# Building the House of the Lord

Foundational Teachings

Peter McArthur

#### BUILDING THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Copyright © Peter McArthur 2001

All Scripture quotes are from The Holy Bible New King James Version © Thomas Nelson Inc. 1984

National Library of Australia ISBN 1 876769 14 9

Published by **The Issachar Ministry**PO Box 213

Carnarvon, Western Australia,
6701, Australia.

# **Contents**

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: What is the House?	5
Chapter 2: The House is Holy	9
Chapter 3: The House is Worthy	11
Chapter 4: The House of Greatness	13

### INTRODUCTION

The Lord is building His house in the hearts and spirits of His people. This has always been His intention, and in these days we see a quickening of the Spirit of God to inspire us to accelerate this process.

This booklet is a compilation of the study papers used as foundational teachings in the *City of Palms Fellowship*, based in Carnarvon, Western Australia, of which I am a joint elder.

We have felt it important to set out some of the insights and truths, pertaining to this hour, in the world wide Ecclesia, regarding our walk before the Lord.

The Biblical criteria for personal growth requires us to first *hear* the truth being revealed.

Second, to **see** *inwardly* with understanding,

Third, to begin to apply the truth, so that ...

Fourth, we can walk daily in it.

When these four things are done in correct sequence, it allows us to build the House of the Lord within our innermost being.

From this comes the Perfect Man, mature and complete in the ways of the Lord, no longer just seeing what the Lord is doing on the face of the earth, but participating in it, having come to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ.

May these eternal truths infect us with a new desire to follow closely after the Lord Jesus in all we do!

Peter McArthur

## WHAT IS THE HOUSE?

- 1. This series on **The House of the Lord** is intended to show us what the "House" is, and how to "build" it within ourselves, first as an individual and then as a community of covenant believers.
- 2. We will need to hear the truth being revealed. This will mean understanding some of the deeper Biblical insights into the building of **Moses' Tabernacle** and **Solomon's Temple**. The insights gained from **Nehemiah** as he worked to rebuild the City of Jerusalem will also help us to appreciate how we are to spiritually build the House of the Lord today.
- **3.** First, we need to be aware that this "House of the Lord" teaching will become a foundation stone to some, but a rock of stumbling to others. Many are still content to build on previous (church) history and doctrine. However, it is plain that we should only build in unity with God, and on the revelations found in His Word, otherwise we labour in vain (Psalm 127:1).
- **4.** It is necessary to realise that God's intention has always been to dwell in a "House." This house is also His throne (Psalm 18:11). In Hebrew it is the word "merkavah," meaning a "chariot-throne." God's throne is mobile! He rides on the winds on a mobile throne (verse 10). It is His canopy, His "House." His intention is still to dwell in a House, His people, who are meant to be mobile, on the move, going forth to take the Gospel, advancing His Son's kingdom at every opportunity, **apostolic** in its calling and destiny.
- **5.** The Hebrew word for "house" is "beth," and it is represented by the letter *beit* which signifies "**unity in the house.**" It is a symbolic reflection of the New Jerusalem, the ultimate House of the Lord, where complete unity exists between God and His Sons.
- **6.** This letter stands for "**Understanding**," particularly spiritual understanding. It is a letter derived from the Hebrew word "banah," which means "to obtain children, or to build a house." **A man** is one who *desires* to father children, to "build a house for his name." **A father** is one who *has accomplished* this and formed a genealogical dynasty to continue his name for succeeding generations. So too, with our Heavenly Father; He desires Sons.
- **7.** "Ben" is the Hebrew word for "son of," as in Ben-jamin, meaning the son of Jamin. Correctly, "ben" means **to have a son as a builder!** This is, of course, God's intent, to have Sons who will build for Him a dwelling place for all eternity.
- **8.** Thus "beth" is actually a Household of Sons, the family of YHWH. This house is a house of spiritual Understanding, a House of Sons who understand what the Father wants to build and gets on with it. It is the forerunner of the New Jerusalem, which is the ultimate "house," consisting of God's true Sons and Daughters (see also Psalm 119:9-16).
- **9.** The New Jerusalem is also known as the Bride of the Lamb, His wife (Revelation 21:9). This is important to understand, for the whole Biblical purpose of marriage is

