

# EXPLORATION: BIBLE

Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy **but to fulfill**. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law **till all is fulfilled**” (Matthew 5:17-18). Jesus came “to fulfill... the Law and the Prophets” and Jesus assures us, in due time, “all” will be “fulfilled” in Him.

## SCARLET THREAD #7

### Jesus is Greater than the Temple

For devout Jews living in the 1st century, implying that anything was “greater than the Temple” was blasphemy. Yet, that is exactly what Jesus did. Referring to himself, Jesus said, “I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the Temple” (Matthew 12:6). You might ask, “How was Jesus greater than the Temple?”

**FIRST: Jesus fulfilled God’s plan for the temple.** Jesus said, “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44). As we learned in last month’s EXPLORATION BIBLE article, the Temple was created by God to perfectly picture Jesus. Jesus is, therefore, greater because God’s ultimate plan for the Temple was to point us to Jesus. In an earthly and temporary way, the Temple pictured the final and eternal work of Jesus on the cross.

**SECOND: Jesus fulfilled God’s reason for the Temple.** I love to ask people this question. What was the last thing Jesus said while he was hanging on the cross? Here is a clue:



**This tattoo of the Greek word “Tetelestai” was done in the oldest tattoo parlor in the world, a 700 year old family business, in Jerusalem. This is the most important word ever uttered on planet earth. [Photo by Chip Thompson]**

In Greek, “Tetelestai” is a one word proclamation – translated it means, “IT IS FINISHED.” The question is, “What was finished?” Individuals might offer varying ideas, but biblically there is only one option because God himself interpreted this moment in history for us. As Jesus was hanging on the cross, at the moment of his death, this is what happened, “Jesus cried out again with a loud voice... He said, **“It is finished!”**... And yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:50-51 & John 19:30).

At the moment when Jesus cried out “It is Finished” God tore the veil in the Temple from top to bottom. Why? What was finished? Quite simply, the reason for the Temple was finished. The final and forever blood sacrifice happened when Jesus shed His sinless blood on the cross as the “propitiation” for our sins. “He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world... In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2 & 4:10). The veil that God ripped from top to bottom represented the barrier that separated sinful mankind from the Holy God. Through the finished work of Christ on the cross, the barrier between God and man was forever removed. All true believers now have direct access to the Father. Jesus fulfilled God’s reason for the Temple.

One proof that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jewish Temple is the fact that Christ’s followers never attempted to rebuild the Temple that was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The Lord’s Apostles led the way for the building of Christian churches in Jerusalem in honor of Jesus. Why not rebuild the temple? Again, the answer is found in God’s Word. The Lord’s Apostles taught, “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). Instead, the Apostles declared, “Do you not know that you are... your body is... the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:15 & 6:19). With the finished work of Christ on the cross, the dwelling place of God transferred from the Temple into all true believers. In Jesus, the stone building called the Temple became obsolete. In Christ, believers become the living Temple where God now dwells. All glory to God!

**Finally: Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the Temple.** The Temple was the place where atonement for sin happened. The Bible tells us the shed blood of Jesus was greater than all the blood

sacrifices offered at the Jewish Temple and there were millions of such sacrifices. Hebrews 10:11-14 says, “Every priest stood ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins. But this Man (Jesus), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God... For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” The Temple sacrifices could never take away sins! Only the blood of Jesus can take your sins away,



**God no longer dwells in Stone Temples rather God dwells in all True Believers. [Photo created by Chip Thompson]**

God’s desire has always been to “tabernacle or dwell” with His people. The Temple was only a temporary solution until the Savior, Jesus Christ, fulfilled God’s desire. God’s desire has always been to have a personal and intimate relationship with His people. This intimate relationship is only found in Christ, through his finished work on the cross.

Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him” (John 14:23). Today, believers from all nations, tribes, and languages, have literally become the “body of Christ” on earth. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, when speaking of the body of Christ (His church), it starts and ends this way, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit... Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.” In Christ, believers become his hands and his feet to spread the love of Jesus to a lost world. Worldwide, over 2.4 Billion believers claim to be members of Christ’s body, the Christian Church.