

# Biblical Theology of the Temple

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Let me open us up in a word of prayer. Lord, we pray as we look to your word together, that by your spirit, you would build us each like living stones into a spiritual house, that you would receive all the honor, praise, and glory in this time together.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Well, good morning. We are going to take a break from the mental health class, and today we're going to be talking about the temple. But perhaps if we understand this idea of temple, it might help our mental health a little bit.

So have you ever noticed that temples are everywhere? We in our fallen nature are prone to setting up temples. Almost every man-made religion has a temple, from temple shrines worshiping pagan gods in meadows to the Mormon temple in Salt Lake City.

During the French Revolution, atheists built places called Temples of Reason. Temples are everywhere. You know, the God of the Bible commanded his people to build him a temple too. And you know, this temple resembled some of the pagan temples found in the ancient Near East. Was this resemblance a coincidence? Is Israel taking their cue from the cult of the surrounding nations?

[ 1 : 1 9 ] No, I don't think so. I think it's the other way around. I think the surrounding nations were copying the true temple that God had established, which continued in Israel.

And we'll see actually that pagan temples are copying the true temple that God established in the very beginning.

And these pagan temples are marred, sin-distorted versions of something that was lost, that humans longed to return to. A true temple that existed at the beginning of time. A place where God dwelled with his people.

And a place that every human longs to return to. Human beings are creatures of longing, aren't we? Augustine once said, Our hearts are restless until they find rest in you, O Lord.

And human beings were created to worship in the true temple that God had created. So today we'll touch on this temple, beginning in Eden, to the temple at the end of history in Revelation.

[ 2 : 1 8 ] So this picture is from the ESV Study Bible. It might look familiar to you. So to begin, let's consider Jesus' words on the subject of temples.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus made some pretty audacious claims. His statement about the temple was one of them. You recall after he cleansed the temple in John 2, picking up in verse 19, Jesus answered the Pharisees, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

The Jews then said, It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days? But he was speaking by the temple of his body, as John said. Jesus declared that he is the temple. But no one understood what he meant. The Jews didn't understand. His disciples didn't understand what he meant. What did he mean? That Jesus is the temple. So to understand this, we'll need to consider a biblical theology of the temple in the Bible.

So before jumping in, let's do a brief refresher. What is biblical theology? Is it all theology that's biblical? No, not quite. To put it simply, biblical theology studies the scripture's overall storyline and traces the development of themes from the beginning to the end.

[ 3 : 3 2 ] So as you read the Bible, you'll notice that various themes often begin dimly in Genesis, almost mysterious in the beginning. But as the story unfolds, the light gets brighter until it gives way to the true form of the reality.

So it's like sketching something on paper. As time goes on, more and more lines are added through each book of the Bible, and the picture starts to come into view. And biblical theology sees the scripture as progressively, gradually painting one portrait.

And this portrait is of Christ and what he would come to accomplish. So this begins dimly, right, in the beginning, and then gets brighter. The Jews didn't understand this. So remember, Jesus chided them in John 5, 39.

Jesus says, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have life, have eternal life, but it is they that bear witness about me. So the scriptures bear witness about Jesus from the beginning to the end.

And the definition we gave last year when we did a series on biblical theology is it's a discipline of understanding how the diverse parts of the Bible, 66 books in total, fit together into one grand story centered on Christ.

[ 4 : 38 ] So today we'll consider the thread line of the temple, which will ultimately point us to Christ. So we'll have six points today, six points. The symbol, the garden, the temple completed, the temple expansion, the temple fulfiller, and then finally, the world encompassing temple in Revelation.

The symbol, the garden, the temple completed, the temple expansion, the temple fulfiller, and then the world encompassing temple. So to understand the temple, we must begin with the tabernacle, the predecessor to the temple.

The tabernacle was that mobile tent in Exodus. You recall, a portable house for the king. God rescued the people out of slavery in the drama of the 10 plagues and then the dramatic crossing of the Red Sea.

And God powerfully delivered the people out of slavery with this mighty outstretched arm. And God crashed the waves of judgment onto Pharaoh and his army's heads. And with God's help, the people reached the other side, dry ground.

God saved his people. And after this great work of salvation, it's then in Exodus that God begins to give specific directions on the tabernacle's design. The place where God would begin to dwell with the people in the promised land.

[ 6 : 01 ] So salvation leads to God dwelling with his people in Exodus. One amazing thing that God desires to dwell with his people, right? And the proportions of the king's house had to be exact.

Strangely, in Exodus, God would give Moses precise instructions on how to design this tabernacle. In Exodus 39, verse 25, God even tells Moses how to build the utensils which the priests were responsible for.

Verse 40 says, See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain. The smallest detail had to be followed. And God is emphatic about this. He says it over and over again. Look how much he repeats it. Exodus 26, 30, Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for that you were shown on the mountain. Exodus 27, verse 8, You shall make it hollow, the altar, with boards.

As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made. Exodus 36, verse 1, Every craftsman whom the Lord has put skill and intelligence shall work in accordance with all the Lord has commanded.

[ 7 : 06 ] See a pattern. And finally, Exodus 39, verse 1, From the blue and purple and scarlet yarns they made finely woven garments for ministering in the holy place. They made the holy garments for Aaron as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Lord commands Moses to build the tabernacle and the priest's garments with exact specifications. And he repeats this over and over again. And the writer of Hebrews says this fact means the tabernacle symbolized something greater beyond itself.

Listen to Hebrews 8, verse 5. The place, that is the tabernacle, where they serve, is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle.

See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain. So the tabernacle was a symbol, a shadow, imaging a reality that existed in heaven.

