

### 3.23.20 – The Temple, The Tabernacle and The Body

As you probably know there is no temple for the New Testament church. The New Testament church is the group of believers not the building they meet in. Jesus and the Apostles used the temple and the synagogues to teach the new doctrine till they were barred from doing so. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. There is finally, after nearly 2000 years since its destruction, an effort underway to rebuild the temple. In fact, all of the temple implements have been constructed and the money and building materials have been set aside, the Rabbis are simply waiting for the right time. That said, it took much longer for this one to get rebuilt then after the Babylonians destroyed the first temple.

What happened, why didn't the temple get rebuilt quickly after it's destruction in 70 AD.? Did God get tired of the abuse of the temple or is there a replacement? According to scripture, there is a replacement. **1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?** "What does that mean for naturists?" you ask. We will explore that a little later, but we want to add another sacred place to the discussion.

In Exodus we find a lengthy description of the tabernacle. It was roughly 45 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high with wood boards on three sides and a covering over the top. Most of the front and rear of it would be visible to everyone. It was designed to be easily moved from place to place as the Israelites moved from Mount Sinai to the promise land. It was God's "tent" as the Hebrews traveled. It is also mentioned in the New Testament meaning the body of the believer. **2Pe 1:13, 14 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.**

I remember a sermon from a long time ago, over thirty years ago, which is very unusual for me. I often have trouble remembering the topic of the morning sermon at lunch time. The sermon was a comparison of the priest and the temple with the husband and wife. It was one of those "sins of summer" sermons to tell us how much we should wear even if it got uncomfortable. The idea that stayed with me is the husband is like the priest and the wife is the temple. The priest is the only one allowed in the temple. The only one to see the inside of the temple. The husband should be the only one to see more than the approved parts of the wife. I was not a naturist at the time, maybe I remembered it so I could play Pharisee. That gal is sure showing too much of her "temple"!

There are a lot of things that do not fit the comparison. The temple was never covered in clothing. If the wife was to be a "temple" she should be visible to all without clothing. As suggested above that is the opposite of the point of the sermon. The relation of the husband and the wife is far different than the priest and the temple. Yes, they both have privileges that are unique to them. The body is the outside of the temple which was visible to all that were close enough to see it. There is very little similarity between a wife and a building. True, God dwelled in the temple and the Holy Spirit dwells in the wife if she is saved. The need for clothing is missing for the temple. The wife needs clothing to protect the body from cold and hazards. I wonder how the ladies liked being compared to a building.

The temple that Solomon built was the most glorious building that could be built at that time. All the craftsmen would want everyone to see their workmanship, even if it was not visible on the outside. Even after more than 20 years, I want to point out the houses that I helped build the foundations which are not visible on the outside of the finished building. The human body is far more glorious than anything that man has ever made. It would seem reasonable that God would want his craftsmanship seen and admired, especially when you look at the Word of God knowing in fact, that He created us so that His handiwork was seen by all.

The tabernacle also involved a lot of outstanding craftsmanship. Unlike the temple, the tabernacle was movable and had no permanent resting place which fits our bodies rather closely. We can move as God directs or as we will, but we are not going to find permanent rest in this world. The tabernacle would have been a little better for the sermon mentioned above. At least the tabernacle had a cloth covering, not to hide it, but to protect it from the environment.

I read an article recently about the body being sacred. I looked up the definition to be sure I knew what the author was saying. Here is one that I liked: *Holy; pertaining to God or to his worship; separated from common secular uses and consecrated to God and his service; as a sacred place; a sacred day; a sacred feast; sacred service; sacred orders.* The author did not make much sense to me with his arguments. I will look at the idea my way. If we are sacred because God made us, then everything is sacred because God made everything. Sacred would then be a synonym for everything. If we are saved, meaning the Holy Spirit dwells in us, then the body becomes a temple and it is sacred.

The question that concerns us is, should the sacred be displayed. Both the tabernacle and the temple were sacred and visible to all. In fact, they were beautiful to look upon. The buildings were beautiful, the interior furniture was beautiful, the decorations were beautiful and the instruments were beautiful as well. I'd say that the body is more like the buildings rather than the interior furnishings, but the principle is still the same. Just because something is beautiful does not mean it should not be looked upon, in fact the opposite is usually the case. God had them design the temple with majesty and beauty because it was to represent His house, where He dwelt among the people. He wanted it beautiful. Certainly then, the fact that the "body is a temple" cannot be used to justify clothing. I believe that a case could and should be made for the opposite. He made us in His image, He made us beautiful, it makes no sense then to say that He made us to be covered in shame!

Another flaw with the sermon above is the reason for covering the body or what is wrong with men other than the husband seeing too much of a woman's body. Because the preacher was using "husband and wife" instead of "men and women" we can assume he wanted to prevent lust. The very problem he wanted to solve is created by the solution he suggested. Men lust because they are programmed that way. Telling a woman that she needs to cover herself to prevent lust in men also tells a man he should at least have trouble with lust if he sees too much uncovered skin on a woman. Natural curiosity is like a drug, the more exposed skin on a woman the more the man will want to see. Seeing the whole naked body shows everything that there is to see. Seeing the whole naked body often enough in enough variety will dull the appeal as the curiosity and the imagination are eliminated from the equation. By the way, this is not an academic question, this is a fact proven by years of observation in the naturist community.

Another problem that goes with "clothing the temple" so only the husband sees it to prevent lust is that the practice is usually continued at home. The result is that the only time the temple is uncovered is for sex. This is another big part of the programming mentioned above. If the only time a man sees a naked woman is for sex, he will automatically see exposed skin on a woman as an indicator for sex. The more exposed skin the more the woman is looking for sexual gratification. Most of us know that the exposed skin is either for comfort or attention seldom to advertise for a sex partner. Much like Pavlov's dogs who began to salivate when a bell was rung, men have been conditioned so much in this manner that when skin is exposed the reaction is almost instantaneous. This is not what God intended and not what God desires. God created Adam and Eve in the garden naked and not ashamed. He did not do that so that they'd be having sex 24/7 in the garden. The Bible tells us that He put them in the garden "to dress it and keep it." Satan is behind the reconditioning that we have today, not God!

As we have mentioned often when talking about lust, that it is to be controlled by the man, not by rules about covering women. The idea

that covering the woman to prevent lust gives the man an excuse or blind spot for not correcting his heart condition. A lot of non-sexual nakedness is a help as it reconditions the response, but it does not change the heart where lust originates. We are not even expected to clean up our own hearts. We are expected to allow the Holy Spirit to clean it up. We may have to follow His leading instead of complaining that the Holy Spirit is not doing His job so I can't keep myself from lusting.

If you are going to draw the comparison between the Old Testament temple and the body being the temple or tabernacle of the Holy Spirit today then you can only justify clothing to protect it from the environment. That means you wear clothing to protect the body from cold, thorns and etc., but you cannot conclude that the body needs hidden away as the tabernacle / temple certainly was not hidden away.

When Christians decide to accept the Bible as written and originally intended then there is no other option but to conclude that biblical non-sexual nakedness is what God intended from the very beginning and based on Old and New Testament examples is still His desired state of being for the human race. When Christians decide to stop adding to scripture as the Pharisees of old did, then the Christian faith will begin being a proper biblical light and salt again.