

AN END TO SACRIFICE AND OFFERING

David Baker, prepared for the Presbytery word, 08 August 2021

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Introduction

Welcome to session fifteen on the Seventy Weeks prophecy. In our last two sessions, we considered how Jesus Christ came to 'confirm a covenant with many for one week'.

That covenant is the Everlasting Covenant. It is the *covenant of sonship*.

We considered how Jesus Christ came to confirm that covenant by water and by blood, and also by the Spirit, because the Spirit bears witness, for the Spirit is truth.

The crucifixion of Jesus is the central tenet of the Seventy Weeks prophecy

In this session, we will focus on the point that, in the middle of the week, Christ brought 'an end to sacrifice and offering'. That is, at the end of the first half of the seventieth week, Christ brought an end to sacrifice and offering

'And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

'Then He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.' Dan 9:26-27.

These two verses are both summary statements that identify the major waypoints after the coming of the Messiah, or after the coming of Jesus Christ, and His baptism. It is important that we consider these two verses together, because they are highly integrated. The essential point of connection between the two verses is the *crucifixion of Jesus Christ*. And this is the central focus of the entire Seventy Weeks prophecy.

It is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

When we read, 'The Messiah is cut off but not for Himself,' that refers to the crucifixion of Christ.

When we read, 'He shall bring to an end sacrifice and offering', that also refers to the crucifixion of Christ.

The end of sacrifice and offering under the Old Covenant is foundational to our understanding of the New Covenant

That is the point of connection between the two verses. When we make this point, it is not an isolated, exegetical point. The truth that the offering of Christ put an end to all sacrifice and offering under the Old Covenant is *foundational* to our understanding of the New Covenant.

This is one of the central themes in the book of Hebrews.

'For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins [It had no capacity to cleanse the conscience]. Therefore, when He [that is Christ] came into the world, He said: "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE, BUT A BODY [speaking about His own physical body] YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME [And this was particularly His confession in the garden of Gethsemane]

"IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAD NO PLEASURE. THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME - IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME - TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" [That is the expansion of the prayer of Christ, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.']

'Previously saying, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING, BURNT OFFERINGS, AND OFFERINGS FOR SIN YOU DID NOT DESIRE, NOR HAD PLEASURE IN THEM" [and he qualifies this then by saying] (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD." [He restates the point.] He takes away the first [that is, the Law covenant], that He may establish the second [that is, the New Covenant].'

We know that *the offering of Christ fulfilled the Law*; it abolished the Old Covenant; and it inaugurated the New Covenant.

‘By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.’ Heb 10:4-10.

‘For by one offering He has perfected forever’

The offering of Christ was *the full revelation* of the will of the Father; and it was the full revelation of the will of the Father for every son of God.

Paul continued, ‘For by one offering He has perfected forever’, meaning ‘He has learned our obedience; He has accomplished the works of our sonship; He has perfected forever those who are now being sanctified in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings’. Heb 10:14.

Christ opened a new and living way

When the soldier pierced the side of Christ after His physical death, the veil in the physical temple was torn in two. The Scripture says it was torn in two from the top to the very bottom. This was a remarkable and profound physical sign. It bore witness that the new and living way was now open for us to participate in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

It also bore witness to the fact that the Old Covenant, with its temple, with its priesthood, and with its entire regime of offering and sacrifice had come to an end. It had all been abolished by the offering of Christ, forever.

Animal sacrifice was now an abomination to the Lord

Now, remarkably, history tells us that once the veil tore in two, the Jews sewed it back up, and they continued to make their animal sacrifices. But once the offering of Christ was complete, the blood of all animal sacrifice was *an abomination* to the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah declared, concerning this religious activity, ‘He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog’s neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine’s blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations, so will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them [he will deliver them over]; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear.’ Isa 66:3-4.

We could say that they didn’t respond when Jesus Christ came to bear witness to the Everlasting Covenant, which is the covenant of sonship by water, blood and the Spirit. ‘When I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight.’ Isa 66:4.

Recognising that it was Christ who put a stop to all sacrifice and offering, the abomination of animal sacrifice was one of the *major reasons* why God delivered the Jewish nation to judgement at the hands of the Romans in AD70. We will consider that in this session.

