

The Temple(s) of God

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Well, tonight we're gonna begin in the book of 2 Chronicles 3. As I mentioned, almost every time we gather, we as a family of faith are walking through a systematic study and reading of God's word. We find ourselves today in 1 & 2 Chronicles and as we make our way out of 2 Chronicles, don't worry, for those of you who would like, shall we say, more familiar reading, the Gospel of John is right around the corner.

But in 2 Chronicles 3, we have the instructions and the implementation and the building of what you and I know as Solomon's temple and tonight that is the subject matter that we're gonna address from the Bible. What we know as the Jewish temple or the temple of God, such a controversial subject matter that even today in the heart of Jerusalem on what you and I know as the Temple Mount, there is great controversy, there is great tension, there is great dissension and there is division. Who should be allowed on that Temple Mount? What structures should be allowed to be built on that Temple Mount? And so before we get to the present day, we're gonna go way back in time about 3,000 years ago and very briefly read the instructions that God gave Solomon for the building of the temple, then we're gonna take those instructions and we're gonna do a historical walk through the first temple, the second temple, and eventually to what the book of Revelation speaks of, what we've commonly referred to as the third temple.

If you'll join me in 2 Chronicles 3, beginning in verse 1, it says,

1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.
2 And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

Now we're not gonna spend time tonight going through all of the details and the elements and the specifics of the building plan and the blueprint but we're gonna use that tonight as somewhat of a launching pad, and as we address these specific temples that were built and ultimately destroyed, I want to walk through time and deal with two very important subject matters: the construction of the temple and the destruction of the temple. We're

gonna talk about how these buildings came to be, why they came to be, and then ultimately what led to their demise and, in some cases, their destruction.

So we begin tonight in 2 Chronicles 3. We have the Lord instructing Solomon to build this most famous of buildings. Remember just that this building was not something that came by circumstance or by coincidence, this had been desired by his father David for many years, but as you make your way back into the Old Testament, you discover that even after we'd come out of the garden of Eden, even after God had called Abram to go to a land he knew not of to establish what you and I know as the lineage of the Messiah, there had been the desire of the Lord to dwell among his people. In fact, all the way back in the book of Exodus 25, we have the, shall we say, the building of the tabernacle. It was temporary in nature, in fact, it was called a tent even in the New Testament. It was nomadic, in a sense, and it was left out in the elements and then it could be moved around, and at times it was even captured, not the tabernacle per se but the ark of the covenant that dwelt therein, and it was a permanent place for the presence of God that was the purpose of the temple of God. I want to state that again because that needs to be the theme throughout the entire study time. It is the permanent place for the presence of God, and even though we see it prophesied before Solomon actually implements it, this is what the Lord desired. In Exodus 25:8 he said, "Build the tabernacle so that I might dwell among my people." Did he move in a nomadic fashion with them in the tabernacle? Absolutely, but it would be the temple that initiated or would start a new form or a new means of worshiping the Lord. This time now, the Israelites would gather at those famous feasts, they would descend upon Jerusalem, they would have the Levites gathered and they would worship the Lord and they would sacrifice to the Lord in a permanent place, a structure that would be fixed rather than being nomadic. In fact, if you go back in the book of Deuteronomy 12, as the Israelites are making their way into what we know as the Promised Land, receiving the instructions for exiting of the wilderness, it tells us that the temple was to be a place over and over again, a permanent place in a specific place in what you and I know as Jerusalem.

Obviously this is a controversial subject matter in today's contemporary tense environment, but it was also controversial in Jesus' day. You remember in the Gospel of John specifically in chapter 4, he meets the woman at the well and remember as he begins to diagnose her spiritual condition and address where she stands with the Lord, she somewhat interrupts and kind of has a side bar conversation and she says, "Where should we worship? Should we do it here or in Bethel?" In other words, when we see the kingdom divide after Solomon, we will have the southern kingdom worship in Jerusalem at the temple, we'll have the northern kingdom worship in another location, and even though the northern kingdom would be taken captive by the Assyrians, it would be the captivity of the Babylonians that would be most significant for Jerusalem is the place for the temple of God. It is Mount Moriah as we just read, that David received not only the call of God but the commission of God for the presence of God and a place that would be permanent.

So the very first temple that you and I are aware of on that famous Temple Mount was constructed at the direction of Solomon. All the elements were brought in exactly as the

Lord had commanded and here for years and years and years, the people of God had desired the permanent place for the presence of God, so much so that David as we read a couple of weeks ago, even built a new cart to bring the ark of the covenant in and remember that time when Uzzah touched it and he passed away because they moved it differently than what the Scriptures said to do. There was an excitement about this. There was an energy about it and what we know at approximately 1000 BC, that's an approximation, David passed on to Solomon the reign of the kingdom and the building began.

