

This Dwelling Place of God Will Endure Long Past Notre Dame

Our news feeds in the past week have been filled with horrific pictures of Notre Dame Cathedral being consumed by devastating flames. The videos remind me of a proverbial train wreck—it hurts to look, but you can't look away either.

The 850-year-old cathedral is an iconic landmark that has been a must-see stop for every tourist in Paris. The French Gothic architecture, stained glass windows and works of art are the focus of thirteen million visitors annually.

Even before the fire, I've been thinking about cathedrals and temples and the dwelling place of God. In my current Bible study, we've been reading the account in First Kings of Solomon building the temple—a dwelling place for the God of Israel.

For thousands of years, humanity has been constructing altars and buildings to worship God. Some are plain, others ornate. But as King Solomon said, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? See, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less can this house that I have built?" (1 Kings 8:27).

And Acts 7:48-50 notes Stephen's words: "as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things?'"

Yet the Bible also tells us we—believers in Jesus Christ—are now the dwelling place of God's Spirit. The same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead lives in us. Our body is His temple (see 1 Cor. 6:19).

The dwelling place of God is not a building made of wood and stone. Instead, His Spirit resides in His people. Buildings will come and go. Time wears them down and wears them out. Notre Dame Cathedral was in dire need of repair long before the fire. Authorities even speculate the fire may have started as a result of the renovation work.

But people are eternal. By faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit brings life that will last long after our mortal bodies are dust.

So what are we doing with this knowledge? Yes, we mourn the loss of temples and cathedrals, but not because they are the dwelling place of God. We mourn the loss of their manifestations of human beauty and artistry.

But we do it knowing the living God lives in us. We are His ambassadors with a message to the world of reconciliation to God in Christ.

Enjoy the beauty of manmade temples and cathedrals. But always remember, Christ-followers are the most beautiful temple of all. {eoa}

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