

The Lord Jesus said ... “My Sheep

OT Picture

1. **“IN THE LAND.”** In Deuteronomy 12 God gave Israel instructions when they would come *“in the land, which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it.”* The promised land is something they would find themselves in and the Scriptures consistently express that this land was given to them as a gift from God. There is a set of instructions concerning the terms of the land and their behavior in it.

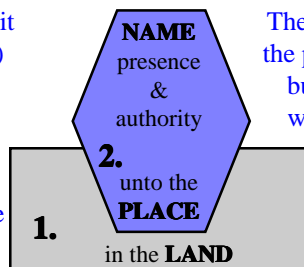
2. **“UNTO THE PLACE.”** God also gave a second set of instructions. This set involved a place within the land. Once they were in the land of their inheritance they were to come *“unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither shall ye bring your offerings and sacrifices”*

Characteristics of the place

- a. it was the place of God’s choosing, not man’s convenience or popular desire
- b. it was the gathering center for His people to assemble in a God-appointed design
- c. it was God’s habitation (living place)– His house. Thus it is designed foremost for the desires of God and not man’s needs and wants
- d. it was where one came to offer and give to God, not to get something from Him
- e. it was where God put His Name (Lord - Jehovah). Since He put His *Name* there, only He has authority there, never man’s traditions (When one comes “in the *name* of the law,” he means the authority of law).

Israel’s two concerns in their calling for God

What made it “the” (not a) place of assembling exclusively, was that God’s Name was there



The land was for the people to live but “the place” was for God to live, to receive worship and service

hear my voice, and

While instruction concerning the land are numerous and very important for the people’s welfare, instruction concerning the place where God resides is equally important. In these chronicles of the church we want to focus on the place of God’s dwelling on earth.

In Deuteronomy 12-31 there are a series of instructions concerning the place of God’s dwelling. They reveal the nature of the house of God that make it pleasing to the One who resides there. Following are some things that characterize “the place.”

OT graphic– God’s house (temple) was:

A place of assembling for offering and sacrificing to God. Deu. 12:5-7

A place of separation from all other names. Deu. 12:11-18

A place for the whole family to learn to fear the Lord. Deu. 14:23-27

A place of sacrificing the best to God. Deu. 15:19-23

A place of remembrance. Deu 16:1-8

A place of observing and obeying God’s statutes (religious ordinances). Deu 16:9-15

A place of judging matters among God’s people - God’s supreme court on earth. Deu 17:8-13

A place of liberty for *all* the priesthood tribe to minister unto the Lord. Deu. 18:1-8

A place of worship. Deu 26:1-11

A place of proclaiming God’s Word to the whole family. Deu. 31:9-13

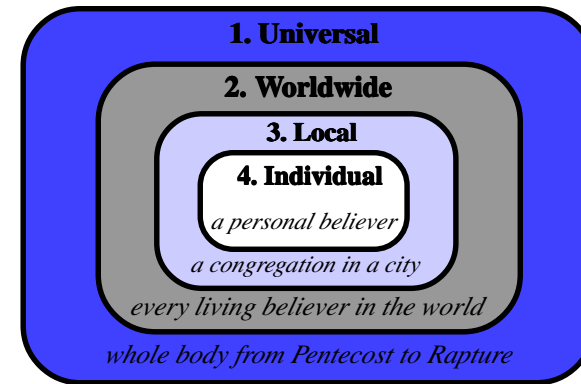
NT Reality

The old covenant with its temple in its chosen place of Jerusalem is no longer here. If God lives on earth today, where does He live? And may we there expect to find His same principles of truth?

The New Testament reveals that believing Jews and Gentiles equally “are builded together for an *habitation of God* through the Spirit”: the church (Eph. 2:21,22).

they follow me” ... John 10:27

The 4 Aspects of God’s Church



For example, take the name ‘Smith family.’ If you say, “this is the ‘Smith family’ tree,” you mean the whole clan of Smiths, living and dead from the beginning to now. If you say, “I’m going to the ‘Smith family’ reunion,” you mean all the living Smiths in the present. If you point out a house and say, “the ‘Smith family’ lives there,” you mean one family unit (that will have authority, rules and order to it). If you say, “the ‘Smith family’ is in Congress,” you likely mean one member of the Smiths who represents the name as a whole.