So roughly 3,000 years ago this famous temple was built. You may remember not only in 2 Chronicles but also in 1 Kings, they had a dedication of the building and the Spirit of the Lord manifested himself so much so it said the smoke filled the building and they could not worship therein. It was the place, the permanent place for the presence of God. It was the place where the people of God would descend on a regular basis to offer sacrifice and to receive atonement for God. In fact, if you want to go back to Genesis 12 where the Lord called Abram to begin or to initiate what we know as the messianic line, I would daresay that it would be this building on this piece of property that would be the most viable and most valuable physical item of the calling of God to the people of God. That's why today the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is the most valuable piece of real estate on the planet, the most controversial piece of real estate because there are so many people that claim a lineage to it. We'll address the contemporary in just a moment. But what we know is about 3,000 years ago. This temple was built exactly as described and amazing detail is given to us in the Bible at an amazing cost.

Now there's a lot of, shall we say, discussion about how much would the temple have cost in a contemporary society when you look at all the gold that was utilized, the wood that was utilized, the labor that was involved in building it. And I know oftentimes the spectrum of analysis is broad but let's just keep it simple tonight. It would have cost tens of billions of dollars to build this building in the contemporary world, so an incredibly viable yet valuable piece of property and building, but it's not the construction of the temple that really is of greatest concern tonight, it's the fact that it is still not in its original state. 3,000 years later when you to the Temple Mount, Solomon's temple is not there. In fact, it lasted for a little over 400 years.

You remember as you study the Old Testament, the prophets whether they be Isaiah or Jeremiah or such, they continually came to the people of God and warned them that if they did not repent of their evil ways, if they did not continue to do their sacrifices in vain, that judgment would come. In 722 BC, a critical date in studying your Old Testament, the northern kingdom was taken captive by the Assyrians. Although it was a lesson for the southern kingdom and a horrible event, it did not impact what we know as the temple. The temple was in Jerusalem. The temple was on Mount Moriah. The temple was safe, at least from the northern invasion. But the years went by and the prophets continued to preach and they continued to warn, and the people of the southern kingdom continued to rebel and they continued to ignore God's warning. Finally the year was 586, probably one of the most critical years of understanding in Old Testament history. In 586, the Babylonians with a leader by the name of Nebuchadnezzar, they ransacked what we

know as Jerusalem, they took the temple and they destroyed it. Even though it was viable to the Jewish system of worship, even though it was valuable, they took that building and they absolutely razed it in the sense of taking it to the ground in 586 BC and the Israelites began their exile. They began that which the prophets had foretold in Daniel and Jeremiah, and what Ezekiel would live through. For 70 years Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, Nehemiah and Esther among some of the Bible's most hallowed, shall we say, individuals would find themselves in a foreign land, they would find themselves in a place where they would not be able to worship as the Lord commanded in Deuteronomy 12, they found themselves in a place where they could not offer the sacrifice as commissioned by God and desired by God. That is why what we know or who we know as Nehemiah the cup-bearer went into Cyrus, by that time the leader of the Persians who had taken over the Babylonians, remember the Bible says he was sad of countenance and being the cup-bearer who would test his food and his wine, he became nervous that maybe he had become sick. He said, "What can I do? What is the problem?" He said, "I am hurting for my people. I am hurting for my land. I am hurting for the temple and the place of God." He was given an edict by Cyrus to go back and he and Ezra and many other of notable Old Testament characters after 70 years of exile as prophesied by the prophets, specifically Jeremiah and Daniel, they returned to Jerusalem and they built what you and I know as the second temple.

Now the second temple was constructed, at least the completion of its construction, was approximately 445-444 BC. You may be wondering why is that date important. Remember I keep mentioning the prophet Daniel and tonight we don't have time to go through all the chronology of Daniel but his famous 70 weeks were each one of those of years is represented by a day, that it was that prophecy of 490 years of the judgment of God that is divided up into sections that ultimately, if you look at the chronology, takes us from the building of what we know as the second temple to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

Now when that temple was built, or shall I say completed in the mid 5th century BC, it was built to the same specifications but things were a little bit different. Hopefully you have your Bible in front of you, I mentioned we were going to go to several passages, well, this is the time in which we're gonna begin. I want to encourage you to go to the Gospel of John in the New Testament, chapter 2. Jesus is at the beginning of his earthly ministry. He has accomplished what we refer to as his first miracle. He's there in Cana at the wedding, turns the water into wine, and then goes out and overturns the tables. Now you may be thinking, "I thought Jesus overturned the tables in what we know as that famous Palm Sunday?" You're correct. He actually overturned the tables twice: one early in his ministry, once in the latter part. In the early part here in John 2, he says, "You've made my Father's house a den of thieves." When you get to the end of his ministry he says, "You have made my house a den of thieves." On the backside of this famous event where he throws up the moneychangers and he overturns the tables, you can imagine those that were in authority of the temple were in much despair.

