

Jesus As the Temple of God

Jn. 1:14-18

Introduction:

1. In recent studies we have focused attention on the theme of God's presence among men.
2. God's presence was made known in Eden.
3. Even though we were separated because of sin and exiled from the garden we were not abandoned by God. Every altar constructed by the patriarchs reminded of God's presence. The tabernacle, the temple of Solomon, the second temple constructed after the Babylonian exile and the temple of Herod were all reminders of God's on-going presence and concern for mankind.
4. With the coming of Jesus there was a dramatic shift from focus on the physical/geographical temple in Jerusalem to the fulfillment of the O.T. temple concept in Jesus Himself.
5. It is our objective in this lesson to consider some of the texts that give evidence to this dramatic shift of focus and remind us of who Jesus is as God among us.

Discussion:

- I. The Judaism of Jerusalem had made the first century temple ineffective (Jn. 2:13-22).
 - A. Those selling and changing money were for the convenience of Jews coming from out of town. It was not workable to bring animals long distances. The right coinage was demanded at the temple. Those coming from other places needed to exchange their money much like we do when traveling overseas.
 - B. These businesses were set up in the Court of the Gentiles and effectively served to block the Gentiles from the temple. This becomes particularly clear in Mk. 11:15-18. Mark records that Jesus quoted Isa. 56:7: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." (Is there implication here that Jesus considers this house His house?)
 - C. Matthew (21:14-16) records that the blind and lame were coming to Jesus in the temple and children were shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David." The chief priests and scribes objected. Jesus quoted Psa. 8:2: "Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself" (LXX). Is he not identifying Himself as God? See R. T. France, Matthew, p. 789 and Jesus and O.T., p. 151-52.
 - D. The cursing of the fig tree mentioned in Matthew (21:18-19) and Mark (11:20-21) illustrates the fruitlessness of the current Judaistic system (Cf. Matt. 21:43).
 - E. When they questioned His authority (Jn. 2:18) and tried to destroy Him (Lk. 19:47) Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn.

2:19). The Jews objected, "It took 46 years to build this temple and you will raise it in three days?" But the disciples came to realize He was speaking of the temple of His body. They remembered this statement when He was raised from the dead.

- II. Jesus has become the focal point of God's presence among men (Jn. 1:14-18).
 - A. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us."
 - B. "We saw His glory." Ex. 40:34-35 reminds us of how the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."
 - C. But it is not just John that sees Jesus as God dwelling among men.
 - 1. Matthew (1:23) quotes Isa. 7:14 translating "Immanuel" as "God with us."
 - 2. Mark mentions the tearing of the temple curtain when Jesus was crucified (15:38). He contrasts the temple built with hands with one built without hands, in reference to His bodily resurrection (14:58).
 - D. Just as God's presence in the garden of Eden resulted in life giving water flowing from the garden (Gen. 2:10-14), Jesus presents Himself as the source of "living water" that "springs up to eternal life" (Jn. 4:10, 14). Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'" (Jn. 7:38).

- III. Jesus is the cornerstone of the "new" temple.
 - A. Matthew records Jesus' quotation of Psa. 118:22-23. Jesus interprets it to the effect that He is the stone rejected by the builders but used by God (Matt. 21:42-44).
 - B. Paul identifies Jesus as the corner stone of the temple (Eph. 2:20-22).
 - C. Peter too identifies Jesus as God's choice stone (1 Pet. 2:4-8).

- IV. Jesus inaugurated the new temple and the new creation.
 - A. Jesus' death and resurrection begin the new creation. God's purpose from Genesis and Eden begins to be realized in the new creation and the temple of Jesus.
 - B. Matthew 27:50-54 reveals how the veil in the Jerusalem temple was torn from top to bottom at the death of Jesus.
 - 1. This symbolizes that the way into the presence of God is made available by the death of Jesus.
 - 2. This tearing of the temple veil pictures the destruction of the old temple (Matt. 27:40). The resurrection of Jesus inaugurated the new temple (Jn. 2:19-22).
 - 3. It is from this point that the presence of God breaks out to bless all nations.

Peter says in his Pentecost sermon, “The promise is for you and your children **and for all who are far off**, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (Acts 2:39). The rest of the book of Acts shows all nations streaming to the “house of God” (Isa. 2:3).

Conclusion:

1. God is calling you to come into His house.
2. He dwells among us in Jesus Christ.
3. The life that He intended us to have in His dwelling in Eden He has given us by means of His own son, a stone rejected by the builders but chosen by God to be the chief cornerstone.