

## **Jesus the New Temple**

HN/SS 2/05/04 am

Reading: Hebrews 9, John 2

Study: John 2:13-22

Psalms: 90:1-4, 69:6-11, 69:30-36, 84:8-12

Have you ever watched the demolition of a building? Sometimes they swing an enormous steel ball to knock walls down but nowadays prefer explosives. I watched on the TV the demolition of a stadium in USA. The old stands crumbled as explosives were detonated around the ground. The old stadium was flattened in a very short time. Once the rubble was removed a new stadium would be built. The old had to go to make way for the new.

Jesus entered the temple when he went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He went there to offer the Passover sacrifice. However, he was shocked to see all the trading going on within the temple courts – animals being sold and money being changed. He rose up and drove all these traders out of the temple. *Take these things away! Do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise!*

### **The response**

What was the response to this outburst from Jesus? He did not act to please men, that's for sure. What of those he drove out. They said nothing. They had to comply for this was the Son of God and this was his father's house. This is one who has divine authority. Moreover they would have known what they were doing was against the Law. They could not stand before the truth.

The Jews, the temple authorities, did not stop him. He was not arrested for disturbing the peace. They also knew that what was going on the temple was not right. Rather than saying you cannot do this, they asked him what authority he had to do it. They avoided the issue of whether what was going on was right or wrong before the Lord. Rather they wanted to know what his authority was for doing it. *What sign do you show us since you do these things.*

Did they need a sign when it was obvious from the law that what was going on was wrong? This was the house of the Lord. This was the holy place where his people came to worship him. It was not to be used for commercial purposes; it was not to be used for entertainment. It was a house of prayer for all nations.

But this is what still happens today. We have authority say the church leaders. We will determine what goes on in our church. If we want women preachers then we determine that, if we want homosexual ministers we will determine that. What happened to the authority of the word of God?

Notice the response of his disciples. They remembered what was written. They turned to the word of God, to the place of ultimate authority. *Zeal for your house will eat me up or consume me* said David in Psalm 69:9. They saw the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of God here standing before them.

A sign the Jews asked for. Show us a sign. They did not turn to the Word of God in response to Jesus' action. They did not repent saying 'yes we have done wrong in allowing this to go on in the temple'. They did not look to themselves but wanted to blame someone else. They wanted argue the matter with Jesus. They wanted to find some fault in Jesus rather than look at their own hearts.

Not an uncommon response when we are confronted by our sin. We try to shift the attention away from ourselves. We don't want to look at our own sinful hearts. But how should we respond when our sin is revealed? Confess your sins and ask forgiveness. If we confess our sins *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (I John 1:9).

Jesus was not about to perform some miracle to satisfy them for the moment – for that is all it would have been. He did not want people following him on their own terms. He offered them a sign, a sign like the parables, a sign that only humble seekers of the truth would understand.

### **The Sign**

*Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up* he said. Well didn't that set them off. What do you mean? It has taken 46 years to build this temple and you think you can build it in three days. This was the so-called second temple, the one built by Herod beginning 20BC. It was barely completed and would soon be destroyed.

It was these words of Jesus that witnesses tried to use to convict him at his trial before the Sanhedrin, the Council of the Jews. But the witnesses could not agree (Mark 14:58). Jesus did not in fact say 'I will destroy' but simple *destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it*. So he was not speaking against the temple.

Jesus was not even talking about the temple of stones standing before him. He was talking about himself, about the temple of his body. Not that that makes his claim any less stupendous. For what was he saying about his body? He said *destroy this temple, destroy this body, kill this body, and I will raise it again in three days*. What an impossible claim. Has anyone ever risen from the dead? Can anyone rise from the dead? Only Jesus ever made such a claim.

What a magnificent sign this was for those who had eyes to see. His disciples saw it after he had risen from the dead. They remembered what Jesus had said three years before and they believed. His death and resurrection is the greatest of all signs that Jesus gave, for in this sign was fulfilled all that he came into this world to do. Those who see this sign and go to him who died and rose again will be cleansed of their sin and will receive eternal life.

We might notice that the word for 'temple' Jesus uses here is not *hieron* as in the earlier verses *but naos*. The latter has a more specific reference to the inner sanctuary. It was in the inner sanctuary that the glory of God, His presence resided. It was the curtain into this Most Holy place that was torn when Jesus died on the Cross – the veil that is his body (Hebrews 10:20).

'Jesus saw the connection between the temple and his body to be fundamentally typological'. That means that the temple in Jerusalem was built according to pattern or type of the true temple in heaven. The Lord instructed Moses to build the tabernacle, the forerunner of the temple, *according to the pattern shown you on the mountain* (Exodus 40).

Jesus came down from heaven – *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, we have seen his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father*. The glory of God went up from the temple in Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day (Ezekiel 11) prior to its destruction in 586BC. In Jesus the glory of God was revealed for he is the true temple – *he was speaking of the temple of his body*.

Now we find that believers are referred to as the temple of God also – the temple of the Holy Spirit – both individually (I Corinthians 6:19) and corporately (I Corinthians 3:16). This is because as believers we are united to Christ, we are in Him. We belong to the church which is the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12, 27). This is the new temple that Jesus was referring here in this text.

The temple of stones then was superceded, its purpose fulfilled in Jesus Christ. There are no more sacrifices so no need for a temple, no place for a temple, and there will never be a place for another earthly temple. What we look forward to in the New Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem is a city without a temple for the Lord Almighty and the Lamb is its temple (Revelation 21:22).

Are you sure about that? A lot of Christian's are not. They believe in a literal temple being built once again in Jerusalem. If they tell you this, point them to these words of Jesus here in our text – *he was speaking of the temple of his body*. And then ask them what will become of this temple that is the body of Jesus if there is a new earthly temple. What will become of the sacrifice of Jesus if the temple is rebuilt? The temple was the place for sacrifice from beginning to end. And the ministry of an earthly temple has indeed ended to the glory of God and the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

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