1. Universal

In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy **TEMPLE** in the Lord. ... Christ also loved the **CHURCH** and gave himself for it. (Eph. 2:21, 5.25)

Sometimes in Scripture the word temple or church (called out company - assembly) refers to the body of Christ as a whole. All from Pentecost to Rapture who placed saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ were baptized with the Spirit into Jesus Christ and form His spiritual body. *All* in Christ’s body share equally in the same spiritual blessings and inheritance.

2. Worldwide

I (Paul) persecuted the **CHURCH** of God. (1Cor. 15:9)

Sometimes in Scripture the word church simply means all Christians in general living in the world.

“The Lord is my shepherd ...

3. Local

Unto the **CHURCH** of God at Corinth ... Know ye not that ye are the **TEMPLE** of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1Cor. 1:2, 3:16)

Sometimes in Scripture the word church refers to a specific congregation of believers who habitually assemble in a place. Here there is an order and protocol. It has a specific function and ministry in being a lampstand of testimony unto Christ for God.

4. Individual

What? know ye not that your *body* is the **TEMPLE** of the Holy Ghost which is in you. (1Cor. 6:19)

Here the word body is added, now referring to every individual believer. Since the Spirit personally indwells the heart of every believer, one is to behave as the holy temple of God seven days a week, twenty four hours a day regardless of their physical location.

While there are definite similarities between the universal church and local church, there are also differences. This is because of a different calling to the local. Following are some distinctions between the two:

Universal “In Christ”	Local “In the church”
No differences– everyone has same body blessings Gal. 3:28	There are differences in gifts and roles of authority Rom. 12:6, Heb. 13:17
Gender equality in salvation– no male nor female <i>in Christ</i> Gal. 3:28	Different roles– man oral - woman silent “in the church” 1Cor. 14
Secure– no one can pluck out of hand Jn. 10:28	Non-secure– one can be excommunicated 1Cor. 5
Only God adds Acts 2:47	Man receives into fellowship of saints Rom. 16:2
No ordinances to be saved Col. 2:14	“Keep the ordinances” 1Cor. 11:2
Position blameless before God Eph. 1:4	Practice (walk) has things Lord blames Rev. 2:4

... and I will dwell

The Local Church: the place of gathering for offering sacrifices to God

As in the OT, the people were first *in* something and then came to the *place* where God's Name was and there offered to God, so also in the NT. Observe an opening remark in the first letter to the local Corinthian church.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified **IN** Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every **PLACE** call upon the **NAME** of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. (1:2)

In Christ Jesus. Firstly, believers are in Christ Jesus. They have been set apart from the world by God and placed with the Holy Spirit into a union with His Son. This is the effect of God's salvation. All believers are now constituted as the sons of God and the body of the Lord Jesus. This brings the believer into all the blessings of Jesus Christ Himself, for when one is in a union (head and body), he shares in *all* things.

As the land was the gift of God to Israel so Christ's salvation is a gift of God. A gift is not by works (Eph. 2:8,9). One is in Christ by the grace of God alone.

**One could not come to the place
until he was first in the land.
One must first be in Christ
before he partakes in the church.**

In every place. In the Corinthian epistle God does not say everyone but "every place." Here He has in mind the corporate assembly of believers: the local church. In the NT gospel, it is not one national central headquarters of gathering but every *place* worldwide.

