

Not One Stone

"And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!' And Jesus said to him, 'Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.'" (Mark 13:1-2, ESV)

When the disciples stopped to take in the beauty of Israel's Temple, Jesus deflated their perspective with a few words. Was the temple beautiful? Certainly. This second temple was built after Israel came back following its exile. This temple did not match the splendor and beauty of the first temple of Jerusalem which Solomon had built. As Ezra tells us, when the second temple was constructed, "But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy." (Ezr. 3:12) The remnant that had seen the first temple and now saw the smaller temple knew the short lasting nature of all things. The temple, as Jesus saw it, had been built up by the Jews to be a prettier thing than it was in Ezra's time, but it still would be destroyed in time. What wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings would some day lie in rubble at some observer's feet!

Today, there is only one wall left of the second temple. It has survived the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the reconstruction of Jerusalem as a Roman city ca. 132 A.D., the wars of the ages, the crusades, the Palestinian land-debate of the twentieth century, and sits today, venerated by many physical descendants of Abraham who write prayers on papers and insert them into the cracks of the wall.

Mark well Jesus's words: even the stones of this remaining wall will be tore down at some point, stone by stone. Many of the physical children of Abraham today expect there to be a third temple built by people using physical stones based on the prophecy of Ezekiel. (cf. Ezek. 40ff) However, the third temple of God, the true temple, is already being built in fulfillment of this prophecy. The foundation was laid with the crucifixion of Christ in 33 A.D. (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20) Christ's disciples are the living stones of that temple. (1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:16) Each disciple, each one a stone, is a temple of God's Holy Spirit today. (1 Cor. 6:19)

Not one stone will remain of physical temples made with human hands. God is not worshipped in physical temples, houses, buildings made by human beings. God does not live in physical temples made by human beings. God's true temple, constructed by the divine being with his own hands from living stones he chose and added to the foundation himself, this temple will never be destroyed. (Ac. 2:47; 7:48-50; 17:24-25)