It is worth noting that one of the major arguments against this interpretation of the Seventy Weeks prophecy - that it was Christ who put an end to sacrifice and offering - is that after the offering of Christ, the animal sacrifice continued. So, the argument is: how could Christ have brought it to an end if it continued after His offering was complete?

However, we need to recognise that the Seventy Weeks prophecy refers to the *legitimate* regime of sacrifice and offering under the Law covenant. That is what Christ brought to an end, and it had been legitimate for fifteen hundred years, pointing forward and bearing witness to the offering of Christ.

It does not refer to the illegitimate sacrifice and offering that continued after the offering of Christ as an abomination to the Lord.

The fact that the Jews sewed up the veil in the temple and continued to make animal sacrifices did not undermine or nullify *the finished work of Christ*.

The irrevocable end of sacrifice and offering was the crucifixion of Christ. It wasn’t when the temple was destroyed in AD70 by Prince Titus.

In the same way, the Seventy Weeks prophecy does not refer to a future reinstatement of sacrifice and offering. Any future reinstatement of animal sacrifice would also be an abomination to the Lord, in the same way that the continuation of animal sacrifice by the Jews, after the death of Christ, was an abomination to the Lord that led, in large part, to the destruction of the temple and city in AD70.

The Lord preserved the temple and Jerusalem for the sake of public and house to house fellowship

This brings us to an important question. We know that there were approximately forty years between the offering of Christ and the final destruction of the temple in AD70. So, if the abomination of animal sacrifice continued immediately after the crucifixion of Christ, why did the Lord wait approximately forty years before allowing the city of Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed?

The answer to that question is that the Lord preserved the temple buildings, and He preserved the entire city of Jerusalem for the sake of the public and house to house fellowship of the early church.

The Lord gave the temple precincts to the apostles to be their 'cathedral' for the sake of proclaiming the word of life. And the apostles proclaimed, or preached, the word of life, particularly in Solomon's portico, which was the vast colonnade on the eastern side of the temple.

They performed many miracles in that place. That is where *the word* was *publicly proclaimed*. 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.' Act 5:42. So, the fellowship of the early church was public; and it was also house to house.

While ever the apostles proclaimed the word of life in the temple, and while ever there was a house to house fellowship with a multitude of houses throughout the city of Jerusalem, all devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayers, *the Lord preserved the city of Jerusalem for the sake of the early church*.

The continuance of animal sacrifice in the temple, which occurred at the same time as the public and house to house ministry of the church, was *an abomination to the Lord*. However, 'the abomination which makes desolate standing in the holy place' is much more than this, and this is a very important point to understand.

The abomination which makes desolate – the violation of the table of the Lord

Jesus said, 'Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' [or the 'abomination which makes desolate'] spoken of

by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.' Mat 24:15-16.

The 'abomination which makes desolate', spoken of in the book of Daniel, is *the violation of the fellowship of the Lord's table*, which causes the Lord's messengers and His people to be *trampled* for 2300 years.

We know that began in the time of the Greek Empire, particularly in the time of the Seleucids, and it will continue all the way through into the time of the end. Jesus identified this principle that lasts for 2300 years. But He also warned the believing Jews in Jerusalem that this abomination would reach a fulness in their day, and that when they saw the abomination reaching a fulness, they were to leave Jerusalem. Those who were in Judea were to flee to the mountains.

This was a specific manifestation of the 'abomination which makes desolate'. We know that these words of Jesus also have an application in the days ahead of us, when the 'abomination which makes desolate' reaches another fulness in the time of the seventh world kingdom, and Jerusalem will again be surrounded by armies led by Gog and Magog.

However, our interest in this session is to look at the early church in the lead-up to the destruction of the temple in AD70.

The true temple is the temple of His body

When considering the abomination in the holy place, it is important to remember that, following the offering of Christ, 'the holy place' no longer referred to the physical temple building. So, we are not looking for an idol being set up in the physical buildings or something similar. The holy place' does not refer to the physical temple buildings.

Jesus inaugurated the *true temple* by the sprinkling of His blood on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross.

The true temple is *the temple of His body*.

When Jesus spoke about the 'abomination which makes desolate, standing in the holy place,' it refers to *idolatry in the fellowship of the body of Christ*.

The disciples became members of Christ's body when they received the Holy Spirit from Him on

the day of His resurrection. That is when they were born of the Spirit. That is when they each became a *temple* for the Person of the Holy Spirit. And that is when they were joined to the fellowship of Christ's body.