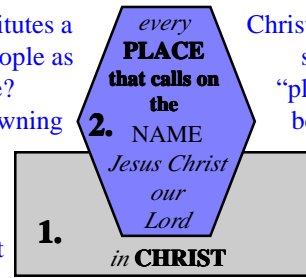
Now, *every* place is not *any* place. What makes the "place" a living temple for God's presence is that there, believers call upon the *Name* of Jesus Christ as Lord. It is upon Jesus alone that the Lord has put His Name: *Lord* (Phiip. 2:6-11). When a local gathering of believers recognizes the risen authority of the Lord Jesus alone, they constitute a NT temple (assembly) of God.

in the house of the Lord

A local church is viewed as those in Christ Jesus (saints) who in a given community habitually come together in one place and call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together" (1Cor. 5:4). Coming together in the church is defined as "When ye come together therefore into one *place*" (1Cor. 11:18,20), and "If therefore the whole church be come together into one *place*" (1Cor. 14:23). The geographical place is not the church or sanctuary but the saints who are gathered in that place calling upon the Name of the Lord Jesus.

The two aspects of the church's calling

What constitutes a group of people as God's place?
It is them owning only the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ



Christ came for the sinner, but the "place" is where believers come for the Savior, to give Him His desires

NT reality— *God's local church (temple) is:*

A place of assembling for offering and sacrificing to God. 1Peter 2:5, 9

A place of separation from all other names. 1Cor. 1:10-31

A place of learning to fear the Lord. 1Tim. 5:20, 2Cor. 6:16, 7:1

A place of sacrificing the best to God. 1Peter 4:11

A place of remembrance. 1Cor. 11:17-34

A place of observing and obeying *God's* traditions (ordinances). 1Cor. 11:2, 2Thess. 2:15

A place of judging matters among God's people - God's supreme court on earth. Matt. 18: 15-22

A place of liberty for the priesthood of *all* believers to minister unto the Lord. 1Cor. 14

A place of worship. John 4:20-24, 1Cor. 14:23-25

A place of proclaiming God's Word. 2Tim. 4:2

forever." Psalm 23:1, 6

There is much teaching today on being in the land, i.e. in Christ: the terms of His gospel, its benefits for *us*, how to walk, enjoying spiritual fruit in *our* lives, and family values. If based on Scripture this is good. Yet there seems to be a neglect in ministry on the church as it gathers in one place. Because this is God's portion, we see it necessary to emphasize such.

It is true one can worship God in his heart in a private setting. However, God puts an emphasis on corporate worship and service. Yes, there is a cost to getting there and putting up with people's idiosyncrasies. But worship is sacrificial and has "feet" to it. Israel was to seek and *come* with their sacrificial offerings *to the place* where God put His Name (Deu. 12:5,6). King David said he would not offer to the Lord that which cost him nothing (1Chron. 21:24).

A sports team is elated when fans pack the stadium to cheer its team. So also as believers of different races and classes assemble to *glorify God* in Christ with one mind and one mouth, the power of God's gospel is seen (Rom. 15:6).

**One should not say in God's house,
"I didn't get anything" but rather,
"did I give anything to Him?"**

The house of God is His. Therefore, it functions for His pleasure, just like your house is designed to your liking. The church is not for man primarily. If one thinks the purpose of assembling together is for the unsaved, he will be tempted to turn it into a mission that's "seeker sensitive," to make the unbeliever feel comfortable, and not offended. If one believes the assembling together is essentially for the needs of believers, he will be tempted to make it "user friendly," a "happy-hour" for believers. But, if one realizes the assembly is for God, he will make sure that God is not offended and is delighted according to His Word.

Chronicle #2 of 'The church of God' series looks at the church being the place for His Name alone

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The Chronicles of the

Church of God

1

The Place: where God's people come

This chronicle deals with the house of God on earth. With His Old Testament people, Israel, it was the temple in Jerusalem. With His New Testament people, the church, it is assemblies of believers in every place that call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. To help understand the importance of God's house to Himself, we first want to look at His principles in His Old Testament house and then in the New Testament house. For while the methods of God change from the old to the new, His character and principles of truth do not.

Both in the Old and New Testaments, God's dwelling place among His redeemed people involved two elements.

1. Something they are *in* that is a gift.
2. A *place* in which to come together where the Lord has chosen to put His *Name* (presence and authority).