#### to establish a household.

- **10.** The Lord has preserved strong meat for these Last Days (Hebrews chapters 5 and 6). He wants to bring out the treasure chest of Hidden Manna (Revelation 2:17).
- 11. This teaching on the "House" is in **seed form** at present. There is much yet to be revealed; much more strong meat to sit at table with. There has always been a principle involving **living things**, and that is, **the seed comes first**. From the seed you later reap the harvest! By applying ourselves to this truth on the House of the Lord, we will be sowing seeds that will one day bring forth an abundant and mighty harvest of many Sons.
- **12.** In the symbolism of Moses' Tabernacle, we find an enlightening truth: the **Outer Court** is for those at the beginning of their spiritual journey. We call these beginners "children," and children are always *in need*. On the other hand, the **Holy of Holies** is for matures ones, the "fathers," and fathers are always *giving*.
- **13.** So where does God our Father dwell? In the Holy of Holies, spiritually speaking. Our Abba is always giving. And He desires mature Sons who are no longer at the childish stage of *wanting and needing*, but who have grown up to become spiritual fathers, who have learnt *to give* rather than *to take*. This is a test in discerning maturity in others.
- **14.** There is a ministry within this Holy of Holies, in the Sanctuary, which is prophetically **the place of the Heart**. This Sanctuary is also the place of holiness. To minister from the Sanctuary is to minister from the heart. *God's Sanctuary is within us!* (Luke 17:21)
- **15.** Hebrews 8:2 speaks of the sanctuary that is in God's "true tabernacle," where Jesus our High Priest ministers. Remembering that "sanctuary" means "heart," we can see that Jesus wants to minister out of our heart, with His heart! He desires to walk within our hearts, in the sanctuary. This is why there has been such a call from the Father for us to intensely seek after holiness!
- **16.** It is not too difficult for us to now see that, historically, the Tabernacle, and later the Temples, were a Habitation for God so He could dwell amongst men. When the Word became flesh (John 1:13), when "Jesus" was born as man, He "dwelt" among men. The word means He "tabernacled," habitated with man (verse 14).
- **17.** The first instance of God's "house" is found in the original, perfect one in Heaven (Revelation 11:19; 21:19; Hebrews 9:23-24). All other houses were temporary dwellings, until the coming of Jesus.
- **18.** The very first physical habitation, based on the heavenly pattern (Exodus 25:40), was the fabric **Tabernacle tent of Moses**:
  - It pointed to a stone habitation, a more permanent one.
- **19.** The next house was **David's Tabernacle tent**, which was in use alongside of Moses' Tabernacle for forty years :
  - It awaited the stone temple of his son, Solomon.
- 20. Then came King Solomon's Temple, with all its beauty, richness, and grandeur:

- It was the so-called "high point" of the earthly houses.
- **21.** Later came **Zerubbabel's Temple**, under Ezra; a restored stone Temple but far inferior to Solomon's (Ezra 3:12):
  - It pointed to the hope and possibility of yet another day.
- **22.** By Jesus' time, **Herod's Temple** had replaced Zerubbabel's, along with the palaces and grounds expanded and beautified:
  - It clearly pointed to the pride and glory of man, not God.
- **23.** Finally, **Jesus came**, in whom the fullness of God dwelt. In fact, He becomes the "temple" (Revelation 21:22).
  - This true Temple points to other *living stones* to come.
- **24.** The saints of God are now the living Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:21), consisting of many living stones (1 Peter 2:5). As we abide (tabernacle) more and more in Christ (John 15:4), the Spiritual Habitation of God is being built up in which he will dwell for all eternity (Ephesians 2:22).
  - What this ultimately points to is not yet fully seen! (1 Corinthians 2:9)
- **25.** In all of this, we see a picture of the Temple from its "pureness" in Heaven, to its earthly "high point" in Solomon's time, declining to its baseness in Herod's period, then rising again to its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, and onto its future glory in the Saints themselves.
- **26.** This is what God is building and using us as living stones to do it! (1 Peter 2:5) It is a holy house, and requires us to be holy. We must furnish this House with holy furniture and adorn it with precious jewels. These are the acts and deeds of the righteous.
- **27.** This teaching is not "pie in the sky." It is based on the eternal reality that God had commanded His people to erect a dwelling place for Him that was patterned on the "original" in Heaven. Now it has come full circle. Material buildings are not where He desires to dwell, but in the sanctuary-heart of man whom He has redeemed. Once more He is looking for willing hearts (Exodus 35:21).
- **28.** The role of **Nehemiah**, in rebuilding the fallen city of Jerusalem, will also help us understand the role of the House of the Lord in these days.
- **29.** While Ezra's role was to restore the ruined Temple, Nehemiah's calling was to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. There is a truth here: co-operating with God in building the House in our own lives is not the end of the matter. The restored Temple in Ezra's time was identified with the restored City. The two are linked. As we build up God's House within us, we must also understand His desire is for us to influence the City, the world. This is what we call Revival!
- **30.** Even Queen Esther had a role to play in this restoration. While the overall aims of Ezra and Nehemiah were to deal with the Temple and City, Esther's destiny dealt with the Nation. So we see this three fold principle at work:

Ezra	Restored	Temple
Nehemiah	Rebuilt	City
Esther	Preserved	Nation

**31.** The "House of the Lord" is us! As we co-operate with God in restoring it within ourselves, we will begin to spill out and influence the world, the City. In doing so, the Nation itself can be preserved from the wrath and judgments of God. **Restoring the House** of the Lord is the first step in **Rebuilding the City**, and then, in due course, **Preserving the Nation.** 

## THE HOUSE IS HOLY

- **1.** All that God does is holy because it is His nature. He is a holy God doing holy things for a holy purpose. Holiness adorns everything He does. *Holiness adorns Your house, O LORD, forever.* (Psalm 93:5) Holiness means "to be separated" for divine use.
- **2.** We might say that God "built" the universe then separated part of it, the earth, for a particular holy function, to house Mankind. The very first "house" that God "built" was Adam. He was a man set aside for a special purpose in a special place. The Hebrew word used to describe Adam's creation is "yatsar," which has the understanding of "being formed with a pre-destined purpose."
- **3.** Then God formed Eve (Genesis 2:18-23). The Hebrew word describing her creation is "asah," which means "to work, to labour, to build, to construct, to refine." The idea is of God fashioning, and then refining, a created object. Eve was fashioned out of the separated holy man, Adam, to fulfil a holy function alongside him.
- **4.** So, right from the beginning, we see that the idea of "being separated" (made holy) is established. As new covenant believers, we have been seeded by Abba, whose name here means "source." We are NOT of this world, just as Jesus was not of this world (John 17:14). By the new birth we have been separated and made holy to our source, Abba Father.
- **5.** It is plain from this that our lives are meant to be a reflection of He who seeded us, and who has separated us unto Himself. Nothing less than holiness of life is required by God, and nothing less will get us through to maturity.
- **6.** The House of the Lord is described as a "holy" house. This is a term which denotes those for whom it is being prepared. Only the holy will dwell in this House, for He for whom it is being built is **the Holy One** Himself! He is surrounded by holiness and the cry that incessantly goes up before Him is just that **Holy**, **holy**, **holy** (Revelation 4:8).
- **7.** It was in the Holy of Holies that God spoke from, between the cherubim: *Now Moses ... heard the voice of One speaking to him ... from between the two cherubim* (Numbers 7:89). In Hebrew, the Most Holy Place was not a "place" at all, but a Person! It is better translated as **the Holiness of all Holinessess!** This describes a Person, not a place.
- **8.** The Father wants us in His House, close to Him, just like a natural son is close to his natural father. Jesus, who is THE Son, has gone to be close to His Father, and since He is our forerunner (Hebrews 6:20), we also should expect to abide intimately with our Father.
- **9.** It is in this House where we find this intimacy, and those who understand intimacy and act intimately have a maturity about them. And it is **mature people who make a way for God's presence**. The more we grow into maturity, the more we shall see God's presence remain amongst us. This is holiness!