There was a copy and a shadow on earth and the true form of these realities existed in heaven, as the author of Hebrews says. So what was it a symbol of? Let's continue to look to find out what this tabernacle symbolized.

[ 8 : 19 ] The tabernacle will have two areas. The first section was called the holy place, which contained various items, the lampstand, the table, and the bread of presence. And in the innermost section was the holy of holies.

The holy of holies was the throne room of the king. It was shaped like a perfect cube. 20 by 20 by 20 cubits, which is an important detail we'll come back to.

It was shaped as a perfect cube. And everything inside was inlaid with gold. It was unspeakably glorious. And even the cherubim, these heavenly creatures without sin, could not look directly upon the king in his all-consuming, incomprehensible holiness.

At the center of holies was the ark containing the Ten Commandments. God's law. God's law uniquely reflected God's holy character.

And above the ark is the mercy seat, flanked by the cherubim. And as the author of Hebrews says, the cherubim of glory overshadowed the mercy seats. So God declares in Exodus 25, verse 22, there at the holy of holies I will meet with you.

[ 9 : 31 ] And from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel. God speaks to his people above the mercy seat in the holy of holies.

He put his name there, Yahweh, the God of the Bible. This God who demands that there be no other gods in front of him, no rivals. This God who raises up and condemns, the God who is personal, who hears his people's prayers, who can see, who knows, who speaks to his people, the one and only true God will be approached at the holy of holies.

Deuteronomy 12, Moses speaking to the people, says, God has put his name there, but you shall seek the place the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes as his habitation to put his name there.

You shall go there. So it's above the mercy seat where God will be approached. He tells his people how he is going to be approached and the king of the universe has set his throne inside this small tabernacle.

What a humble king this God is. The king worshipped in heaven shows his humility by dwelling in a small tent in the wilderness to be with his people. God is a humble king.

[ 10 : 45 ] Not only is he humble, but he is holy as well. Because you cannot just casually stroll right in there, right into the holy of holies. There was a big do not enter sign. If you want to continue to live, stay out.

No trespassing. Do not pass go. Because before the holy of holies stood this veil with pictures of cherubim. And here we begin to see what the tabernacle meant to symbolize.

The veil retold a cosmic story. So here's a picture of the veil right here from the ESV Study Bible. It retold a cosmic story.

It retold the story of the world and what its purpose was and what had gone terribly wrong. This veil of cherubim sewn on it echoed that tragic chapter of history when God exiled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

He placed cherubim and a flaming sword to keep sinful humanity away from the tree of life. So after Adam and Eve plunged the world into darkness through their disobedience, people from then on were exiled from God's presence.

[ 11 : 48 ] The temple is telling the people a story of how God initially dwelled with his people and the effect of sin separating the creature from its creator.

So we were cut off from the God we were designed to worship. And the people of Israel were to understand their lives in light of this overall cosmic story symbolized by the tabernacle.

The people could not enter the Holy of Holies because of sin. And God is holy. But once a year as you probably know one man could enter into God's presence.

The Day of Atonement that is Yom Kippur in Leviticus. The people needed a mediator someone to stand in the gap between a perfectly holy God and sinful humanity. And this high priest could enter once a year sacrificing an animal as a substitute in the people's stead and sprinkling blood on the mercy seat.

And the priests were butchers constantly killing goats and bulls to deal with the sin of the entire nation. The priest would slaughter one goat and the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement. So this resulted in what the Bible calls propitiation.

[ 12 : 54 ] Propitiation is one of those long theological words. Propitiation. To propitiate something means to assuage or satisfy God's divine anger or wrath against sinful man.

God put the animals to death in the people's place so the high priest as mediator could approach God on the people's behalf. So on that solemn Day of Atonement another goat would be sent to the

wilderness the scapegoat symbolizing the people's sins were forgotten.

The sins of the people were dealt by the blood sacrifices. But in the tabernacle there was one really conspicuous piece of furniture that was missing. So any idea what furniture was missing in the tabernacle?

One piece of furniture. Take a guess. Yes.

There's a table but there's no chair for Aaron and any of the priests to sit on because their work was never finished needing constant repetition indicating that the one sufficient sacrifice which provides true rest had not yet come.

[14:03] So Hebrews 10 verse 11 and 12 captures the idea. And every priest stands daily at his service offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God. So there was no chair because the priest's work was never done.

But there was one seat in here the mercy seat. But that was reserved for God himself who sat there between the chair of him. The king sat on the mercy seat only to be approached by the high priest on the day of atonement.

So do you see the picture that the tabernacle is starting to develop here? The wonder of wonders. The king stepped down from the mercy seat and became our great high priest fully God and fully man and offered his own blood as the perfect sacrifice at the mercy seat sprinkling his own blood. And when he rose from the dead he sat down on the throne reserved for God alone. So the throne of grace is a throne of grace because it's a blood sprinkled one. Christ is our scapegoat who was put to death outside the camp so that we could approach God in the Holy of Holies.

[15:17] So I love that hymn Arise My Soul Arise the first verse goes like this Arise my soul arise shake off the guilty fears the bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears before the throne my surety stands before the throne my surety stands my name is written on his hands.

So a surety is one who stands as a guarantee for the performance of another. So our surety the Lord Jesus stands before the throne as the bleeding sacrifice on our behalf right now and we can shake off the guilty fears approach the throne of grace because Jesus guarantees that we will be accepted.

And so this entire system is just foreshadowing this greater reality that's going to come and this system is designed to answer the question of how it's possible for the thrice holy God to dwell in the midst of a sinful people and the answer is this at the temple on the ground of the accepted sacrifice his throne the mercy seat again is a blood sprinkled one.

