

# THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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## Building Up the Temple

*Charles Fry*

The temple built by Solomon lasted about three hundred and fifty years and then was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, in divine judgment. Seventy years later, the Jews who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon dedicated a second temple, much smaller than the one Solomon built, and the sacrificial system was restored, as predicted by Jeremiah. The second temple was eventually renovated and expanded in the latter part of King Herod's reign, about five hundred years after it was built, with work continuing for several decades, throughout the lifetime of Jesus on earth. Construction finally terminated in the early 60s A.D., about the time Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Then the second Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., by the Romans, as predicted by Jesus. From that time, the Jewish sacrificial system initiated at Mt. Sinai through Moses ended, and several generations later in Rabbinic Judaism a symbolic system of prayers and rituals centered in the synagogues and homes of the Jews among the nations became the traditional substitute. Almost two millennia have passed with no Jerusalem temple, although since the late nineteenth century, interest in building a third Jerusalem temple has been stirred again, an interest further inflamed by the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel in 1947. Zionists and evangelical premillennialists have great interest in a revived Jewish temple system.

After the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D., stamping out a Jewish revolt against the Romans, there was a second Jewish revolt in 132 A.D., led by a man known as Bar Kokhba (Son of The Star), who presented himself as the Christ, during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Bar Kokhba intended to restore Jewish dominion over Jerusalem, rebuild the temple and reinstitute the sacrificial system. The rebellion was put down by Hadrian's forces, brutally and at great cost in lives, and Bar Kokhba died in 135, with one result being that Jews were banned from Jerusalem, the province of Judea was dissolved into Syria Palestine, and the city renamed Aelia Capitolina. A little more than two centuries later in 363 A.D. a Roman emperor remembered as Julian the Apostate wanted to destroy Christian influence in the empire and reaffirm paganism. Part of his program included restoring the Jews to Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple there. Christians of the era believed that Julian's motive was to undermine the prophecies of Jesus in the New Testament about the destruction of the temple (see Matthew 24-25). The emperor

authorized funds and resources to build a third temple, but several historians, both Christian and pagan, reported that the work was thwarted first by disaster, fireballs bursting forth from the foundation stones of the temple, and an earthquake, and then by the abrupt death of Julian (see Ammianus Marcellinus, "*Res Gestae*," Book 23, for example). After almost 3 more centuries passed, in 610 A.D., the Persian Sassanid Empire gained control of Jerusalem and again proposed rebuilding the Jewish temple, but that effort too fizzled and died.

Meanwhile, what did Jesus say about building a third temple in Jerusalem? He clearly and accurately prophesied the destruction of the second temple in all its grandeur, "*not one stone left upon another*," (**Matthew 24:1-2**), but what did he say about building another temple? Early in his ministry when he visited Jerusalem's temple and denounced turning his "*Father's house into a market*" the Jews demanded a sign proving his authority (**John 2:16-18**). Jesus answered, "*Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in three days*" (**verse 19**). This answer seemingly confused the Jews who cited the ongoing building project that was then forty-six years in progress, but John tells us that "*the temple he had spoken of was his body*" which his disciples later understood when he was raised from the dead (**John 2:21-22**), and they "*believed the scripture and the words Jesus had spoken*."

Jesus proposed to raise up a temple, and that temple was his body. When Jesus later spoke to the Samaritan woman at Sychar (Shechem), he told her:

*"believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth," (John 4:21-24).*

Subsequent New Testament references speak of the fading glory of the Mosaic mode of worship at the temple in Jerusalem and the increasing glory of heartfelt worship of those who come to God by the Spirit.

*"If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory" (2 Corinthians 3:7-11, and see Hebrews 8:13).*

When the New Testament speaks of a temple being built, it is as Jesus said, the temple of His body, which is the church

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(**Ephesians 1:22-23**), made up of living stones being built together. Peter had confessed faith in Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God, and Jesus promised that *"on this rock I will build my church"* (**Matthew 16:16-19**). Peter later wrote that Jesus is *"the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him. You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"* (**1 Peter 2:4-5**). The church, the body of Christ, is God's house,

*"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple to the Lord... built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit"* (**Ephesians 2:20-22**).