I want you to hear what they say in verse 20 of John 2, actually let me back up to verse 19.

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

That famous what we call second temple took 46 years to build. Think about the amount of labor, think about the amount of valuables according to the blueprint that would have been involved. It was an enormous, shall we say, endeavor of the Jewish people and that temple would stand for about 400 years but it would become in disrepair and it would taken for granted. And there was a Roman ruler by the name of Herod, just a couple of decades before the birth of Jesus Christ, who gave the money for, shall we say, the refurbishment of the temple. And so oftentimes we refer to the first temple as Solomon's temple because he was the one who, shall we say, managed the building thereof, and oftentimes we refer to the second temple as Herod's temple. Herod had nothing to do with the building but he had everything to do with funding the restoring of that building just some decades before the birth of Jesus Christ.

So if you'll think about the chronology for a moment we have approximately 3,000 years ago. Let's just use simple numbers tonight just to make it easy on all of us. About 1000 BC, the first temple is built, 586 it is destroyed. There are 70 years of exile. The Jewish people come back and in the mid 5th century, they begin a 46 year process that culminates in 445-444 BC and the second temple is built. During the timeframe of what you and I know as the second temple, we would find ourselves in the second century at what we now commemorate as Hanukkah where the Maccabean family led a revolt against the Romans where one day's worth of oil lasted for eight, thus the lighting of the eight candles of the menorah. It was the building not only where the people of God came to sacrifice, it was also the place where they gathered as a community. It was the foundation of their faith with the Lord and it was also their commonality with each other.

But there was one very significant difference of the second temple versus the first. Was it built alike? Yes. Was it in the same place? Yes. However the one major difference has to deal with the most important part of the temple. It wasn't the outer courts that was the most important, it was what you and I refer to as the Holy of Holies. The Bible speaks to the fact that there was this inner chamber in the temple and behind a great veil that stood great in length and great in width, in fact, the Bible says it was the width of a man's hand, it had a seam every three feet, that it stood between the general populace and that permanent place with the representation of the presence of the Lord. It would be on the day of atonement that the high priest would go into this Holy of Holies and the blood of the lamb would be placed upon the mercy seat. Hopefully tonight you see the imagery, the foreshadowing and even the prophetic elements that lead us to the person, to the sacrifice and ultimately the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The second temple, there is no record that what you and I know as the ark of the covenant was ever behind the veil in the Holy of Holies. If you allow me tonight to give you somewhat of a teaser for next week as we journey through 2 Chronicles, we're gonna look at that famous ark of the covenant, its origination, its journey, and the question of

where is it today. What we know as the second temple was constructed, was built and was on the place of the first but one critical thing was missing: the ark of the covenant was not behind the veil and it allows you and I to imagine the priest on the day of atonement not sprinkling blood on a mercy seat but just going through what we might call the motions. It's no wonder when Jesus came on the scene and he began to chastise the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes and the religious leaders when he said, "You know, you think that you're doing so much according to the law," you can almost hear an undertone, "You don't even have the mercy seat, how can you think that your sacrifices are doing any good?"

The first temple was built and then ultimately destroyed by the Babylonians. The second temple was built in what we know as the 5th century BC and it was technically destroyed, technically destroyed in approximately 70 AD when what you and I know as the Roman Empire dispersed the Jewish people not only out of Jerusalem but again took the temple to the ground and to this very day it does not stand upon what we call the Temple Mount.