So realize if you're an Israelite there's really no room for religious pretension when we draw on you to the throne of grace on the basis of the blood of the sacrifice as one saying puts it at the foot of the cross is level ground.

The strong in the faith and the weak must both approach the throne on the same basis. All must approach the throne on the basis of the sacrifice.

[16:39] It's true now it's also true then there's no room for religious pretension. And if you're not a Christian perhaps if you're listening to this and you're not a Christian when God summons you to stand before his throne on that great and terrible day you will find trusting in your own righteousness will be like building a house on sand and when the storm of God judgment comes great will be the collapse because you built a house on the sand.

Instead build your life upon the sure and steady rock of Christ. All of the ground is sinking sand and you know we all have our secret sins. Are we going to plead our own righteousness on that day of judgment before a holy God who knows and sees all who knows us better than we know ourselves or will our confidence be in this substitute who has died in our stead?

So let's flee to Christ all of us and take him hold of him by faith. Here's this interesting side note that the Bible translators of the Christian Standard Bible a translation published in 2017 led by Tom Schreiner made in Romans 3 they chose the word mercy seat instead of propitiation.

Do you see why they would do that? The mercy seat is the place where propitiation happens. So whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood again assuaging God's divine anger God presented him as the mercy seat by his blood.

So as I understand their translational decision the Greek a little out of my depth here but the Greek word for propitiation is identical to the word for mercy seat. So when the Old Testament was translated into Latin this word mercy seat was translated as propitiatorium which means the place of propitiation.

[18:28] So Romans 3 in context is arguing sin provokes God's wrath and anger and argues God put forward Christ at the mercy seat.

So this isn't new William Tyndale and Martin Luther both translated this similarly. It's an interesting translational decision they made but it's really just for the continuity of imagery.

They want you to see how Romans 3 is echoing the day of atonement in Yom Kippur. So let's connect the dots so far. God desires to meet with his people and the blood of the sacrifices in the tabernacle are the only means by which that meaning is possible.

So the story continues to unfold after the tabernacle is constructed. After the tabernacle is completed that pillar of cloud that Shekinah glory descends on it and the cloud is where God appeared in glory to Moses.

A glory so intense that Moses that it made Moses' face shine and the descent of the cloud on the tabernacle signifies that God is now dwelling with his people. It was during this period where the people rebelled by making a golden calf and Moses intercedes when the people are forgiven and Moses in his anguish asks God to show me your glory and the Lord replies to that request.

[19:51] I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you and I will proclaim my name the Lord in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

But he said but you cannot see my face for no one may see me and live. So God is present on earth in that cloud of glory and the glory is so intense that Moses cannot see the face of the glory of God and live.

But during this period of history something remarkable happens actually in Exodus. The Lord invites the elders of Israel and Moses to an extraordinary covenant meal.

The elders of Israel are invited up on the mountain with Moses sitting at God's feet and the elders ate in the presence of the Lord though the people could not see God face to face and live.

So isn't it amazing God desires to share a meal with the people of Israel. I think about Jesus at the Lord's Supper he says I have greatly desired to have this meal with you.

[20:53] So God desires to fellowship with his people and you see that right in the beginning of Exodus and even though the people could not see God's face and live God still makes peace with his people before he calls them into his presence.

They need not fear destruction. So isn't that amazing God from the beginning is desiring to fellowship with his people to eat a meal with us. And to recap the meeting place between God and his people was mediated by one appointed by God representing them before God's presence on the basis of the sacrifice.

So the second part is the temple garden. The temple garden. So question in what ways do we see a similarity between the temple and the tabernacle and the garden of Eden?

Just going to throw that out there. Any similarities that we see? Tom? Is there cherubim a cherubim or present? Yes.

The cherubim reappear in the tabernacle guarding the Holy of Holies just like the cherubim were guarding Eden and the Tree of Life. So please walk up in the garden and that this idea of walking is really really precious and important.

[22:10] God is walking in the garden like you said Michelle and this is echoed throughout the Old Testament. I have a few verses here. Leviticus 26 the Lord promises that he will walk with his people and be their God.

Verse 11 to 12 I will make my dwelling among you and my soul shall not abhor you and I will walk among you and will be your God and you shall be my people.

Or Deuteronomy 23 God commands Israel to keep their camp holy because he walks in their midst.

Verse 14 Because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give you up your enemies before you therefore your camp must be holy so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.

2 Samuel when David plans to build a temple the Lord reminds him that I have been walking about in a tent for my dwelling that's a tabernacle again the humility of God to walk among people in a small tent.

I think the most explicit area where Eden is described as a temple is in Ezekiel 28. God calls Eden a sanctuary placed upon a mountain which Bible scholars point out that's how Israel's temple is often described elsewhere.

[ 23 : 26 ] So walking is very important there's cherubim anything else? You could think of similarities between Eden and the tabernacle.

what was that Ezekiel 28? Just the whole chapter? Yes. And where Israel's temple is described elsewhere as Exodus 15 Israel's temple is described as a mountain just like God calls Eden a sanctuary and a mountain.

there's two more that I thought of that I read about. The second similarity between the tabernacle and Eden is the parallel between Adam's role and the role of the priest of the temple.

So God placed Adam in Eden to work and keep it. So Adam's work is not just working the soil but it's serving God and guarding the garden from intruders.

So he is a gardener and a guardian. And the two Hebrew words for work and keep when they occur later in the Old Testament without exceptions have the meaning most often of priests serving God in the temple and guarding the temple from unclean things entering it.