**10.** It is not God's desire that we simply mature as individuals. It is His desire that we come to maturity **as a body!** All our striving and aiming for maturity must bear this in mind. We are not out to spiritually develop ourselves so we can be seen as great men and women of God.

We are part of the Body and must work together to build a House of holiness, intimacy and maturity: So that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:15-16).

- **11.** Whatever is not holy in us, needs dealing with (2 Corinthians 7:1). God wants His house to be adorned with beautiful and precious things (2 Chronicles 3:6; 1 Corinthians 3:12). Even the stones of Solomon's Temple were covered with silver and gold! (1 Chronicles 29:4; 2 Kings 6:21-22) The purpose of these precious stones was for one thing **beauty!** The House of Holiness is a thing of beauty unto the Lord (1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 27:4). Our lives, of holy living, need to reflect that beauty.
- **12.** This House is holy, separate from the patterns, order and looks of other houses. **Nothing is the same as this House**. Religion has tried to copy it, but because religion has not separated itself from the ways of the world, the pattern of that house is highly suspect. It is flawed, and so can never truly be a house for God. Church tradition has established many models and patterns to build on, but in the end the structure it builds is not according to God's unique pattern.

We are not seeking to renew an existing pattern but to restore God's pattern. Therefore we must avoid religion and not build on its supposed foundation. God has given us **one pattern to build on** (1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:6-7; Ephesians 2:20), and it is from Him and for Him.

- **13.** While the House is "for the Lord," it is also true that we too, who are the living stones of this House, must "be holy." Every part of our life (spirit, soul and body) must abide in this House. Every area of our life must be a testimony to the holiness of God's House.
- **14.** The issue we now face is whether or not we are living in holiness and intimacy with the Father, and how we should build on this foundation stone: According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But **let each one take heed how he builds** on it (1 Corinthians 3:10).
- **15.** The end result of building the House of the Lord, according to the revealed pattern, is that **glory shall come** upon it **due to the unity of the living stones** (1 Peter 2:4-6).
- **16.** So, building the House according to God's pattern creates "a divine order" which enables the Father's glory to be manifest through His Son's Body, on earth. **His House shall be one of glorious holiness and precious beauty.**

## THE HOUSE IS WORTHY

- 1. What does the House look like, inside and out? What distinguishes this House from all other "houses," and makes it worthy of belonging to the Lord? One is its holiness factor (see Chapter 2). Another is **what rooms the House has within it,** and what they are used for.
- **2.** Just as a house is an assembly of different rooms, so the present day House of the Lord, the Body of Christ, is also an assembly of different individual "rooms", i.e. believers. **A house is not complete unless each separate room is connected and used for its designated purpose**. The House of the Lord will not be complete until each believer is connected to the rest and uses their gifting for a designated purpose. We are members one of another (1 Corinthians 12:14-27). Each person needs to recognise their need for the others.
- **3.** The rooms of this House need to be cleansed (the holiness factor) and be made ready for their set purpose (the discipling factor). In part, this has to do with our character; we have to make ready our individual "rooms" (lives). But it also has to do with the make-up, the "fabric" of the House in general. In other words, it is both **character** (rooms) **and ministry** (fabric) **together** that will build the House of the Lord.
- **4.** This "fabric" consists of the joint materials used to construct the House. These are the various **ministries of the House**, such as Biblical oversight of local Elders, the Five Fold ministry, release of the Apostolic and Prophetic, having a Biblical understanding of why and how we meet, meaningful celebrations of the Lord's Supper, discovering a local (and perhaps unique) expression of life in Christ, declaring and aiming for the grand vision of God's end time purpose (Sonship), mentoring others, church planting, equipping and sending out the saints, and so on.
- **5.** Together, this fabric enables the House to be correctly built on God's pattern, not man's. In the Lord's time, this House will become **the most prominent House in all the earth** (Micah 4:1-2).
- **6.** The House of the Lord is to be a **lighthouse** that will keep believers from being shipwrecked. It will also be a House of Light that nations will stream to (Micah 4:1). Consequently, leaders will be needed who will bring forth the inspired Word of the Lord (light) to others.
- **7.** The House (Church or Body of Christ) is not an organisation handing out knowledge *about* the Light. It is *the* Light, because it is part of Jesus the Light. The House, Church, Body of Christ, is a living organism that must know, understand and then apply one over-riding foundational truth: **The Primacy of Jesus flowing through all we do!** (Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:17-19) To those who build the House of the Lord, and who are His Body, it is *His will* that must be the most essential truth which compels us onward. This foundational truth must somehow be translated from theory and teaching into reality and practice.
- **8.** To do this in a Biblical fashion, we will need to put aside many (some would say "most") of our pre-conceived ideas of educating and training the saints. We must

