

“My House Is Your House”

When I was in Honduras and visited people, I'd be welcomed into someone's house with, “Mi casa es su casa.” In English, that's “My house is your house.” It's the Spanish equivalent to our, “Come in. Make yourself at home.” A salesman or a police officer at the door would never hear, “Mi casa es su casa.” The idea behind this generous welcome is, I'm willing to be in a relationship, to fellowship with you. It's what houses are for. Let's discuss houses.

In the beginning, God created a house. That's what Genesis 1 narrates. This world is God's house. And He filled it with life. Houses, after all, are for living in. And God made a unique living creature, man, and placed him in His house, to live in it, to enjoy it, and to keep it for God, that is, on God's behalf. Genesis 1 and 2 are as if God said to Adam, “My house is your house.” It seems to have been God's intention that He and His human creatures would enjoy fellowship together in this house. Tragically, the Fall in Chapter 3 ruined this relationship—ruptured it almost as soon as it began. The rest of Scripture narrates how God takes the initiative to restore fellowship; indeed, not only restore it but enhance it, that is, to raise it to an even higher and more intimate level of relationship.

The Book of Exodus narrates how God delivered His people from Egypt, but that's not the most important content in Exodus. The construction of a house for God, the Tabernacle, is the main text in this book. God had His people build for Him a magnificent structure in which He would reside so that there would be fellowship. We easily miss it! All the details, chapter after chapter, given once then repeated, details that we find boring and probably skip over when reading Exodus, are really the essence of that book: the construction of a house for God where He and His chosen people would meet. The purpose of the rescue from Egypt was not freedom from slavery, but to establish a relationship.

After Israel was in the Land and David was their anointed king, the tabernacle, a movable temple, was no longer needed and evidently no longer even existed. So David decided that he would build a house for the Lord, a temple on His land in which God would dwell among His people (2 Samuel 7). The nation would identify with and worship their God at this temple. But God responded to this idea with, in essence, “You want to build for Me a house? I'm going to build for *you* a house. You, David, cannot build it because you're a bloody warrior, but your son will build it. And I'm going to make for you a dynasty that will rule forever. I will adopt your royal descendants as My son, and your house, David, will reign over all My beloved creatures, forever.” It's as if God had said, “Your son is My son,” and “Your house is My house.” Note the play on words: “house” has a double meaning, it's both a structure to reside in and a royal dynasty. This is deep. In love, God connects the two meanings: both “houses” share a common identity and common purpose.*

* Both kinds of house represented the presence of the Lord in the midst of the people, for communion and for national identity. Israel's monarchy wasn't merely for governance. The father/son relationship between the Lord and the king meant that the King represented God, and it would assure the will of God for His people would be enforced so as to establish righteousness, peace and blessing in the land. The Temple likewise wasn't merely for worship; it was where God dwelt assuring the people protection, provision and blessing. The Temple was where sin would be dealt with and instruction given in the Law. Both kinds of house were to be the central focus of the people's lives. Both anticipated the future Messiah, who would perfectly and permanently embody the presence of God. Both houses, the Davidic King and a glorious Temple, will be present in the future Messianic Kingdom.

So David's house is God's house and David's son is God's Son, to rule and to bless all humanity. Solomon thus built a magnificent house for the Lord, and the Lord entered it (1 Kings 8:10) and resided there among His elect people.

As Adam had disobeyed God in that primal house, so did God's people, Israel. And as Adam got evicted, so did the Nation of Israel. Adam was thrust into a wilderness outside the lovely Garden surrounding Eden, and Israel was thrust into a wilderness of pagan Gentile nations. God abandoned that Temple Solomon had built (Ezekiel 10), and He allowed the Chaldeans to demolish it. But David's house . . . it endured ("a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him . . ." Isaiah 9:1,2a).

In the fullness of time, God humbled himself and bodily entered His own house. The Apostle John refers to Jesus as the "tabernacle" (John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us"). Jesus referred to himself as the Temple ("Destroy this Temple and in 3 days I will raise it up again," John 2:19, also Mark 14:58 and Matthew 26:61). Jesus was God residing in a unique house, a human body. The house (dynasty) that God promised to David was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.

The Apostle Paul insightfully writes that the body of a follower of Jesus is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Because we've been justified and sanctified by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, we are sacred space. God Himself enters our body to dwell in it, as if we are a house. The Spirit of Christ unites to our spirit and we become a new entity, a new creation. We can truthfully say, My house is Your house. We therefore must bring every thought, every motive, every value we hold, every word we say and every deed we do into captivity to Christ, because the place where God dwells must be holy. We should want more than anything to be holy so that God can freely dwell in us to bless us and so that we can glorify Him. Another way to view this is, We followers of Jesus are, thru the Gospel, *in Christ*; and that means that we are in God's unique house, identified with God, having access to God and intimacy with God. God doesn't merely share with us something that's His. He shares *himself*. Fellowship with God occurs in a house.

In the future, God will restore His house, that is, His very good physical creation so that His beloved humans can dwell therein to marvel at and enjoy His goodness. A Temple will be restored for worship. And Jesus will be enthroned with David to rule the world; the house promised to David will be on glorious display. It will be magnificence and blessing beyond anything we can imagine.

And so the Bible ends with God creating a new house, one that's eternal and lovely beyond description, a house filled with God's effulgent splendor. It will be a house without even the possibility of evil in it, in which the transcendent God and His now glorified human creatures would enjoy intimate fellowship, forever.

The Bible is the story of houses. Throughout Scripture, God says, "My house is your house." We are living in God's house, and we need to acknowledge that. Why? Because it entails obligations, not so much for the care of His house as for how we are, that is, our character, and how we live. We must not, *dare not*, presume upon God's grace. We are not free to live in God's house as autonomous beings, indifferent to His demands and expectations. For this very reason He's given us the Scriptures! And we all, believers in Christ as well as unbelievers, will one day have to give an account to Him for how we lived in His house. Let's heed the warning.