

Jesus at the Jerusalem Temple

This essay in four parts describes how closely Jesus was connected to the Temple in Jerusalem and how much of his recorded life and teachings, especially in John's Gospel, take place in the Temple environs. The Temple in Judea was the focal place for Jewish worship especially during the three great Festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Booths. Pilgrims came from far and wide to offer worship at the Temple in which God had his 'footstall'.

(1) Jesus' Early Days

Jesus association with the Temple began shortly after his birth, when he was presented at The Temple by his parents along with the necessary ritual offerings both for himself and for his mother, Mary (Lk. 2:22-24). At that very time there were two prophetic announcements of his divine nature and of his coming ministry. These were made by a couple of aged and devout people, Simeon and Anna (Lk. 2:25-38). Mary treasured these prophecies in her heart and might have remembered them often as her special son grew up.

In the following years as Jesus matured he most likely accompanied his parents on their annual pilgrimages to the Temple. Presuming they were Torah observant Jews, we can envisage that they travelled to the Temple, for the three major festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Booths each year (see appendix 1). This was what the Israelites were commanded to do (Deut. 16:16). We find supporting evidence of their piety in Luke 2:41:-

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it...

Jesus, at twelve years of age, had accompanied his parents to Jerusalem for The Festival of Unleavened Bread – The Passover. Afterwards when Jesus' parents departed for Nazareth, unknown to them, Jesus remained behind in the Temple area. After they had travelled a whole day they realized that Jesus was not in the family group. They hurried back to Jerusalem and began a search for the boy. After three days they found him in the Temple courts sitting and discussing spiritual truths with the teachers. He was both asking them questions and also answering their questions. All who heard him were amazed. When scolded by his mother for his actions Jesus replied: "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house? (Lk. 2:49).

In John Chapter 2 we learn that as an adult Jesus regularly visited the Temple at Passover, as was surely his normal custom. Jerusalem would be packed with up to half a million extra pilgrim visitors during the major festivals.

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables.¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!'¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'¹⁸The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?''¹⁹Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'²⁰The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?''²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body.²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.²³ When he was in Jerusalem

during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing.²⁴ But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people²⁵ and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

On this early occasion, what has been called the "First Cleansing of the Temple" took place (Jn. 2:13-22). It is interesting that after Jesus drove out the moneychangers and sellers of sheep and oxen, he still referred to the Temple as his "Father's house" (v.16). Despite its great corruption by men's sins, even those of the religious leaders, Jesus always looked upon the Temple as a special place. Apparently in connection with this visit Jesus had a private talk with the religious leader, Nicodemus. Jesus' words were surprising... (Jn. 3:1-21).

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.³ Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.'

⁴Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?'⁵ Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above."⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.⁹ Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?'¹⁰ Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony.¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?'¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

From this passage we receive one of the most famous and well-known verses in Christianity; it is almost a one-verse summation of the entire gospel message.

¹⁶ 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life...

¹⁷ 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.¹⁹ And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed.²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

(2) Later Ministry in the Temple Area

In John 5 we see Jesus attending another feast in Jerusalem (likely the second Passover of his public ministry).

¹After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

²Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes.³In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and

paralysed.⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?'⁷ The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.'⁸ Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.'⁹ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.'¹¹ But he answered them, 'The man who made me well said to me, "Take up your mat and walk."¹² They asked him, 'Who is the man who said to you, "Take it up and walk"?'¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there.¹⁴ Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.'¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.¹⁶ Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath.¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is still working, and I also am working.'¹⁸ For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

During this feast and at the northern end of the Temple complex, by the Sheep's Gate, Jesus healed the disabled man beside the Pool of Bethesda. A controversy arose concerning the supposed breach of Sabbath laws. Jesus made a startling claim. He said, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (Jn. 5:17). For this statement the Jewish leaders sought to kill him because they perceived that he had made himself equal with God. As the controversy developed Jesus claimed the power of God to raise the dead to life but the Sadducees did not believe in life after death.