move from theological training to ministry doing, from information-only to information-with-impartation, from telling the saints "how to," to participating with them in discipling and mentoring. The oversight of the saints must likewise move from hierarchal management to **servant eldership**, and from appointed leaders to **anointed apostles**.

- **9.** The foundation for all this to occur will be the implementation of two New Testament models. The first is a loving and mature partnership between the prophetic and apostolic (Ephesians 2:20). The second is an effective and accountable relationship between local Elders and trans-local Apostles.
- **10.** These two models are not an attempt to simply revitalise the present concept of leading the Church. These are God-inspired truths that are dynamic and foundational. Just as the "Law" went forth from the Temple in the natural Jerusalem, so too will "government" go forth from the spiritual House through Elders and the Five Fold ministry.
- **11.** Jesus told His disciples to seek out a "worthy man and his house" from which to preach the Good News. (Matthew 10:11-13) The proclamation of the Gospel was to be directly associated with this godly man and his worthy household. Today the Lord is still seeking for worthy houses. Above all, the building of God's House must be found to be "of worth."

A worthy House will be a local congregation or gathering that becomes a place of preparation and equipping. In time, the local church will be a centre for ministry, a base from which many are sent out. It is interesting to note that the Greek word for "worthy" is "axios," from which the word "axle" is derived. A worthy person, or worthy house, is like an axle in a vehicle - if it is not in good condition, or in the right place, nothing moves forward!

- **12.** There is a major shift needed in our thinking about the local gathering of believers. For too long the main emphasis in most churches has been "pastoral." We have even called the leader of the flock "pastor," and most programmes and issues in local churches deal heavily with "the pastoral." However, the New Testament emphasis is quite different the early church was not primarily Pastoral, but Apostolic! It was not focussed simply on *caring* for the saints but on *sending* them out!
- **13.** So, equipping the saints *to go out* must be a vital part of making this House "worthy." Alongside of that, we must also strive to make the local assembly a worthy place for newly saved people *to come into*. To use some agricultural imagery: we must **train up the sowers and reapers**, but we must also **prepare the barns** to gather in the harvest they reap.
- **14.** Today, many Christians are looking at teachings like these, thinking that having "correct doctrine" and "right government" will bring revival and new life to the Church. But it is not having the correct structure or introducing radical changes that will produce life rather it is *His* life that produces the structure and initiates the necessary changes!

