

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 21- Luke 21:5&6

313- Jesus Ushers in a Better Covenant

May 8, 2016

Luke 21:5-6

5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,

6 "*As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.*"

To the Glory of God

Now sometime around 7:30 a.m. on September 11, 2001, 19 Saudi-Arabian men hijacked four American airplanes. These men had been trained and financed by both our enemies and our supposed friends to attack the very symbols of the United States. The first plane ran head on into the World Trade Center- Tower 1 in New York City.

Now many people at the time thought this was merely an accident because an airplane had hit the Empire State Building on July 28, 1945. And so news reporters rushed to the scene to cover the story thinking that is was it was.

And as the cameras were rolling and as the commentators were commentating, another plane could be seen from the side heading directly for Tower 2. It slammed into the tallest building in New York City at over 500 miles an hour and exploded in a huge fireball. And this nation was at war. The 65 passengers along with over 300 people in the building were eviscerated in a fire ball that burned at over 1000 degrees.

This second direct hit was seen in vivid color on live television and the image of that explosion is forever burned on our memories forever. And at that moment, everything changed. From that moment until this very day, this nation, whether we like it or not, is at war with Islamic

terrorists who are deceived by a demonic religion and who want to kill and maim as many Americans as they can.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., a third plane hit the wall of the Pentagon also exploding in a firebomb that killed 125 people and took three days to extinguish.

At the same time, a fourth plane, heading either for the White House or the Capitol, was diverted and crashed into a farm field in Pennsylvania due to the brave and heroic efforts of the people on board, killing all 39 people on board.

Brave firefighters, policemen, and rescue workers rose up and went to work, and rushed into the damaged buildings to try to help over 2400 human beings who were trapped. And they were never seen again as all 414 perished.

It is my own personal conviction that it should be required of every school child in this nation to watch the videos of that event every year. We need to listen to the recorded phone calls of the people who were trapped in those buildings that day as they were begging for help. We need to look at the videos as about 200 men and women jumped from those buildings and fell through the air, at speeds of over 150 miles an hour, and smashed into the ground like eggs rather than be burned alive. The emotional anguish of those videos galvanized this nation and should never be forgotten.

At some time around 10:00 a.m., our time, the heat of those two planes had melted the steel beams enough to cause both buildings of hundreds of millions of tons of steel to collapse and bury fathers and brothers and sons and husbands and wives and mothers and sisters and daughters, and children, in the worst attack on this nation since Pearl Harbor. 2,996 people died that day, along with 11 unborn babies. Another 1,400 have died since then.

Now the reason why those savages chose these buildings is because they *represented* something. The two World Trade Towers represented the economic might of the United States, which is the strongest economy in the history of the world. Even today, with all our problems, the economic system of the United States is the freest in all the world and has brought more financial prosperity to more people than any other economy, ever.

In a day when Democratic Socialism is making a huge comeback, especially among many young people, we need to be reminded that

Capitalism has brought more goods and services to more people at a cheaper price than any other economic system since God created Adam. Truly Solomon, in all his glory, never enjoyed a single day of the financial benefits that our economy has brought to every single one of us.

The Pentagon represents the might of the most lethal military in the history of Mankind. And it represents a nation that has fought in and won two World Wars and freed hundreds of millions of human beings from tyranny, without confiscating a single inch of territory from any of the nations that we liberated.

Since 1943, the United States has controlled and dominated both the air and the seas. And today, a single aircraft carrier has more firepower than all of the guns, all of the bombs, all of the airplanes, and all of the tanks *combined* of all the nations who fought in World War 2, and we have 19 of them with two more on the way!

And the White House or the Capitol symbolizes an experiment with Democracy that has become the envy of the world. A radical concept that says that our rights do not come from the generosity of Government, but from the Hand of God.

And as recently as just three years ago, people from other countries are willing to get into a row boat and travel across the open seas, just for a chance to get to this country.

On November 11, 1947, in a speech to the House of Commons, Winston Churchill said:

“... democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time....”

