

Let Us Build

The Biblical Basis for the Church
Building Fund

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All Scriptures references are from the Authorized King James Version.



This book is dedicated to the faithful members
of Chapel Street Baptist Church, who labor
tirelessly to steward well the facilities God has
given us.

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1	3
Chapter 2	8
Chapter 4	12
Chapter 5	15
Chapter 6	18
Conclusion	23

Introduction

It ought to be the goal of every born-again Christian to provide a scriptural basis for everything done in our lives. Things that are based on traditions or preferences will falter under the scrutiny of the carnal world and lead many demoralized believers away from the faith once delivered to the saints. This truth is especially important when it comes to people's finances. Any instruction regarding money demands a biblical foundation. Money represents people's time and effort. Twenty dollars is not just a piece of paper. It represents an hour or more of hard work for the person who possesses it. With this in mind, this short book aims to

provide a biblical foundation for the local church Building Fund.

It is important to keep in mind that churches may differ in what they consider to be a Building Fund and what they use it for. Some churches only use a Building Fund for special projects and the building of new buildings. Others, such as ours, direct Building Fund monies generally for both construction and repair/maintenance of said buildings (not including utilities). This study will apply broadly to both uses and will focus generally on how we as Christians ought to view church infrastructure and the funding of it.

This study originated from the sermon “The Biblical Basis for the Building Fund”, preached to the Chapel Street Baptist Church on August 17th, 2025.

Chapter 1

Our study will begin in the book of Exodus. In chapter 25, God has commanded the building of a tabernacle (large tent). The Israelites are in the wilderness, and at this time, they have never had a specific place to worship God. God would appear to them at times, such as on Mount Sinai, when the people were told not to touch the mountain lest they die, because God's presence was there. But God wanted something different. He commanded them to build a tabernacle where He could specifically meet with His people.

The tabernacle was intended to be a meeting place, and specifically, the housing

place for the Ark of the Covenant. In Exodus 25:21-22, God says,

"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

Inside this tabernacle, in the Most Holy Place, rested the Ark. Inside the Ark were the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, a bowl of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4). But the most important element was God's presence resting above the mercy seat. God ordered the building of this tabernacle for

this exact reason: *I want a place where my presence can rest, where you can meet with me.*

To fund this, God ordered an initial offering. Exodus 25:1-2 says,

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering."

Notice the specification: God didn't demand a specific quota from every person. He said that whatever their heart was willing to give, they should give. He listed the materials needed—gold, silver, brass, fine linen, animal skins, oils, and precious stones—to begin this building process.

However, while there is an initial cost to build, there is also a continued cost to maintain a building. God ordained a system for this in Exodus chapter 30, often called the census tax or the temple tax. God commanded that whenever a census was taken, every numbered man aged twenty and above was to give a half-shekel of silver as a "ransom for his soul" to make an atonement.

“¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹² When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. ¹³ This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the

sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.” (Exodus 30:11-13)

God instructed Moses in Exodus 30:16 to take this atonement money and appoint it for the service of the tabernacle. It was to be a memorial to the children of Israel. Essentially, this money was given to atone for them, and every day when they came to worship, the standing building was a visible memorial of their atonement.

Chapter 2

While the tabernacle was glorious, God made it clear that it was a temporary, mobile structure designed for their time in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy 12:10-11, God promised that when they crossed the Jordan and dwelled in safety, He would choose a specific place to cause His name to dwell.

“¹⁰ But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; ¹¹ Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your

choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:” (Deuteronomy 12:10-11)

This promise took a couple of hundred years to come to fruition. When the Israelites finally conquered the land, they set up the tabernacle at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1). Jerusalem, at this point, was still a pagan city run by the Jebusites and wouldn't become the capital of Israel until the reign of King David (2 Samuel 5:6-7).

Over time, tragedy struck. Under the corrupt priesthood of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, the Ark of the Covenant was taken into battle, and captured by the Philistines, never to be pitched in Shiloh again (1 Samuel 4). Even when the Ark was returned to Israel, it remained in the house of Abinadab for twenty years (1 Samuel

7:1-2). It wasn't until David became king that the Ark was restored to its proper place in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6).

As David reached the end of his reign, he was troubled. In 1 Chronicles 17, he expresses to God that it wasn't fair for him to dwell in a cedar palace while the Ark of God dwelled in a tent. David had a valiant and honest desire to build God a permanent temple. However, God told David that because he was a man of war with bloody hands, his son Solomon would be the one to build it.

David accepted this, but he immediately set to work. In 1 Chronicles 22, David gathered masons, iron, brass, cedar trees, and massive quantities of gold and silver. He say in verse 5,

"Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it." (1 Chronicles 22:5)

David couldn't build it himself, so he accumulated all the resources needed so that when Solomon took the throne, the temple could be swiftly built. When Solomon finished the magnificent temple, God approved of it, hallowing the house and placing His name there forever (1 Kings 9:3).