## THE HOUSE OF GREATNESS

- 1. The principle found in the Introduction (page 4) shows us that we need to hear and then understand the truths of Scripture, and finally apply them. It is obvious that, amongst many believers, there is a lack in understanding of their goal in the Lord other than a hope of getting to heaven! If you were running in a race, it would be foolish to run without aim and purpose. Sadly, many today do not seem to know what the finishing line actually is, let alone where it is and how to aim for it.
- **2.** But our Father has not left us directionless or without hope. His Spirit has been sent to guide, teach and comfort us (John 16:13; 14:26). He will give all that is required to understand our destiny and how to mature in it. The Spirit will reveal to us the "finishing line."
- **3.** Anointed by this same Spirit, Jesus said, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) The word "perfect" is teleios, which means "of full age, a mature and finished adult, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, brought to its conclusion."
- **4.** With this in mind, it is plain that God's destiny for us has to do with finishing what He has started: *He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ* (Philippians 1:6). (See also 2 Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 13:21; James 4:1 Compare 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12.)
- **5.** Do not let unbelief rob you of this great promise. But what if some do not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God ineffective? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. (Romans 3:3-4) We must believe what God says instead of man. When we do not listen to the words of the Lord and act on them, we make void His promise in that part of our life. We may even become responsible for the tumult in the lives of those around us!
- **6.** How do we finish the race; how do we complete the House? The answer lies in appropriating all that Jesus has provided through our faith in Him. If He is the cornerstone of our faith, then we need to align our lives with Him. To use the imagery of the building our stones must touch Him as the chief cornerstone; we must abut Him, and even be anchored to Him.
- **7.** The Father has laid down a costly cornerstone. That stone has been tested, approved, and placed in the exact position from which it will bless and strengthen every other stone that aligns with it.
- **8.** Our quality of life, as disciples of Jesus, depends entirely on this. We can not impart to others what we have not experienced for ourselves. Our chief cornerstone is Christ, but unless we are aligned with Him, we will never bring strength and direction to others. Even the quality of our corporate church life will depend on how well we have built on that same cornerstone.
- **9.** Build in holiness, strive in the Spirit to be a worthy disciple, run with vision, keeping your eyes fixed on He who is the goal of all that we live for. You will NOT be disappointed. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief (choice) cornerstone, elect and precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame (disappointed). (1

#### Peter 2:6)

- **10.** We can be encouraged by one overriding truth: the Lord's purpose has never been altered or modified and nothing will delay its fulfilment. His purpose is to reveal His glory through those He has been preparing for all eternity (Isaiah 46:9-10). This should stir our hearts and spirits! He will accomplish everything He has ever desired to do, and its culmination shall be when His House will be eternally filled with His glory! Nothing can ever be greater than this.
- **11.** So we can now appreciate that the main objective of each local assembly (Church) is to reveal and express God's glory. He is seeking a House not to *contain* Him, but through which *to reveal* Himself. So it is our quest to search out and speak forth the precious mysteries of God: *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages <u>for our glory</u> (1 Corinthians 2:7-10).*
- **12.** To do this, our character needs to align itself with this great purpose. His glory shall not be revealed through a united House until each room has been "sealed" for its chosen purpose. We are to co-operate in this sealing and to make every endeavour to establish our life according to His ways (Psalm 15:1-3; 24:3-4; 92:12-15).
- **13.** So, on what is our heart focussed? The mysteries of God deal with three main desires. When the Father speaks, His heart is focussed on us as Children and Sons. When the Son speaks, He is focussed on us as the Bride and the Body. When the Spirit speaks, He focuses on us as the Dwelling Place, the House, the New Jerusalem. It is significant that, in Scripture, God speaks more often of the one latter desire than the former two. This is God's focus, and He desires to seal this truth deep within us.
- **14.** In Jewish thinking, this "seal" is understood to be the letter *Tau*, the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In fact, the rabbis regard it as YHWH's seal! The High Priest's golden headgear had *"Holiness unto YHWH"* inscribed (sealed) upon it. (Exodus 28:36-37) Note this truth: the Lord's Name was engraved in gold upon the place of the mind!
- **15.** In other words, His name, which is the same as His nature, was to be written (sealed) always on one's mind. Those who are sealed and marked with His holiness, and His name, will have the victory. They are pre-destined for the House of Understanding, the New Jerusalem.
- **16.** This Name, written in one's mind, becomes like one's surname, thus it is written in Jewish literature that there are three who are called by the Name of YHWH: (1) the Messiah, (2) the Hasidim (*the Righteous*) and (3) Jerusalem. This establishes all three in the family of YHWH's unity, where all are of one mind, soul, and spirit, and all are in agreement. This, truly, is the greatness of God's House, for no other house shall ever be like the unity of this one (John chapter 17).

This is our goal, this is our unalterable destiny - this is our prize: *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this same mind.* (Philippians 3:14-15)

Published by **The Issachar Ministry**PO Box 213

Carnarvon, Western Australia,
6701, Australia.

issachar@wn.com.au