

Destroy This Temple

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The religious leaders challenged Jesus Christ on a regular basis because he posed a threat to their authority in the nation of Judah, as well as their privileged relationship with the Roman government. In one of these instances, the Jewish leaders wanted Christ to prove his authority to perform various deeds, including miracles, came from Almighty God. Christ's response was misunderstood and later misinterpreted by those who sought his death (Mt. 26:61; Mk. 14:58).

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The apostle John explained that Christ was not referring to the temple complex in Jerusalem. Instead, Christ was using the physical temple as an allegory to teach some important spiritual lessons. These will be examined shortly.

But he (Christ) was speaking of **the temple of his body** (Jn. 2:21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Before examining this allegory, it is important to mention that Christ could not raise his body up from the grave because he would be dead. Instead, prior to his death, Christ "trusted" that his heavenly Father would resurrect him to everlasting life. There are many scriptures that refer to this, and Christ was paraphrasing some of these in John 2:19. Following are just some examples.

I will extol You, O Lord (Almighty), for You have lifted me (Christ) up... (Ps. 30:1a; cf. Jn. 3:14; 12:32; Ed. notes in parentheses).

... my (Christ's) flesh will rest in hope. ¹⁰ For You (Almighty God) will not leave my soul (Heb. *nephesh*; living being; life) in Sheol (the grave), nor will You allow Your Holy One to see (undergo) corruption (Ps. 16:9b-10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that He Himself (God the Father) does; and He will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹For as **the Father raises the dead** and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will (Jn. 5:20-21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back to Christ's allegory, he was comparing his physical body to the temple in Jerusalem because the nation of Israel had witnessed the power of God in the temple that Solomon built as well as the tabernacle that preceded it, and Christ had this same power of God working in, and through, his physical temple or body.

Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: "*For He is good, for His mercy endures forever;*" that the house, **the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud,** ¹⁴**so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory (power) of the Lord filled the house of God** (2Chr. 5:13-14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. ³⁵And **Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of**

the Lord filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35; cf. Lev. 16:2; emphasis added).

And on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, **the cloud covered the tabernacle**, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning **it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire** (Nu. 9:15; emphasis added).

Because he had the power of his Father's Holy Spirit dwelling in him, Christ trusted that his Father would raise his body from the dead.



**NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST,
AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY.**

1 Corinthians 12:27; emphasis added

But if the Spirit of Him (Almighty God) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies **because of His Spirit which dwells in you** (Rom. 8:11; cf. Ac. 17:31; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

From the point in time that Christ was resurrected, the physical temple in Jerusalem became insignificant as the apostle Paul confirmed, even though it continued to function until 70 CE.

However, **the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands**, as the prophet says: ⁴⁹"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? ⁵⁰Has My hand not made all these things?" (Ac. 7:48-50; emphasis added).

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 (Ac. 17:24; emphasis added).

Almighty God gave the Jewish leadership and all unbelieving Jews forty years, following the death of Christ, to repent and acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, before allowing the physical temple in Jerusalem to be destroyed by the Romans. God would not have allowed its destruction if it held any significance, but it did not. Instead, the power of God dwells in the temple, or Body of Christ, which includes every repentant sinner.

Now **you are the body of Christ**, and members individually (1Cor. 12:27; emphasis added).

So **we**, being many, **are one body in Christ**, and individually members of one another (Rom. 12:5; emphasis added).

I (Paul) now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church** (Col. 1:24; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, the temple that Almighty God is focused on is a "spiritual body" that could only exist because Jesus Christ was willing to "pay the price", so that every repentant sinner could be forgiven. This required a tremendous amount of suffering both emotionally and physically, which ended in Christ's death.

Do you not know that you (repentant individuals) are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For **the temple of God is holy, which temple you are** (1Cor. 3:16-17; cf. 2Cor. 6:16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Or do you not know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you**, which you have from God, and you are not your

own? ²⁰For **you were bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body (1Cor. 6:19-20; emphasis added).

The apostle Paul used familiar terminology to describe the spiritual house of God that has been under construction since the time of Abel (Mt. 23:35).

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being joined together, **grows into a holy temple in the Lord**, ²²in whom you also are being built together for **a habitation of God in the Spirit** (Eph. 2:19-22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is unfortunate that many people are focused on a physical temple in a physical city on this earth, especially when so many scriptures make it abundantly clear that God has been working on the construction of a spiritual house (Eph. 2:19). Therefore, it should be no surprise that New Jerusalem has no temple in it because every repentant individual becomes part of the body of Christ.

But I (John) saw no temple in it (New Jerusalem; cf. vs. 2), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Rev. 21:22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

When Christ returns to begin the next phase of his Father's plan, that will include reconstructing this planet and re-educating its inhabitants, he will not be returning to a physical temple in a physical city on earth. Instead, he will be coming to gather those who have been part of his body, the true church of God, and this will happen very suddenly.