Chapter 4

Fast forward a century or so. The kingdom has split, and Judah is ruled by a young king named Joash. The temple, tragically, had fallen into disrepair. The evil Queen Athaliah and her sons had broken up the house of God and used its dedicated things to worship idols.

“For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. (2 Chronicles 24:7)

Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord. He commanded the priests and Levites to go out and gather money from all Israel to repair the temple. But surprisingly, the Levites dragged

their feet. They were accustomed to neglecting their duties.

So, Joash took matters into his own hands. At the king's commandment, they made a chest and set it outside the gate of the house of the Lord. They made a proclamation throughout Judah, asking the people to bring the collection that Moses had commanded in the wilderness (Exodus 30:12).

How did the people respond? 2 Chronicles 24:10 tells us:

"And all the princes and all the people rejoiced and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end."

They weren't clutching their wallets in resentment; they rejoiced! They had a heart to

worship God and to restore the place where they met Him. Day by day, they gathered money in abundance, hired masons and carpenters, and perfectly restored the house of God.

Chapter 5

We see a similar pattern generations later, after the Jews were exiled to Babylon. Under the Persian Empire, King Artaxerxes allowed Ezra to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the destroyed temple.

In Ezra chapter 7, we read the decree of Artaxerxes. The king and his counselors freely offered silver and gold to the God of Israel. Furthermore, he allowed the people and the priests in Babylon to give freewill offerings for the house of God. Artaxerxes even decreed that whatever else was needed for the temple should be paid for out of the king's treasure house.

“¹⁵ And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely

offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, ¹⁶ And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem: ¹⁷ That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meet offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. ¹⁹ The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. ²⁰ And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house.” (Ezra 7:15-20)

What an amazing God we serve, who uses even pagan empires to fund His work! But note the recurring theme: *freewill offerings*. From the very first tabernacle, to the Joash chest, to the rebuilding under Ezra—God’s building projects are consistently funded by the joyful, voluntary giving of His people.

Chapter 6

Everything we have discussed so far belongs to the Old Testament. When Jesus came, He fundamentally shifted our understanding of the temple.

In John chapter 4, Jesus speaks to a Samaritan woman at a well. She is caught in the Old Testament mindset regarding location, pointing out that Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerizim, while Jews insisted on Jerusalem.

Jesus responded with a revolutionary truth:

"²¹ Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... ²³ But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall

worship the Father in spirit and in truth."
(John 4:21, 23).

Jesus declared that a specific, physical place was no longer required to meet with God. In the Old Testament, God's presence was housed in a building. But through Jesus Christ, God came to man. Even more profoundly, God promised to dwell *within* man.

The Apostle Paul makes this incredibly clear in 1 Corinthians 6:19: *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...?"* The Apostle Peter even refers to his own physical body as a "tabernacle" (2 Peter 1:13). The tent in the wilderness was built to house God's presence, but today, *we* are the tabernacles of God.

This poses a crucial question. If the church building is no longer the dwelling place of God—because He dwells in us—then what is the building?

The church building is simply a tool. Just as God gives us a car, a house, or a phone to use for His glory, He gives our collective church body a building to help us fulfill the Great Commission. This changes how we view the building. It is no longer an issue of *worship*; it is an issue of *stewardship*.

In Luke 16, Jesus tells the parable of the unjust steward. The master commends the steward because he used his temporary resources shrewdly to secure his future. Jesus applies this to us in verse 9:

"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke 16:9)

Christians are called to use their worldly resources (the "mammon of unrighteousness") to further God's eternal interests. When we invest our resources into the gospel, we are investing in eternal souls.

Jesus concludes this thought in verse 10:

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." (Luke 16:10)

If we cannot steward the physical tools God has given us as a church—like our building—why would He entrust us with something far more important? If we are uninterested in

stewarding our meeting place, why would God give us the infinitely more difficult task of stewarding a human soul? Maintaining a building is easy compared to the work of spiritual ministry, but faithfulness in physical things is the proving ground for faithfulness in the spiritual.

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 4:2, “(Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.)” When God sees the way His church stewards His building, should He consider us faithful? It is imperative that we faithfully steward all that God have given to our care, whether it is a building or a soul.

Conclusion

We see, therefore, that the maintaining of the buildings that God has given us is an important matter of stewardship. However, it is important that we do not forget about God's presence. Because His presence is no longer relegated to the building, the keeping of the building becomes a matter of stewardship rather than worship. But God does still dwell somewhere: You.

It is important that we remember to care for the current temple of God. If the temple of our bodies is where God meets with us and is where we worship Him, then just as Joash rebuilt and maintained the temple in Jerusalem, so too should we maintain the temple of our bodies.

“¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Let us each make a commitment to care for our bodies. Let us commit to eating well, drinking water, exercising, and keeping harmful substances out of our bodies. By doing so, we can keep up the temple of God and allow it to be usable by Him for a long time.