This is the temple Jesus proposed to raise up, and he is the builder of the house of God in which Moses was a servant, as described in **Hebrews 3:1-6**, which concludes that *"Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory."* Jesus built the temple God wanted. He spoke of no other. Despite every effort to destroy or distract true worship, his temple stands firm as the "place" for worship in spirit and truth.

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## What's in a Name?

Joshua Riggins

**Ecclesiastes 7:1** begins, *"A good name is better than precious ointment..."* The wise Preacher states that a good name is better than costly cleansers or perfumes for the body. What, though, does he mean by a good name? While I would like to think we gave our children good names -- names that just roll off the tongue -- is that really what the Preacher means? Was he warning us to get out the name book one more time before appellation?

Since I can remember, it has been my desire to have a son named Caleb. Now that God has granted me that son I pray that we will have the blessing of entering the Promised Land together. However, it isn't what we call him that reveals his godliness. So it must be more than just the way the name rolls off the tongue.

From **Genesis 3:20** onward, we see names assigned to identify unique traits, conduct, or purposes. Eve is the mother of all living, and the name well-described her uniqueness and core purpose. This hits the heart of **Ecclesiastes 7:1**. What

makes you you is not your name, but rather the identity you've developed through your actions and words. It's your uniqueness and core purpose. Perhaps you've known a mother or two who refused to name their children specific names because of the character of others bearing those names. The name didn't give the person soiled character, but the soiled character certainly soiled the name. When we think of the names of people we hold dear, it isn't the beauty of their literal name that endears us to them. It's their character. It's love. It's patience. It's generosity. These, and many others, are the traits that make up a good name.

It is likely that most of you reading this article bathed recently using various products, and a few of you used additional fragrant sprays or oils to add sweetness to your natural scent. Realize, says the Preacher, that all our preparation for proper presentation in public matters very little if our reputation is unclean. If our reputation hasn't cleaned itself in weeks, its stench of ruin will overpower any fragrance we might try to apply to our bodies.

A woman is presented to us in **Luke 7:36-50** who seems to have understood this concept. Jesus was invited by Simon the Pharisee to eat a meal. As they ate a woman came to Jesus. Her name in **verse 37** is *"sinner."* This woman began to wash and kiss Jesus' feet using her own hair and tears. Consider, the next time you're dusting, using your hand instead of a rag or glove. This woman humiliated herself at the feet of Jesus. Weeping she cleansed his dusty, road-worn feet. Then, she took an alabaster flask of fragrant oil and anointed his feet. She proved her adoration for him and submitted to him in humility. In this moment, her name transformed into humility and submission.

The Pharisee, on the other hand, was incensed that Jesus would allow this to happen. In **verse 39** he said to himself, *"This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."* The Pharisee saw himself in comparison to this woman. Yes, it is right for Jesus to join me for a meal, but how dare this "sinner" approach. And further, how can he allow such to continue? In this monologue, the Pharisee's name changed to pride.

This is an easy trap for us to ensnare ourselves into. We begin to think that the good name we're supposed to have is with the world. We mistakenly think if our reputation is solid in our communities that this is that good thing the Preacher so encouraged us to have. Not so. For the Preacher concludes **Ecclesiastes 7:1**, *"...and the day of death than the day of one's birth."* For it is in death that the truth of a man is revealed. All the potential from birth is brought to judgment in death. Peter remarks in **2 Peter 3:11**, *"Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness."* It is our good name before God that is most

## Reading the W.O.R.D.

Marc Hermon

valuable. Jesus could see that Simon had made a name for himself on this earth, but it was of no value in the kingdom of heaven.

