

God, Temples and Us Various Texts

Last week we read about the construction of Solomon's Temple. David, the 2nd king of Israel, wanted to build a temple for God since the ark continued to rest in the Tabernacle Moses built. But God refused David's offer and instead, his son, Solomon built the Temple, destroyed by Babylon. later rebuilt by Herod the Great, and destroyed again by Titus.

In our text last week, Solomon built the temple, dedicated it and God filled it with his presence.

But this isn't really the first temple in the Bible. There is a sense in which the entire Bible is filled with temples that demonstrate God's will for his people to live in his presence.

First: Eden was a Temple

a) The Garden of Eden was God's first Temple

Genesis 2:8 – *And God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he formed.*

Genesis 3:8-10 - *And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."*

Genesis 2:15-17 - *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

- a) God
- b) People
- c) Priest
- d) Sacrifice – We know that God required sacrifices because Abel brought the right one and Cain brought the wrong one

NOTE: Rebecca McClaughlin will be at Heritage this Wed at 6:30 to speak to the ladies of our church. I am encouraging men to create the space and time for their mothers, wives, daughters, friends, to attend.

In Scripture a temple is where God meets people and where people meet God.

Second: The Tabernacle was God's second Temple

Exodus 33:7-11 – *⁷Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. ⁹When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. ¹⁰And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.*

- a) God
- b) People
- c) Priest
- d) Sacrifice

Many chapters of Exodus are devoted to discussing the construction of the Temple and the Most Holy Place, who can approach the holy God in the Most Holy Place, and when; namely, on the Day of Atonement, once a year — only with the prescribed blood of the prescribed sacrifices, a bull and a goat, covering both the sins of the priest and his family and the sins of all the people — and sprinkling that blood on the ark of the covenant behind the veil — only the high priest being allowed to do it and even then only once a year, and so forth. And so this theme is tied to the years of the wilderness wandering, the glory of God coming upon the tabernacle, the detailed prescriptions of how the tabernacle works, the role of the priests, and the glory of God manifesting himself there, and so forth.

Third: The Temple (Solomon's & Herod's) was God's third Temple

2 Samuel 6 and 7 which are hugely formative for the rest of this biblical theology. David has been king at this juncture for seven years, but only over the southern two tribes. After seven years he becomes king over the entire country — all 12 tribes — and takes Jerusalem and makes it his capital. The ark of the covenant is brought there in 2 Samuel 6. The Davidic dynasty is promised by God in 2 Samuel 7. So now you have three huge themes coming together that control a great deal of typology for the rest of the Bible: Jerusalem, the kingdom dynasty of David, and finally the tabernacle that eventually becomes the temple under Solomon in the next generation.

2 Chronicles 7:15-16 - *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. ¹⁶For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.*

But Israel sins against God and

- 722 - the northern tribes are taken off into captivity by the Assyrians
- 586 – the southern kingdom is destroyed and taken into Babylonian captivity

For many people this captivity is unthinkable, because it is threatening the Davidic dynasty which God promised would be perpetual and it is threatening Jerusalem which is now destroyed, and it is threatening the temple. How can that be? It is the meeting place between God and his people. Where will God meet with his people?

Perhaps one of the most insightful passages is Ezekiel 8–11 where God himself shows in a vision how the city will be destroyed.

Ezekiel 10:18-19a - *Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. ¹⁹And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out...*

In particular, it is interesting that God says to the exiles by the banks of the Kebar River through the mouth of Ezekiel that even though they are far away, **“I will be a sanctuary to them” (Ez 11:16)**. That is temple language.

In reality then, the real Temple is where God is. It is not masonry

Nevertheless, in God’s covenant mercy he calls the people back to Jerusalem. Some come back first in a wave of 50,000 under the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah. The small temple is rebuilt again under the ministry of Nehemiah. There is the rebuilding of the city — the repopulation of the city — and great celebrations of covenantal renewal that focus again on the temple. And Herod the Great eventually rebuilds the Temple in Jerusalem that Jesus saw.

Third: Jesus is God’s Temple

a) Jesus said he was God’s Temple

John 2:19-22 - Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² When therefore 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.