Then, on the day of Pentecost, 'the anointing of the Most Holy' was complete when the power of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh was poured out upon them through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and they then were empowered to be Christ's witnesses to the ends of the earth as sons and priests in the Father's house, which is the true temple, the body of Christ.

Idolatry in the true temple is the abomination which makes desolate

With this in view, 'the abomination which makes desolate, standing in the holy place' refers to *idolatry in the true temple*, not something physical in the physical temple.

One of the most significant causes of corruption within the early church in Jerusalem was the influence of the religious zealots, who promoted the view that the Jewish followers of Christ still needed to observe the requirements of the Law covenant.

This abomination in the holy place reached its fulness when the elders of the Jerusalem church imposed upon the apostle Paul the need to observe the rites of purification according to the Law. In this situation, Paul was openly *trampled* as a messenger of Christ.

Paul is trampled as a messenger of Christ

'And when we had come to Jerusalem [This is Luke speaking], the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present [There is no indication here that Peter was present, but we know that James was present because he is nominated here by name.].

'When he had greeted them [when Paul had greeted the brethren], he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law." Act 21: 17-20.

So, they received Paul's testimony, but then they immediately compared it with what was happening in Jerusalem and ask Paul to observe it.

'You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed.'

These were not non-believing Jews who kept the Law, but believing Jews. These Jews had believed in Jesus Christ, and they professed to be followers of Jesus Christ, but they were still loyal to the traditions of their extended Jewish families and to the traditions of the Jewish nation. So, while they professed to be followers of Christ, they were still zealous for observing the requirements of the Law.

It was obviously a very large and significant faction in the church in Jerusalem. And, remarkably, the elders were either completely on board with this view - of the same mind - or they had succumbed to this congregational pressure. It is quite likely here that James was not of the same view, but he had succumbed to the *collegial pressure* within this presbytery, the elders, in Jerusalem.

He had been overcome by the power of this collegial presbytery of elders. Luke recorded that it was the elders who spoke to Paul, and not James himself. James had somehow been sidelined through all of this.

Paul's gospel was Jew and Gentile in one body

'But they have been informed about you. [The elders spoke to Paul, as a collective, about the congregation, saying, 'The congregation have been informed about you.'] that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.' Act 21:21.

Now, Paul did preach that Christ had abolished the Old Covenant, and that He had inaugurated the New Covenant. And Paul did preach that it is baptism that now joins us to the circumcision of Christ, which is the fellowship of His sufferings; those wounding events that He experienced from Gethsemane to the cross. That is what is circumcising the *other law* from our heart.

And he did preach that it is Jew and Gentile in one body. And, in fact, Paul said to the Galatians, 'If anyone preaches any other gospel than this, let

him be accursed.' Paul's gospel was 'Jew and Gentile in one body'.

The elders made this statement and then said, 'What then?' Now, that's a good question, isn't it?

On this specific matter, the elders should have asked Paul - recognising that he had received *revelation* directly from Jesus Christ, recognising the *grace* that he had received as part of an apostolic administration of Christ, recognising that he was a *messenger* of Christ - to preach this same gospel to them so that they could also hear and see and turn and look upon Christ whom they had pierced.

The elders were promoting a gospel that divided Jew and Gentile

However, instead of entreating Paul, and asking for him to speak to them, they simply continued on, as if it was a foregone conclusion, saying, 'The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.'

They knew that the church would come together, and they wanted to have a very harmonious church meeting when that happened.

In order to make this happen, they said to Paul, 'Therefore, do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow [which was evidently the vow of a Nazarite.]. Take them and be purified with them and pay their expenses [So, become their benefactor in this matter] so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you *are nothing*.' Act 21:22-24.

This was more than just saying that those things were not true. It was saying that the things that he was reported to be preaching would have no effect or impact upon the congregation in Jerusalem.

If, however, Paul had begun to preach there, as he preached in every other place, then it would have certainly brought *a sword into every family*, which is the word of the cross.

'That all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing [they would have no effect on them], but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no

such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.' Act 21:24-25.

So, you see, they kept promoting a gospel that *divides* Jew and Gentile, whereas Paul's gospel was Jew and Gentile in one body.

Paul submitted himself in the meekness and gentleness of Christ

'Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.' Act 21:26.