*"Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much..." (Luke 7:44-47).*

This woman left the Lord with the most beautiful name: forgiven. Truly, she could go in peace (Luke 7:50). Hers was a name so much more valuable than anything she had ever possessed. What was the value of her hair compared to the beautiful feet of the one bringing peace (Isaiah 52:7)? What was the value of the oil compared to the sweet-smelling aroma sitting before her (Ephesians 5:2)?

So what if our bodies are clean and our name is well thought of in the world? If we haven't made the answer of a good conscience, then the stench of death surrounds us. So what if we've hit the fast track at work and everyone seems to like us. If we remain in sin, the Judge of all will condemn saying, "I never knew you." Make sure you've submitted yourself to him so that in the end you may hear him say, "well done, good and faithful servant." May the Lord always know us by that good name!

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*"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1).*

*"Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:3-4).*

*"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).*

*"And they said, 'Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you'" (Acts 10:22).*

*"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it" (Revelation 2:17).*

As 2017 comes to a close, so does the "7 Bible Studies" Facebook study group. Although this was a "read the Bible in a year" plan, the true goal was to just form the habit of spending more time in the WORD than we did the previous year. We would like to thank our daily reading leaders: **Ryan Ingle, Butch O'Neal, Nick Hermon, Steve Wright, Kevin Crittenden, Wade Stanley, John Morris and Doug Twaddell.** I think many of us will forever associate a day of the week with each of these men!

In 2018, it is critical that we once again continue to immerse ourselves in the Spirit-breathed word of God. We ask you all to join us to **Work On Reading Daily.** If you miss a day of reading don't worry about it...you're forgiven! Again our goal will be to spend as much time in the Word this year as we can. This year our study will be called "chronoLOGOSpel." Basically, we will be reading through the Bible in chronological order. Each day, the daily reading along with a few simple questions will be posted to the Facebook group page. Everyone is invited to comment on the daily reading or questions. The Facebook page contains directions on how to add the "chronoLOGOSpel" mobile site to your phone/tablet. Please join us at:

[www.facebook.com/groups/ReadersOfTheWord](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ReadersOfTheWord).

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*"Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalms 1:1-3).*

*"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward" (Psalms 19:7-11).*

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*



*Please check your expiration date!*

## Foreign Report

In the November issue of this publication, Evangelist John Morris made us aware of the need for native dialect songbooks in the Philippines. Brother John sends us this message:

I am thankful to announce that the needed funds to purchase all 2,500 Philippine songbooks have been collected. No more contributions will be necessary. Thank you for your generosity! Surely, what Paul wrote to the Corinthians will be true for you and our brethren overseas:

*“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God” (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).*

Additionally, I would like to share that I have learned from **Sister Norma Crum** (Kendallville, IN) that the Crum family continues to offer Sacred Selections and Special Sacred Selections (English only) at prices far below those listed by other distributors: \$8.95 (100 or more) and \$10.95, respectively. These prices improve on those I cited in my November article by \$3.50 per hymnal. For more information, you can visit the website below.

[www.asacredselections.com](http://www.asacredselections.com)

Thank you, John, for coordinating this effort and letting our readers know that the need has been met.

There are many positive developments taking place in the Philippines. Over the course of the past year, three Filipino evangelists have been appointed by elderships and are now carrying out their work in Mindanao, Luzon, Leyte, Cebu, and elsewhere. If you or your congregation would like to know more about the churches in the Philippines or if you would like to become involved in helping support good works like providing songbooks, Bibles, supporting evangelists, or relieving the afflicted, please contact **your editor**. Above all, let us remember to pray for our brethren across the world!

## Special Meetings

Over the course of the past few years, your editor has noticed congregations using fewer young men as speakers for weekend meetings. Many congregations use their weekend meetings as an opportunity to hear from mature and well-studied brothers. However, please do not overlook the many gifted young men who would grow from the experience of speaking at such a meeting. Please consider including such young men in your 2018 itineraries. Your meeting this year, and in coming years, could play a key role in helping develop future leaders in the church. If you would like recommendations, your editor and publisher would be glad to supply you with names and contact information.

## The Gospel Message

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