So, symbols are very powerful. And that is because symbols stand for something. Symbols represent something larger and more important than the symbol itself. And there have been symbols all throughout human history. And people have fought for symbols and people have died for symbols and people have killed for symbols. And symbols have helped people to live and to be free and to prosper. So symbols are very important.

And in the 1st Century in Palestine, the Jews had a symbol. It stood in the very center of the most important city in all of Israel. It was the Temple. And everything that the Jew thought and did and

prayed about and hoped to be was wrapped up in that single building. The Temple is where the people met with God; The Temple is where sacrifices were offered for their sins; The Temple was the center of Jewish life and Jewish thought and Jewish worship.

They talked about the Temple at dinner; they sang about Jerusalem and the Temple; they prayed facing the Temple. Mothers prayed that their little boys would grow up and serve God in the Temple.

You simply couldn't function as a Jew in the 1st Century without being connected in some way to the Temple. The Temple represented God choosing the Jew and setting His Love upon the Jew to the *exclusion* of the other nations of the world. Listen to what God told Moses in **Deuteronomy 26:18-19**:

18 "The Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments;

19 and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken."

Congradulations

Now, the phrase "**above all nations**" here means: *to the exclusion of all other nations*. So God had chosen the Jew, and God had chosen Israel, and they knew that. And they took great pride in that. And that Truth gave them much comfort.

We have to understand that God gave the Jew his own land, and gave them their civilization and their language and their government and their law and their religion. God fed them and clothed them and kept them and housed them and dealt with them, to the exclusion of all the other nations.

And God made a Covenant with them. And basically, the Covenant that God made with Israel was... You do this and I will do that...

You serve Me and I will bless you. You obey Me and I will protect you.
You follow Me and I will go before you. You love Me and I will love you.

And so the First Covenant was between God and Man. And so, it was based upon performance. And that means it was based on human effort, because God commanded Man to obey it. Now look at how the Apostle Paul, a man trained in all the aspects of the Law, describes the Law in **Romans 7:12**:

the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

So, God Himself is the One Who gave the Law. And that made the Law, or the First Covenant, to be holy, righteous, and good. So what's wrong with it? Why did God abolish the First Covenant to bring in the New Covenant? Because, in addition to the First Covenant being holy, righteous, and good, it was also weak. Look what this same Apostle also said about the Law in **Romans 8:1-4**:

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

And so, God chose the Jew to be the *exclusive* recipients of His Love and Mercy and Salvation. He called them to be holy, to be set apart, to be different and unique and distinct from the other peoples of the world. They were chosen to demonstrate God's Glory to the other nations of the world. They were chosen to display God's Love and Mercy, and they were chosen to show forth what it means to know and to serve the one, true, living God.

But, instead of humbling them, all of this Grace and Kindness and Mercy made them arrogant and self-absorbed and self-centered. Even though God had told them:

Deuteronomy 9:5

It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but *it is* because of the wickedness of these

nations *that* the Lord your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But the same God that chose them also told them that their understanding of Him was *partial* and was not in fullness. God said early on:

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

So everything that the Jew had, they had in part, even their knowledge and worship of God; even their Covenant. And so, as God was moving among them and giving them His Law and His Word, and sending angels and sending Prophets, and even as He was driving out the nations from before them, and even as God was visiting them and correcting them and feeding them and loving them and keeping them, God told them over and over and over again that they didn't have it all. And God said He was going to, one day, reveal Himself in fullness.

And so, right in the middle of God writing His Law on tables of stone, God told them that what they had was not the finality, it wasn't finished, it wasn't everything. The fullness was God writing His Law on the tables of a heart that had been so radically transformed that it would not merely *fear* God, but would genuinely *love* and *enjoy* God. God said that the day was coming when He would use Himself to so transform the human heart that those people would gladly love and adore Him. And God called that the New Covenant.

But, God couldn't do that yet, because their knowledge of God was incomplete, their love for God was incomplete, their worship was incomplete, their service was incomplete, and their Covenant was incomplete. What the Jew had as he beheld miracles and supernatural manifestations and angels and manna, and pillars of fire and clouds, and rocks with water was *not* the highest or the best or the completion.