[ 24 : 48 ] So I put number three as an example. It's using the same word that God charged Adam with when God is charging the priests. It says, they the priests shall keep guard over him and over the whole congregation before the tent of meeting as they minister as they work at the tabernacle.

They shall guard keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. So those are the same. It's echoing the charge that God gave to Adam.

So Adam, like the priest, took care of the temple, the dwelling place of God by keeping unclean things out, intruders out. And you start to see Adam's responsibility in the garden and how he failed to protect Eve from the serpent.

So before this serpent ever even tempted Eve, Adam has failed in his duty to protect the garden. I think that's why in Romans 5, verse 12, Paul will say Adam bears particular responsibility.

Romans 5, verse 12 says, sin came into the world because of what one man did and with sin came death. Adam failed to keep the intruder out. He didn't intervene to protect Eve from the serpent.

[ 26 : 00 ] So Adam bore responsibility for the fall even before Eve was tempted. And we see that picked up in the temple where the priests were meant to guard from unclean things, mostly Gentiles, from coming into the into the inner sanctum.

So we see the first was walking, Adam's priestly status. There's the cherubim, which we touched upon. And then finally, some Bible scholars have pointed out the lampstand directly outside the Holy of Holies is possibly designed to appear as a tree with seven branches coming off a single trunk.

It's possible the lampstand was designed to point back to the tree of life. And if you read Exodus 25, there are these cups, four cups next to the lampstand and they're described with flowers and almond blossoms.

So kind of a garden imagery, tree imagery. I don't know. Could be. Doesn't Zechariah talk about the memoir with trees feeding into it?

That sounds right. Yeah. I, kind of looks like a tree. It's got branches.

[ 27 : 25 ] Yeah. It's drunk. Use your imagination. But it could be, it could be symbolizing the tree that was in the garden.

So the first part was the temple symbol. The second was the temple in the garden. And now the third part in the play is the temple completed.

The temple is finally completed. And you could see how the temple mirrors the Garden of Eden. The innermost part of the Holy of Holies, the holy place and the outer court.

So the cloud that came upon the tabernacle isn't mentioned again until Solomon's day. So Solomon, as you probably know, is in the line of David, who God promised the Messiah would one day come and rule, bring an international blessing to the whole world as God had promised Abraham back in Genesis 12.

that offspring will come in the line of David. The Messiah would be from the line of David. And that great day had finally come under Solomon's reign.

[ 28 : 30 ] It had taken seven years to build, but now it was finally complete. Solomon's temple was at last a magnificent reality. So to fit the occasion, Solomon dedicated this building to the Lord, asking that God's name would dwell there.

And 1 Kings 8 records a celebration. God let it be known that he was present. In verse 10 to 11 in 1 Kings 8, it says, And when the priest came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord

so that the priest could not stand to minister because of the Lord.

For the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. So God is now dwelling with his people in the temple. In many ways, this is the climax. This is the apex of the reigns of David and Solomon.

This would be the place that replaced the tabernacle in the wilderness. So this would be the place that symbolized the presence of the living God in the midst of his people Israel. The place where they could come before him and worship in prayer and for the cleansing work of the sacrifices to happen amongst the priests.

The temple would be the heartbeat of Israel's faith in Yahweh their God. So if you turn to Psalm 24, the psalmist writes a familiar verse in Psalm 27, sorry, Psalm 27 verse 4.

[ 29 : 44 ] One thing have I asked of the Lord that I will seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

And this glorious passage is echoed in Psalm 84 verses 10 to 11. The psalmist declares my soul long, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Then in verse 10, better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

The psalmist yearned to be in the temple. The psalmist is saying I long so much I just want to collapse to the ground thinking about being at the temple. That's how much I love it. Maybe he really appreciated the architecture of the temple.

You know, it's a beautiful aesthetic design, beautiful columns. No, of course not. That's not right. Clearly the temple was important because the temple is where God dwelt. The temple was the meeting place between God and his people and the temple represented the glorious presence of God revealed most fully in the Holy of Holies, the inner chamber of the temple.

[ 30 : 56 ] More than anywhere else on the earth, more than anywhere else, God's presence was manifested in the Holy of Holies in the temple. He put his name there. In Psalm 84, the whole thing, the temple actually is an oasis in the desert for a weary pilgrim because the psalmist talks about being attacked and persecuted in the Valley of Tears and the temple becomes a Garden of Eden for him where he experiences true happiness because of the temple is where he would commune with his God.

So the temple is a place where God would dwell with his people. Again, isn't that amazing? God desires to dwell with his people and the entire Bible is asking the question, how can God dwell with the sinful people?

You know, the Bible is asking the question, how can a good God send us to hell? That's not the question at all. The Bible is asking the question, how can a good God not send us to hell? And God desires to dwell with his people, but again, how can he because he is holy?

And so there's a tension right in the temple. But right at the outset, something is fundamentally flawed about the temple. The temple was great, right?

Solomon hints, even during the celebration, that it's actually inadequate. 1 Kings 8, 13, Solomon celebrates, I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.

[ 32 : 21 ] But then in verse 27, But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this house that I have built. Solomon understood something.

He understood that God created everything. The one who created everything out of nothing could not possibly be limited by a temple, especially one made from human hands. So here's the first problem with a temple. A handmade structure is not fitting for the God of the universe to dwell in. A handmade structure is not fitting for the God of the universe to dwell in. Acts 7, verses 48 to 49, Stephen quotes Isaiah 66 when he said, Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands.

As the prophet says, Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, and what is the place of my rest? The whole earth cannot contain God's presence.

