

Reflecting Holiness

*Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.
Psalm 93:5*

Holiness in its basic sense refers to being set apart, or literally “other than.” God defines holiness because there is none other like Him. Therefore, its meaning is expanded in the Bible by other attributes of God, such as righteousness. Holiness becomes, or is appropriate and suitable for, the house of the Lord, because the house of the Lord is where His presence abides. The house of the Lord has been at once a literal and symbolic expression. The Old Testament people of God referred to the house of the Lord, first in the tabernacle, and then in the temple. They witnessed the awesome display of the shekinah of His presence in both places. Scripture refers to these as the places where God chose to put His name. All of the artifacts associated with those houses were deemed to be holy, not because of the quality within them, but because of their association with Him.

In our New Testament times, the house of the Lord has been misunderstood by many to be a building. But scripture is abundantly clear that the place where God chooses to put His name under this new economy is the body of His people. The house, or building, of God’s presence is the spiritual household of those whose faith and eternal life is in Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:19-22; I Peter 2:5). And the truth of our text remains very sure, that holiness is fitting and appropriate for His house. It also remains that the holiness comes from His presence in the house, not from the house or its elements of their own accord. As we are admonished to pursue holiness (Hebrews 12:14), we should not think that we do so by performing holy acts. God is not holy because He does holy things. He does holy things because He is holy. So we, as the household of God through His Holy Spirit, ought to pursue the power of His abiding presence in our lives both individually and corporately, so that river of living water may flow out of us in life that behaves in ways that reflect and are becoming of His holy presence.