

Home Sweet Home

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INTRODUCTION

“Home” is a wonderful word, communicating various concepts, many of which are close to the heart.

Webster offers the following definitions of home: “(1) one’s place of residence: domicile, house; (2) the social unit formed by a family living together; (3) familiar or usual setting: congenial environment; also: the focus of one’s domestic attention (home is where the heart is); (4) a place of origin (salmon returning to their home to spawn); also: one’s own country (having troubles at home and abroad); (5) an establishment providing residence and care for people with special needs (homes for the elderly or a home for unwed mothers); (6) the objective in various games; especially: home plate” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

In this lesson, let us consider the concept of home from three different standpoints, looking at the benefits and blessings, and also the duties and responsibilities associated with our physical home, our spiritual home, and our eternal home.

OUR PHYSICAL HOME

Our physical homes must be built according to God’s pattern (Psa. 127:1-5). If we follow God’s pattern, we are blessed; if we reject it, we stand accursed (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21).

OUR SPIRITUAL HOME

Our spiritual home, the church, is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone (Eph. 2:19-22). If we follow God’s pattern, we are blessed; if we reject it, we stand accursed. Solomon, the son of David, built a house for God (1 Chron. 22:6-16). Near the end of his life, David ordered Solomon to build God’s house according to the pattern (1 Chron. 28:9-20). During His earthly ministry, Jesus promised to build His church and empower the apostles with divine authority (Matt. 16:18-19). Beginning on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47), and continuing thereafter, in times of persecution and peace, the

great commission was implemented (Acts 8:1-4; 9:31; 11:19-26; 13:1-3), and God's eternal plan was realized (Heb. 12:22-24).

In the Christian era, we must be active and energetic in spreading the gospel, being careful to build according to the New Testament pattern (1 Cor. 3:5-17). As living stones, we are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:4-5). Like Timothy, we must retain the standard of sound words received by inspiration (2 Tim. 1:13-14), continuing in the things we have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom we have learned them (2 Tim. 3:14-16).

OUR ETERNAL HOME

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus said, ""Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going" (John 14:1-4).

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." The Greek word verb *hetoimazō*, here translated "prepare," means "to cause to be ready, put/keep in readiness, prepare" [BDAG]. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (Matt. 25:34), glorious beyond compare (1 Cor. 2:9).

Similarly, hell is also a place prepared by God: prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41; cf. Rev. 20:10-15), and for those who are unprepared to meet God (Amos 4:6-13; 1 Thess. 5:2-6).

CONCLUSION

Let us submit to the Lord's will in every area of our lives (Psa. 37:23-26; Prov. 16:9; Jer. 10:23-24). Since heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people, we must be productive in this life if we hope to enjoy rest in the next life (Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 3:1-2, 8, 14).