How much less a building made by human hands. So we see that while the tabernacle and eventually the temple serve at the center of Israelite worship, even from the beginning, it's defective.

[ 33 : 25 ] It's deficient. But there's also a second problem, worse than the first one. The second problem is this. Israel's sin repeatedly compromised the temple.

Israel's sin repeatedly compromised the temple. As Jesus said, His Father's house of worship was made into a den of thieves. Just like the heart of a fallen sinner, God made us to be places of worship but sin corrupts and our hearts become dens of thieves.

Instead of worshiping God at the temple, Israel quickly devolved into what I call rabbit hat religion. Rabbit hat religion. That's where God is a means to an end. God will do whatever you ask Him to do.

Pull a rabbit out of your hat if you just have a lucky token of the Ark of the Covenant or if you just go and make some sacrifices at the temple. But God is not a means to an end. He will not be mocked. Eventually the temple had sunk so low that pagan sacrifices were made inside it.

Is the God who is holy going to dwell in a house filled with idolatry? Is the king going to build his house in a dump? Would you live in a dump? Of course not. How much more is the God who is holy not going to dwell in a house filled with idolatry?

[ 34 : 33 ] And at one point the book of God's law had to be found in a pile of garbage. It sunk so low that God told the people that they would go into captivity, exiled into the foreign nations, and God's going to utterly destroy Jerusalem.

But right before that happens, right before that horror, the most dreadful thing happens. God leaves the people. The glory of God departs from the temple. God declares His intentions in Ezekiel 10. And He said to me, Son of Man, do you see what they are doing? The great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here to drive me far from my sanctuary. But you will see still greater abominations.

And He brought me to the entrance of the courts. And when I looked, behold, there is a hole in the wall. And He said to me, Son of Man, dig in the wall. So I dug in the wall and behold, there was an entrance. And He said to me, go in and see the vile abominations that they are committing here.

So I went in and saw and there engraved on the wall all around was every form of creeping thing and loathsome beasts and all the idols of the house of Israel. And before them stood 70 men of the elders of the house of Israel with Jezebel, the son of Staphon, standing among them.

[ 35 : 43 ] Each had a censer in his hand and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up. And He said to me, Son of Man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his own room for pictures? For they say, the Lord does not see us.

The Lord has forsaken the land. He said also to me, you will see still greater abominations that they commit. Shocking, is it not?

The leaders of the people are committing flagrant idolatry in the king's own house. The glory of God leaves the temple and the people no longer enjoy God's presence. You know, God in fact prophesied the departure of His glory well in advance.

Back in Deuteronomy, Moses warned the people, then my anger shall be aroused against them in that day and I will forsake them and I will hide my face from them and they shall be devoured and many evils and troubles shall befall them so that they will say in that day, have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us.

Hosea 9 verse 12, God proclaimed, woe to them when I depart from them. No illustration can adequately capture this national tragedy. 9-11 may be the most striking in recent memory of a national tragedy when the towers came crashing down but this was worse because this building would be like a church, a trade center in the White House all wrapped into one.

[ 37 : 01 ] But even then, as Christians, our worship is not connected to a place so the words don't adequately capture the pain of the temple being destroyed. Imagine everything being taken away from you.

First, your church family and then your physical family is carried away and your house, every possession and finally your own identity is ripped away from you. God departs from you and you are utterly worthless because God has forsaken you.

The pain of it, the writer of Lamentations expressed this pain. Lamentations 2, he has bent his bow like an enemy with his right hand set like a foe. He has killed all who are delightful in our eyes.

In the tent of the daughter of Zion he has poured out his fury like fire. He has laid waste his booth like a garden, laid in ruins his meeting place. The Lord has made Zion to forget festival and Sabbath and in his fierce indignation has spurned king and priest.

The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary. He has delivered into the hand of the enemy, the walls of her palaces. They raise the clamor in the house of the Lord as on the day of festival. The Lord determined to lay in ruins the wall of the daughter of Zion.

[ 38 : 07 ] This is like a person looking at the ruins of the raising of Warsaw after the Holocaust. Complete devastation. But it was caused by God's judgment.

The people were in darkness because of their idolatry and God had caused that. Jerusalem is shattered. The king from David's line is removed. Homes, including the palace, are destroyed. And the temple is now a trash heap laid in ruins. Israel experiences national death. And during this downfall, the long-for deliverer from David's house does not arise.

Where is this one from David's line who will come? When will he come to save Israel? The people dwelled in a deep darkness in the exile.

But the fourth part after the exile is the temple expansion. The temple expansion. The prophets talk about a future time when the temple not only returns, but expands.

[ 39 : 05 ] And the blessing of God's presence will expand over Jerusalem. Over the whole site of Jerusalem, the temple is going to expand. Listen to some verses in the prophets.

Isaiah 4, verse 5. Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day and Moses in the shining of a flaming fire by night and smoke in the shining of a flaming fire by night.

For over all the glory there will be a canopy. So God is going to dwell over the assemblies gathered at Israel a cloud by day. Or Ezekiel 37.

God says, I will make a covenant of peace with them. Actually, Jeremiah 3. And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land in those days, declares the Lord, they shall no more say the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed. It shall not be made again. At that time, Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord and all nations shall gather to it to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil hearts.

[ 40 : 13 ] So you see the picture. All the nations will gather at this temple and the Lord will cleanse the hearts of a stubborn people. The temple is expanding because there's no more of the ark of the covenant. Then we get into Ezekiel.

I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them and I will set them in their land and multiply them and will set my sanctuary in their midst forever.

My dwelling place shall be with them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.