And **the Lord**, whom you seek, **will suddenly come to his temple**, even the Messenger of the covenant (Christ), in whom you delight. Behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts (Mal. 3:1a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Behold, I (Paul) tell you a mystery (hidden truth): We (those in the true church of God) shall not all sleep (remain dead), but **we shall all be changed** – ⁵²**in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1Cor. 15:51-52; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Contrary to the teaching of some religious organizations, Christ will return when least expected. In fact, Christ used a parable to explain this truth. In this parable, Christ used the phrase "master of the house" to describe Satan who deceives everyone to one degree or another (Rev. 12:9).

But know this, that if **the master of the house** had known what hour (watch of the night) the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect him (Mt. 24:43-44; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Part of being a masterful deceiver involves manipulating, lying, and bribing all those under one's influence. By utilizing these, and other tactics, Satan's house is not allowed to become divided. Christ pointed this truth out when the religious leaders accused him of casting out demons by the power of Satan.

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought

to destruction, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶And **if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?**" (Mt. 12:35-36; emphasis added).

As cunning as Satan is, he will not know in advance exactly when Christ will return, and neither will the other angels (Mt. 24:36). Even though Noah was a loyal servant of God, he only had seven days' notice that a cataclysmic flood was about to strike, and this was because he had to coordinate the movement of animals into a vessel (Gen. 7:4).

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Mt. 24:37-39).

Part of one disinformation campaign, regarding Christ's sudden return, claims that the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11:1-13 will be preaching for three and a half years and then Christ will return, but no such statement in scripture supports this theory. Yes, two witnesses are mentioned, but Christ returning immediately after the death of these two individuals does not follow in sequence. Instead, their death signals the end of the second "woe" (Rev. 11:14), and by continuing the sequence from Revelation 11:15-18 the context indicates a time of final judgment (vs. 18). Many scriptures dealing with this time of judgment show that it will not occur until the end of Christ's one-thousand-year reign on earth. Therefore, it is more likely the two witnesses will be delivering their message just prior to the second resurrection, which means that Christ has already been actively teaching the inhabitants of

this planet for many centuries. At the end of Christ's one-thousand-year reign, Satan will be released for a short period of time and he will again deceive many nations (Rev. 20:7-10). It is in this context that Christ will wage war with Satan for the last time, and then living waters will flow from New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1). These waters represent God's Holy Spirit being poured out on all flesh as an integral part of their judgment, with the goal of leading them to repentance (Jn. 4:10-11; 7:38).

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. ⁴And **in that day** his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, **from east to west...** (Zech. 14:3-4a; emphasis added).

And **in that day** it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them **toward the eastern sea** and half of them **toward the western sea...** (Zech. 14:8a; emphasis added).

In the symbolic language of the Bible, the terms "sea" and "seas" are sometimes used figuratively to describe regions in the spirit realm inhabited by fallen angels (Eze. 26:16; Dan. 7:2-3; Jude 13; Rev. 5:13; 12:12; 13:1; 18:21; 21:1). Therefore, the living waters representing God's Holy Spirit will be available to those fallen angels who are in the eastern and western seas. Because God's Law defines the wages of sin as death (Rom. 3:23a), these fallen angels in the sea/s are considered "dead", spiritually-speaking, and, as God is not willing that anyone remain dead forever (2Pet. 3:9), they will be resurrected and given an opportunity to repent.

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death (2Pet. 2:4; Jude 12b) and Hades (the grave) delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his

works (Rev. 20:13; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, these living waters are meant to lead all sinners, including fallen angels, to repentance as the first step in their rehabilitation and restoration process.

In another parable, Christ taught that even those who knew about his teachings could allow other "priorities" to negatively affect their relationship with him. For half of this group, Christ's return will be so sudden they won't have enough time to re-build the relationship they once had with him. This parable will now be examined.



NOW THIS I SAY, BRETHREN, THAT
FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT
THE KINGDOM OF GOD ...

I Corinthians 15:50a

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom (Mt. 25:1).

This first verse begins with "the kingdom of heaven", which is something that repentant sinners can enter.

For I (Christ) say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, **you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven** (Mt. 5:20; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Elsewhere, Christ confirmed that this kingdom is not a physical entity located on this planet.

Jesus answered, "**my kingdom is not of this world**. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews (Jewish religious leaders; cf. Jn. 8:44); but now **my kingdom is not from**

here (Jn. 18:36; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ stated that any sinner wishing to enter the kingdom of heaven must first be transformed in mind, by repenting of sin; and body, by a resurrection to everlasting life.

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (through baptism, following repentance of sin) and the Spirit (received after baptism), he/she cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:5; Ed. notes in parenthesis)

The apostle Paul confirmed this same truth,

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ... (1Cor. 15:50a).

Going back now to Matthew 25:1, Christ was explaining that the ten virgins were desirous of marrying the bridegroom who, according to the apostle Paul, was Jesus Christ. As Christ is already in the kingdom of heaven, the ten virgins would be seeking to join him in this spiritual abode.

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2Cor. 11:2; emphasis added).

In many scriptures, the word "virgin" is used symbolically to represent those who have become a new creation through the process of repentance and baptism, which required the shed blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he/she is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2Cor. 5:17; emphasis added).

