

Message Seven

The Intrinsic Significance of the Materials of the Temple

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 5:15-18; 6:7, 9-10, 15-16, 23, 31-34, 36; 7:14-15, 21

I. In order to become materials for God's building, we need to experience Christ in His death (signified by cypress), Christ in His resurrection (signified by cedar), and Christ as the Spirit (signified by olive wood):

- A. The crucified and resurrected Christ, who is the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus Christ and the presence of the processed Triune God, is the reality of the materials for the building up of the church as the temple of God, the enlargement and expansion of Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a; 1 Cor. 3:9, 12a, 16-17.
- B. We need to allow the crucified and resurrected Christ as the Spirit to build Himself into our being so that we can have the fullest enjoyment of Christ in order to be good stewards of the varied grace of God (the rich supply of life) for the building up of the church as the temple of God—Eph. 3:2, 16-17; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.

II. Cypress signifies the crucified Christ—1 Kings 6:15b, 34; cf. Gen. 6:14:

- A. In ancient times the Jews planted cypress trees above their graves; hence, cypress signifies Christ's humanity in His death, the crucified Jesus—1 Cor. 2:2.
- B. The doors of the temple were made of cypress wood and were carved with cherubim and palm trees—1 Kings 6:34-35; cf. Ezek. 41:18-20:
 - 1. Cherubim signify the glory of the Lord manifested upon the creatures (10:18; Heb. 9:5), and palm trees signify the victory of Christ and the everlasting and ever-existing power of Christ (Ezek. 40:16; Rev. 7:9).
 - 2. The carving of the palm trees and the cherubim on the doors of cypress wood signifies that the victory of Christ and the glory of the Lord have been "carved" into our being through sufferings—Acts 16:7; Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:10-12.

III. Cedar signifies the resurrected Christ—1 Kings 6:9-10, 15-16, 36:

- A. Cedar trees grew on the mountains of Lebanon; thus, cedar signifies Christ's humanity in resurrection, the resurrected Christ—Psa. 104:16; S. S. 4:8.
- B. The resurrected and ascended Christ as the King is a majestic and magnificent cedar out of the house of David—Ezek. 17:22-23; Rom. 1:3-4; Acts 2:22-24, 32-36; Heb. 2:9.
- C. We need to be those who send forth our roots into Christ, like the cedar trees of Lebanon, causing us to grow in life as we are planted in the house of Jehovah, flourishing in the courts of our God, still bringing forth fruit in old age, and being full of sap and green—Hosea 14:5-9; Psa. 92:12-14; 2 Kings 19:30.
- D. The church is the depository and the storehouse of the resurrection power of Christ; when this power operated in Christ, it made Him the Head; when this power operates in us, it makes us His Body—Eph. 1:19-23; Rom. 8:2, 11; 12:1-2; Phil. 3:10.

IV. Olive wood signifies the transformed Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Kings 6:23, 31-33; 1 Cor. 15:45b:

- A. Olive oil typifies the Spirit of God; hence, olive wood signifies Christ's humanity in the Spirit of God, the anointed Christ, who is also the compound Spirit as the anointing—Heb. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27; Exo. 30:25, 30.
- B. We are the branches of Christ who have been grafted into Him as the cultivated olive tree to enjoy Him (Rom. 11:17, 24); the life-giving Spirit is the life-juice of Christ as the heavenly olive tree; if we desire to partake of the riches of Christ as the fatness, the

sap, of the heavenly olive tree, we need to contact the life-giving Spirit as the life-juice of Christ (Luke 23:31; cf. Psa. 92:13-14; 36:8-9):

1. Because our grafting with Christ has taken place in our spirit, we need to exercise our spirit continually; when we call on the Lord by saying, “O Lord, O Lord,” we exercise our spirit and immediately partake of the Lord as the life-giving Spirit—Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 10:9-13.
 2. Another way for us to enjoy the riches of Christ is to read the Word of God and to say Amen to every word; by this, we exercise our spirit, we contact the Lord, we enjoy Him, and we partake of the all-inclusive Spirit as the fatness—Psa. 106:48; Neh. 8:6; 2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 19:4; Eph. 6:17-18.
- C. We need to see that we have been grafted into Christ “contrary to nature”; *contrary to nature* means “contrary to the self”—Rom. 11:24:
1. Everything of our old nature contradicts the Lord’s nature; our nature is the sinful nature, and the Lord’s nature is the divine, spiritual, and holy nature—Gal. 5:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 2. In order to partake of Christ as the olive tree with His riches, we need to be fully cut off from our old background, old history, old life, old habits, and old customs as wild branches—Rom. 11:24; cf. Eph. 4:22-24.
 3. In order to experience being cut off from our old manner of life and to enjoy the experience of being grafted into Christ, we need to exercise our spirit to call on His name and pray-read His Word—Rom. 10:6-8; Eph. 6:17-18.
- D. Romans 11 reveals that we are the branches of Christ as the olive tree (vv. 17, 24) to bear “olives” and produce soothing oil, signifying the Holy Spirit; John 15 reveals that we are the branches of Christ as the vine tree (v. 5) to bear “grapes” to produce invigorating wine, signifying the divine life; and in Luke 10 the good Samaritan poured oil and wine on the wounds of the dying one (vv. 33-34):
1. Oil and wine together become a healing to people; the more we abide in the Lord by calling on Him and pray-reading His Word, the more we will bear “olives” and “grapes” to produce oil and wine to pour into people who have been inwardly wounded and have become depressed and disappointed.
 2. The oil of the olive tree was used to honor God and man (Judg. 9:8-9), signifying that those who walk by the Spirit honor God (Gal. 5:16, 25), and those who minister the Spirit honor man (2 Cor. 3:6, 8; Phil. 3:3).
 3. The wine of the vine tree was used to cheer God and man (Judg. 9:12-13), signifying that those who enjoy Christ as their sacrificing and invigorating life cheer God (Matt. 9:17) and that those who minister Christ as their sacrificing and invigorating life cheer man (2 Cor. 3:6; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6).