Now I want you to notice I said technically it was destroyed in 70 AD, however I want to take you tonight to the Gospel of Matthew 27 and I want you to see what happened to the temple at what you and I know as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 27, we're gonna go back to that famous passage in regarding the veil and I want you to see what happens and then I'm gonna go back into Matthew 1 and hopefully tonight I'm gonna unfold for you a progression of the permanent place of the presence of God in regards to the temple of God. In Matthew 27, beginning in verse 51, at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ it says,

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; [now for those of you who are reading ahead, notice it says] 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

For the sake of time, that's another message for another day that deals with the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of what you and I would call the Old Testament saints, but for tonight I want you to notice verse 51, the veil was torn. Not only was the ark of the covenant not on the other side, but this is very representative of what Jesus Christ was doing on behalf of humanity. I want to take you 26 chapters to the left to Matthew 1, one of my favorite and I believe one of the most significant verses in all of the Bible. It has everything to do with the progression and the history of the temples of God. Matthew 1, most famous for the genealogy of Jesus Christ, So-and-so begot So-and-so who begat So-and-so. It's a list of names but in verse 17 it says,

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Now just as a side bar, when the Bible speaks of a generation, it can be either a chronological generation or a philosophical generation, and oftentimes you can have multiple chronological generations who all think and act the same, and so don't try to go back and try to match all the dates with the 14 generations, what you see is a cycle of history. You see generations coming and going but what I want you to notice tonight is that all of the Jewish history is wrapped up in one verse in three segments: from Abraham to David; from David to the carrying away; from the carrying away unto Christ, and I want you to see the significance of what you and I call the temple.

When Abraham was called out, circumcision was the sign that God gave them that they were the followers of the one true God and they began a journey and a path to ultimately having a permanent place for the presence of God. And so what we see in David is that desire for the building, and even though it did not happen in his life, notice that second string of names from David. Who came from David? Solomon. It was the building of that first temple to the carrying away. Not only did they go into exile but the temple was destroyed. Notice the third statement, and from the carrying away. In other words, when they came back into the land and they built the second temple unto the time of Christ. So what we see happening in Matthew 1:17 is not just the history of the Israelite people but it's giving a testimony of the temple of God and its purpose, not just its purpose for the permanent place and the dwelling of the presence of God but its place in the Jewish people's life in history.

So we have the first temple built by Solomon, destroyed by the Babylonians; the second one was built in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah and it was technically destroyed by the Romans; but when that veil was torn, we enter into a new temple period. What did Jesus say? It would be one that would not be built with hands. What did he say back in John 2? "If you destroy this temple, I will raise it up in three days." What you and I know as the purpose of the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed when the veil was torn. Yes, the building was there, yes, it would have been, shall we say, some type of place to go and to visit and to relish and to cherish, but with the veil torn and the ark not present, it's functionality as the permanent place for the presence of God was no longer there.

I realize that history tells us it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD approximately, but theologically speaking, biblically speaking it was no longer needed for the worship of the one true God. The veil was torn and so allow me to somewhat share with not the third temple, I'll talk about that in a moment as far as a physical building, can I talk about just the intermediary temple, the parenthesis temple? You say, "What do you mean the parenthesis temple?" I'm speaking about you and I, about the body of Christ.

I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians 6 in your New Testament. I want you to see what the Bible says in regards to our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now understand the church at Corinth had its struggles, they had their difficulties, they had their carnality and they were struggling with what did it mean, much like the church at Thessalonica, to turn from these idols and to worship the one true God, and when you're here in 1 Corinthians 6, it's dealing with a very sensitive subject matter, it's dealing with those who were doing

things with their bodies in a very intimate way that should never be done, particularly in what we might call a church environment. The Lord is communicating very clearly that this is behavior that is condemned and never to be condoned, and when you get to verse 19 of chapter 6, I love the first word, "What?" with a question mark. It's almost as if the Lord through the Apostle Paul is trying to get their attention in an extreme manner.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

One thing that I want to make very clear tonight as we look through the temples of God in Scripture is you never find a place where two temples exist simultaneously. That's gonna be important when we get to that physical third temple in a moment. First temple, Solomon built, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed. Second temple, Ezra and Nehemiah built, and the tearing of the veil destroyed its purpose. But it was at the resurrection of Jesus Christ as he mentioned in John 2, "after three days I will build it again," that there was this temple built that's one without hands. It's not in a specific location, in a specific place, in fact, it can be accessed anywhere on the globe by any person who becomes a believer in Jesus Christ. How is what we know as the temple of God today, how was it built? It was built by the Passion and by the Pentecost. You say, "Passion and Pentecost?" The Passion event of Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, all 48 of them in his birth, his life, ultimately his death and his resurrection; the completed story of his love, his sacrifice for us. When he shed his blood on Calvary, when he gave his life for our sins, he was making what we just read in 1 Corinthians 6 possible. You and I now as a believer in Jesus Christ, we are the building, the dwellingplace for what we know as the Spirit of God. Is not the Spirit of God the presence of God?