In John's Gospel we often hear the term "The Jews". This variously means the Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, (religious leaders) sometimes it means the Judean Jews. The exact meaning depends on the context. There is overt judgement of "The Jews" but it was never intended to be a universal condemnation as it has often been wrongly interpreted by Christians, leading to widespread and sustained persecution of Jews.

In John chapter 7 we learn that Jesus decided to keep his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Booths low-key, such was the perceived danger from the authorities. Jesus though had a sense of timing about when he would be arrested and killed.

²Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near.³ So Jesus' brothers said to him, 'Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing;⁴ for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.'⁵ (For not even his brothers believed in him.)⁶ Jesus said to them, 'My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.'⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil.⁸ Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come.'⁹ After saying this, he remained in Galilee.¹⁰ But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret.¹¹ The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, 'Where is he?'¹² And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, 'He is a good man', others were saying, 'No, he is deceiving the crowd.'¹³ Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

Scholars consider that John's Gospel was probably written in Ephesus (Turkey). The intention of the Gospel is to elicit belief amongst the Diaspora Jews. John is making it clear that it was certain Judean Jews who rejected Jesus' ministry. John wants his

gospel that reveals Jesus to be the long awaited Messiah, to be accepted by the Jews of the Dispersion – who are sometimes referred to as Greeks, because they lived away from Judea and Israel. The sharpness of John’s terminology (“The Jews”) reflects the all important debate over the acceptance of Jesus as God’s Messiah within the entire Jewish community. Sadly the invective in the exchanges between Jesus and those who opposed him has often been used by later Non-Jewish Christians to condemn Judaism – something that John (himself a Jew) would never have intended.

Jesus habitually taught in public, the people (friends and detractors alike) were looking out for him. He was a teacher (Rabbi) that engaged his audience!

¹⁴ About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews were astonished at it, saying, ‘How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?’ ¹⁶ Then Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. ¹⁸ Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him. ¹⁹ ‘Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?’ ²⁰ The crowd answered, ‘You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?’ ²¹ Jesus answered them, ‘I performed one work, and all of you are astonished. ²² Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. ²³ If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the Sabbath?’ ²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement.’

Jesus provokes debate with the learned men of the Temple through his challenging yet authoritative teaching. Ultimately the question arises – Is Jesus the Messiah?

²⁵ Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, ‘Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill?’ ²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah?’ ²⁷ Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from. ²⁸ Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, ‘You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. ²⁹ I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me. ³⁰ Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, ‘When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?’

The Temple authorities send out officers to arrest Jesus...

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him. ³³ Jesus then said, ‘I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come. ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, ‘Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?’ ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, “You will search for me and you will not find me” and, “Where I am, you cannot come”?’

Jesus is not arrested and later he appears yet again in public in the Temple...

³⁷ On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, ³⁸ and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” ³⁹ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

People were divided in their opinions about Jesus....

⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, 'This is really the prophet.' ⁴¹ Others said, 'This is the Messiah.' But some asked, 'Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he?' ⁴² Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived? ⁴³ So there was a division in the crowd because of him. ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

The men in authority were also divided in their response to Jesus....

⁴⁵ Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, 'Why did you not arrest him?' ⁴⁶ The police answered, 'Never has anyone spoken like this!' ⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees replied, 'Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? ⁴⁸ Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹ But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.' ⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, ⁵¹ 'Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?' ⁵² They replied, 'Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.'

(3) Living Waters Flow From Jesus

Opposition to Jesus' ministry and teaching was now beginning to build rapidly and Jesus had several sharp discussions with the religious Jewish leaders at this time. During this visit Jesus gave a very striking teaching concerning himself. This probably happened as the customary "Water Drawing Festival" was taking place during the Feast of Tabernacles and made it deeply significant and instantly memorable. Every day of the year, after the sacrifice was burned, an offering of wine was poured on the altar. During Sukkot, there was also a water libation as a Temple Priest drew water out of the Pool of Siloam and paraded it before the pilgrims. It has been suggested that it was originally a folk rite, an inducement for rain made by pouring out water at the growing season's onset, transformed by the rabbis into a symbolic Temple ritual. Imagine the people ritually drawing water and Jesus says, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him". The context deepens the meaning! (Jn. 7:37-38). There was a belief that an everlasting stream of water would flow from the within the Temple. Zechariah 14:8 prophesies:-

On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter.