These are the ones who were not defiled with *women* (symbolic of false religious systems; cf. Rev. 17:4-6), for **they are virgins**. These are the ones who follow the Lamb (Christ) wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb (Rev. 14:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore the ten virgins, mentioned in Matthew 25:1, were redeemed through the shed blood of Christ followed by their repentance and baptism (Rev. 1:15; 7:14). Part of this process included the understanding that sin is the transgression of God's law (1Jn. 3:4). Hence, the symbolism associated with the lamps that each of these virgins carried. These lamps represent the law of Almighty God, which includes every word that proceeds from Him (Mt. 4:4).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps. 119:105).

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light... (Prov. 6:23a; cf. Ps. 19:8).

Although all ten virgins knew about God's law and commandments, how they acted on this understanding determined whether they were wise or foolish.

Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish (Mt. 25:2).

The foolish took their lamps, but did not take any oil with them (cf. vs. 8). In other words, they would be unable to see through the darkness because their lamps were virtually empty.

Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them (Mt. 25:3).

The Greek word translated into the English word "oil" is SGD 1637, which means "olive oil" that is

used as fuel for lamps/torches; for healing the sick; for anointing the head and body at feasts, and as an article of commerce. In God's tabernacle, olive oil was to be carefully maintained so that the lamp located outside the veil did not go out.

And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. ²¹In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the Lord... (Ex. 27:20-21a).



**YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET
AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH.**
Psalms 119:105

As the law of God is compared to a lamp, it is inconceivable that anyone can accurately see the Law without oil in their lamp. Therefore, olive oil must represent the means through which God's law can be clearly seen/understood (Jer. 31:31-34). As we will see, five of the virgins allowed the oil in their lamps to be virtually quenched.

And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for **our lamps are going out**" (Mt. 25:8; emphasis added).

The apostle Paul warned the Thessalonian brethren not to quench God's Holy Spirit. If they did, they would be unable to correctly understand and follow the will of Almighty God in their lives.

Do not quench the Spirit (2Thes. 5:19).

It is through continual neglect that God's Holy Spirit can be extinguished, or removed. Therefore, the five foolish virgins were no longer taking the action/s necessary to obey God's law. Instead, they appear to have become passive,

and even academic, in their relationship with God and His truth.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith (trust in God) without works is dead also (Jas. 2:26; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Just like the five foolish virgins, King Saul continued to neglect doing those things he knew he should do, and eventually God's Holy Spirit departed from him.

But **the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul**, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him (1Sam. 16:14; emphasis added).



WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YOU KNOW
NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR.

Matthew 25:13

Just as God's Holy Spirit is given to those who seek to obey Him, it can also be removed if they continue neglecting what they know is expected of them.

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is **the Holy Spirit which God has given to those who obey Him** (Ac. 5:32; emphasis added).

For everyone **to whom much is given**, from him **much will be required**; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask (expect) the more (Lk. 12:48b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As mentioned previously, Christ's return will be sudden, and he will be seen by those who have his Father's Holy Spirit actively working in their lives. Although the five foolish virgins were notified that Christ's return was very imminent, they were not able to see him or be with him in

the kingdom of heaven. Instead, the door was shut.

And at midnight a cry was heard: "Behold, the bridegroom; go out to meet him!" (Mt. 25:6).

And while they (the 5 foolish virgins) went to buy (cf. Rev. 3:18), the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and **the door was shut** (Mt. 25:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

At this point, the five foolish virgins were shocked. They began to pray, and their prayers were heard. However, the response was not what they hoped for,

Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!"¹² But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you" (Mt. 25:11-12; cf. Isa. 26:20).

In the context of this parable, and others, Christ stressed how vital it is for God's true servants to be vigilant and not complacent about their responsibilities, especially obedience to the law and commandments of Almighty God.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour (Mt. 25:13).

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.²² Many will say to me in that day (ref. *period of future judgment*), "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?"²³ And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, **you who practice lawlessness!**" (Mt. 7:21-23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As previously shown, Christ will return suddenly, and he will only be seen by those who comprise the spiritual temple of God. This should not be a foreign concept. Upon close examination of scripture, it is apparent that the spirit-being known today as Jesus Christ has appeared many times throughout man's history, but mainly to those who are truly serving the will of Almighty God (Gen. 17:1; 1Kgs. 3:5, 9:2; 2Chr. 7:12; Lk. 24:34; Ac. 7:30, 35; 16:9).

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After that, he (Christ) appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country (Mk. 16:12; Ed. note in parenthesis).

(The apostles) to whom he (Christ) also presented himself alive after his suffering... (Ac. 1:2b-3a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And we (Christ's apostles) are witnesses of all these things which he (Christ) did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰Him God (Almighty) raised up on the third day, and **showed him openly, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God,** even to us who ate and drank with him after he arose from the dead (Ac. 10:39-41; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So I (Paul) answered, "Who are you Lord?" And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth who you are persecuting.' ⁹Now those who were with me indeed saw the light, but **they did not hear the voice of him who spoke to me** (Ac. 22:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In conclusion, Jesus Christ will return suddenly and very few will be aware he is coming. He will not be returning to a physical temple in Jerusalem, as many teach. Instead, he will be returning to his Body, which consists of those who are actively obeying God's law and commandments (Jn. 2:21; Rev. 12:17b).