



The Temple Of Asclepius In Corinth

# A Holy Temple

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.**

**~ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:16-17 (NASB)**

- 1) **Be Careful How You Build...**
  - A) **With the metaphor of building wisely with the best materials still fresh in mind, the emphasis of “how to build” shifts to the significance of “what is being built” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:10-17).**
  - B) **In the first of ten rhetorical questions (5:6, 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24), Paul forcefully asks “Do you not know...” (3:16). The question is meant to be confrontational, aggressive, even combative.**
  - C) **The assumption is, in fact, that followers of Jesus Christ do know what is being asked about. The question is meant to highlight an assumed truth, a basic precept of life in Christ.**

**D) It is assumed there is an understanding that “y’all know that y’all” (plural) are “a temple” (singular). The community (y’all) form a singular dwelling place (a temple) for God’s Spirit (3:16).**

**E) There are two competing concepts which were at play in Corinth at which Paul is drilling:**

**i) First, Paul is appealing to the concept that the height of worship, the place of greatest holiness and reverence, the location of devotion occurred in the “temple.”**



The ruins of the temple of Apollo located in Corinth. Only seven of its 38 limestone columns remain, each one carved out of a single block of stone.

**ii) Temples were relatively common in Corinth, with the temple of Apollo (pictured above), the temple of Octavia (Roman temple, built in honor of the sister of Caesar Augustus), and the Asclepion (built for healing to the Greek god of healing, Asclepius -- noted on back panel) all major temples current to the time period in which the Corinthian letters were written.**

**iii) In ancient times, when people would see the temples of different gods, they would be awed by the wonder of the aesthetic beauty of the temple and make sacrifices out of the “spiritual experience” from being “in the presence” of (witness of) “god within his temple.”**

**iv) Second, while Paul is comfortable with the truth that God dwells in the temple, he is also making the point that God “does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24), but within His people. The temple is not a place, it is a people (y’all). Worship, witness, wonder, sacrifice, etc., are not limited to a time and place -- because we serve a living God living in His people and who are collectively His temple.**

## **2) Living In The Temple**

**A) God’s Spirit lives in His temple (y’all), and is best experienced in the midst of the entire community (worship, Word, groups, giving, life-on-life...). The Spirit of God is most manifest in His temple.**

**B) Note that when building a place of worship for God (the temple), that care is demanded (build well, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:10), and caution is demanded (3:17).**

**C) By separating oneself from the rest of the temple or doing something which would cause damage (destruction) to the temple -- a person damages both the worship and witness of God (3:17).**

**D) The warning is clear -- DO NOT BE THAT PERSON! Rather, be holy (a temple) -- because this is who we are (y’all’s identity) -- the temple of the Living God for all to witness, wonder, and worship.**