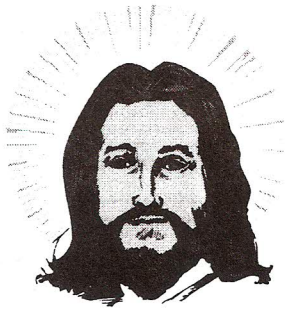


Jesus Said That He Is Greater Than The Temple



Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple." -- Matthew 12:6

When Jesus spoke these words to the Jews, we must understand what the temple meant to them in order to grasp the impact of Jesus' words. The temple was the hallmark of Judaism, and to have it rebuilt by Herod only strengthened Israel's beliefs in their heritage. The temple had become the shining light of their religion. It was revered above all other symbols of their faith. When Jesus compared himself to the temple it ran into direct conflict with everything a Jew would practice, for nobody before Him dared to say he is greater than the temple.

Jesus didn't make radical statements for the sheer pleasure of radicalism, so why were His statements considered so radical and upsetting to the Jews? It is simply because He has the authority to say such things (Matthew 7:29; 28:18), He spoke as God incarnate (Matthew 1:23), something the world had never encountered previously. We would expect that if the true God from the Bible visited earth, then He would say things that had never entered man's thoughts or ears before. Such is Jesus; He is God incarnate (Philippians 2:6-8) and His words are not mere opinions, but directly from God to us (Matthew 24:35).

Let us now look at what the temple meant to the Jews so that we can have a clearer picture of how Jesus is greater. In their day it was called the house of God or the tabernacle (Matthew 12:1-6). The tabernacle was made by the Israelites in the wilderness with Moses. It was a large tent that housed the ark of the covenant. Within its walls were performed the sacrifices outlined in the Old Testament. It did not become a solid structure until the reign of Solomon. Even then, it resembled the tent or tabernacle.

The tabernacle was great in that it manifested God's presence. This, called shekinah, is the glory of God which radiated from the midst of the ark of the