Jesus used the difference between running water (from a river or spring) and that of still water (drawn from a well or pool) as a metaphor for an active rather than a still personal spirituality. He called this 'living water'. This was an important factor in the call to Mikveh (baptism) at the River Jordan, rather than the ritual purification pools.

During the Temple visit, detailed in John Chapter 7, Jesus apparently rescued the woman taken in adultery (Jn. 8:1-11);

¹ While Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. ³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, ⁴ they said to him, 'Teacher this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. ⁵ Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?'

Jesus was able to defend the woman with his powerful and yet gentle reason. This story is not really about the woman, or adultery. It is about searching ourselves for our

own sins and shortcomings before we accuse others. The woman is saved, but told to go and sin no more.

Jesus, addressed the people again and claimed for himself the title "light of the world" (Jn.8:12 ff.); and claimed that those who believed in him would know the truth and be set free (8:32). The thing that likely brought about his exit from Jerusalem on this visit was his statement to the religious leaders in John 8:58, claiming: *"Before Abraham was born, I am!"* This statement appeared to be blasphemous to them and they sought unsuccessfully to stone him.

⁵⁹So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

On another occasion Jesus was in Jerusalem and healed the man who was born blind (Jn. 9:1 ff.). Probably as a result of his conflict with the Jewish leaders over this incident, Jesus related to them the parable of the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:1 ff.). Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd and the Door of the sheepfold. His claim cast the Jewish leaders into the role of being false shepherds and hirelings. Once more many of the Jewish leaders rose in opposition to him.

It was probably in the winter of the same year that Jesus visited the Temple again. On this occasion it was the Festival of Dedication or Hanukkah. In Solomon's Portico in the Temple Jesus made a claim to divinity by saying: "I and the Father are one" (Jn.10:30).

²²At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter,²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon.²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.²⁵ Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me,²⁶ but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.²⁷ My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.²⁹ What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand.³⁰ The Father and I are one.'

This was blasphemous in the understanding of the Religious Authorities...

³¹The Jews took up stones again to stone him.³² Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?'³³ The Jews answered, 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.'³⁴ Jesus answered, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, you are gods"?'³⁵ If those to whom the word of God came were called "gods"—and the scripture cannot be annulled—³⁶can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, "I am God's Son"?'³⁷ If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me.³⁸ But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.³⁹ Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

Jesus once again evaded capture; his time had not yet come. It was to come during the next Passover Festival. Jesus now spoke openly of his impending passion which he was no longer going to avoid. As he arrived from a period in hiding in Ephraim (close to the wilderness) back to the village of Bethany just two miles from Jerusalem he was in the place where he had recently raised his friend Lazarus from the dead. There was no hiding the enormity of this miraculous deed. Jesus' fame and reputation spread all the more, greatly worrying the religious authorities. Soon enough Jesus the man was to fear the consequences of his arrest as his fervent prayer in the Garden at Gethsemane reveals.

(4) Jesus' Final Visit to Jerusalem & The Temple

As Jesus led his disciples up to Jerusalem for his final visit he spoke with them about what awaited him in the city (Mt. 20:17-19; Mk. 10:32-34; Lk. 18:31-34). The disciples recognised the immediate danger but did not understand Jesus' attitude and prophecies concerning his impending arrest, death and resurrection.

In order to fulfil prophecy Jesus rode from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem and to the Temple area on a little donkey. Zechariah 9:9 had spoken of this in these words:

"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

We know that on this great occasion the common people spread garments and branches before him as they rejoiced and shouted, "Save us!":

"Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" (Mt. 21:9).

The Pharisees were not pleased with this demonstration saying:

"See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!" (Jn. 12:19).

It is significant and often overlooked that Jesus entered Jerusalem on the very day that the sacrificial animals were being chosen. They had to be unblemished, perfect and thus worthy of sacrifice to God. Jesus presents himself at the Temple and becomes the Lamb of God....

