



The Temple replaced

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Dear friends,

For those who like to take the scripture literally I have great news: *We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands (Mark 14:58). He did!! Jesus, the cornerstone of the new Temple!* Actually we are talking here about God's house, the place where He is living, where He wants to live, His dwelling place on planet earth. Amazing! Finally a place here on earth where God wants to live and dwell after the destruction of the physical Temple in Jerusalem in AD70. We really looked forward to that moment! What happened? Well, **it has been promised to us who are living in the last days, when the fullness of the times had come: But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26) and But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son (Galatians 4: 4).**

A majority of the Jews in the first century rejected the cornerstone of the new Temple (Matthew 21:42). **Many Christians nowadays accepted Jesus, however not His dwelling place on earth and are waiting for a better (physical) temple.** Unintended they neglect and underestimate the perfection of His finished work. John is explaining where it is all about: *But He was speaking of the temple of His body (John 2:21).* The word 'body' is explained in Greek: so'-mah, is used of a (large or small) number of men closely united into one society, or family as it were; a social, ethical, mystical body, so in the NT of the church. **The body of Christ, the Church, you! God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24). Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3: 16).**

The old Temple.

During the old covenant the house of the Lord was a house of stone: *And the temple, when it was being built, was built with Stone ... (1 Kings 6:7).* It was a visible, holy place for this world, with laws and requirements for this world (the flesh). These requirements were applicable until the time of the new temple: ¹ *That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth.* ⁹ *This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them.* ¹⁰ *For that old system deals only with food and drink and various cleansing ceremonies—physical regulations that were in effect only until a better system could be established (Hebrews 9:1, 9-10).*

The new Temple.

The new Temple, in the new covenant, with a new High Priest, Jesus the Christ, has been made of living stones as written: *And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.* ⁶ *As the Scriptures say, "I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."* (1 Peter 2:5-6). **The new Temple is spiritual and not physical, Jesus is the cornerstone, and it is placed in Jerusalem!** *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,* ²⁰ *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,* ²¹ *in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,* ²² *in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).* **You are the new Temple, you are the living stones, and He wants to dwell in you as His new Temple, His new (spiritual) Jerusalem! But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation (Hebrews 9:11).**

Some Christians are still expecting a new physical temple during the NT period, referring to passages out of the OT. Mhmmm, these passages are including the OT ceremonies and offerings and I wouldn't have the courage to discuss the perfection of His finished work: *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).*

An interesting comparison.

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (2 Corinthians 6:16). Compare this with: ² *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* ³ *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God (Revelation 21:2-3).* This prophesy has been accomplished already! When did the Lord come to be among us forever? With Jesus first coming. When Jesus came to the earth wasn't He the holy tabernacle that would live with us forever? Isn't it written that we are the temple (tabernacle) of the Holy Spirit? So, He wants to dwell in His holy tabernacle (us) already for more than 2000 years.

Final word.

Hebrews 9:10 is very clear about the replacement of the old physical temple: *For that old system deals only with food and drink and various cleansing ceremonies—physical regulations that were in effect only **until a better system could be established.*** Jesus is the cornerstone of that new better system, a new spiritual Temple in a new spiritual dwelling place, called Jerusalem. Don't chase for a Tabernacle made with hands on planet earth and miss those spiritual dwellings. *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).* I have no words. What a spiritual explosion! We, right now, on the Mount Zion where God lives! **We, right now, in the heavenly Jerusalem, together with the angels and the saints and Jesus in a joyful gathering!** *Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?* ⁴ *Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.* ⁵ *They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior.* ⁶ **Such people may seek you and worship in your presence,** *O God of Jacob.* ⁷ *Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter (Psalm 24:3-7).* In this dwelling place every spiritual blessing is waiting for us: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).*

Thank you Lord Jesus for building a new dwelling place for yourself in the New Testament on planet earth, accessible for us. You didn't leave us with a gap between the Old Testament and the New earth, instead it is a steady growing and improving system:

1. The tabernacle and the physical temple in Jerusalem in the Old Testament, limited to one physical location.
2. A spiritual Temple in a spiritual Jerusalem, throughout the earth where people accept you as Saviour during the whole New Testament.
3. On the new earth, the new Jerusalem again physically present on earth in its full glory!

In all three cases it is an in and outgoing through the gates, enter Gods holy dwelling to bring Him glory and honour! Newborn people, born from above, from the heavens, the Church, **the New Jerusalem** coming down to earth 2000 years ago as a spiritual Kingdom and at the very end, *after the renovation of the world by fire, the visible capital in the heavenly kingdom.* Psalm 122 is giving a nice view on Jerusalem (a

song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem): ¹ *I was glad when they said to me, “**Let us go to the house of the LORD.**”* ² *And now here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.* ³ *Jerusalem is a well-built city; its seamless walls cannot be breached. All the tribes of Israel—the LORD’s people—make their pilgrimage here. They come to give thanks to the name of the LORD, as the law requires of Israel.* ⁵ *Here stand the thrones where judgment is given, the thrones of the dynasty of David.* ⁶ *Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper.* ⁷ *O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces.* ⁸ *For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, “May you have peace.”* ⁹ *For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek what is best for you, O Jerusalem (Psalm 122).* This all is applicable in the Old Testament, in the New Testament and on the new heaven and earth.

Yours in His service,

Kees

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