

THE TRUE TEMPLE

By

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Christians in America have been raising millions of dollars to aid Israeli Jews to destroy a shrine sacred to a billion Muslims and replace it with a great Jewish temple, which they call the “Third Temple.” A late 1998 Israeli newsletter posted on a “Voice of the Temple¹ Mount” Web site says its goal is “the liberation” of the Muslim shrines and the building on that site of a Jewish Temple. This activity encourages the militant Zionists in Israel and helps to make peace in that country an impossibility. It also strokes the fires of false prophecy and hinders a true understanding of God's word and His purpose.

Solomon's Temple, which replaced the portable Tabernacle, had been the pride of Israel until its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. Five centuries later King Herod, the same Herod that later sought to destroy the infant Jesus, completely rebuilt the temple. He used 1000 specially trained priests as masons and the work took 44 years.²

It was this temple of which Jesus said, “There will not be one stone left upon another” (Matt.24:2). He spoke of the day of Israel's judgment, which took place in 70 A.D. The order of worship and sacrifice in the temple had already become obsolete. Christ's death on the cross ended the need of putting blood on the mercy seat in the temple, and Christ himself became the High Priest and mediator between God and men. (1 Tim 2:5)

Modern Israel has no relationship to Biblical Israel. It was not established by Semites, but by descendants of the Khazars, who converted to a form of Judaism (based upon the Talmud, not the Bible), in the 8th century and eventually were found all over Europe. These were not Jews “returning to their home land” but political Zionists whose ancestors had never been in the land of Palestine.

Many Christians ignore these facts and promote the effort to “rebuild the Temple,” thinking this will fulfill prophecy and hasten the return of Christ. Classic premillennialism teaches that animal sacrifices will be reinstated. Instead of a future temple in Jerusalem fulfilling prophecy, as many erroneously teach, **there is already a temple in existence in fulfillment of Prophecy.**

Zechariah prophesied that the man whose name is the Branch “shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and shall be a priest on his throne” (Zech. 6:12-13).

Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, showed that Jesus was the longed-for Messiah and King, and had been seated on the throne as David had predicted (Psa. 89:3; 132:11). “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him (David) that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne, he foreseeing this spoke of the resurrection of the Christ that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see

corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the holy Spirit, he has poured forth this, which you see and hear” (Acts 2:30-33).

Jesus has become a “high priest who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heaven, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.” (Heb.8:1,2)

The temple, its priest and sacrifices, were only types of the true spiritual things of the New Covenant established by Jesus. They are called “copies”³ and “a shadow of the good things to come.”⁴ The sacrifices would not take away sins, so Jesus, the Lamb of God, “offered one sacrifice for sins forever.”⁵ 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,”⁶ and after His resurrection “sat down on the right hand of God”⁷ and now all Christians are exhorted to have “boldness to enter in to the holy place by the blood of Jesus.”⁸

With the perfect sacrifice made “once for all”⁹ 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,¹⁰ indicating that it was of no further significance to God. Should the Zionists, with their misguided Christian supporters succeed in building their temple in Jerusalem, it would be a counterfeit and could serve no spiritual purpose.

The true temple in which God dwells is the redeemed believer, for He “dwells not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). 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.” (1 Pet. 2:5) The earthly stones of the Jerusalem temple are replaced by living Christians, “in whom every building, fitly framed together, grows unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22).

“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” (2 Cor. 6:16).

Only Christ could build the true temple, of which the material temple was only a type, for it is Christ who transforms and gives life to the new creature; it is He who “adds” to the church living stone upon living stone to become the spiritual house of God.

So, what does it mean to be the temple of God?

It means that you do not go to the church house to be with God. You do not go anywhere to meet God, because He is with you and abides in you through His spirit. You do not

enter the house of God when you go to church; you entered the house of God when you became a Christian. Nor do you leave the house of God when you go home from the assembly. You are part of the house of God wherever you happen to be.

It means that you are in constant fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His son Jesus Christ. (1 John. 1:3) This is a personal day-to-day relationship with Almighty God, the creator of the universe, and with Jesus His son and our Lord.

It means that God is always as near as your breath. If you are "in Christ" then God abides in you through His spirit. It is His desire to be near you, for He created you for his own pleasure.¹¹ If you are thinking that maybe you don't want to be quite that close to God all the time, then perhaps you should heed Paul's advice: "Try your own selves, whether you are in the faith...Or know you not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you are reprobate" (2 Cor. 13:5).

It means that the temple, whether individually or as the entire congregation of God's people, does not depend upon material embellishments, cathedrals, forms, prestigious dignitaries of the world, nor upon the favors and works from the hands of men. The true glory of the temple is the beauty of holiness seen in the lives of Christians.

Rather than speculate on what might or might not happen in the nation that calls itself Israel, it is better for Christians to concentrate on keeping the present and true temple of God holy and fit for His spiritual service, remembering that "if any man destroys the temple of God, him God shall destroy; for the temple of God is holy which temple you are" (1 Cor. 2:17). The material temple was to be kept from pollution and reserved for those things which are pure in God's service; so the Christian. His life is not to be a mixture of serving the world with service to God added as a Sunday activity. Rather it is to be fully consecrated for God's presence and work.

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

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