

Building The Temple

By

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Militant American Christians are raising millions of dollars to aid Israeli Jews to destroy a shrine sacred to a billion Muslims, and to build on the site a great Jewish temple, which they call the “Third Temple.” An Israeli guide claims that the building materials are ready, that they are preparing the linen to dress the temple priests and young men are being taught how to make animal sacrifice.¹

When God called Israel out of Egypt, He instructed them to make a portable tabernacle, to house the ark of the covenant, with its mercy-seat to receive the sacrificial blood of the atonement.² About 400 years later, King David complained that while he lived in a house of cedar God dwelt in a tent,³ not realizing that the tabernacle was only a type or shadow of the true temple that was to come. But David had blood on his hands, and had to leave it to his son Solomon to build the temple,⁴ which became the pride of Israel, until its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC.

When the Babylonian captivity of 70 years ended, the people restored the temple, but not to its original splendor. It was King Herod, using 1000 specially trained priests as masons, who completely rebuilt the temple, twice its original size. This work took 44 years.⁵

It was this temple of which Jesus said, “There will not be one stone left upon another,”⁶ in the day of Israel’s judgment, which took place in 70 AD. Since that day there has been no order of sacrifice and worship like that prescribed by Moses in the Old Covenant — no annual sacrifice, no high priest, and no blood on the mercy-seat to atone for the nation’s sins — for the nation ceased to exist.

The nation now called Israel has no relationship to the Biblical Israel of 12 tribes. The Jews who established modern Israel were not Semites, but descendants of the Khazars, who converted to a form of Judaism (based upon the Talmud, not the Bible), in the 8th century, long after the Roman destruction of the second temple in 70 AD. These were not Jews “returning to their homeland,” but secular humanists and socialists whose ancestors had never been in the land of Palestine. “They have no more claim to Jerusalem and Palestine than do Irish Catholics have claim to Vatican citizenship just because they profess the faith of Vatican City.”⁷

Willfully ignorant of these facts, many Christians are promoting the effort to “rebuild the temple,” thinking this will fulfill prophecy and hasten the return of Christ. Some hold that the temple will then be occupied by the anti-Christ. Classic Premillennialism holds that the Jewish economy will be reinstated (in the “millennium”), including animal sacrifices.

MISSING THE POINT. It is amazing that believers can miss the teaching that the tabernacle, the temple, its priest and sacrifices, were only **types** of the true spiritual things in the New Covenant established by Jesus. They are called “copies”⁸ and “a shadow of the good things to come.”⁹ The sacrifices would not take away sins, so Jesus, the true Lamb of God, “offered one sacrifice for sins forever.”¹⁰ Under the law (shadow of good things to come) only the High Priest could enter the Holy Place, the second room of the temple. But Jesus became “a great priest over the house of God,”¹¹ and after His

resurrection “sat down on the right hand of God,”¹² and now all Christians are exhorted to have “boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus.”¹³

With the perfect sacrifice made “once for all”¹⁴ and the High Priest having entered “once” into the heavenly Holy Place, the temple in Jerusalem was rendered useless. As Jesus died, the temple veil to the Holy Place was ripped from top to bottom,¹⁵ indicating that it was of no further significance to God. It was now time for the fulfillment of the prediction Jesus made to the woman of Sychar: “the hour is coming when neither in the mountain nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.”¹⁶ Yet it was necessary for the Lord to destroy the earthly temple to get the believers’ minds and hearts away from the formalistic idolatry¹⁷ and centered on true worship.

A COUNTERFEIT. Should the Zionists, with their kosher supporters like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and the majority of some 80,000 fundamentalist preachers who broadcast daily over 400 radio stations, succeed in building their temple in Jerusalem, it will be a counterfeit temple for several reasons.

1. By His death, Jesus nullified forever the OT system of temple sacrifices. (Hebrews 9:10–15, 10:1–4, 18.)
2. Christians are forbidden to go back to the OT system. (Galatians 3:23–25, 4:3–9, 5:1, Colossians 2:16–17.)
3. It will have no priest, as Christ is the High Priest now seated at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:11–12.)
4. God will not dwell there, as He dwells in individual Christians, not in houses men build. (Acts 7:48.)

THE TRUE TEMPLE. Jesus shocked the Judean clergy when he said, “One greater than the temple is here.”¹⁸ More shock waves were felt when he predicted the temple’s total destruction.¹⁹ The material temple was to be replaced by a temple of a different nature. The prophet Amos had prophesied the future building of the Tabernacle of David to receive the saved of the heathen.²⁰ In a special counsel of apostles and other leaders, James declared that this prophecy was fulfilled as people were being converted through the preaching of the gospel and were becoming the spiritual house of God.²¹ This was called “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.”²²

The true temple in which God dwells is the redeemed believer, for He “dwells not in temples made with hands.”²³ Peter wrote, “You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”²⁴ The earthly stones are replaced by living Christians, “in whom every building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built for a habitation of God in the spirit.”²⁵

“Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God.” (I Cor. 6:19.) “We are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.” (II Cor. 6:16.)

The true temple, of which the material temple was only a type, could be built only by Christ. “Behold the man whose name is **The Branch**! ...he shall build the temple of Jehovah: ...and he shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne.”²⁶ This **Branch** is Jesus, both King and High Priest, who promised, “I will build my church.”²⁷

Man may build a house in which to meet, but only the Lord can build the **ekklesia**, the temple and household of God, and He has been building it since Pentecost, almost 2000 years ago.

Peter gave a warning to false builders, when he was challenged by religious officials for preaching Christ. He said, "This is the stone that was set at naught of *you builders* which is become the head cornerstone."²⁸ "You builders," he called them — men who assumed to build for God while rejecting the one Stone essential for that building.

A common error is heard in thousands of assemblies every Sunday morning when people speak of having "come into the house of God," referring to the building dedicated to God in which they have met. Unknowingly, perhaps, they are applying a holy scriptural phrase to something entirely different, and by doing so, robbing the church of an important and meaningful figure of speech. "You are God's building," Paul writes.²⁹ We come into the house of God when we become Christians, not when we enter the door of the assembly hall. Neither do we leave the house of God when we are dismissed, not unless we depart from the faith.

Unfortunately, there are many who treat the church as a great business enterprise, and willingly promote and exalt the building, as such buildings become monuments to human success. The negative influence of such builders is demonstrated in that we have so many enormous and elaborate church buildings throughout the land, but so little evidence of the presence of God in the populace.

Christians are the "built" ones, not the builders, except as "worker together with God" through proclaiming the gospel, that the redeemed might be added as living stones to the building.³⁰

Jesus sent us not to build temples, but to be temples where God might abide through His Spirit.

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