So what the first temple had as its purpose and what the second temple had as its purpose is now the purpose of what you and I know as the body of Christ or, shall we say, the church of Jesus Christ. We're not in one simple location. We don't have to make a pilgrimage to a certain GPS location. We find the temple of God today anywhere we find anyone who is a believer in Jesus Christ. What's interesting about this imagery that's used in the New Testament is, yes, here in 1 Corinthians 6 we are called the temple, we are the dwellingplace, we are where he resides, but then even later in 2 Corinthians 5, the Apostle Paul who's given us instructions about what happens after this life is over, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, he says that if this earthly tabernacle were to dissolve. You see, the body of Christ actually takes the concept of the tabernacle and the reality of the temple and he marries or merges them together. We are the place of the presence of God, much like the temple, but like the tabernacle, we are able to be mobile and transient and nomadic and to move around, but what's important about a tabernacle is this, that the tabernacle would come to a place where it would be no longer viable.

You see, we talk about the construction and the destruction of the temples, Solomon and Nebuchadnezzar for the first temple, Ezra, Nehemiah, the veil in the second. How was

the temple of God, what we know as the church of Jesus Christ, how was it constructed? By the Passion of Jesus Christ, his death, burial and resurrection and ultimately what we know as Pentecost. Remember he told those early apostles, in fact, the Bible says there was 120 of them in the Upper Room plus the women? In Acts 1 he says, "Wait here and pray and the Holy Spirit will come upon you." And there in chapter 2 of the book of Acts it says they heard in their own language and the Lord moved mightily and some 3,000 were saved, and the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit began to be constructed.

You know, it's interesting when we look at the temple of the Holy Ghost as the body of Christ, there are times that it is more effective than others, times it is larger than others much like the temple in the Old Testament, there were times it was gorgeous on the outside and there were times that it fell in disrepair; there were times where it was prominent and times it was taken for granted. You know, you and I today right now at this moment have access to and have the privilege to be the temple of God, the permanent dwellingplace for the presence of God through the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's interesting as you look at the church and a you look at the temple of God as far as the Holy Spirit is concerned in these last 2,000 so years.

You know, we long as humanity, our flesh longs for prosperity. We long for an ease of life and comfort. We work all the time just so that we can get a couple weeks vacation and yet what we discover in regards to our faith, that the more that the church is persecuted, the more pressure that is put on the people of God historically speaking, the church of Jesus Christ actually thrives. The first 300 years of what you and I know as Christianity, the government systems of the world had 10 major waves of persecution by which they thrust upon the church, and every time they pressured us, every time they persecuted us, we actually grew in strength. You and I today are the temple of God. The Holy Spirit as a believer in Jesus Christ dwells within us and we're living through days of great pressure, are we not? May we learn from those who have walked this path before us. May we allow this a time where our temple thrives and our temple grows, not necessarily to become larger but to become stronger.

The real question we have to ask tonight about our temple, this, shall we say, intermediary temple or this parenthesis of a temple is when's it gonna be "destroyed"? Well, it'll never actually go away because you and I are part of the body of Christ and it says in the Bible Jesus Christ the same today, yesterday and forever. However, remember I made mention the fact that no temple or two temples can be present at the same time? There's only one. You know, the Bible says there is coming a day where the temple of God, where the Holy Spirit dwells within you and I, the church of Jesus Christ, that we're not gonna be destroyed but there's going to be a departure. In fact, the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 4 and in 1 Corinthians 15 that there is coming a day and when that day comes, it says that the trump shall sound, those who are dead in Christ and those who are alive in Christ will rise together to meet the Lord in the air and so we shall be with him forever.

There's a collective term that we've used throughout the years to describe this event, we call it the rapture. Now the word rapture is nothing to be fearful of or scared of, even

though technically that word does not or is not contained in our English Bible. It actually derives from Acts 8. Remember when Philip was ministering to the Ethiopian eunuch and he shared with him the Gospel and there he professed Jesus, he was baptized in the desert? And it says that Philip was taken up from that place and supernaturally relocated to another place. The term rapture just means to be taken from one place to another place, what we call very quickly and supernaturally and that is what is one day going to happen to the temple of God, you and I, the church, the body of Christ. There is coming a day where those who are believers in Jesus Christ whether they've been deceased for a thousand years or whether they're alive and walking on planet earth today, in a moment according to 1 Corinthians 15 and in the twinkling of an eye, we'll be removed from this place and taken to the presence of the Lord.

