

The True Temple of God

John 2:12-25

At Passover the Lord Jesus Christ went “up” to Jerusalem. If one is in the south one goes up to the north. That is typical English usage. But the Jews always went up to Jerusalem regardless of which direction they were coming from. This was their way of saying that Jerusalem is the most important of cities because the temple of the living God is there. The psalmist tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. But what does the name Jerusalem represent for Christians? Are we simply to have concern about the earthly city or is there a fulfillment in Christ that we must see?

The writer of Hebrews teaches us that we “...have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...” (Hebrews 11:22) Just as the city of Jerusalem was emblematic of the nation of Israel, so the heavenly Jerusalem is emblematic of God’s holy nation, his church. That is why John in the book of Revelation speaks of Jerusalem as “coming down” out of heaven as a bride. We are to pray for the health and well being of God’s church here on the earth and rejoice in the triumphant character of the church in heaven.

The Lord Jesus Christ discovered that the temple of God was being profaned by misuse. Commercial interests had turned the holy site into a center for money making in much the same way that some use religion for their monetary advantage today. Could it be that God’s house, his church is being profaned today? When false doctrines are taught the church is being abused. When membership integrity is ignored by low standards for membership, and by the omission of church discipline, the church is being misused. When the church fails to make obedience to Christ the thing of first importance, the church is profaned. Paul the apostle said, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy and you are that temple.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

As individuals, our bodies are holy temples for the Lord. The immoral use of the body profanes the temple. Failure to love our brothers and sisters in Christ profanes the temple.

Unlike many today who try not to “rock the boat,” the Lord Jesus took his stand publicly. He drove the money changers out of the temple in a violent sort of way. He even overturned the tables that they had set up to conduct their business. His disciples remembered the scripture that read, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” (Psalm 69:9)

There is another great truth here. When the Jews demanded a “sign,” that is, an emblem of authority for his actions, the Lord told them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” They thought that he was claiming to be able to raise up the existing temple of their day which had taken many years to build.

Actually he was making a much bolder claim. He was speaking about his own body, calling it the temple of God. Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is the very essence of the temple in all perfection. John, many years later, will be able to say, “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:22)

Our Lord is the perfect temple of God and this was made clear by his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection from the dead. After he had been raised to new life his disciples remembered this teaching of the Lord. If Christ is zealous for the house of

God should we not be also?

Should we not ask, "Am I a temple indwelt by God's Spirit?" "If so, am I living in a way that brings honor to that work of God or am I profaning the temple by the way I live?" Should we not ask, "Is my local church seeking to maintain the integrity of its membership by teaching true doctrine and by holding the membership to biblical standards of conduct?" The moneychangers were judged by the Lord.

Scripture teaches us, "But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment." (1 Corinthians 11:31")

by Joe Nesom