This means that Jesus is the real and ultimate place where people meet Jesus

b) The Apostles (in retrospect) saw Jesus as God's Temple

John 1:14 – *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...*

Dwelt = *skenoo* from *skeno* / tent or *abode*. It is the Greek word for Tabernacle. "God tabernacled among us..."

c) The OT pointed to Jesus as God's Temple

*Four posts (Gospels)

*Three doors (I am the way, the truth and the life)

*Doors faced east – Jesus entered Jerusalem from the East

*Wall posts rested on silver – Jesus as redeemer who paid the price for us

*Wall curtains were white linen – Jesus who is Perfect

*Bronze altar = Jesus as sacrifice

*Bronze laver = Jesus as sanctifier

*Table of bread = Jesus as bread of life

*Table of candlesticks = Jesus as light

*Table of incense = Jesus as Intercessor

*Holy of Holies – Jesus is the Holy One of Israel

*Curtain between holy place and holy of Holies was linen woven of 4 colors:

*Purple – Matthew = God's King

*Scarlet – Mark = God's servant

*White – Luke = God's perfect man

*Blue – John = God's Son

*Four coverings over the Holy of Holies – last/outward and only visible covering was the least attractive; badger skin

Isaiah 53:2 - *he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*

*Ark of Covenant = Wood overlaid with gold = Jesus humanity & divinity

*Mercy Seat = Jesus is the reason we receive mercy – Luke 18:13 – *"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."*

*Inside the Ark of the Covenant and under the Mercy Seat is -

*Manna = Jesus is the bread of life

*Broken Ten Commandments = Jesus is the law-keeper

*Aaron's (dead) rod that budded = Jesus is the resurrection

*Seven pieces of furniture formed a cross

*There was no chair

Hebrews 10:12 - *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,*

In the OT, three kinds of people did not live in villages but in tents:

- *Shepherds – Jesus is the Great Shepherd of our souls – Hb 13:20
- *Pilgrims – Jesus came from heaven, lived here and returned to heaven
- *Soldiers – Jesus is the Commander of the army of the Lord - Joshua 5:14

d) Jesus did all of those things the Jews traditionally considered as Temple-centered, primarily, he is God, he healed, and he forgave.

- He healed a woman who had been cast out of the Temple – woman with issue of blood
- He forgave people who had no access to the Temple – maniac of Gadara
- We were once just like them -

Eph 2:12-13 - *remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

- e) Jesus is God
- f) Jesus is God's people (we are all God's people in him)
- g) Jesus is God's priest – Hb 4:14-16
- h) Jesus is God's sacrifice – Hb 10:12
- i) Jesus is God's prophet – Hb 1:1-2
- j) Jesus is God's king – Rev 19:13, 16
- k) Jesus is God's Emmanuel – God with us – Mt 1:23

Fourth: The Church is, You are God's Temple

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Do you not know that you **are** God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1 Corinthians 6:19 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

You are where God displays his glory. You are the holy place. You are where people meet God.

- a) God
- b) People
- c) Priest

d) Sacrifice (Jesus)

All are present when you meet people.

Fourth: There is an Eternal Temple

Revelation 21:1-3 – *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”*

Revelation 21:22 - *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

THINK: 2 Chronicles 7:15-16 - *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. ¹⁶For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.*

If Jesus is God’s true temple and the temple to which all other temples pointed, then “*My eyes and my heart will be there [on Jesus] for all time.*”

IMP: Man pointing finger to show a child something. The child looks at the man’s finger and misses what the man is pointing at. The Tabernacle/Temple was God’s finger pointing, God’s signpost pointing to Jesus. Too many of us are looking backward, toward God’s finger rather than the Person God was pointing to.

Fifth: Let’s pay attention to Jesus’ reaction to the Temple

The Temple was Israel’s most beautiful building. It was Israel’s most religious building. It was the centerpiece of their social, religious and political life. It was at the top of Zion which was at the top of Israel’s world. It represented God himself. The Temple was Israel and Israel was the Temple.

Mark 11:11 - *And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.*

Jesus walked in, looked around, yawned and left because it was time for supper and bed.

The next day he will say, “*The best thing that can happen here is to clean it and stop it. More, let’s destroy it.*”

Conclusion: There was a time when the whole earth was God's temple. It will be again.

Mark 1:15 – *The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand...*

Gospel: In the interim, if you want to be with God, want the only sacrifice God will accept and want God himself to pray for you, you have to accept Jesus.

Community Groups:

1 – How are you?

2 – How is your family?

3 – What particular concerns are facing you now?

4 – What did pastor mention as the 4 requirements for a Temple?

5 – How does the Tabernacle point to Jesus?

6 – What happened to Solomon's Temple?

7 – How does Ezekiel encourage the kidnapped remnant in Babylon about the Temple?

8 – Where did Jesus claim to be God's temple?

9 – How is Jesus God's temple?

10 – What does it mean that you are the temple of God?

11 – How does this change the way you view your own life?

12 – What 'world' has God given you for people to meet him?

Don't forget about Rebecca McClaughlin at Heritage this Wed at 6:30pm

