

A Promised Memorial

Memorials

Have you ever wanted to be a part of a memorial? The Old Testament tells of memorials built of stones. Joshua set up twelve stones from the dry Jordan river bed to memorialize God's allowing Israel to cross on dry ground (Joshua 4). And Samuel placed his Ebenezer, the stone of remembrance, saying, *"Thus far the LORD has helped us"* (1 Samuel 7:12). However, Isaiah prophesied of a memorial to be built within God's house. *"To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off"* (Isaiah 56:5). Verses 6 and 7 clarify that all those declared unacceptable under Moses' Law would love the Lord and be a part of this new house, *"For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples"* (Isaiah 56:7).

Solomon had prayed for this at the dedication of the Temple, the house of God made from stone. That prayer included concern for those alienated from God's covenant of worship in that house. Solomon prayed, *"Also concerning the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Your name's sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your mighty hand, and of Your outstretched arm); when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, to fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name"* (1 Kings 8:41-43).

The first gentile called by Christ into His church was Cornelius the Roman Centurion (Acts 10). Although other centurions recognized Jesus as the Christ, they could not be admitted to Christ's house until the new covenant replaced Moses' Law (Acts 8). Finally, The gospel of Christ was preached, calling people of all nations into the *"household of God, which is the church of the living God"* (1 Timothy 3:15). Paul wrote to the church at Colossae, reminding them, *"All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:27-28).

Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). He told the disciples that *"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"* (John 14:2 ESV). Jesus told them this in the context of His second coming. The implication is that in His church, His body of believers, He gave everyone access to the Father and His house (Ephesians 2:18). Paul explains the building materials of that church this way. *"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:19-22). Inside this building are people, fellow saints, God's household. Therefore, the memorial inside God's house is the saved who have become children of God through faith and obedience.

Peter expressed the building this way. *"And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house** for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 2:4-5). *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into*

His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10). Paul said of the church in Corinth and the fact of their existence, "You are a letter of Christ, ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Corinthians 3:3).

The church itself stands as a memorial to the wisdom and faithfulness of God in providing a spiritual house for those raised from the waters of baptism to become His spiritual household. Individuals are a living testimony that the gospel of His Son can change sinners into saints and make brethren of the world's diverse nations. Together, as children of God, giving praise and honor, love and obedience to Him, they comprise a holy family, shining as lights in a dark world. A living monument to the saving power of Christ.