

Temple Trouble

Luke 21:5-7, 20-24

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I know many people who lost their homes in the Cedar and Witch fires. These are terrible personal and community losses. It takes years to recover and in some cases, there are people who do not ever fully recover from a trauma like that. When we read about Jesus prophesying about the destruction of the Temple, I think many of us relate to it in a similar way as we would the loss of a personal residence, because we do not have a parallel building in our culture. Though it is difficult for us to fully understand, the significance of the temple in the life of God's people is hard to overstate, as is the shocking statement of Jesus in Luke 21:6. *"As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."*

In our study today we will seek to more fully understand the significance of the Temple as well as the massive changes Jesus was prophesying about.

Why A Temple?

The story of the Temple really begins in Genesis 1 and Creation. It is there that we first read of God's plan to enjoy being in a close relationship with His people in a very special place (Garden). But, as we well know, by Genesis 4, man's relationship with God had been dramatically changed, and they had been removed from the Garden, and removed from His presence as punishment for their rebellion. But God had a plan to once again dwell with his people. It was not until Exodus 25:8-9 that God instructs Moses regarding the construction of a new place for God to "dwell" with his people again.

"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. ⁹Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it."

While the Israelites were traveling toward the promised land, and while they were established in the land, there was an obvious sign to them that God was with them. His Shekinah glory filled the tabernacle. God had returned to His people and was once again dwelling with them. (Exodus 40:34-38, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

Temple Transitions

This mobile tabernacle was replaced with the magnificent Temple of Solomon around 950 BC. On the day of its dedication, it (like the tabernacle) was filled with the shekinah glory of God, as He came to dwell in this Holy Temple. (1 Kings 8:10-13) This permanent temple became the very center of Jewish life and worship. It was the place where God was going to dwell again with His people.

However, due to the disobedience and continual idolatry of Israel, God was “seen” by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 10) leaving the Temple shortly before He brought judgment upon Jerusalem and the Israelites, through the Babylonian invasion of 587 BC.

Once the Jewish people were allowed to return to Jerusalem, they were led by the prophets Ezra and Nehemia to rebuild the Temple in 515 BC. This was a much more humble building than Solomons, but a much larger concern than the grandeur of the temple, was the fact that the glorious presence of God didn’t return to it. Ezekiel was given a vision that eventually the glory of God would return (Ezekiel 43), and the people held fast to this hope.

Around 20 BC King Herod the Great took on a massive remodel and expansion of this 2nd Temple, which wouldn’t be fully completed until 64 AD. This was the Temple Jesus would have known. However, we see very early on in Jesus’ public ministry that there is something very unexpected going on regarding this temple.

Jesus And The New Temple

In the Gospels, Jesus refers to himself as the temple (John 2:19). He has a number of conflicts in and about the temple. Here in our passage today he is prophesying the destruction of the Temple. There are huge changes taking place with Jesus regarding how God is going to “dwell” with His people in this new Kingdom, and it isn’t going to have to do anything with a building. We will see a new “house” for God established in each and every one of His people. Marked once again by God’s visible presence and glory descending, but this time in a much different way and with much different results.

Grace Family Needs, News & Notes

Come Check Out A Home Group!

Mondays 6-7:30pm: Phil de Martimprey: phil@gccramona.com

Mondays 7-8:30pm: Al Lerma: amlermatelco@yahoo.com

Tuesdays 10-11:30am: Ian Hollingsworth: judy.n.ian@cox.net

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Wednesday Nights 6:30-8pm: Jerry Sain: 888sain@gmail.com

Thursdays 6-8pm: Jud Cameron: judrcam@gmail.com

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