

The Temple Blood Sacrificial System

1. The Old Covenant

- A. According to Jewish reckoning, there are 613 commandments (known as mitzvot) in the Old Testament.
- B. Divided into 3 categories:
 - Moral Laws; The 10 Commandment being the heart of the moral law.
 - Ceremonial Laws; rules for worship, sacrifices, purity, and festivals.
 - Civil Laws; governed daily life, property right, and crime punishments.
- C. Ceremonial Laws: Instructions regarding the priesthood, dietary restrictions, the Tabernacle/Temple, and sacrificial offerings.

2. The primary purpose of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem

- A. Served as the earthly dwelling place for God's divine presence. (Exodus 25:8)
- B. Was the central sanctuary for ancient Israelite worship. The place where animal blood sacrifices were made.
- C. Important points concerning the Temple;
 - *Sacrificial System*: Priests offered daily, Sabbath, and festival blood sacrifices for atonement, thanksgiving, and purification.
 - *The Holy of Holies*: The innermost chamber housed the Ark of the Covenant, where the High Priest entered only once a year on Yom Kippur (or the Day of Atonement).
- D. Temple Location: Mount Moriah - The place in Jerusalem where Abraham went to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19), King David built an altar (2 Samuel 24:18-25; 1 Chron. 21:18-28) and King Solomon built the Lord's temple (1 Chron. 3:1).

3. The Biblical Blood Sacrifice

- A. In a blood sacrifice, the animal sacrifice takes the place (substitute) of the person in suffering the punishment for sin. (Deut. 24:16; 2 Chron 25:4; Jer 31:30; Ezek. 18:20)
- B. The innocent dying for the guilty. (The price for sin had to be legally paid).
- C. Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah perfectly illustrates the concept of *substitution*.
- D. The forgiveness of sin requires the shedding of blood (Lev. 17:11, 14; Hebrews 9:22)
- E. Blood represents the very essence of life and is highly sacred. Because it sustains physical existence, it symbolizes the ultimate price of life and has deep spiritual significance.
- F. The primary purpose of blood is to sustain life by serving as the body's main transportation, defense, and regulation system. It continuously flows through the circulatory system to keep tissues healthy, protected, and balanced.

4. Information concerning the Tabernacle/Temple

- A. The Tabernacle was a portable sanctuary that God commanded the Israelites to build after He brought them out of the Egypt during the exodus. (Exodus 25-27 & 35-40)
- B. It served as God's dwelling place among His people during the 40 years in the wilderness before the Temple was built in Jerusalem.
- C. The Ark of the Covenant was the symbolic location of God dwelling with His people.

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- D. The "veil" separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. (Exodus 26:31-37; Matt 27:20-51; Mark 15:37-38; Luke 23:44-46).
- E. David desired to build God a permanent dwelling place (2 Sam 7; 2 Chron 17)
- F. Temples up until the time of Christ
 - *Solomon's Temple*: Completed around 960 BC. Its ground plan was the same as that of the Tabernacle; but the measurements were doubled. (1 Kings 5-7; 2 Chron 2-4) Destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. (9th of Av) (2 Chron 36:17-19)
 - *Zerubbabel's Temple*: Built between 536-516 BC after Israel's returned from captivity in Babylon. Was modest in comparison to Solomon's Temple; also, it lacked the Ark of the Covenant. (Ezra 1-6)
 - *Herod's Temple*: Result of a rebuilding program starting in 20 BC and completed in 64 AD. It was the temple during the ministry of Jesus. Destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. (9th of Av)

5. The temple was the center of Jewish life and their relationship with God. It was a symbol of their faith, unity, and connection to their history and traditions.

- A. Solomon's Temple; 7 years to build. 1st Temple 957 BC – 586 BC
- B. 1st Temple destroyed in 586 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon on the 9th Av.
- C. The Ark of the Covenant was lost in history and never discovered. What happened?
 - Priests hid the Ark in tunnels underground beneath the Temple itself.
 - Jeremiah hid the Ark, the Tabernacle, and the Altar of Incense on Mount Nebo according to 2 Maccabees 2:4-8
 - Amateur Christian archaeologist Roy Wyatt claims the Ark was hidden in a secret chamber under Golgotha where Jesus was crucified.
 - The Ark and the Temple may have been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's army in 586 B.C.
 - It may be that it is God's will that the Ark is never found. (Jeremiah 3:16-17)
- D. 2nd Temple (Zerubbabel) dedicated March 12, 515 BC.
- E. How could there be Temple sacrifices when there was no Ark of the Covenant? (Lost in 586 BC). Answer: The sacrifices did not depend on the Ark of the Covenant. They depended on the altar, the priesthood, and the Temple itself.
- F. Herod's Temple; 2nd Temple Renovation taking 46 years
- G. 2nd Temple Destroyed by the Romans; 9th of Av; August 3-4 AD 70

6. The change in Judaism

- A. The destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70 brought about a dramatic change in Judaism. *Rabbinic Judaism* is a religion centered around the teachings and writings of rabbis. After the destruction of the temple the rabbis reorganized Judaism, adding many new laws, rules, and traditions.
- B. *Temple or Biblical Judaism* practiced animal blood sacrifices and all the ceremonial laws. Rabbinic Judaism replaced temple ritual with prayer service in synagogues that was built upon practices of Jews in the diaspora dating back to the Babylonian exile.

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7. The New Covenant

- A. God says a New Covenant will be made with Israel & Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- B. Jesus shed His blood to purchase eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9:12)
- C. The blood of animal sacrifices cannot take away sin. (Hebrews 10:4)
- D. Jesus did not abolish the Law, but fulfilled it. (Matt 5:17; Rom 10:4; Gal 3:24-25)
- E. The Old Covenant became obsolete and vanished away. (Hebrews 8:13)
- F. Jesus is greater than the Temple (Matt. 12:6), His body is the Temple (John 2:19-21).
- G. In the New Covenant, the believer is the Temple. (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16)

8. Will a 3rd Temple be built?

- A. Not required by any explicit scripture. Some use 2 Thess 2:3-4 to infer the need for a 3rd Temple.
- B. Points to consider;
 - God utterly had the 2nd Temple destroyed with no trace of it left. “Not one stone left upon another.”
 - To rebuild the Temple and bring back animal sacrifices for the atonement of sin would be an *act of defiance* to Christ’s sacrifice. The believer is the Temple in the N.T.
 - The rebuilding of the Temple would be an act of man’s will, not God’s. Implies Christ’s sacrifice is not enough.
- C. What about Ezekiel’s Temple (Chapters 40-48)?
 - Do the detailed descriptions of this Temple prophecy show it will be built?
 - Ezekiel, using imagery familiar to the people of the time it was written, was speaking of future things beyond their understanding at the time. It is a description of a temple that never will be built because it does not need to be built due to the redemptive work of Christ.
 - It says the *prince* (Messiah) will offer sacrifices to make atonement for the house of Israel (Ezekiel 45:17). That means for the forgiveness of sin. (After the cross!)
 - Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross was sufficient to pay the penalty for our sins (Hebrews 10), so why would God require us to go back to the sacrificial system?
 - Why would God require sacrifices and offering in the millennium or eternal state based on these passages? We must conclude that the Ezekiel temple in chapters 40-48 is speaking figuratively.
 - No temple in the Eternal State (Revelation 21:22).
 - Should the OT prophecies be prioritized over the NT or should they be read through the lens of the NT?

Final Comments:

This lesson emphasizes the importance of the Temple in Jewish life. Its destruction, as described by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, illustrates the magnitude of this event in Biblical history. The destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, reflects the end of the Jewish Age, or the Temple sacrificial system.