So God revealed Himself to the Jew, absolutely. And God revealed Himself to the Jew better and in far greater detail than He had revealed Himself to any other people on earth. And yet, God only gave

the Jew a *partial* Revelation of Himself, a *partial* understanding of His Ways and His Salvation. And it was all wrapped up in the Temple.

And God designed a very intricate and detailed manner of worship for the Jew that involved garments and colors and bells and shofars and incense and smoke and words and prayers, and lots and lots and lots of sacrifices. Lots of animal sacrifices. There is no doubt in my mind that collectively, for the entire time that the Old Covenant was in force, there was upwards of millions and millions and bulls and goats and oxen and turtle doves that were slaughtered and killed.

For example, we talk a lot about Solomon's Temple and how elaborate it was. I read where if that same Temple was built today, that it would cost upwards of a billion dollars to build. And yet we seldom read things like this:

2 Chronicles 7:4-5

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the Lord.

5 King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. Thus the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

Now this happened at the dedication of Solomon's Temple more than 900 years before Jesus was born. But try to imagine this, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep were slaughtered continuously by the Levitical priests, *without* drains, *without* stainless steel, *without* air conditioning, *without* running water; blood running everywhere, animal excrement all over the place. The noise of the animals, the smell, it was a continual slaughter going on without stopping- day and night, for seven days. And keep in mind that this was not in Chicago at a slaughter house to get ribeyes; this was a religious service in Jerusalem, dedicating the Temple!

Now please turn with me to **Hebrews 10** to read what the writer of **Hebrews** said about comparing millions of animal sacrifices to Jesus dying one time:

Hebrews 10:1-18

1 For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "**SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;**

6 **IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.**

7 "WHEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"

8 After saying above, "**SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them**" (which are offered according to the Law),

9 then He said, "**BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.**" He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,**

13 waiting from that time onward **UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.**

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

16 "**THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,**" *He then says,*

17 "**AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.**"

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.

So right in the middle of the Jew worshipping under the parameters of the Old Covenant, God spoke through Jeremiah to say this:

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

So, all along, God told them that this First Covenant wasn't permanent. That all the signs and shadows and partial revelation of the First Covenant would eventually give way to the infinitely superior New Covenant.

And yet, over 500 years after God spoke this through Jeremiah, the average Jew was not looking for that fulfillment. But some were. God had a remnant of believing Jews who were eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of Jeremiah's Prophecy which would bring about the end of the Old Covenant.

For example, in **Luke 2**, go there with me, Dr. Luke tells us about people who believed. An old man named Simeon, the old widow woman Anna, the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, these people were Jews who had been steeped in Jewish tradition and custom and had spent their *whole* lives sacrificing animals and heeding the Levitical priests, and yet God had His Hand upon them, and when confronted with Jesus, they *abandoned* the inferior Old Covenant and they *fully* and *immediately* embraced the superior New Covenant.

And in verse 25, Luke tells us that when Joseph and Mary brought the eight day old Jesus into the Temple to dedicate Him to God, look what Dr. Luke wrote about this in **Luke 2:25**:

Luke 2:25-35

25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32 A *LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES*, And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed —

35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul — to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

So Simeon knew that this eight-day old baby was the Lord's "Christ", or the Lord's "Anointed One", or the "Messiah". And look what Simeon called Jesus in verse 30:

Your [God's] Salvation

Now keep in mind that the ending of the Old Covenant and the bringing in of the New was not going to come easily. It was not going to enter onto the scene with sweet background music. Ending the Old Covenant was going to be painful; it was going to involve agony and struggle and violence and even death. The Ending of the Old Covenant was going to forever abolish animal sacrifices and the burning of incense, and the inner and outer courts, and the Holiest of all.

By definition, bringing in the New Covenant, as glorious as it is, would only come about by forever ending the Levitical priesthood and everything it stood for, including all the rituals and the dietary and ceremonial laws. And all that the Old Covenant was, all that it entailed, all that it included, everything that God was going to end for all time, was symbolically wrapped up in the Temple

So it was time. The prophesied moment had arrived. The foreseen event was now here. Shadow was now going to give way to reality. Partial Revelation was now going to fade away in light of the full Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. The words spoken by sinful prophets was going to bow before the Word spoken by a sinless Son. An infinitely *superior* Covenant, based on infinitely *superior* Promises, brought about by an infinitely *superior* Sacrifice, offered by an infinitely *superior* High Priest was now at hand! And things would never be the same again!

