious things (2 Chron 3:6 and 1 Cor 3:12). Even the ordinary stones of Solomon's Temple were covered with silver and gold! (1 Chron 29:4 and 2 Kgs 6:21-22). The purpose of these precious stones was for one thing - **beauty!** The House of Holiness is a thing of beauty unto the Lord (1 Chron 16:29 and Psa 27:4). Our lives of holy living need to reflect that beauty.

This House is holy, separate from the patterns, order and looks of other houses. **Nothing is the same as this House**. Religion has tried to copy it, but because religion hasn't separated itself from the ways of the world, the pattern of that house is highly suspect. It's flawed and so can never truly be a house for God. Church tradition has established many models and patterns to build on, but in the end the structure it builds isn't according to God's unique pattern. We are not seeking to renew an existing pattern but to restore God's pattern. Therefore we must avoid religion and not build on its supposed foundation. God has given us **one pattern to build on** (1 Cor 3:11 and 1 Pet 2:6-7 and Eph 2:20) and it's from Him and for Him.

While the House is "for the Lord" it's also true that we too who are the living stones of this House must "be holy". Every part of our life (spirit, soul and body) must abide in this House. Every area of our life should be a testimony to the holiness of God's House.

The issue we now face is whether or not we are living in holiness and intimacy with the Father, and how we should build on this foundation stone: "***According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it***" (1 Cor 3:10). Note what Paul stresses – "take heed how you build".

The end result of building the House of the Lord according to the revealed pattern, is that **glory shall come** upon it **due to the unity of the living stones** (1 Pet 2:4-6). You may have been in a church service where the pastor or worship leader says "let the glory fall Lord" or something like that. They beseech the Lord to send the glory and desperately want a manifestation of it. All good, but they seek it by wanting to create a spiritual atmosphere of some sort, as if that will manifest God's presence. No it won't, simply because it's not according to the scriptural pattern. You can cry out for His particular presence in that way, all you want, but if there's no unity among the brethren it will never happen.

If we really want that expression of Him, there first needs to be unity among the living stones (1 Pet 2:4-6), THEN you might indeed begin to know His presence in a very special way. It will never come by trying to whip up some kind of atmosphere or religious sensation among the people. There is a God-given condition, and we should stick by it – not attempt to manufacture any other sort of "experience".

So, building the House according to God's pattern creates "a divine order" which enables the Father's glory to be manifest through His Son's Body on earth. **His House shall be one of glorious holiness and precious beauty.**

May it be so for us all when we assemble to worship Him.

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