

## A Life of Peace and Prosperity

By Pastor Greg  
September 13, 2009

1 Kings 6

Bunkertown COB

I have always been a fan of elegant architecture. I especially like older buildings. Last year Carolyn and I stopped at Monticello on our way back from Annual Conference. Fascinating place. Some day I'd like to visit the Biltmore Estate in Ashville North Carolina. I can't even begin to imagine the cost. Interestingly, a recent search on the internet for mansions gave me thousands of examples of what too much money can buy. Almost all of these listed were for single families. And I just can't imagine one family living in a home that cost 45 million dollars. Such extravagance. Such elegance. And yet I know it pales in comparison to a building described in the Bible.

God had said that King Solomon would be the one to build this Palace of glory. It was to be a Temple that honored the Hebrew God Yahweh. Construction began about 4 years after Solomon became king, sometime during the month of April or May. **Read 1 Kings Chapter six** and I know you will be shocked and amazed at the extravagance and splendor of this Holy Temple.

In light of the glory and splendor of this Temple, read what God will do if His people disobey. Look at **1 Kings 9** for just a moment. In verse 3 God says that it was dear to His heart. Yet in verse 8 God says He is willing to destroy it all just to teach His people a lesson. And guess what. That's exactly what He did. In 586 BC, God allowed the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar to loot, sack and burn the Temple (2 Kin. 25:9, 13-17).

It's not like no one had warned them. Not only did God speak through Solomon, but He constantly sent Old Testament prophets to point out how they have forgotten what God expected from them in the first place. The Jewish people were to be God's holy nation. They were to be different than the rest of the world. They were to treat others with honor and dignity. But they completely abandoned what it meant to be a Jew and merely went through the motions. Listen to what the Lord has to say to a people who thought they earned God's kindness and protection. Listen to what God has to say to these people who had forgotten what the Lord had told them from the beginning. (**Read Isaiah 58:1-10**) It seems they expected God

to constantly watch over them and to make their lives as comfortable as possible. But God would not stop until they returned to what they had first been taught.

In Revelation Chapter 2, Jesus warns the church in Ephesus, <sup>2</sup>"I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. <sup>3</sup>You have patiently suffered for me without quitting. <sup>4</sup>"But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! <sup>5</sup>Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. <sup>1</sup> (Revelation 2:2-5)

To remove the lampstand means that God would withdraw His Spirit from this church. And a Church without the Spirit of God is nothing more than a Country Club; something similar to the Elks Lodge or a Moose Lodge. They do good deeds and work to improve the community, but God is not there among them. And without God's Spirit among them, it wouldn't take too many funerals until they would have to close the doors.

I suppose the big question here is why would God allow such a magnificent building to be destroyed? Why would He withdraw His Spirit from a church and allow it to fail; because God is interested in changing people, not filling our lives with peace and prosperity.

It is so very important that a Christian remember what God has done for them through Christ Jesus. As a Christian continues to look to the cross, it must cause humbleness and submission. And a Christian must remember their call to love one another. If they forget this, they too may fall into the trap of merely going through the motions. When they act the way a Christian is supposed to act and do the things a Christian is supposed to do, and yet have no love in their heart for Him or for their Christian brothers and sisters, why would they expect God to bless them and watch over them? It sounds absurd, yet that's exactly what most Christians do.

---

<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

I meet so many Christian who expect - almost demand - that their lives be blessed by God. And yet they continue to spread lies and gossip. They tear down what God is trying to build up. They say they love God yet hate their brother. Their tongue is a scalpel, cutting away at the hearts of others. They do these things and yet will show God the offering plate and the perfect attendance roster. If that is you, may I remind you that God's greatest desire is to bring you back to righteousness; to your first love? You need to heed the warning God gave Solomon and the warning Christ gave the Ephesian Church. In order to bring the Jews back to righteousness, He allowed the great Temple to be destroyed. And if he was willing to do that for the nation of Israel, what must He be willing to allow you and me to endure? When will we learn that God is not interested in changing our circumstances so we love Him more; He is interested in changing us?