



2 Samuel 7:13

Solomon's Temple

The LORD God knew King David as "a man after His own heart." He made a promise to David that when he died one of his descendants would sit in his place on the throne (2 Samuel 7:12). The LORD didn't allow David to build the Temple, but his son, Solomon was permitted after his father's death. David made preparations and gathered materials for the project before his death. God said to David, "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . And your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (vv. 13, 16).

Long ago Hengstenberg observed, "The building of the house of the LORD goes hand in hand with the eternity of the kingdom." Therefore, "as the kingdom endures for ever, so the house built for the dwelling-place of the Lord must also endure for ever. . . " (Keil and Delitzsch).

Many scholars have observed that it is not just the earthly form that the LORD God is referring to, but the essential characteristic of the Temple. It is the place where God meets with man. The earthly form is perishable, but the essence is eternal. The very essence of the Temple of God was His presence with man. That never perishes. His essence and character did not cease with the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC.

Of course, the Temple was not necessary because of God's nature (Acts 7:46-50). God is Spirit. The Temple was an accommodation to the limitations and needs of His people (1 Kings 8:27ff).

It is when the Word became flesh and tabernacled Himself among men that we see the true essence of the Temple of the Lord. His Temple culminated in the appearance of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Only in Him was there the full revelation of God's presence with man. In Him, we see the full manifestation of the LORD God. Yahweh came to dwell with His people in person. One who knew Him best wrote, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). A little later he wrote, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*" (v. 18). The LORD pitched His tent on the earth in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The Messiah was in the Temple building one day and He saw the religious leaders selling oxen and sheep for "official" sacrifices. The moneychangers were seated bargaining with the people. Jesus picked up pieces of rope that had been used to tie the animals and plaited a whip. With passion burning in His soul, He ran the merchants out of the Temple. He was approached a little later by angry officials demanding, "What sign do you show to us, seeing that you do these things?" The Messiah answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They responded to Jesus saying, "It took forty-six years to build this temple and you will raise it up in three days?" Jesus spoke of the temple of His body.

The play on words is clear in the original language. Jesus cleansed the *hieron*, the standing temple with its various precincts. He chased the merchants out of the physical Temple building and outer courts. However, Jesus spoke of the *naos*, the inner shrine, the holy of holies. "Destroy this *naos*, the holy of holies, and in three days I will raise it up." He spoke of the *naos*, the holy of holies of His body. In the person of the Messiah God's promise to David of building an eternal house is fulfilled.

The temple of His body was destroyed. It was placed on the cross and He bore in His body the marks of the penalty of sin for every individual. He was made sin for us so that He could put away our sin. However, the Temple endures forever through His resurrected body, the Temple of the Messiah.

The apostle Peter spoke of the temple God is now building in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul also speaks of this temple in Ephesians 2:20-22. "Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

Every individual believer, both Jewish and Gentile, becomes a part of the glorious temple of His body. "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). This is only true of those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Every believer is a part of that body, or temple of Christ.

The apostle Paul reminds us why we are the temple of God. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Later he wrote, "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

The complete and essential fulfillment of God's promise to David begins with this building up of the temple destroyed by dying on the cross, and being raised through the resurrection from the dead. The body of Christ is built up through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers. This is the construction of the spiritual house of God. It is composed of living stones. The temple of the LORD God will be perfected in the completion of the kingdom of God when the New Jerusalem and new heaven come down on the new earth.

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The millennium will see a temple raised to God, the refuge of all nations. This will be primarily memorial, however. When the millennium is complete and the new age of perfection is established, there will be no temple. The Lord God and the Lamb will be in the midst of the people (Revelation 21:22).

One wonderful glorious day He will descend and manifest Himself in full glory in the New Jerusalem and we will experience eternal communion with God.

The apostle John on the island of Patmos saw in a vision the tabernacle of God among men. The ultimate fulfillment of all God's promises in space and time will come in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21-22). He wrote in Revelation 21:2-4:

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

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