

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2009**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH
AS THE TEMPLE OF GOD—THE GOAL OF GOD’S ETERNAL ECONOMY**

Message Three

Going On with the Lord from the Tabernacle Church Life to the Temple Church Life

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 43:10-12; John 14:23; Phil. 3:12-14; Isa. 66:1-2; 57:15; Eph. 2:21-22

- I. The meaning of the name Habakkuk (“embracing” or “clinging to”) reveals that God became a man in Christ to embrace us, to gain us, so that we might cling to Him, to gain Him; Christ has gained us that we might gain Him so that He can be built into us, and we can be built into Him to be a corporate God-man, the new man, the church as the temple, the house, of the living God, the mutual abode of God and man—Hab. 1:1; 2:2, 4b; Phil. 3:12-14; cf. Gen. 41:51-52.**
- II. The work, behavior, and person of God’s people must match the church as the house of God, according to His design and pattern—Ezek. 43:10-12:**
 - A. Since God’s building is the processed Triune God building Himself into us, we need to be perfected in the church life by the perfected saints, who cooperate with the transforming Spirit to perfect others with the attributes of the Triune God for their transformation—1 Cor. 3:9, 12, 16-17; S. S. 1:10-11; Eph. 4:11-12; John 14:23.
 - B. Since God’s house is spiritual, we must be people who are filled with the Spirit, living by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, serving by the Spirit, walking according to the spirit, worshipping in our spirit, serving in our spirit, and overflowing with the Spirit to minister the Spirit—1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16, 25; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 8:4; John 4:24; Rom. 1:9; John 7:37-38; 2 Cor. 3:6; John 6:63; Isa. 66:1-2; 57:15.
 - C. Since God’s house is His heart’s desire, we must be not only His friends but also His companions, who have the most personal and intimate contact with Him, to be used by Him to carry out His enterprise on earth—John 2:17-22; James 2:23; Exo. 33:11.
- III. The tabernacle and the temple typify two aspects of the church:**
 - A. First Kings 8:1-11 shows that the tabernacle was merged with the temple; the tabernacle was a portable precursor moving through the wilderness, whereas the temple was the consummation of God’s building in typology.
 - B. The temple as the enlargement of the tabernacle signifies the strengthening and stabilizing of the church, and the renewing and enlargement of the furniture in the temple signify the renewing and enlargement of the saints’ experience of Christ:
 1. The dimensions of the temple and of the Holy of Holies in the temple were twice those of the tabernacle; furthermore, with the exception of the Ark, the size and number of the furnishings and the utensils were greatly enlarged—1 Kings 6:2, 20; 2 Chron. 4:1-8; cf. Exo. 26:3, 16, 18, 22-24, 33.
 2. This indicates that although Christ Himself (signified by the Ark) cannot be enlarged, our experience of Christ in all His riches, as signified by the temple

and its furnishings and utensils, should be greatly increased and enlarged to match His enlarged expression—Eph. 3:8, 14-19; Phil. 3:7-14.

- C. The tabernacle typifies God's church on earth, or His church in the localities, whereas the temple signifies the church as the reality of the Body of Christ; the local churches are the precious procedure to bring us to the reality of the Body as the glorious goal of God's economy—Eph. 1:22-23; cf. Rev. 21:10-11.
- D. The unique ministry is for God's unique testimony, and God's unique testimony, the reality of the Body of Christ, is realized in the local churches—Exo. 25:22; 38:21; Rev. 1:2, 9; cf. Eph. 4:4; John 16:13.
- E. The Body described in 1 Corinthians 12 is the testimony that a local church should have; it is the testimony of the Body; the local church today must be a testimony that expresses the reality of the Body of Christ—vv. 14-18, 21.
- F. The church exists for the testimony of oneness; when we say the "local church," our emphasis is on the church and not on the "local-ness"; the life that the churches possess is a life of oneness—John 17:11, 21, 23; Rev. 1:10-12.
- G. The testimony of the reality of the Body of Christ is God's final recovery—with Christ being everything to us, with the oneness of the Body of Christ, and with all the members of His Body functioning—Eph. 1:17; 3:16-21; 4:1-6, 16.

