

“God’s Temple” Luke 19:41-48 Trinity 10 2021

In our text for today we find a prophecy of Jesus, which was fulfilled after His death, resurrection and ascension: The destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple. Our reading of the Old Testament (Jeremiah 7.1-11) also speaks of the temple, so we will reflect on that.

Let us again remember the Exodus story. The Israelites escaped slavery in Egypt under the power of Pharaoh, crossed the Red Sea, but did not immediately enter the Promised Land, the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They traveled in the wilderness more than 40 years, lived as refugees in tents. They were in one place for a while, then they folded their tents to go to another place. However, the Israelites wanted a place to worship God.

Why it is good to have a place to worship God? Can we not worship God anywhere at any time? God is in all parties and does not need a house made by human hands. But we need a place dedicated to worship to gather in the same place at the same time to worship and witness to our faith to all around us.

In addition, we are creatures with eyes, ears and other senses. We need to hear the Word of God and receive the water of baptism on our skin, the bread and wine of the sacrament with our lips. It is also good to hear the music of praise and view images, symbols of our Savior.

So, God led the Israelites through Moses to build a tabernacle, a tent for worship. With each move, they folded the tent and took the altar, candles and all the other things to another place. For over 40 years they worshiped God in the tabernacle in the wilderness and then in Jerusalem until King Solomon, son of David, built a temple, a permanent building as the house of God.

However, when the people of Israel strayed from the path of God, judgment fell on them. The northern tribes were defeated by the

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Assyrians. The southern kingdom, where Jerusalem stood, fell to the king of Babylon and Jerusalem and the temple built by Solomon were destroyed. After 70 years, the emperor of Persia defeated the king of Babylon and allowed the return of the Jews to the land of Palestine. And they rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and the temple. In addition, more or less 40 or 50 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, King Herod the Great enlarged the temple and its grounds. So, at the time of Jesus, the temple was very large and impressive.

But again, the people strayed from God's Word. Above all, they rejected the Messiah, the Promised One of Israel and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Therefore, "And as he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it, saying: O If you had known, at least in this thy day, which belongs unto thy peace! But now it is hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about you, and compass you round, and keep you in on every side, and shall lay you even with the ground, and thy children within you; and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation. . "

This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD. The Jews rose in rebellion against the Roman Empire. The Roman emperor sent his army, crushed the rebellion and destroyed the city and the temple. In time they rebuilt the city again, but to this day there is no temple, there remains on the mount of the great temple complex only one part of a wall, called the Western Wall or the Wailing Wall.

The descendants of Abraham rejected the Messiah, but He, as the son of Abraham and David, fulfilled all the covenant that God made with Abraham. Therefore, the heirs of the promises of Abraham are now believers in Jesus Christ. God's people now are the church, the community of believers in Christ.

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Well, now in Ontario, we have great temples to God. Beautiful buildings, with wonderful altars. This is a good thing, no doubt. However, what will happen if the Word of God is not preached in this temple or nobody comes to hear the Word of God? This pandemic has emptied our churches for much of the past two years. Except for online presence and one-on-one visits, the church has been largely silent. We must continue to listen to the Word of God or perhaps lose the opportunity to listen.

A large building is good to show others the importance of our faith and to invite them to the worship of God. However, if we do not show the love of God in our lives, then our worship in these great temples are worthless. As the reading of the Old Testament says:

For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, ⁶if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, ⁷then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

God calls on us to follow the first table of the Law - to love and fear God - but He then encourages us with the second table to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this way we show the love of God to others. God loved us first, so with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can show the love of God in our lives. If people do not see this love in our lives, they will not see the value of worshipping God.

We have by way of warning the example of Israel that rejected the Word of God and therefore lost the grace of God. Let this always be a warning against complacency and laziness. We also have the promise that we abide in the Word of God, the Lord is always with us. May we always walk in the ways of the Lord, constantly returning to Him when

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we err, and trusting in His promises for us. Here we have the peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.