

Building in Silence, By William S. Long (1839-1924) preached by Daniel H. Kuhn, Jr. 22051016
1 Kings 6:7, and Ephesians 2:17-22
Elon Community Church, 16 October, 2005

The sermon for today is taken from the notes of W. S. Long, first minister of this congregation. The sermon was not printed or typed out. The notes are handwritten in small notebooks in the special collections of the Belk Library. This sermon is based on deciphered words and extrapolated thoughts based on the notes. The sermon is undated and it may have been preached around the year 1897.

The text: “And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.”¹

This house reared in mysterious silence was the first temple at Jerusalem. To the Jew this house was sacred and dear. The men who wrote the Bible partook of this feeling. As Paul said, “the church is called ‘an holy temple.’”² Look at this new and living temple in the heavens.

The theme: “the whole building fitly framed together groweth.”³

The subject: The church is viewed as a temple now building by God in heaven.

Point I: In thus contemplating it, look first at the materials of which it is composed. They came from a far country. The “Stones were made ready.” The rough stones “look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.”⁴ A blessed change passed over them. The stones were “made ready.” God moved by his Spirit. The stones were weaned from the world by promises, threatenings, hopes, fears, providences, disappointments, and troubles. Ye must be born again, changed. On earth only can thus be done. No Spirit strives there teaches he.

Point II: The foundation of the heavenly building. Those who now rejoice in it once possessed another, but ruined it in sinning. They bound it in misery and caused death. Can they retain this new building? Angels tell us Christ is the “chief cornerstone”⁵ “the sure foundation.”⁶ By his grace he now supplies every want and every need. We have grace at last. As Jesus has said, “Because I live ye shall live also.”⁷ We are safe amid commotions. The temple’s walls are “salvation” its gates “praise.”

Point III: The manner in which this heavenly temple is built.

1. It is built gradually. Able was the first stone. God has been adding stones to the temple ever since. Sometimes it is built slowly, then rapidly. The temple is One nation. God takes from this congregation then that [congregation], the old and the young. He says to the North, “give up” and to the south “Keep not back.”⁸ “Bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of

¹1 Kings 6:7, King James Version

²Ephesians 2:21, King James Version

³Ephesians 2:21, King James Version

⁴Isaiah 51:1, King James Version

⁵Psalms 118:22, KJV

⁶Isaiah 28:16, KJV

⁷John 14:19, KJV

⁸Isaiah 43:6, KJV

the earth.”⁹

2. This building goes on constantly. This is not so with earthly temples. God laid the peace. His enemies are overcome. His friends are encouraged and refreshed. He can work and none can hinder. “He can cause the wrath of man to [praise him.]”¹⁰ It was God who, in creating the earth, beat back the proud waves and shut up the sea with doors.¹¹

3. His temple is building silently. There was neither hammer nor axe. How do great men rise and earthly kingdoms spread? Mark the secret operations of God in the nations - and in men. God works through the “Prince of peace.” More is done for God silently than we suppose. Alms, labors, and prayers, are all done in silence. They are the end for which the temple is built. Are we made ready? Will we allow God to take us and shape us as the building blocks of his temple? Let no darkness discourage you. Let the character of true religion shape you. That character is quietness, mercy, peace, and brightness. The Heavens are a blaze of glory, peace.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Psalm 76:10, KJV

¹¹Job 38:6, KJV