V. The pillars of the temple were built of bronze, signifying God’s judgment—1 Kings 7:14-15, 21; Rev. 3:12; 21:22:

- A. In the Scriptures the pillar is a sign, a testimony, of God’s building through transformation in practicing the Body life—Gen. 28:22a; 1 Kings 7:15-22; Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 3:12; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:11-12.
- B. Those who are useful to God are constantly under God’s judgment (bronze), realizing that they are men in the flesh, worthy of nothing but death and burial—Psa. 51:5; Exo. 4:1-9; Rom. 7:18; Matt. 3:16-17:
 1. The reason for both division and fruitlessness among believers is that there is no bronze, nothing of God’s judgment; instead, there is pride, self-boasting, self-vindication,

self-justification, self-approval, self-excuse, self-righteousness, and condemning and regulating others instead of shepherding and seeking them—16:24; Luke 9:54-55.

2. When we love the Lord and experience Him as the man of bronze (Ezek. 40:3), He will become our extraordinary love, boundless forbearance, unparalleled faithfulness, absolute humility, utmost purity, supreme holiness and righteousness, and our brightness and uprightness (Phil. 4:5-8).
- C. On the capitals of the pillars in the temple there were “nets of checker work [like a trellis] with wreaths of chain work”; these signify the complicated and intermixed situation in which those who are pillars in God’s building live and bear responsibility (1 Kings 7:17; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:7-8); on the top of the capitals were lilies and pomegranates (1 Kings 7:18-20):
1. Lilies signify a life of faith in God, a life of living by what God is to us, not by what we are; the bronze means “not I,” and the lily means “but Christ”—S. S. 2:1-2; Matt. 6:28, 30; 2 Cor. 5:4; Gal. 2:20.
 2. The pomegranates on the wreaths of the capitals signify the fullness, the abundance and beauty, and the expression of the riches of Christ as life—Phil. 1:19-21a; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19.
 3. Through the crossing out of the checker work and the restriction of the chain work, we can live a pure, simple life of trusting in God to express the riches of the divine life of Christ for God’s building in life.

VI. The stones of the temple signify Christ’s humanity in transformation, the transformed Christ—1 Kings 5:15-18; 6:7, 36; 1 Chron. 29:2; 2 Chron. 3:6:

- A. As God, Christ in His incarnation put on man’s flesh; having become a man in the flesh, a man in the old creation, He needed to be transformed in His human part—Rom. 1:3-4.
- B. Such a transformed Christ is now the living stone, the foundation stone, the cornerstone, and the topstone of God’s building—1 Pet. 2:4; Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6; Zech. 4:7; 3:9; Rev. 5:6; 4:3; 21:11.
- C. The stones in the temple also signify the believers in Christ, who have been transformed by Christ as the stone—Matt. 16:18; John 1:42; 1 Pet. 2:4-7; Rev. 21:11, 14, 18-21; cf. Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45.
- D. The New Testament speaks of living stones (1 Pet. 2:5), and the Old Testament speaks of cut stones (1 Kings 5:15, 17-18; 6:7); the stones used for the building up of the church must be living inwardly and cut (dealt with) outwardly (2 Cor. 4:16):
 1. In the church some brothers and sisters can be compared to “wild” stones, freshly cut from the quarry and full of sharp edges; when they are contacted, they cause people to be hurt and to have an uncomfortable feeling.
 2. They are not stable enough to be built upon, to coordinate and serve with others, to fight the battle with others, or to bear the Ark with others.

VII. The real Christian life for the building up of the church as the temple of God is a life of the crucified and resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit being built into our being so that we are being conformed to His death by the power of His resurrection to be renewed day by day and transformed from glory to glory for His glory in the church—Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18; Eph. 3:21.