The Synoptic Gospels in Matthew 21, Mark 11 and Luke 19, have Jesus doing a second cleansing of the Temple on this occasion. Jesus having visited the Temple went out of Jerusalem back to Bethany a few miles away. With all this activity of Jesus, the leaders of Israel were sore displeased (Mt. 21:15) and once more challenged his authority (Mt. 21:23-27). With this act and with several highly critical parables and stories specifically directed at the Jewish leaders, the pressure was rapidly heightening.

We see in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, that as Jesus and his followers left the Temple the disciples remarked to him about its beauty. Addressing their remarks, Jesus began to speak of the great judgment that would soon befall the Temple:

"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down" (Mark 13:2).

How true were Jesus' words! That very generation would not pass until the Romans would come and totally destroy the Temple, not leaving one stone on top of another.

Now the plot unfolds for the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus (Mk. 14:1-2). Obviously they were fearful of the people rioting – Caiaphas said it was better for one man to die for the whole people (Jn 18:14) and concerned that such an event would not happen during the coming Passover celebration. They were aided in their schemes when Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve disciples stepped forward and agreed to betray him for money (Mt. 26:14-16). One can only presume that Judas was disaffected by the lack of forceful action – perhaps he was trying to help bring events to a climax. Although Jesus had performed many astounding miracles before them these leaders did not believe. That Jesus could be the Messiah. In their unbelief they fulfilled the words of Isaiah:

"Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isa 53:1; cf. Jn. 12:37-41).

Jesus celebrated his Last Supper, a Passover Meal with his disciples and Judas hurried out into the darkness to finish his job of betrayal. Later that night Judas led the band of guards and servants from the High Priest and elders to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus and his disciples had gathered. There, in the garden just

below the Temple Mount, Judas Iscariot misguidedly (*with Satan in his heart*) betrayed his own Master into the hands of his pursuers.

Jesus was bound and taken for questioning before those of the High Priestly office, Annas and Caiaphas. The priests and elders sought out false witnesses against Jesus that they might condemn him. They deemed him guilty of blasphemy and thus worthy of death. He was mocked and abused by those present. The next day the Jewish Sanhedrin hastily met and led by Caiaphas agreed that Jesus was worthy of death. He was therefore sent to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, that the death sentence might be rendered. The Judean religious establishment, in concert with the depraved Roman political system and a hastily assembled rabble of detractors, all had a part in Jesus' condemnation and later crucifixion. Jesus was crucified as a common criminal – a bandit, with bandits on either side of him:-

At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. (Matt 26:55)

On the hill of Golgotha just outside the Jerusalem city wall, in sight of The Jerusalem Temple, Jesus hung, brutally beaten and scourged, until he died. On that cross Jesus achieved what could never be done by the multitudes of offerings throughout the many centuries of the Temple's existence. With his life-offering (his personal sacrifice) he made possible our atonement and opened the gates of salvation. When Jesus said "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30), a new truth, a new Way and a new life of faith was opened to humankind.

We are left to ponder Jesus' prophetic words:

³⁷ 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you, desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. ^{24:1}As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.² Then he asked them, 'You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.' (Matt 23:37 – 24:2)

When Jesus died, Matthew 27:51 informs us that the very thick and heavy curtain (veil) in the Temple was suddenly and miraculously 'rent asunder' from top to bottom. The "*new and living way*" (Heb. 10:20) was now opened through the veil. The things that were formerly hidden were now on full view for those with eyes to see them. God was not hidden within a 'holy of holies' in a sanctuary hidden from view. God was revealed for those with eyes to see!

Jesus had been falsely accused of threatening to destroy the Temple. He hadn't – it was a misunderstanding (possibly deliberate) of his statement that likened his body to the Temple. The crucifixion of Jesus probably most likely took place in April 33 CE.

The Temple was destroyed by the Romans as a result of the Jewish Roman War in 70 CE. Jesus had said that not one stone would be left on another, all would be thrown down (Mark 13.2). Thus the Temple was redundant!

The faith of Jews who followed in The Way of Jesus the Messiah spread throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. His Way, now known as The Christian Church has spread worldwide and has become a living Temple.