You see, every one of these temples has a beginning and an end, a construction and a destruction. Solomon's temple ended with Nebuchadnezzar, the second temple ended with the tearing of the veil, and you and I began with Jesus Christ and we're going to end with Jesus Christ, not to be forgotten, not to be forlorn, not to be destroyed, but we're gonna be translated is what 1 Corinthians 15 says. On that day when it arises, not only will we be instantaneously in the presence of the Lord but the Bible says that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It says that this mortal will put on immortality; that you and I will receive that new glorious body that will never fade, wear away, and it will be eternally our dwellingplace.

You see, it's at that point that you and I have to address the controversy of what's coming in the days ahead. I know the concept of the rapture is somewhat controversial to some and many people like to debate its date, will it happen before this great tribulation, in the middle of it, or at the end. Some of you may be hearing a message tonight like this for the very first time and you say, "Tribulation, what is that?" It's what Daniel prophesied of in his last final week. It's what Jeremiah spoke of. Even Jesus Christ in Matthew 24 mentioned there would be a time called Jacob's trouble for seven years that would be the worst existence on planet earth. It is the final week, the final seven years of the punishment of God, his people for their rebellion. That rapture event where the church of Jesus Christ is supernaturally taken up to be with the Lord, people have debated for years. Does it happen before that tribulation event? In the middle? Or after? And I know technically that's another lesson for another day, but I think we find its answer in the study of the temple.

You see, there can only be one dwellingplace, there can only be one temple and we know the Bible speaks of the fact that a third physical temple is coming. In fact, let me encourage you to open to the last book of your Bible, the book of Revelation 11. We find ourselves in the midst of that famous tribulation period. For those of you who may not be familiar with the study of eschatology which is a big fancy word for end times and the book of Revelation and what we know as the Second Coming of Jesus, the book of Revelation can be divided up into three very simple sections: chapters 1-3 speak of the church and the dealings thereof; chapter 4 and 5 begin a section through chapter 19 that deals with this famous tribulation period; at the end of chapter 19, Jesus descends at the battle of Armageddon, he establishes his kingdom and then we go and roll into eternity

toward the last two chapters. So chapter 11 finds ourselves in the midst of this great tribulation period, the famous seven seals that are poured out, the famous antichrist who reigns over the world system. Here in chapter 11 of Revelation, beginning in verse 1, it says,

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

I mentioned at the beginning of this study we're dealing with most likely one of the most controversial subject matters most likely, buildings and pieces of land in all of existence and in all of the earth. What is the Bible saying? The Bible is saying that in what you and I know as Jerusalem on the Temple Mount during the tribulation there will be a temple of God which means that this temple which currently embodies the Holy Spirit must be departed from here for there is never a situation or a case where two temples would find themselves in competition with each other. We find ourselves here in Revelation 11 with sacrifices being offered. That's not an aspect of the church of Jesus Christ or the body of Christ, and so I think we can say with confidence as a study of the temple of God, that that which was initiated at the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, shall we say, shall be completed at that famous rapture event.

Now we have what we call the temple of God, the third temple in the book of Revelation. One of the questions that's often asked of me is when will it be built, how long will it take to build? We know where it's going to be built. There are many organizations and even groups today that are desirous for this to be built and those who are experts in the field say that in the right time with the right materials that have already been placed in warehouses, that it could be built in less than a week, and some say if enough people and enough materials are there, it could happen in a weekend. We know where this building will be, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

You know, some years ago as Tracy and I led a pilgrimage to what we call the Holy Land, we had a Jewish tour guide that was somewhat, shall we say, dismayed at what the Bible says and somewhat got frustrated with me and it was probably the only, shall we say, heated discussion we got in in the entirety of the week. He said, "You're telling me that the most controversial piece of land in the world, that a temple will be built and what we know as the Dome of the Rock will be dismissed?" You see, in the very center of that most sacred, most valuable piece of land on the planet is a Muslim mosque and it is assumed by most that for a temple to be built on there, that the mosque must be removed. You and I know that that would bring great political calamity to the world, however, one of the most interesting aspects of the famous temple on the mount is what you and I call the Eastern Gate, the gate that Jesus Christ came into on that famous, what we call, Palm Sunday. The Bible says he entered straight-way into the temple. If you were to go and to Google the images of the Temple Mount, you can see for yourself what I'm speaking of. That Eastern Gate is not actually in the middle of the Temple Mount, it's more toward the

northern side. There are archaeologists that are digging even today trying to discover where the original placement of the temple was on the Temple Mount, and I believe that we're likely gonna discover through archaeology that it probably wasn't right in the center but probably a little further to the north. That's why the Eastern Gate would be placed where it is, and isn't that fitting for the end times? Isn't that fitting for what the antichrist will bring with "one world government"? The Jews and the Muslims worshiping at the same place, at the same time? It's unfathomable to us today but as you read how the antichrist reigns and rules over the world, he takes those that were vowed enemies and he brings them together in a coalition and by the time you get to Revelation 19, the only enemy they have is Jesus Christ himself.

