

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

As Seen from Solomon's Temple

The Scriptures tell us that a glorious Church is being prepared to be the Bride of Christ. To become more fully a part of this, we need to understand the *process* of how this glorious church will be prepared.

In the Old Testament we can read how King Solomon, the Son of David, built a glorious temple to the Lord. In the New Testament we now find that King Jesus, the Son of David, is building His people to be a glorious temple. As we study about the construction of Solomon's Temple, we find many useful insights in this prophetic picture of the Church.

First Chronicles 22:5 tells us, *"Now David said, 'Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries....' So David made abundant preparations before his death."* We see here that it was in the heart of King David to make a glorious temple that would be famous throughout the world. This shows us the heart of King Jesus, the Son of David, Who has planned to make His Church a glorious testimony throughout all the nations.

THE BUILDING MATERIALS

Before his death, King David dedicated the wealth from his conquests to become building materials for the temple. David said, *"Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant,"* 1 Chron.22:14. One modern estimate of the gold and silver's value was 960 billion dollars! Yet King Jesus paid a far higher price through His death to prepare for His glorious temple. First Peter 1:18-19 tells us, *"You were not redeemed with ... silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ."* Our lives are worth more than millions of pounds of gold. We were bought by the blood of the Son of God! When we see the true value of what God is preparing us for it can help protect us from compromising our life and ministry for financial gain.

When Solomon began to build the temple, we read in First Kings 6:7, *"The temple was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple."* In the New Testament we learn that every Christian is a living stone being prepared for the temple of God, 1 Pet.2:5. So in a similar manner to Solomon's Temple, the Lord is preparing each of us now to become those shaped stones that He can silently and quickly join us together as His completed temple at His Second Coming. Every difficulty and trial that we face can be used by the Lord as His hammer and chisel to help prepare us, if we will but submit to His grace.

First Kings 6:22 also tells us that Solomon covered the entire temple with gold. It was indeed a glorious temple, as it was covered with about twenty million pounds of pure gold! Every stone became united and looked equally beautiful because of the pure gold covering them. Yet in the

Bible, gold is also a symbol of the divine nature; because it lasts forever, and is the most beautiful and famous metal. As the living stones of the temple that Christ is preparing, we will become a glorious Church as we are covered with the gold of the nature of God! Only the beauty of Jesus will be seen as we are all covered, united, and made equal.

THE BRONZE LAVER

Another important part of Solomon's Temple was the huge bronze bowl placed in the courtyard. In First Kings 7:23-26 we read many important facts about this bronze laver that are prophetic about the Church.

This huge bowl was filled with water that the priests used to cleanse themselves for their service in the temple. In the New Testament now tells us that every born again Christian is a priest that is to serve God in the temple, in the Church. Ephesians 5:26 also tells us that it is not a natural water that is to cleanse us now, but the *"washing of the water of the Word."* It is the Word of God that can sanctify us so that we can serve the Lord in His Church.

The bronze bowl was filled with 2000 baths (or barrels) of water, 1 Kings 7:26. This is prophetic of how the water of the Word of God will fill the world to sanctify a priesthood from every tribe, nation, and tongue. The 2000 baths speak of the 2000 years that will be the approximate length of the Church Age, during which the Word of God is spreading worldwide to help prepare a glorious Church throughout all the nations.

While the date for the beginning of the Church Age is usually accepted as being 29 A.D., that does not mean that we should assume to have until exactly 2029 A.D. until the Second Coming of Christ. The Lord suggested that the end may be shortened when He said in Matthew 24:22, *"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."* It is very unwise to attempt setting an exact date for the Second Coming. Even our Lord warned against this in Matthew 24:36 when He said, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."*

What is very clear, however, is the general time and season that we live in. The Lord Jesus had prophesied in Luke 21:24 & 32 that when the foreign Gentile nations no longer ruled over Jerusalem, that generation would see the Second Coming. Christ declared there, *"And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.... Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled."* After almost 1900 years of foreign dominion, this was fulfilled when the Jews again gained rule over all Jerusalem in 1967. At that time Israel captured most of Jerusalem from the nation of Jordan during the Six Day War. So since 1967 we are clearly living in the generation that will see the end of the Church Age, when the Word of God will have been carried throughout the world. As our Lord Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:14, *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."* The Word of God will fill the earth in approximately 2,000 years, just as the laver was filled with about 2,000 barrels of water.

