

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

 149 Main Street
Madison Heights, VA 24572

MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 13

July 10, 2023

George B. Harris, Minister
Email: bernerdharris@yahoo.com
mhcc16@yahoo.com
Church Telephone: (434) 845-3855
Minister's Telephone: (434) 215-4846

Pam Hubbard
Music Director

Brenda Harris
Administrative Assistant

God's Design

In the midst of a world of decadence, Noah was singled out by God to preserve life on earth. After God destroyed the corrupt, violent and wicked on the earth, Noah settled on the land and built an altar to the Lord. This is the first altar of the Bible and shows how worship was God's design all along. Other altars were constructed throughout history by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Whereas, a person can worship God anywhere, the altar provided a special place for the worshiper to commune with God.

After the Hebrew nation crossed the Red Sea and began to make camp. A portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites. The tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. Although the worship of God can take place anywhere by an individual, the tabernacle served as a place of worship for the community. There are some 50 chapters in the Bible devoted to the tabernacle revealing just how crucial community worship is to God.

The Hebrew nation reached its peak of unity and power under the reign and leadership of King David. After the nation settled in the Promised Land, a very devoted and thankful King David desired to replace the mobile tabernacle and erect a permanent temple for God. However, God intervened and through the prophet Nathan informed David that Solomon would be the one to build the temple in Jerusalem. David accepted this as God's will. David made extensive preparations for its construction and worked diligently on providing the necessary resources. God's desire for a temple to be built for community worship is affirmed through the prophet Nathan, King David, King Solomon, and through the consummation of the offering at the dedication of the temple.

The synagogue is also a God ordained institution. The temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire during the Exile and synagogues flourished with the dispersion of the Jews. It is the destruction of the temple and the displacement of the people from their homeland (Diaspora) that gave rise to synagogues as a place for worship, religious instruction, and assembly. The synagogue provided the focal point of Jewish religious life as the central Jewish institution for Jewish communities throughout the world.

Cyrus the Great, King Persia, fulfilled prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah regarding the liberation of the Hebrews from Babylonian. After he defeated the Babylonians, he freed the enslaved Jews. According to the Bible, it is the Lord, the God of heaven that charged Cyrus to build a temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-2). It is God that wanted another temple built.

Then Jesus comes to the earth to save us and the church is born. The synagogue provided the inspiration for the Christian church building. The religious practices evolved from God's design for community worship as is evident in the Old Testament. The church building provides a place for worship, religious instruction, and assembly. Organized religion is God's design.

Thank you,
George