Well, this famous third temple will be built in what you and I know as the tribulation. We spoke of it here in Revelation 11, it's measured, the dimensions are correct, the worship is taking place and later in chapter 11 the famous two witnesses preach, prophesy and do some incredible miracles outside thereof. But here's what I want you to hear about this third temple, physical temple, is that everything goes well for about 3 ½ years. In fact, I want you to turn back to the book of Matthew 24, I want you to hear what Jesus says is going to happen on the Temple Mount in the midst of that famous great tribulation. What Jesus is speaking of, he's actually quoting the book of Daniel in chapter 9, if you want some further study on the subject matter. In Matthew 24:15,

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Jesus is saying in this famous discourse on what we call end times, he says there in verse 15 that there's coming a day where what we know as the temple of God will be desecrated according to the abomination of desolation. Now hear me clearly: this did not happen in 70 AD. Now many people will claim the Romans did horrible things and you're absolutely right, but I want to show you how we know that this is a future event in the days ahead.

One of the last verses I'll have you turn to is 2 Thessalonians 2. 2 Thessalonians is one of the key chapters in the Bible in regards to what you and I know as the person of the antichrist. By the way, the term antichrist is only used in the book of 1 John. He's technically referred to as the beast in the book of Revelation. Here in what we know as 2 Thessalonians, he's called the man of sin and the son of perdition. I want to begin in verse 3 of 2 Thessalonians 2. It says,

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Basically what the Bible is saying there is that what we know as the church of Jesus Christ, much like the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3, somewhat falls in disarray

toward the end and eventually is departed at that famous rapture event. Notice verse 4. who is this son of perdition? Who is this antichrist?

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

One day in the future what we know as the church of Jesus Christ will be immediately taken to be in the presence of the Lord. The temple, the third temple will somehow, some way be built upon that famous Temple Mount. For 3 ½ years what we know as the tribes and the Jewish people will be going about worship as they've longed to do for thousands of years. In fact, at the end of what we know as the Passover meal, they always say, "Next year in Jerusalem." But according to Daniel 9, in the middle of that final week at about the 3 ½ year period, the abomination of desolation that Jesus Christ spoke of will take place. The antichrist, the beast, the one who has deceived the entire world by his miracles will walk onto the Temple Mount, into that famous building, and claim he is God. What did Jesus tell the Jewish people? When you see this happen, run for the hills, and he actually warns those who have little children and ailments and such and he warns them that hopefully it will not happen on what you and I know as the Sabbath day where you're only allowed to take a certain journey.

What we know as the temple there in Jerusalem in the book of Revelation is spoken of as being, shall we say, desecrated by the antichrist. What's interesting is that there is no mention in the book of Revelation of that building actually being torn to the ground like it was in 586 BC or technically like it was in 70 AD by the Romans, which brings up a very interesting study that obviously we have very limited time for, is when you go back into the book of Ezekiel, the prophet who lived through the exile of the 70 years of what we know as that period between the first and the second temple, the prophet who's probably the most misunderstood by the most people, in chapters 40 through 44, he describes a temple of God. It's dimensions appear to be a little bit different than the first and the second temple but this third temple that we just read about in Revelation 11, the dimensions are not given with the specifics of the first and the second, and there in Ezekiel's temple it begins to describe the elements much like the first and the second, what's interesting is in verse 3 of chapter 44 it says that "the Prince will sit therein." One of the great issues of debate is Ezekiel's temple. Is Ezekiel's temple what you and I know as Herod's temple? It couldn't be because the Prince never sat therein, the Messiah. Is it the temple of the tribulation, that famous third temple? Well, not during the reign of who the Bible calls the beast. One of the great questions is that when Jesus Christ descends at the battle of Armageddon when he defeats his enemies, and according to Revelation 20 and Isaiah 59 and other passages, that he establishes his kingdom on the earth, is that the place as Ezekiel describes that would currently or, shall we say, would still be there, is that the place where he establishes, is that the temple in a somewhat different form as described by Ezekiel? Many will say that Ezekiel is describing a fourth temple. I'm here to tell you tonight that I don't know if it's actually a different building than the one in Revelation 11, will it be an extension of or a difference of. I do know this, that in Titus 3:5 it says that when you and I get saved, we are regenerated, that which is old is remade,

