

Meditation #3: Birthing a Living Temple

What does it say?

STUDY: Acts 17:22-31

GOLDEN TEXT: Acts 17:24 = *The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands.*

What does it mean?

Christmas celebrates an eternal truth: The Creator chooses organic temples over those that are human-made. This truth was especially shown in the body formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. Jesus himself referred to his body as God's temple (John 2:18-22). That divine temple was his living body that some of the religious leaders wanted to destroy, and which would also rise victorious and transformed in three days. Similarly, the Holy Spirit also chooses to indwell the bodies of all committed believers as his temples. (I Corinthians 6:19-20 and Meditation #29)

1. Is it surprising that 'the Living God,' who is 'life himself,' chooses living temples (Deuteronomy 30:20; John 11:27 and 14:6)? What was the first place on earth that it was recorded his Spirit entered (Genesis 2:7)?
2. Would some people prefer the Lord to stay in temples made of stone or wood? Do some so-called "houses of worship" feel and smell like museums...or even mausoleums? Why?
3. Was the Lord's choice of living temples a problem for the philosophers the Apostle Paul was addressing in Athens in this Acts 17 report? Does the incarnation of the Lord God in the baby Jesus pose a belief problem for some people today? If so, how do they describe this problem?
4. Later in the same speech, why does the Apostle Paul announce the resurrection of Jesus, too? Is the baby Jesus, living Creator, not confined even by death? Can God's goodness be affirmed everywhere—both in life and in death?

What are we going to do about it?

5. Is there any place on earth where we should not read the Bible out loud, pray in Jesus' name, sing hymns and praise songs, dance with Godly joy, and in other ways celebrate his living presence? Knowing he is present, are we moved to care more for his good earth?
6. Why is the Apostle Paul making this point about humans as living temples to the Greek philosophers? Is he inviting them to come out of the "boxes" of their own religions and mind-sets? How does God becoming flesh in the baby Jesus also shake us from our limiting perspectives?
7. The "God who made the world and everything in it" is obviously greater than any other "god." How does this truth give you hope? How should we honor the Creator in his creation?

Truth To Celebrate: *God is greater than we can ever imagine, and still closer than even our very own breath.*

Advent-Action: *Use ceiling fans to circulate warm air in the winter, so that heat is not wasted or lost due to high ceilings—at home, Church or work.*

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