

Pauline Theology – Lesson 04

Christ as the Temple

Ephesians

Ephesians 2:18–22 (ESV)

¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

“[Believers] are not only ‘built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets’ with the resurrected Christ as ‘the corner *stone*’ of the temple, but it is reiterated three times in 2:21-22 that believers explicitly are incorporated into and come into union with the resurrected Christ as the temple: ‘**in whom the whole building...is growing into a holy temple in the Lord [Jesus], in whom [Jesus] you are also being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**’ Since Christ is the temple at his resurrection, so believers become part of the temple, when they believe in Christ and come into union with him.”¹

- v. 20 – “the corner *stone*” » allusion to Ps. 118:22 (connection with Matthew 21).

Colossians

Colossians 1:19

Because in him he was well pleased for all the fullness to dwell

Colossians 2:9

Because in him all the divine fullness dwells in bodily form

- Colossians 1:19 » allusion to Psalm 67:17-18: “God was well pleased to dwell in it (Zion);...the Lord will dwell [there] forever,...in the holy place.
- This is applied to Christ in 1:19 » Carries over to 2:9.
- “The holy-of-holies was the preeminent revelatory reality in all of Israel.”²
- Therefore, the reason that Jesus takes the preeminent place in everything (Col. 1:18b) is because he is the inaugurated end-time temple in which God’s fullness has begun to dwell.
- “[H]e himself is identified with the unique tabernacling presence of God and is the most preeminent one together with God in the church and in all the cosmos.”³
- 2:9 » verbally parallel with 1:19 » emphasizing the complete “union between God and Christ.”⁴
- Greek OT *pleres* used in multiple places where temple is “full of the glory” (Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 43:5; 44:4)

Colossians 2:10 – ¹⁰and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

- Believers’ union with Christ means that, just as Christ has become the divine temple presence of God, so they have *begun* to be identified with and to experience the effect of being “filled” with that tabernacling presence of Christ’s divine “fullness.” Just as their union with him in verses 11-13 means they have been circumcised in him, buried with him, and raised with him. – Beale
- The church is identified with the temple because believers are in Christ...the Temple

¹ Beale, *Union with the Resurrected Christ*, 140

² Beale, 141

³ Beale, 141

⁴ Beale, 141

1 Corinthians 3:10–17

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.