So, they went into the temple to notify the priests that these men intended to make the relevant sacrifices at the end of the seven days.

This was a remarkable response by Paul. You would think that if there was ever an opportunity for Paul to preach, as he did in Galatia, and say to this group, 'O foolish elders of Jerusalem, who has bewitched you? Who has led you astray from the truth? Because Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed before your eyes', this was it.

And if there was ever an opportunity to say to them, 'I want to ask you one question, did you receive the Spirit through the works of the Law or through the hearing of faith?', this was the time.

And if there was ever an opportunity to say to them again, as he said to Galatia, 'Why are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect in the flesh?', it was then.

If ever there was an opportunity for Paul to preach that sermon, you would think that this was the time. Yet, Paul did not do that.

He very humbly submitted himself to this word, and even though it was *a sinful imposition* upon him, Paul *submitted* himself to this instruction in *the meekness and the gentleness of Christ*.

Paul's specific fellowship in the sufferings of Christ

He was joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings here, being *trampled* as a messenger of Christ.

The Lord had already made it clear to him by the Holy Spirit that he would be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem, and then delivered into the hands of

the Gentiles. He had testified to the Ephesian presbytery before he went down to Jerusalem. He said to them, 'Now I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city that chains and tribulations await me.'

In every *agape* meal context, the Holy Spirit was evidently bearing witness through the gifts of the Spirit that this is what lay ahead for Paul; and Paul had received that word.

When he was in the house of Phillip the Evangelist, who was one of the original seven, and the prophet Agabus, came up from Judea and took Paul's belt and bound his hands and feet, and said, 'Whoever owns this belt, thus shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'

I don't know what Paul was expecting when he came to Jerusalem, in terms of how this would eventuate, but here he was, being *bound* by the elders of the Jerusalem church.

'Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

'Now when the seven days were almost ended [So they hadn't finished. He didn't actually get to the point where the sacrifices needed to be made. So, sometime before the seven days were complete, just before], the Jews from Asia seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him.' Act 21:26-27.

'A thorn in the flesh'; circumcising pride from Paul's heart

The group that stirred up the crowd were not the same as the believing religious zealots in Jerusalem. They were the non-believing Jews from Asia, and this was the crowd that followed Paul from place to place as 'a thorn in the flesh'. This was part of his very specific fellowship in the sufferings of Christ with *the crown of thorns* that has been placed upon Christ's head.

Paul knew that this specific fellowship in Christ's sufferings was *circumcising pride* from his heart and was also joining him to the grace of Christ's headship. The non-believing Jews from Asia stirred up the whole crowd, including the believing Jews in Jerusalem.

They cried out, 'Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple).' Act 21:28-29.

The key point is this. They accused Paul of defiling the physical temple in Jerusalem. In reality, the whole city came in an uproar, including many of the believers in the Jerusalem church. The whole crowd defiled the *heavenly sanctuary* by laying their hands upon Paul, who was a messenger of Jesus Christ, and by *trampling* him.

Because of this sin against Paul, 'all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together [including many of the believing Jews], seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.' Act 21:30.

Jerusalem is delivered over to judgement

That is a very interesting statement. 'The doors were shut.'

The Lord had preserved that temple precinct for as long as it remained the context for the apostles to proclaim the word of life. However, because of this sin against Paul, which was precipitated by the transgression of the elders in Jerusalem, the church lost the use of the temple buildings as their public place of ministry.

The city of Jerusalem was delivered over to *judgement* at the hands of the Romans. Paul was saved by the intervention of the Roman soldiers for the sake of preserving law and order within the city. However, Paul understood that this was for the sake of his ministry to come. The Lord had already made it clear to him that he would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.

This event happened around AD60 or possibly just before. And this would have been a major watershed or event in the life and ministry of the apostle James in a similar way to the event in Antioch when Paul confronted Peter when he withdrew himself from the *agape* meal with the Gentiles. That was a major watershed moment for Peter, in terms of his life and ministry, when he was confronted by Christ Himself in that interaction.

The arrest of Paul would have been a significant point in the life and ministry of James.

The ministry of the apostle James

From that point onwards, it is very likely that James set about confronting the *pervasive leaven* that was being promoted by the religious zealots within the Jerusalem church, with renewed fervour and vigour. This would have not only put him in conflict with these factions within the church; it would have also brought him into direct conflict with the priesthood that was still operating in the temple.

