

Will the Real Temple Please Stand?

By Nollie Malabuyo • January 2010

Most Christians today believe that when Christ returns, he will sit on a throne in a rebuilt Third Temple in Jerusalem during a literal earthly millennium. The following, with a few edits and additions, is a presentation on this subject that I helped Rachel put together for her Bible class last year. Again, so proud of her. She has a Powerpoint file of this project which she can share with anyone who's interested. Jesus, together all of the New Testament writers, completely disagree with this false teaching.

Will There be a Third Jerusalem Temple During a Millennium?

A. Jesus is the Temple

John 1:14: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."*

The word "dwelt" comes from the Greek noun which means "tabernacle." John says Jesus is the tabernacle.

John 2:18-21: *"When the Jews asked Jesus where his authority to cleanse the temple came from, he answered, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'"*

The Jews thought Jesus was crazy, because it took them 46 years to rebuild the temple. They took his words literally, but John says that Jesus was really talking about himself as the temple.

Revelation 21:22: *"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb."*

This is why in the new heaven and new earth, there is no temple because God and Christ will be the temple.

B. The Church is the Temple

Psalms 2:6: *"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."*

The Old Testament temple was built on a mountain in Jerusalem called Zion. God installed his Son as King of Mount Zion.

Hebrews 12:22: *"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,"*

The church is called Mount Zion, and therefore the church is the New Testament temple.

Acts 15:13-18: *"After they finished speaking, James replied, 'Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name.'"*

James, quoting **Amos 9:11-12**, interprets the rebuilding of David's throne and kingdom as fulfilled by the building of the church made up of elect Jews and Gentiles.

Acts 2:34-35: *"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"*

Where is the throne on which Jesus sits? In heaven, not on David's throne in a new temple. And he is reigning from his heavenly throne right now. Jesus himself flatly rejected an earthly throne, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (**John 18:36**).

1 Peter 2:4-5: *"As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house."*

The temple is built with stones and each Christian is a stone that make up the church—the temple.

2 Corinthians 6:16: *"What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'"*

C. The Christian is the Temple

1 Corinthians 3:16-17: Paul tells the church in Corinth, *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? ¶ For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”*

1 Corinthians 6:17, 19: *“But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.” 19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.”*

Each Christian is a temple of the Lord, and his Glory-Spirit dwells within this "temple" (Exod 40:34; Ezek 43:5).

D. The Old Testament Temple: Gone Forever!

Hebrews 8:13: *“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”*

The old covenant, with its temple and animal sacrifices, was “obsolete” and was “ready to vanish away” in the first century.

Hebrews 8:5: *“They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”*

The Old Testament tabernacle & temple are both a “copy and shadow” of the reality: the temple in heaven. But the temple in heaven is God and Christ.

Hebrews 9:24: *“For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.”*

When he offered his sacrifice, Christ entered the “holy places,” which is not the temple, but the real temple, which is heaven itself.

E. Is there a Temple in heaven?

Revelation 21:3: *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”*

Same as **John 1:14**. In heaven, God will “dwell” (“tabernacle”) with man.

Revelation 21:22: *“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”*

No temple in heaven, since God and the Lamb are its temple.

Ezekiel 47:9, 12: *“And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.” **Revelation 22:1-2:** *“on either side of the river [of the water of life], the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”**

Ezekiel's vision of a glorious end-time temple has a river flowing from it. The river gives life and it has trees on each side which gives life and healing. **Revelation 22:1-2** interprets and fulfills **Ezekiel 47:9, 12**—it says that heaven has a river with the Tree of Life (Christ) which has leaves for the “healing of the nations.” The nations will be “healed” by the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

Conclusions:

1. The New Testament says that Christ, the Church, and every believer fulfill the Old Testament temple today.
2. The temple was a part of the Old Covenant and is obsolete.
3. There is no temple in heaven; therefore, there is no temple in the age to come.
4. If the Bible is inerrant, then the New Testament writers do not contradict the Old Testament writers in saying that all the temple prophecies are already fulfilled by Christ, the Church, and all Christians.