God had taken on flesh! God had now *inserted* Himself into His Own Creation! Jesus was born! Messiah was here! The prophecies of Moses and David and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel had come to pass! It is time.

Now this section of Luke's Story of Salvation covers the last week of Jesus' earthly life. And so, in these verses and all the way to the conclusion of Chapter 21, Jesus is giving His disciples His final Words before His Crucifixion.

It is now time for a sinless Lamb to offer His Life one time to save all of God's elect. And that means that it is time now for the Old Covenant to stop, to end, to cease, to fade away. And it is time for the glorious New Covenant to flourish! And all of this is tied in with that single building, that one edifice, that single Temple.

One by one, Jesus has exposed and confronted and rejected all of the various groups that dominated the landscape in Israel in the 1st Century. The Pharisees came first and then the Sadducees, and finally Jesus confronted and exposed and condemned the lawyers of Israel, the scribes, and His final words to His disciples about these men was in **Luke 20: 46-47** when our Lord said:

46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

47 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

And then beginning with Chapter 21, which is actually just a continuation of Chapter 20 and should *not* have been divided, as Jesus is saying these words, He looks over and sees the perfect example of how terrible and how cruel and how devastating the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes was as He sees a poor widow woman putting her last bit of money into the treasury of the Temple, and Jesus cries out in absolute disgust and to categorically condemn the religion that made this woman a pauper:

Luke 21:3b-4

**3... "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all *of them*;
4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."**

Jesus wasn't praising this woman, as so many teach today. He was *condemning* the false, man-made religion of these religious hypocrites that would take from the weakest person in the room while making the leaders wealthy off the backs of God's people. This Statement by Jesus is *not* about us copying this widow woman and giving "sacrificially". Jesus never said that. This is a Divine Condemnation against oppressing the poor widows.

And it was on the heels of seeing that horror, of standing there watching the degrading results of what false religion does to the poorest and the weakest people, that somebody, who didn't have a clue about what Jesus just said, began to talk about the Temple. And in **Luke 21:5**, they began to admire the beautiful stones and what Dr. Luke called "**votive gifts**", meaning the ostentatiousness of the Temple. Well, how did the Temple get so elaborate? All the beautiful stones were there and this symbol of all Jewishness was just gleaming in the sun because the leaders of the Church had taken advantage of the poor and the widows.

Well, that was the wrong thing to say to Jesus. You don't brag about what you have to the incarnate God at the very moment He is condemning the false religion that preys on the weak. And so Jesus

sees a perfect opportunity here to tie all this in with the very Purpose of why He came. And so He said to them:

Luke 21:6

As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.

Jesus was saying, "You like these pretty stones? You think this is beautiful and glorious? You think God is pleased with all this? You think this magnifies God? You think by taking from the poor and giving it to religious frauds that God is honored? Well, I'm going to tear it all down. This symbol will fall and it will fall so utterly- that it will never rise again. This symbol of your worship and your way of life and your relationship with God was only in part, and it is time now to bring in the fullness, so I'm going to tear it all down!"

Now you couldn't have insulted the Jews any more with a statement like that. The Temple meant everything to them. This where they met with God. And this man says He is going to tear it all down. Just Who does Jesus think He is? Yes, Who indeed does Jesus think He is? Because Jesus is acting here just like He is God.

And Jesus is saying that the Old Covenant wasn't merely going to end, but that everything *associated* with it would stop. And Jesus is saying that this was the Will of God. This was the Word of God. This was the fulfillment of the Promise of God.