So God is going to dwell with his people forever. But one of the most stunning pictures I think comes at the end of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 40 envisions God brought Ezekiel to the land of Israel and set him down on a very high mountain on which was a structure and behold there was a man whose appearance was like bronze with a linen cord and measuring reed in his hands and he was standing in the gateway.

And then that's picked up in Revelation to describe Jesus. But Ezekiel begins to describe to the people in exile the new Jerusalem. And the new Jerusalem itself is depicted symbolically as what?

[ 41 : 31 ] A perfect cube. And where else have we seen a cube so far? The Holy of Holies. The new Jerusalem is described as the Holy of Holies and there's only one cube in the Old Testament.

The Holy of Holies. So you can't have a temple, right, in the Holy of Holies. So what is he saying? All the people of God are in the Holy of Holies. They are in the temple.

They are in the presence of the living God. So in the midst of darkness and discouragement, Ezekiel is prophesying about God restoring the Garden of Eden only much better. God is going to start dwelling with his people.

Meanwhile, in Ezekiel 11, God tells the exiles that he himself will be their sanctuary in the exile. So in other words, God is teaching his people that the temple, the true temple, is where God is.

It's not where the stonework and masonry are. And when the exiles return, of course, they are encouraged to rebuild the temple as they are still under the old covenant and requires it. But God is teaching his people that where I am, that's where the true temple is.

[ 42 : 36 ] And now, just as an aside, Ezekiel's language is apocalyptic. And some will say that physical temple will be restored in Israel at some future date.

I would just respectfully disagree with that interpretation because one of the challenges, I think, of seeing that the actual physical temple being restored in Israel is that the temple is always connected with the sacrificial system.

So how can the temple be restored without also restoring the ritual sacrifices? So I think in this stage of redemptive history, right, under the new covenant, that sacrificial system is obsolete because the perfect sacrifice has come.

So instead, I think the temple dimension seems symbolic. Ezekiel is speaking about God's good intention for his people and is speaking to exiles in a language they understood. The temple will be restored.

And so the people waited for that great day to unfold when the temple will be restored to its former glory, but even better. But even after the people returned from exile in Ezra and Nehemiah, they built a modest temple and the glory of God did not return on the temple.

[ 43 : 42 ] So part five, part five, enter the temple fulfiller. The temple fulfiller. The centuries unfolded and still the glory was hidden. But in the fullness of time, Christ emerges as the new temple.

God sent a man who fulfilled the temple. John 1, verse 1, casually, John says, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. So that word dwelt, right, literally means tabernacled.

God is now tabernacling with his people when the second person of the Trinity, Christ, became a human. And Jesus underscores this in Matthew 12, verse 6, where he says about himself, something greater than the temple is here in front of you.

In the incarnation, Jesus is the place where God became a man. That is what Christians have always believed. Listen to how the Heinrich Neisting Cree puts it. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from true light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one and being with the Father.

Through him, that is Jesus, all things were made. So Jesus is with us. God himself is dwelling with us. True God from true God, one and being with the Father. And the glory that had departed from the temple in Jerusalem appears once again.

[ 44 : 57 ] But this time, it wasn't on a temple, but on a man. That Shekinah glory appears on Jesus at the scene of transfiguration. Recall, as he was praying, the appearance of his faiths changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning and his face shone like the sun.

See, an amazing act rich in meaning. In Jesus, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. That glory is now resting upon Jesus. And Jesus began to teach to the woman at the well that the time was dawning now where true worshipers would no longer worship at the temple in Jerusalem, but would be directed to the Father through the Son.

Jesus fulfills and now is replacing the earthly temple at Jerusalem. He is now the place where true worshipers worship God. So if you want to worship God, we don't go to the temple. You go to the Son.

Jesus is the temple fulfiller. We access the Father through the Son. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through Him. So our faith is not bound up with a location, animal sacrifices, or rituals.

Actually, when Christianity enters into a culture, people stop killing animals. It is bound up. Our faith is bound up in the work of Christ and His work on our behalf. And eventually, the Romans came and destroyed the temple, razed it to the ground in 70 AD.

[ 46 : 21 ] So God has said He is done with the physical temple. It's over. It's obsolete. And while Jesus identifies Himself with the temple, He goes on to say this new temple is still actually under construction.

Jesus is the cornerstone of a new temple, of the new creation that God is building. So you recall Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures that the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?

This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. So if you were going to build a great building in the ancient world, the cornerstone had to be absolutely perfect. Only one stone in the building is perfect, had to be perfect and that's the cornerstone.

Had to be perfect in each direction because if it wasn't flat then the building would be stilted. The builders had to get the perfect cornerstone. And Jesus says, I am the perfect Savior to make a broken people into the perfect building.

God declares in Isaiah 28, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious stone, a sure foundation. So another temple is under construction and Jesus is the cornerstone.

[ 47 : 28 ] Now, we come back to John 2. Jesus' words, Destroy this temple, in three days I will raise it up. The temple always symbolized God's intention to be with his people and now Jesus is the temple fulfiller.

I am the temple. Neither his opponents nor his disciples understood what he meant. John admits that. But look into these words. Don't miss them. Destroy this temple.

Referring to himself. So let those words sink in for a minute. Don't forget them. The temple, Jesus, was destroyed. And who destroyed the temple?

Well, I mean, on one hand, the people destroyed the temple. Right? But on the other hand, ultimately, the Father put his own son to death because of love for his people.

There's a deep mystery here at the cross. Jesus truly was our substitute, made to be sin and a curse for us, endured God's righteous anger for all who had returned from their sin and put their trust in him. J.C. Ryle once said, That death discharged in full of the mighty debt which sinners owe to God and threw open the door of life to every believer.