and there's a passage in the book of Matthew 19:28 that says that when Jesus Christ returns, he regenerates the earth. It opens up the possibility that Jesus takes this temple that was desecrated by the antichrist and he does to that building exactly what he does to our lives, he takes that which has been destroyed by sin and he remakes it into that which is beautiful. We don't have a conclusive answer of what Ezekiel's temple exactly is or what it will be, but we do know this, there is no mention of sacrifice in his temple. Why? Because the Prince sits therein, the one who gave himself as a sacrifice is there in the midst of his people.

Tonight I realize that this has been an enormous amount of material about a very controversial subject matter, and to be honest with you, these are one of those nights that I long not for this room to be empty but to be full, where you and I could have a follow-up with questions and concerns. So tonight I want to leave you with one last passage. I want you to turn to the book of Revelation 21. We've looked at a lot of history, we've looked at a lot of Scripture in regard to the famous temple of God, but in Revelation 21 we find ourselves on the other side of eternity. If you'll allow me to do a quick chronology, we've mentioned Jesus Christ returning, we mentioned in Revelation 20 that he reigns according to Revelation 20 for a thousand years. Chapter 21 and 22 begin what you and I know as eternity. The end of chapter 20 has the judgment of those who were not believers into what the Bible calls the lake of fire. We begin chapter 21 where it says,

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

What you and I know as eternity, God remakes, he redoes what we know as the creative order. Notice the elements. There's a new earth. There's a new heaven and there's a new Jerusalem, that place, that city of peace where David longed for and Solomon eventually built that first temple, that place where the Israelites rebuilt the temple, and that place one day in the future where I believe according to Scripture a third physical temple will be built.

I want you to notice verse 22 of Revelation 21, in fact, it makes this statement,

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

One day you and I are gonna step into eternity. There is no need for Solomon's temple. There's no need for Herod's temple. There is no need for that famous third temple or even Ezekiel's temple. It says there's no need. Why? Well, according to verse 22, it says that the Lamb, the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof.

You know, this morning we talked about having a proper exit strategy, technically speaking, with all that we're walking through today but ultimately it leads to the exit strategy of this life. One day each and every one of us are gonna find ourselves in

eternity, we can either find ourselves at the end of chapter 20, cast into the lake of fire because we trusted in our own deeds and our own works and thought somehow we could justify our own behavior, or we can find ourselves in chapter 21 where it says that the only temple is the Lord himself and the Lamb. What did we read earlier in 1 Corinthians 6? That we are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Right now today, any person no matter where you live, no matter what language you primarily speak, if you can come to the understanding that you are the problem and that Jesus Christ is the answer, not only will he forgive you, not only will he save you, but according to what we read our bodies are his temple of his Holy Ghost, and what we see in Revelation 21 is again confirmation that that everlasting life that he spoke of in John 3 is not a figment of our imagination, it is a reality, that we as his temple have an everlasting eternal existence.

Solomon's temple was brought to the ground. Herod's temple was brought to the ground. And one it speaks of that famous third temple and possibly even Ezekiel's temple as having no, shall we say, eternal purpose. But he, Jesus Christ, can be our temple for all of eternity. If you're in the body of Christ and if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, allow me to challenge you today in the midst of all that we're walking through, even in the midst of the prophecies that we studied, in the midst of all the information, the most important piece of information is this, that belief in Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation and is the only means of having an eternal temple that will always be.

Maybe you're that person who has questions or concerns or maybe you'd like to speak to somebody, we want you to know that the large gatherings of the church are no longer a reality but the church has not closed. Our normal operating hours, our emails, our phones still work just as always. We encourage you to make contact with us. Maybe you're that person tonight who confessed their sins and called out to Jesus to save them, we'd love to have a conversation with you. Maybe you've got questions, maybe you've got concerns, maybe you just need clarity, maybe you need help physically or spiritually, please reach out to us. We'd love the opportunity to minister unto you.

Again, tonight I know it was a lot of information. We thank you for allowing us into your living room to a subject matter that is very controversial and hopefully tonight the word of God brought some clarity. In spite of all the politics of the day and all the tension of the day, it is the temple of the Lamb of Jesus Christ that will always be. It is our prayer that you're a believer in him tonight. Thank you so much for being a part of our Bible study. God bless. See you soon.