But, in order for that transition to take place, two other, seemingly terrible things had to happen first:

1. Jesus had to die for that Truth
2. The Jews had to kill for that Truth

We need to understand that we all would *still* be operating under the tenets of the Old Covenant right now if Jesus had not died. So, the New Covenant, as glorious as it is, could not come through sweet, nice, and beautiful things. No, the infinitely superior New Covenant was ushered into the world through the agony of a bloody, sinless Lamb-screaming out:

Eli, Eli Lama Sabachthani! My God, My God Why Have You Forsaken Me?

And when Jesus died and rose again, everything changed! Everything about the Old Covenant would be forever abolished, and the New Covenant would be ushered in by way of angry, bitter, godless Jewish religious hypocrites crying out:

Crucify Him!

And *both* of those things had to happen. And the one thing that symbolized all of that was the Temple. In order to prove that He alone had forever abolished what He alone had initiated, the Temple had to go. God had to show in such a way that there could be no doubt that He was forever finished with the *inferior* tenets of an *inferior* Covenant. God had to make it clear that He was abolishing the *weak* elements of a *weak* Covenant; the fleshly parts of a fleshly Covenant. God had to show that it was His Will to bring in the New Covenant by and through the *elimination* of the Old. And the symbol that was used in that watershed moment was the destruction of the Temple.

Now it is very hard for those of us who live in the 21st Century to imagine how serious this really was. This was far more than the destruction of a building. This was the end of a way of life. This was the radical transformation of both the knowledge and worship of God. This was the new demarcation line that would define believers from unbelievers from here on out. Accepting the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Old Covenant was what distinguished true spiritual Jews and Gentiles from those who love and follow after God and those who don't; from those who will go to heaven and those who will go to hell.

After Jesus' Death and Resurrection, *nobody* could be saved by merely believing only in God. No, with the destruction of the Old and the bringing in of the New, saved people must now confess with their mouth that Jesus Christ is God. And after Jesus fulfilled the Law, it isn't enough to be born Jewish, everybody who is saved must be born again. And after the destruction of the Temple, those who love God do not seek to re-establish animal sacrifices at some point in the future, we now rejoice in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God! I want you to go with me to **Hebrews 6**.

Hebrews 6:1-3

1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

3 And this we will do, if God permits.

Now the writer is telling the Jews who attended this small Church in what is now modern day Turkey, to whom this Epistle was written, that in no uncertain terms the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ *requires* that they "leave" or "abandon", once and for all, their ties with the Old Covenant, with Judaism, with its shadows and symbols and types and animal sacrifices and an inferior priesthood, and that they, without any reservation at all, fully trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Master and God and Savior!

And the writer tells them to leave the Old Covenant *immediately*, without any hesitation. And the "maturity" that this writer refers to here in verse 1 is *not* that spiritual maturity that you and I seek after, which is the *result* of us being saved and walking with God for years, no, this maturity is the *instant* maturity that occurs whenever a person is truly born again.

The elementary teaching about the Christ is the Old Covenant that saw Jesus in types and symbols and shadows. It was the Old Covenant that had all of the elements contained in verses 1-2. And the writer of **Hebrews** is urging all of these Jews to abandon that and press on to the maturity that is in Jesus Christ.

Now be assured that I'm going to get into all this in great detail in future sermons. Because the rest of **Luke 21** is all about this issue. And so we will be going carefully over all of this in the future. But for today, keep in mind that this is why the curtain in the Temple tore in two as Jesus died. It was a symbol of the utter destruction of the Old Covenant and the bringing in of the New. So the walls were coming down. And Jesus Himself was taking the place of everything in the Temple. For example:

- ✓ **Jesus became our one and only High Priest**- Who lives forever to make intercession for us (**Hebrews 7:25**). So the temple priesthood was "destroyed."
- ✓ **Jesus offered Himself and His Own Blood once for all to make an eternal Redemption** (**Hebrews 9:12, 25–28; 10:10–12**). So all the animal sacrifices of the temple are "destroyed."
- ✓ **Jesus made Himself the Mercy Seat of the Temple** (**Romans 3:25**), and He made His Own Blood the Blood of the Covenant (**Mark 14:24**). And when He did that, the Glory of God, the Shekinah of the Temple, came down and rested on Him and raised Him from the dead (**Romans 6:4**). Peter says, "God raised him from the dead and gave him glory" (**1Peter 1:21**). He is, as James says in **James 2:1**, "**the Lord of glory.**"

And so the Temple is no longer the place where you go to see the Glory of God. And all who try are blaspheming. Jesus is the one single Place. Destroyed and in three days raised up, Jesus is where you go to see the Glory of God.

