

Jehoshaphat Lays a Foundation | II Chronicles 17:3-10 | January 22, 2017

In the third year of his reign he sent his officials (7)... And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the Lord with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people. And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat (9-10).

THOUGHT: The Temple had been built and remained a visible structure in their neighborhood – whether good or bad King. God’s “work” is accomplished through people – His people (and some others including one donkey!). Bottom line – it’s the people who bring about good things – or bad.

Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (2000).

Jehoshaphat: King of Judah, son of Asa and Azubah daughter of Shilhi. He came to the throne at age 35, reigned for 25 years (ca. 874-850 B.C.E.), and was succeeded by his son Jehoram... Chronicles enlarges the Kings account of Jehoshaphat dramatically and depicts the king more favorable, reporting that he fortified, provisioned, and garrisoned his territories against Israel and other foreign powers and that God blessed him with peace (2 Chr. 17:2; 10-19)... Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast, appealed to God for help, and under the guidance of the Levite Jahaziel led his people out for battle, where they found that their enemies had destroyed one another. Finally, Jehoshaphat is portrayed as a diligent ruler concerned with the religious observance of his people and the administration of justice in the hand. He sent princes, Levites, and priests into the cities of Judah to teach the book of the law of God (2 Chr. 17:7-9) and appointed judges throughout his kingdom, establishing in Jerusalem Levites, priests, and heads of families to judge disputes brought to them (19:4-11). 681

Foundation = *themelios*

TDNT, Vol III

The NT refers to laying the foundations of the communities Rom 15:20; Christ as the foundation; 1 Cor 3:11 [*For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*]; and Eph 2:20-22 [*Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*]. 63

This Christological and ecclesiological [church] use arises naturally from a combination of the figurative sense of ***themelios*** with the fact that the NT Christ and the Church are always the logical subjects to which such figures must refer. The thought of building or edification is a familiar one in the NT. The Church or community is a house which is built by God or Christ, and which is constantly to be built with God in Christ by the community and its leaders. Christ is the foundation of this house, as He is the Head of His Church. 63

What is true of the noun is no less true of the verb **themeliow** . To understand the usage in Eph 3:17-20 [...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and **grounded** [**tethemeliw**] in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.]= Col 1:23 [If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and **steadfast** [**tethemeliomenoi**], not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.]; 1 Pe 5:10 [And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and **establish** [**themeliwsei**] you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.], we need only consider the figurative sense of “to strengthen,” “to confirm.” Nevertheless, it is as well to take into account all that we have said condemning the noun **themelios**, since it is only thus that we can do justice to the comprehensive and distinctive meaning of these statements. When God confirms believers, or when believers are confirmed in faith and love, this is implicitly the assuring of the house or Church of God through its foundation, Christ. 64

Paul Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, (Westminster Press, 1960).

The church does not have a nature that can be readily defined simply by looking, no matter how directly, at the church itself. Its life springs from, is nourished by, and is oriented toward the fullness of glory of the Triune God. 12

There is much about the character of the church to which the church itself is blind. Our self-understanding is never complete, never uncorrupted, never deep enough, never wholly transparent. In every generation the use and re-use of the Biblical images [96 according to Minear] has been one path by which the church has tried to learn what the church truly is, so that it could become what it is not. For evoking this kind of self-knowledge, images may be more effective than formal dogmatic assertions. This may well be one reason why the New Testament did not legislate any particular definition of the church and why Christian theology has never agreed upon any such definition. 25

God’s Building: “You are God’s planting, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9). In a characteristic way Paul’s mind moves from one image to another in the middle of a sentence. The Corinthian church is not only God’s field or planting, it is God’s building. Clearly we are dealing with the same thought: the basic message of the two images is the same. 49

The image of the field is more congenial to the sequence of thought (planting, watering, growing) in the previous verses. The image of building, in turn, introduces another series of subimages. Now Paul pictures himself as the foundation layer rather than the sower, and Apollos as the wall builder rather than the irrigator... In this case the foundation of the whole process of building is Jesus Christ, and the earlier assertion holds firm: the stonemasons and carpenters are alike fellow workers with God, who alone can establish their work (Ps. 127:1)... Attention is concentrated on the processes of construction and the crucial relationship between the one essential foundation and what every workman builds upon

it. In other words, the image directs our minds to the continuing dramatic action on the part of both God and man, rather than to the contour of the completed house. 49-50

Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, (Eerdmans, 1998).

Life in the small Christian community in Novi Sad (Yugoslavia) taught me two basic ecclesiological [church] lessons even before I possessed theological language to express them. **The first lesson:** *no church without the reign of God*. The church lives from something and toward something that is greater than the church itself. When the windows facing toward the reign of God get closed, darkness descends upon the churches and the air becomes heavy. When the windows facing toward the reign of God are opened, the life-giving breath and light of God give the churches fresh hope. **The second lesson:** *no reign of God without the church*. Just as the life of the churches depends on the reign of God, so also does the vitality of the hope for the reign of God depend on the communities of faith. We come to recognize the fresh breath of God and the light of God that renew the creation only because there are communities called churches—communities that keep alive the memory of the crucified Messiah and the hope for the Coming One. Without communities born and sustained by the Spirit, the hope for the reign of God would die out. X