IV. The Lord within us is aspiring to go on from the tabernacle church life in the wilderness of the soul to the temple church life with Christ as the reality of the good land in our spirit; in order to enter into the reality of the temple church life, we must see the history of the Ark and the tabernacle—Heb. 6:1a; Josh. 3:14-17; Deut. 8:7-9; Eph. 2:21-22; Col. 1:12; 2:6-7:

- A. The Ark typifies Christ as the presence of the Triune God with His people for the carrying out of His economy to establish His kingdom on earth—Matt. 1:23.
- B. In the first stage of its history, the Ark was the center and content of the tabernacle, signifying Christ as the center and content of the church; the fact that the Ark is the first item mentioned in the vision of the tabernacle indicates that Christ occupies the place of preeminence in the church, with our growth in life "into Him" and our functioning in life "out from Him"—Exo. 25:10; 40:21; Col. 1:17b, 18b; Eph. 4:15-16.
- C. Due to Israel's degradation, the Ark was captured by the Philistines and was separated from the tabernacle, leaving the tabernacle an empty vessel with no reality—1 Sam. 4:11—6:1:
 - 1. In their degradation Israel was foolish because they did not trust in God directly; rather, they trusted in the systems ordained by God—Rom. 2:28-29.
 - 2. In their situation they should have repented, made a thorough confession, and returned to God from their idols, and they should have inquired of God as to what He wanted them to do; instead, having no heart for God's desire or for His eternal economy, they exercised their superstition to trust in the Ark based on the past victories they had experienced through the move of the Ark.
 - 3. To bring out the Ark was to bring out the presence of God; the move of the Ark was a picture of God's move on the earth in Christ as His embodiment; during Israel's fighting with the Philistines, God did not intend to move.
 - 4. The children of Israel had no thought of or concern for God's economy, and their bringing out the Ark indicated that they were usurping God, even forcing Him to go out with them for their safety, peace, rest, and profit; in principle, we do the same thing whenever we pray for our prosperity without any consideration of God's economy; instead of usurping God, we should pray, live, and be persons

according to God's heart and for His economy; whenever man's need replaces God's testimony, there is degradation—1 Kings 8:48.

5. In their degradation they offended God to the uttermost, and God left them; eventually, instead of the Ark saving Israel, the Ark itself was captured; to be "Arkless" is to be "Christless," and to be "Christless" means that there is "Ichabod," meaning "No Glory"—1 Sam. 4:21-22, 11a, 13a; cf. Col. 1:27-29.

V. In the midst of Israel's degradation, God raised up Samuel to be a person in whom God's heart was duplicated and who cared only for God and for God's interest and profit; God raised up Samuel to gain David and, through David, to gain Solomon for the building up of His temple—1 Sam. 1:27-28; 2:30; 3:1-4, 9-10:

- A. Samuel was a Nazarite consecrated to God absolutely for the fulfillment of His economy, a volunteer to replace any formal serving ones of God—1:11, 28a.
- B. Samuel was a priest faithful to act on behalf of God, even to appoint and establish kings for the divine government on earth—2:35.
- C. Samuel was a prophet established by God to assist the kings appointed by him as a priest, to speak the word of God to replace the teaching of the word of God by the old and stale priesthood—3:20.
- D. Samuel was a judge established by God to carry out God's governmental administration, to replace the judging of the people by the old priesthood—7:15-17.
- E. Samuel was a man of prayer who prayed for God's elect, the children of Israel, that they would be kept in the way of God, would be one with God, would not be ensnared by the idols of the nations, and would enjoy God as Ebenezer that God's desire in His will regarding His elect might be fulfilled—12:23-24; 7:3-14; 8:6; 15:11b.

VI. The history of the Ark and the tabernacle prefigures the history of the church:

- A. In the first stage of its history, the church was the expression of Christ, and Christ was the content of the church; this is the normal condition—Exo. 40:21.
- B. In the second stage the church became degraded and lost the reality and presence of Christ; it became an empty vessel without the inward reality—Rev. 3:20.
- C. The Ark was recovered from the Philistines and was brought first to the house of Abinadab at Kiriath-jearim, where it remained for twenty years (1 Sam. 6:2—7:2), and then to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, where it stayed for three months (2 Sam. 6:10-12); beginning from the second century, a number of "Obed-edom" were raised up, who had the Lord's presence but did not have the proper church life as the expression of Christ.
- D. David moved the Ark from Obed-edom's house to a tent that he had prepared for it in his own city, at Mount Zion, the choicest place in Jerusalem (vv. 12-19; 1 Chron. 15:1—16:1); this was an improved situation, but the Ark was still in an improper place because it had not been returned to the tabernacle; this situation reveals that other believers who, like David, cared for God's interests attempted to practice the church life according to their own choice, not according to God's revelation; these believers had Christ, but they had Him with an improper practice of the church life (David's tent in Jerusalem)—cf. 1 Kings 3:3-15; 2 Chron. 1:10.
- E. Finally, after Solomon finished the building of the temple in Jerusalem, the Ark was moved into the Holy of Holies in the temple; today in His recovery the Lord is working to bring us into the reality of the Body of Christ as the temple church life with a corporate living in our spirit as the Holy of Holies for His enlarged and expanded expression—1 Kings 8:11, 48; Eph. 2:21-22.