[ 48 : 39 ] That death satisfied the righteous claims of God's holy law and enabled God to be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. That death was no mere example of self-sacrifice, but a complete atonement and propitiation for man's sin.

And that death solved the hard problem of how God could be perfectly holy and yet perfectly merciful. It opened the world to a fountain for all sin and uncleanness. So at Jesus' crucifixion, the mockers declare, You who destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.

If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross. Jesus then dies and the temple veil is torn. So what does the tearing of the curtain symbolize? What is the tearing of that curtain when Jesus died?

Miraculously, that veil is gone. What does that symbolize? Olivia? Taking down the barrier reaching us and God. Amen. Hallelujah. Yeah, that veil of the cherubim was a constant reminder to the people that sin separated them from a holy God.

Now through his death, he has removed that barrier of sin that separates us from God and we may now approach him with confidence and boldness. So friend, if you are trusting in Christ, repenting of your sin, know that God is happy with you.

[ 49 : 51 ] You can go to him confidently through the blood of the mediator and he will not turn you away. Right? He is happy with you if you're trusting in Christ and turning from your sin. What an amazing thing that Christ was made an offering for sin as we read in 1 Peter 2.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. When Jesus said in John 2 he was at the temple, again, they didn't understand what he meant, but after his resurrection John tells us that they remembered his utterance and understood the scriptures.

Jesus is that great meeting place between God and man. And of course Jesus is the temple, but the church, those who have been turned from our sin and been united to Christ by faith, is a temple that's currently under construction.

Right? 1 Peter 2.5 You yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. And that's what Ephesians 2, verses 20-22 assert.

The church has been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

[ 51 : 00 ] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. So corporately we are a temple. Right? But Christian, your body is a mini-temple of God.

Paul says, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? So that's a call for personal holiness and godliness. A great deal of language tied to a sacrifice in the New Testament in worship is tied to our living in Christ.

So it is wrong to think that our worship is restricted to a worship service at 9 or 11 o'clock in the morning. Our whole lives are to be a pleasing aroma to Christ. And so that temple helps us understand what our mission as a church is.

So God's original purpose for the temple in Eden that God's image bears would expand to fill the whole earth begins to be fulfilled in Jesus, the new temple and in the church. So you see in this stage of redemptive history the temple and the Holy of Holies is reversed.

Whereas in the Old Testament the Gentiles were separated from the innermost chamber of the Holy of Holies by the veil. But now in the Great Commission the temple is going out to the ends of the earth and through the church proclaiming the good news that life can be found in the name of Christ.

[ 52 : 14 ] So God is present through the church expanding until it reaches the furthest ends of the earth. So the Holy of Holies is extending that temple is extending to the ends of the earth. G.K. Beal says our task as the covenant community the church is to be God's temple so filled with His glorious presence that we expand and fill the earth with that presence until God finally accomplish the goal completely at the end of the time.

So that's our common mission. That's why we support missionaries. That's why we do evangelism. Because the temple is going out to the ends of the earth. It's a dynamic temple. But yet the account goes further still.

It goes further still. The last part is the world encompassing temple. The world encompassing temple. So in the culminating vision of the last book of the Bible the people of God gather in the New Jerusalem but there's no temple.

But why would there be? Jesus is right there with His people. And John tells us this new Jerusalem is shaped like a cube. Now again there's only one cube in the Old Testament and from which this imagery is drawn.

It is the Holy of Holies. So in other words all of God's people are now in the Holy of Holies in the most holy place always in the sheer unmediated glory of God forever with the Lord face to face living in the Holy of Holies.

[ 53 : 35 ] So it's a small wonder John says he saw no temple in the city for the temple is God the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And moreover last thing is the entire creation has become the Holy of Holies as evidence from Revelation 22 verse 4 where the high priest who wore God's name on his forehead was the only person in Israel who could enter the Holy of Holies once a year but in the future all of God's people will become high priests with God's name on their forehead and standing not one day a year but forever in God's presence.

And this Holy of Holies will never be compromised because it says it will never be defiled by anything unclean. The last verse in chapter 21 but nothing unclean will ever enter it nor anyone who does what is detestable or false but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So all things will be made new when we go home to glory there we will forever be in that great meeting place between God and his people. So come Lord Jesus. That's where the temple ends where we're going to be living in the Holy of Holies in God's very presence forever.

So I have a song that I'd love us to sing and it's Praise to the Lord the Almighty. Calvin once said all orthodoxy must lead to doxology.

So if we're not ready to praise God I'm sorry we've missed the point so we need to end with praising God and then we will time for questions if anybody needs to go then feel free.

[ 55 : 12 ] So praise the Lord the Almighty. Praise to the Lord the Almighty the King of creation O my soul praise Him for He is Thy health and salvation All ye who hear now to His temple draw near join me in glad adoration praise to the Lord who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth shelters thee under His wings e'er so gently sustaineth Has thou not seen how thy desires there have been granted in what

He ordained Him Praise to the Lord who doth prosper thy work and defend thee Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee Ponder anew what the Almighty can do if with His love He befriend thee Praise to the Lord Lord all that is in me adore Him All that hath life and breath come now with praises before Him Let the Amen sound from His people again

Gladly forever adore Him Amen Amen Amen What a wonderful privilege to think about the future glory that we will all experience when Christ returns or calls us home So with that questions I'm probably just scratching the surface here there's a lot more that we could talk about Yeah Tom Thanks Tyler I don't have a time especially about I mean we're starting walking around the garden and the temple that's so beautiful I have a question about dimensions Yeah I've always been if you could just quickly summarize I feel like there's three dimensions Exodus has dimensions of the temple Ezekiel has dimensions of something John has dimensions of something You did touch on all this but could you just quickly just boom boom boom Yeah sure yeah yeah So in Exodus the Holy of Holies is 20 by 20 by 20 cubits which forms a perfect cube