And so Jesus says the Temple in Jerusalem will be destroyed. And that wasn't simply because Jesus was mad. It was to bring in the infinitely superior New Covenant. Because the New Covenant has a new Temple, and a new Priest, and a new Sacrifice, and a far superior Access to Glory and Fellowship with God.

So that is why John the Apostle said this in **The Revelation 21:22-23**:

22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

What Jesus meant when He said:

John 2:19

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,

... was that He Himself was taking the place of the Temple, by dying for sin once for all, and by rising from the dead to reign as the everlasting

Priest and Lord of Glory. And Jesus was saying, *"When I die, the Temple system dies. And when I rise, I am now the Temple. I am the Sacrifice for sins. I am the Priest and go-between with God. I am the Presence and Radiance of God's Glory. The Temple is finished because God is finished with the Old Covenant."*

Now keep in mind that when the Trade Center Towers fell, we felt insulted. We were angry and we wanted to go after the ones who did this to us. These mad-men had attacked our most cherished symbols. And they had to pay. We considered them our enemies because they had destroyed our symbols. And so we went to war over the destruction of our symbols.

But we need to remember that the Man Who was talking about tearing down the most cherished symbol in all of Judaism here in **Luke 21** was none other than the incarnate God Himself. The very God Who told them to build the Temple in the first place! And they saw Jesus as their enemy. They saw the Man Who was going to bring in the glorious New Covenant that all their Prophets had foretold, they saw this Man as their enemy! And they went to war against the very One Who was bringing in Grace and Truth! And they wanted to kill Him. And God allowed them to do this. But, in killing Jesus, all they accomplished was God's Will. And so the people who hated Jesus and eventually murdered Him, they helped to end the First Covenant that they wanted to hang on to so badly.

And so the people of Israel didn't take too kindly about Jesus talking about tearing down the Temple. That Temple represented everything they knew to be holy and godly. And this itinerate was talking about it being destroyed. So, like Jesus always did, He attacked false religion at its strength. He confronted man-made worship of God at the very place that was the most cherished, the most important, and the most sacred.

Now you could not have insulted a Jew any worse than to insult the Temple. To suggest, as Jesus is here, that every single stone of the most sacred building in Israel would be thrown down was to utter blasphemy that was way beyond anything that the Greeks or Romans ever did to them. This could not be. It was unthinkable. If we lose the Temple, we lose everything!

So why would God incarnate destroy what God the Father built? How is it that God in human flesh would be so against what God the

Father began? In what way are we to understand Jesus destroying the Temple?

Well, Jesus destroyed the Temple the way a soldier coming home from the battlefield destroys the need for letters. Jesus destroyed the Temple the way the rising sun destroys the need for streetlights and headlights. He destroyed the Temple the way a descending reality destroys its shadow.

If the Messiah is coming down from Heaven, with forgiveness and advocacy and glory, and the light of God shining upon Him, then the first thing that will be seen is His Shadow on the earth. And so it was in the Sacrifices and priestly service of the old Temple. But, as the Reality gets closer, the shadow becomes smaller. And when the Reality lands on its shadow, the shadow is swallowed up entirely and it is seen no more. There is no purpose for the shadow when the Reality is here.

But we must take heed to know that this does not mean that the Reality was *against* the shadow, or that it *blasphemed* the shadow. It didn't. It *fulfilled* the shadow. And in that sense destroyed the shadow.

And so, today we have the Reality. Jesus Christ has come into the world to forgive sins once and for all, to be our go-between forever and ever, and to reveal the glory of God.

And the proof that that glorious Event has happened is that everything that paved the way for it has now lost its reason to exist. And the Temple represented everything that paved the way for the Messiah. And now Jesus is here. And he is bringing with Him that way to God. And that is why Jesus said:

Luke 21:6

As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.