Josephus recorded that James was stoned by the direct order of the high priest, in AD62; only about two years later.

It is unlikely that Peter was present when Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, and we don't know whether he was in Jerusalem when James was stoned. However, it is likely that he led an exodus of Christians from Jerusalem following these events.

Peter heeds the Lord's words to leave Jerusalem

So, by the time that he wrote his first letter, and many suggest that this is between AD62 and AD64, he was living with many other believers in the region of Babylon. We know this because he concluded his first letter by saying, 'She who is in Babylon [speaking about the church in the region of Babylon], elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.' 1Pe 5:13.

As an aside, there is no reason to assume that Peter used 'Babylon' here as a code word for Rome. The Scriptures do not record that Peter ever went to Rome, and neither is there conclusive historical evidence that Peter ever went to Rome.

The notion or the tradition that Peter went to Rome, was killed there and buried there, which was held by the early church fathers who had already rejected the gospel of sonship and embraced sacramentalism and Greek philosophy, did not really begin until the end of the second century.

The key point is this. Peter had *heeded the words of Jesus* to leave Jerusalem, and clearly wrote to all believers who had received the faith of Jesus Christ, which he described as 'like precious faith', that they had a New Covenant, a new temple, a

new priesthood, and *a new fellowship of offering*, which is a fellowship in Christ's offering.

Peter identified the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning Christ

Specifically, referring to Christ as the Head of His body and the Cornerstone of the true temple, the apostle Peter proclaimed, 'Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious [coming to Him requires us to let go of every other alternative], you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ [in the fellowship of Christ's offering].' 1Pe 2:4-5.

Peter identified that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ.

'Therefore, it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED".

'Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE", and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENCE". They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.' 1Pe 2:6-8.

Josephus recorded the Jewish Roman War, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD70, in great detail. It began with a Jewish uprising in AD66, and the Jews won some of the initial battles.

The timing here is quite significant. The trampling of the apostle Paul was around AD60. The martyrdom of James was AD62. The warning of Peter in his first letter, was around AD62 to AD 64. Then, by AD66, the war began.

History suggests that it was during AD66 that the remaining Christians heeded the words of Jesus and left Jerusalem.

The Jews won some of the initial battles, but Jesus said, 'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.'

This was one step beyond 'when you see the abomination which makes desolate'. They had begun to see the outcome of this.

‘Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.’ Luk 21:20-22.

In other words, so that the Seventy Weeks prophecy may be fulfilled.

The Romans responded to this Jewish revolt by sending a large army, under the command of Vespasian. And then, when Nero died, Vespasian went back to Rome, and became the Roman emperor. He handed the command of this army to his son, Prince Titus. In the Spring of AD70, Prince Titus allowed many pilgrims to enter Jerusalem.

Now, of course, they were those pilgrims who had not listened to the words of Jesus when He said, definitively, ‘Let not those who are in the country enter into the city of Jerusalem.’

Here they were, flocking into the city of Jerusalem to celebrate what was probably the biggest Passover of all time. Titus allowed them all to enter Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover, but then he did not allow them to leave the city.

The city and the sanctuary destroyed

Josephus recorded that the Jewish zealots were crippled by infighting. Then, also, the whole city was gripped by famine, which he described in very graphic detail. When the Romans finally breached the walls of Jerusalem, Josephus reported that Titus did not want to destroy the temple itself. However, his soldiers were so overcome with passion in the heat of the battle that it was completely destroyed along with the city.

Remarkably, Josephus estimated that 1.1 million people were killed in Jerusalem during this siege. It is sobering to consider that the city of Jerusalem as we know it today is built upon such a massive grave site which bears testimony to the judgement of God. The number was so high because of all the pilgrims who had descended on Jerusalem for the Passover feast.

This continuance of animal sacrifice was an abomination to the Lord. And the destruction of Jerusalem was His *divine judgement* upon those who

had rejected Christ as the Cornerstone of the true temple.

In summary, this judgement fulfilled the words of Jesus concerning the temple buildings. ‘Do you not see all these things? [speaking about the temple itself] Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’ Mat 24:2.

It was also the definitive fulfilment of the words in the Seventy Weeks prophecy, ‘And the people of the prince who is to come [the Romans, led by Prince Titus] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood until the end of the war, desolations are determined.’