In First Kings 7:25 we see that Solomon constructed 12 bronze oxen that carried the bronze laver for the temple in Jerusalem. As the oxen faced out to the north, west, south and east, they were

carrying the water in the laver. The Apostle Paul tells us that the ox is a type of the minister in First Timothy 5:17-18 and First Corinthians 9:9-10. It is the ministers of the Church that will carry the Word of God to the four corners of the world, to help prepare the glorious Church throughout all the nations. This began to be fulfilled by the Early Church when Christ sent His twelve Apostles out from Jerusalem, Acts 1:8.

What we want to concentrate on now are the four directions that the oxen in Jerusalem faced. In First Kings 7:25 the order of the four directions are listed as: 1) first North, 2) then West, 3) South, 4) and East. We will see how these 4 directions are prophetic. They show us the order in which the Lord has caused the water of the Word of God to be carried by His ministers from Jerusalem to the four corners of the earth.

1. NORTH

When we look on the world map to see what major area of the world is north of Jerusalem, we find the continent of Europe. And when we study the Book of Acts, we find that the main direction that the gospel first traveled was northwards through Samaria, Syria, Turkey, and into Europe. Church history then goes on to tell us how the gospel spread throughout Europe, so that by 1,100 A.D. all of Europe had become known as Christian. The first direction that the water of the word of God went to "Christianize" a continent of the world, was north to Europe.

2. WEST

The next area of the world that the oxen faced as they carried the water, was west. When you look at the world map to see what major area of the world is west of Jerusalem, you will find the American continents. World history confirms that the next area of the world to become Christianized was North and South America.

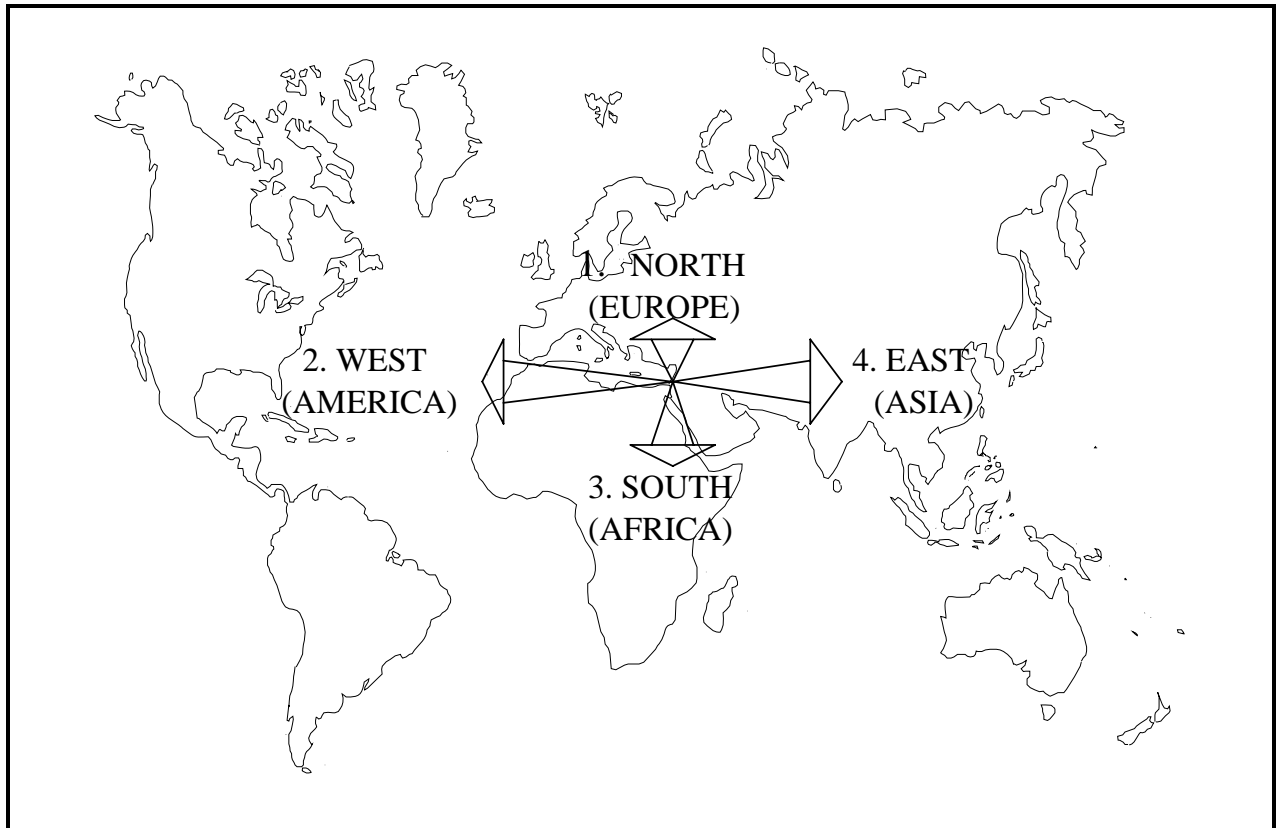
The water of the Word of God first began to be carried there by Columbus and the Spanish in 1492. Christopher Columbus felt that he was called by God to take the gospel to distant nations. From a book that he wrote about Bible prophecy, we read his words: "It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here [Europe] to the Indies [west].... For the execution of my journey to the Indies, I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics, or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied.... No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Savior, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His holy service."

