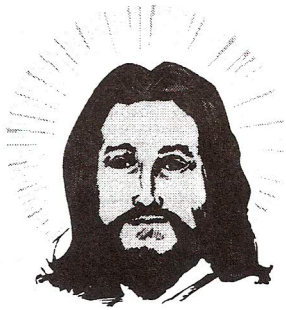


Jesus Said That He Is Greater Than The Temple



Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple." -- Matthew 12:6

When Jesus spoke these words to the Jews, we must understand what the temple meant to them in order to grasp the impact of Jesus' words. The temple was the hallmark of Judaism, and to have it rebuilt by Herod only strengthened Israel's beliefs in their heritage. The temple had become the shining light of their religion. It was revered above all other symbols of their faith. When Jesus compared himself to the temple it ran into direct conflict with everything a Jew would practice, for nobody before Him dared to say he is greater than the temple.

Jesus didn't make radical statements for the sheer pleasure of radicalism, so why were His statements considered so radical and upsetting to the Jews? It is simply because He has the authority to say such things (Matthew 7:29; 28:18), He spoke as God incarnate (Matthew 1:23), something the world had never encountered previously. We would expect that if the true God from the Bible visited earth, then He would say things that had never entered man's thoughts or ears before. Such is Jesus; He is God incarnate (Philippians 2:6-8) and His words are not mere opinions, but directly from God to us (Matthew 24:35).

Let us now look at what the temple meant to the Jews so that we can have a clearer picture of how Jesus is greater. In their day it was called the house of God or the tabernacle (Matthew 12:1-6). The tabernacle was made by the Israelites in the wilderness with Moses. It was a large tent that housed the ark of the covenant. Within its walls were performed the sacrifices outlined in the Old Testament. It did not become a solid structure until the reign of Solomon. Even then, it resembled the tent or tabernacle.

The tabernacle was great in that it manifested God's presence. This, called shekinah, is the glory of God which radiated from the midst of the ark of the

covenant. **Jesus is greater** because He is literally God with us (Matthew 1:23; John. 1:1; 5:18; 20:28; Philippians 2:8; Col. 2:10).

The tabernacle was great to Israel because sin offerings were accepted by God. The priests officiated over many sin offerings on a daily basis. **Jesus is greater** because He covers all sins in one effective atonement (John 1:29). He never needs to sacrifice himself again, because His sacrifice was once for all (Hebrews 10:11-12). The day of atonement was great because of the annual sacrifice offered by the priest on behalf of the nation. The priest first offered an offering to cleanse himself and then an offering for the people. **Jesus is greater** because He is sinless and offered Himself once for all (1 John 2:2).

The priest entered into the Holiest of Holies, which only one priest did annually. **Jesus is greater** because He entered the Holiest in heaven on our behalf, thus giving us access to God (Hebrews 10:19). The Feasts of the weeks, sabbath year, and jubilee gave partial rest for the land and property. The tabernacle was great in providing temporal liberation and rest. **Jesus is greater** because He has allowed us to rest in His works and cease our labors (Matthew 11:28). This is why works cannot obtain salvation; the work is finished and completed. He who has entered His rest has Himself ceased from His own work (Hebrews 4:10).

The temple was temporal. It was made of earthly substance that could be robbed, burned, and destroyed. Solomon's temple was robbed and destroyed, which was later rebuilt by Zerubbabel. It was destroyed also, only to be rebuilt in the days of Christ. **Jesus is greater** because He can't be destroyed. He is eternal (John 1:1) and in His glorified resurrection He lives forevermore (John 17:5; Revelation 1:18). **Jesus is much greater than any earthly temple or tabernacle. He is the greatest of all!** Just compare what Jesus did for us to what the temple could not do.

Jesus is the greatest person whom you will ever know. Don't count your temple tradition greater than Jesus, because He is the Greatest! He shed his blood on the cross so that you could be forgiven of your sins by believing upon Him for your eternal life. Will you repent of your sins and turn to Him today?

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