

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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New Jerusalem #15.

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The Temple

In the Greek, the transliterated words *heiron* and *naos* are most often translated as the word *temple*. *Heiron* refers to a sacred place, predominantly the entire physical structure [i.e., temple] (e.g., Matthew 4:5; 12:5, 6; 24:1). *Naos* comes from a primary word that means “to dwell” and is used mostly in a narrower sense to refer to the sanctuary of the temple.

However, Jesus is the one who defines the spiritual meaning of the word *naos*, especially in reference to New Jerusalem; a meaning, as we will see, that was taken up by Paul in his epistles.

As the day of the Jewish Passover neared, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Since this was a Jewish feast, there were many Jews in Jerusalem at the time, and it was a time for some to make money by selling oxen and sheep and doves in the temple. When He saw the money changers in the temple, Jesus drove them out.

And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple [heiron].... (John 2:15 NASB)

Clearly, this was a reference to the physical structure called the temple. But then, Jesus said something that caught the attention of the Jews that were watching and listening.

(19) Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple [naos], and in three days I will raise it up.” (20) The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple [naos], and will You raise it up in three days?” (21) But He was speaking of the temple [naos] of His body. (John 2:19-21 NASB)

Notice that the Jews used the word *naos* just as Jesus did, and they clearly thought He was speaking of the physical temple. However, He was not, for He was referring to His body that would be broken (die) on the cross and be raised from among the dead three days later. So, Jesus Himself established the spiritual meaning of the word *naos*; it is His body.

If we stop at Jesus’ word, we might be led to think that He alone is the temple of God, even today. However, Paul was given great revelation of the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, and he revealed that the body of Christ, both individually and corporately, is now the temple of God.

The temple of God has moved from a physical structure of wood and stone to a body of holy, living stones. This has been addressed in issue #03-0994, *New Jerusalem #4*, of this series.

(16) Do you not know that you are a temple [naos] of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (17) If any man destroys the temple [naos] of God, God will destroy him, for the temple [naos] of God is holy, and that is what you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NASB)

(19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple [naos] of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (20) For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NASB)

(16) Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.” (2 Corinthians 6:16 NASB)

All who truly believe on the Lord Jesus receive an earnest of the spirit of God (Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13), and, on this basis alone, each believer becomes a temple of the living God. The earnest of the spirit is a down payment of a greater indwelling of the spirit to come when the living stones are transfigured into immortal, celestial, spiritual bodies in the image of the Son of God, when they are filled up to all the fullness of God as the complement or fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:23; 3:19).

In other words, the temple of God is not complete; it is being built up into a holy temple in the Lord. Each temple of God is joined to the living Head and joined to one another through Christ, and all are being fitted together so that one day there will be a completed temple *in* spirit called New Jerusalem.

Paul has given us the most complete explanation of the temple of God and New Jerusalem.

(19) Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God’s family, (20) being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, (21) in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: (22) in Whom you, also, are being built together for God’s dwelling place, in spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22 CV)

This is the definition of New Jerusalem. If you grasp what Paul has given us in these few words, you will never go astray in your understanding of God’s plan and purpose in and through New Jerusalem. In Revelation 21-22, using physical descriptors, John recorded what he saw of New Jerusalem as she came down out of heaven, having the glory of God. However, Paul explains what John saw.

New Jerusalem is Christ Himself; but it is not just Christ alone but Christ and His body, the inseparable Head and Body of Christ, which is called **the Christ** by Paul and **the Lambkin** by John.

For, even as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ... (1 Corinthians 12:12 YLT)

Most translations leave out the article *the*, but the more literal translations leave it in, which gives *the* Christ the proper meaning. *The* Christ is one body, and a body consists of a head. Paul continued on in his letter to include eyes and ears in the body, which are part of the head (1 Corinthians 12:17). There is no division in the body; consequently, it cannot be separated from *the* Head, which is the Lord Himself (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Christ the Head and His body is *the* Christ, the Anointed.

I saw no temple [naos] in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb [Lambkin] are its temple [naos] (Revelation 21:22 NASB [CV])

When John saw New Jerusalem, there was no physical temple in view. I imagine this puzzled him at first since the temple had been the center of Jewish life, but he was given revelation that New Jerusalem is the temple of God. Just as Paul saw *the Christ* as the Head and Body, John saw *the Lambkin* as the Head and Body, the temple of God that is destined to fill the whole new earth. The word *lambkin* is a better translation of the Greek word *arnion* that refers to a little lamb. The body of Christ will become the Lambkin of God, which is New Jerusalem, and will reign with Christ for the eons of the eons (Revelation 22:5 CV). See issue #03-0922, February 13, 2009, *The Lambkin [Arnion]*.

This is the destiny of all who believe on the Lord Jesus, but especially of those who conquer in our present eon, for they are the ones worthy to reign with Christ in His kingdom in the next eon.