From this beginning the Word of God began to spread, until all of the Americas became known as "Christian" continents within a few centuries. While this Christianity was often filled with tradition and mixture, yet the Lord has used these foundations to bring many revivals that are raising up a glorious Church in the American continents.

3. SOUTH

The next area of the world to be evangelized was south of Jerusalem, which is the continent of Africa. In the 1800's missionary work was concentrated in "Black" Africa, which is Africa south of the Sahara desert. Stanley Livingston, Mary Slessor, C.T. Studd, and many thousands of other missionaries carried the Word of God south throughout Africa. Christianity is continuing to rapidly grow, and it is estimated that by 2000 A.D. more than 50% of the population of Black Africa will call themselves Christians.

THE COMPLETION OF THE GLORIOUS CHURCH



4. EAST

As we consider the areas of the world where the glorious Church is being built, we recognize that Asia is the last and least evangelized continent of the world. Why has God chosen the area that has 2/3rds of the world's population to be the last to be filled with the Word of God? As our Lord Jesus said, it is so that *"the last shall be first."* God has reserved Asia for the greatest harvest of souls that will take place in Church History, which will occur just before the Second Coming of Christ!

The Lord spoke to a Spirit-filled Anglican bishop of Singapore over 30 years ago. He said, "I have shown Myself to be the Lord over Europe. I have shown Myself to be the Lord over the Americas. I am showing Myself to be the Lord over Africa, and I will yet show Myself to be the Lord over Asia." We are already seeing this start to come to pass, as many revivals begin to

sweep through areas of Asia. One of these revivals is happening today in China, where over one million new Christians are being born again each month. In the little nation of Nepal the number of Christians has grown in the last 35 years from about 200 to over 200,000. The nation of Korea now has most of the largest churches in the world, including the world's largest church of 700,000 members. As Ezekiel 43:2 had prophesied about the restoration of the Temple, he declared that *"the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east."* May all of the Orient soon be a flaming testimony of the power of God, as the glorious Church is being prepared throughout the world!

THE COMPLETED TEMPLE

When the Temple was completed, God filled it with glory on the day of its dedication. Second Chronicles 7:1-2 says *"Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven ... and the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Temple."* In a similar way, the Lord is waiting until His Church is ready to be completed and shown to the world. He is waiting to fill us with His glory!

The nations and kings of the earth came to see King Solomon and his glorious temple, 1 Kings 4:34 & 10:4-9. The Queen of Sheba was overwhelmed when she visited. *"And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon ... and his entryway by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her,"* 1 Kings 10:4-5. We will also see this fulfilled in our days, as the One who is greater than Solomon comes into His temple, to fill us with His glory! *"But the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising,"* Is.60:2-3.

In conclusion, Solomon's Temple teaches us many things about what the Lord has prepared for His people. Christ is preparing a Church that will be raised up in revival power and glory before His Second Coming. We can be a part of this great work, as we let the Lord prepare us and send us out into the nations with the Word of God. Let us fully dedicate our lives to this holy calling, and may the word come with power to our heart, that declares, *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."*

<p>- by NORMAN HOLMES, the Director of Zion Ministries of the Philippines. He directs several Bible schools, publishes literature for Christian growth, and ministers for pastors' seminars in the Philippines and other nations.</p>