Okay And then Ezekiel is prophesying about in exile that God is going to restore Jerusalem and it's shaped as a perfect cube And that's for the city but he's envisioning it as a cube He's envisioning the city as a cube So he's envisioning the city actually being the Holy of Holies like the city which is fulfilled in Revelation 21 where John describes the new Jerusalem as a perfect cube And actually that Ezekiel's vision of the bronze man is actually Jesus is described as that I think Revelation 3 or

4 So it's an apocalyptic future looking forward looking vision about the fate that awaits God's people and that is picked up in Revelation So this idea of a cube Okay Now I I could be wrong I thought that John says Ezekiel's men even though they are both cubes Yeah And they're both Jerusalem I think they were different I think they have different dimensions

Okay Yeah so John says Doesn't he say there's a translation thing where you could say like angelic measurements It says he says like these are angelic measurements I thought you had I think a cubit is a little different Cubit versus an angelic measurements Yeah Yeah That's good That's good However If you look in Revelation Go back to your cube Yes I can do that So your cube's off a little instead of 8 by 8 you should be 12 by 12 Because you've got the 12 stones that are the layers of the wall which also relate to the 12 stones in the breastplate of Greece There has been a lot of discussion about just exactly what stones those are because the different languages but they're they're close they're similar but yeah so the 12 and again the cube is accurate

[ 60 : 34 ] It struck me as interesting when that flashed up I immediately thought of of course I would pyrite Pyrite is a mineral that forms in the cubic system and it looks without the lines in it exactly like that Yes and it dawned on me that it was very interesting that of course God has a sense of humor that he would put that in the ground for us to find here it is this perfect golden cube and there it is Of course we're not going to be living inside a cube in the ditch but no it's meant I think it symbolizes God's presence with his people and you see it's interesting because Revelation 21-22 describes the New Jerusalem as a garden but also as a city a garden city temple and then it's shaped the cubic is like a temple but there's no temple because God is there he's using a lot of symbolic language to help people understand what it's going to be like

I'm more interested in the walls which are letters of the different stuff Matt so in case you're taking notes as Revelation 21-17 he also measured its walls 144 cubits by human measurement which is also an angel's measurement we need somebody to write a paper on this angel's measurement but I do think two things strike me about this picture and this is sort of stepping back to a little bit of a meta but the the biblical theology of the temple is not linear it's got multiple streams in it and even the fulfillment of it it's like the temple fulfills it's fulfilled in Jesus and in the people of God and in the new creation where it's sort of its totality the things that are that it's pointing to we experience in the fullness of it and I think it's helpful for us to just recognize and particularly when we're in the big deal 37 and we're clearly in apocalyptic literature it's you know it's helpful for us to see those themes without trying to be overly modernistic about having to make the typology all be so particularly precise that we know what this symbolizes in this particular way it's wonderful to explore those things but it strikes me that sometimes people get really worked up about that and honestly that God didn't reveal it to be this exceedingly specific system but more he's using this language to communicate broad truths or specific truths in a multi-fascative way yeah yeah if you take it too literally that word literally is maybe we should take it literally versus symbolically or apocalyptically it depends on how you're going to approach those kind of those passages but yeah there's clearly I mean Ezekiel 40 is hard but I do I would I'll put down that I think he's talking about revelation where God is dwelling with his people but I can be wrong on that who knows I think one of the beautiful things of tracing this theme throughout the Bible for me is that in the beginning God does the work places us in the garden gives us of the trees gives us all you know and walks among us like it's all a banquet that he's laid out for us right then sin happens the fall fractures our relationship and God says I'm a holy God this is how you serve me and at times I think in my Christian walk I thought God was just being crotchety and saying okay make that I'm purple and that I'm purple and it comes to that wrong but no he's not he's saying this is how you serve me like this is how you come before me which is grace to actually describe to us in full detail how to come before him imperfectly is a grace like that

God did spend so much time laying those things out and then obviously we fail but then you know but God is still even from the garden the prophecy that Christ is coming like it's there right in the garden that Christ is coming and then again he sets a banquet he's setting a banquet out before his disciples or he's inviting them to a meal like he's doing it again then the spirit is given to us like there's just grace upon grace upon grace in this temple theme and then at the end again we're placed in this perfect God does the work right Jesus I go and prepare a place for you he's already working to set out this banquet for me and that's one of the most beautiful themes of tracing the temple yeah that's so that's so wonderful yeah that is so wonderful and the fact that yeah I'm just struck that he initiates God initiates he's saying this is how you approach me and he's doing the

work to rebuild what was lost but it's gonna be better

I mean it's gonna be better because the glory of Christ will be our worship is gonna be the lamb who's on the throne worthy of the lamb who was slain so yeah it's a wonderful perfect world but the glory of Christ will be there which Adam and Eve couldn't they couldn't have said that I mean they would God was there but the glory of the lamb is wouldn't have been apparent to them even though he was always glorious yeah there's so much more we could say about the temple yeah any other questions all right let me just close in a word prayer and then we'll continue our father thank you for these wonderful truths that you are you are working to dwell with your people once again and you've done that in

[ 66 : 56 ] Christ and now the spirit dwelling in us but Lord we do look forward to the day when we will dwell with you face to face again and Lord come Lord Jesus would you whet our appetite for that great day in Jesus name amen you you you you you you