

Solomon's Temple

Last week, we took a look at God's dwelling place among his people represented through the tabernacle. Today we'll take a look both (1) historically and (2) structurally at the significance of his abode with us as represented in the temple.

Historical Context

1. God chooses who builds the temple

After finally having finished the conquest of Canaan, David had rest. And so he now wants to build a temple, but God does not let him. Instead God decrees that Solomon will be the one to build the temple.

(2 Samuel 7:1-2)

[7:1] Now when the king lived in his house and the **LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies**, [2] the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."

Significance:

- A. *God initiates his own worship*
- B. *The temple was more than just a fancy building. It symbolized establishment in the land.*

(1 Chronicles 22:6-10)

[6] Then he called for Solomon his son and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. [7] David said to Solomon, "My son, **I had it in my heart to build a house** to the name of the LORD my God. [8] But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. **You shall not build a house to my name**, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth.

[9] Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. [10] **He shall build a house for my name**. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.'

2. God chooses where the temple will be built

The law had always stipulated that a time would come when there would only be one place of worship. Up till now, however, there had been no single place. People worshipped at multiple altars in different places.

(Deuteronomy 12:5-7)

[5] But you shall seek **the place that the LORD your God will choose** out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. **There you shall go**, [6] and **there you shall bring** your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. [7] And **there you shall eat** before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

(2 Chronicles 3:1-2)

[3:1] Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD **in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David his father**, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [2] He began to build in the second month of the fourth year of his reign.

*Significance:**a. The place where God relented from judgment***(1 Chronicles 21:14-15, 18)**

[14] So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell. [15] And God **sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it**, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and **he relented** from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite... [18] Now the angel of the LORD had commanded Gad to say to David that David should **go up and raise an altar to the LORD** on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

*B. The place where God had previously provided***(Genesis 22:1-2, 14)**

[22:1] After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." [2] He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to **the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering** on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."... [14] So Abraham called **the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"**; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

Structural details of the Temple

The biggest difference that we see between the temple and tabernacle is in the heightening and intensification of the imagery that we had seen in the tabernacle. We see this in a couple of places.

1. Types of material used:

(Exodus 26:14, 36)

[14] And you shall make for the tent a covering of **tanned rams' skins** and a covering of **goatskins** on top... [36] "You shall make a screen for the entrance of the tent, of **blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen**, embroidered with needlework.

(1 Kings 6:31-36)

[31] For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors of olivewood; the lintel and the doorposts were five-sided. [32] He covered the two doors of olivewood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. He **overlaid them with gold and spread gold** on the cherubim and on the palm trees. [33] So also he made for the entrance to the nave doorposts of olivewood, in the form of a square, [34] and two doors of cypress wood. The two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. [35] On them he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and he **overlaid them with gold** evenly applied on the carved work. [36] He built the inner court with three courses of **cut stone and one course of cedar beams**.

2. The kind of imagery displayed

A. Arboreal Motif

(Exodus 37:17-18)

[17] He also made the **lampstand** of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered work. Its base, its stem, its cups, its **calyxes, and its flowers** were of one piece with it. [18] And there were six **branches** going out of its sides, three **branches** of the lampstand out of one side of it and three **branches** of the lampstand out of the other side of it;

B. Cherubim

(Exodus 26:31)

[31] “And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with **cherubim skillfully worked into it.**

3. The size and sense of permanence of structure

(1 Kings 6:37-38)

[37] In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. [38] And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. **He was seven years in building it.**

Significance?

(John 2:19-22)

[19] 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.

The Temple was in many ways a fulfillment of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle had represented God’s promise that He was with his people and that he would bring them into the Promised Land. The Temple was a symbol that God had fulfilled that promise. That he had brought them into the land and had cleared away the stones (surrounding enemies). And yet, ultimately, we know that the Temple was not enough. Eventually the people are exiled from the land, and the temple is destroyed. Jesus, rather, is the true and ultimate fulfillment of the temple, he is the one who is permanently seated at the right hand of the Father and by Him alone are enabled to enter God’s presence.