

Typology of the Temple

MORIEL Ministries and Jacob Prasch would like to point out that that they do not necessarily agree with or endorse all of the other doctrinal positions represented in this Encyclopaedia.

Someone asked me, "When is the Temple going to be rebuilt?" There are archaeological excavations (that are officially secret) that have been carried on by the Department of Antiquities of Hebrew University for some years. Everybody knows about them; they are not really secret. There have even been Christians involved in it, like Dr. Jim Flemming.

Dr. Kauffman of Hebrew University has done archaeological explorations beneath the Temple Mount, with the view to rebuilding it and violated an halachic prohibition against going up there. He found some bit of Halachah (Rabbinic law) that says that you can go on the Temple Mount to rebuild it. He actually went up on the Temple Mount to take some measurements, with a view to rebuilding it.

There is a movement to rebuild the temple. I would be very surprised if it was not rebuilt eventually, but this is a complicated subject. To understand it, we have to begin at the beginning.

Words for 'Temple'

There are at least three main words in Hebrew for tabernacle or temple, and three main words in Greek. In Hebrew the words are mishkan, which means 'tabernacle' or 'dwelling place,' beit, which means 'house,' and haikhol, 'a temple'. Different terms are used in different contexts. The first Greek word is oikos, which simply means 'house.' The second is naos, which means 'shrine.' The third is hieron, which means 'temple.' They are used in different contexts, in different verses in the New Testament.

The most important thing in understanding the temple, or the tabernacle, is this: it is the holy place where God dwells. The word shekinah refers to the Holy Spirit, manifested in the cloud and in the fire. The word comes from the Hebrew root shekhan, 'to dwell.' That is where we get the word mishkan, 'God's dwelling place,' one of the words used for the temple.

The Tabernacle

John chapter one says, 'He dwelt among us.' The Greek word is kataskenoo, meaning 'to pitch a tent,' alluding to the Jewish idea of 'the dwelling.'

There are at least seven major tabernacles in the Bible.

The first tabernacle is the one we call in Hebrew ha ohel, 'the tent of meeting.' It was a dynamic tabernacle, designed to be portable by the Levites who would move it. When it was pitched at night, the tribes of Israel would, in a configuration, camp around it according to their tribes (Numbers 2:1-31); the tribes, of course, being those of the patriarchs, the twelve sons of Jacob, the New Testament equivalent of the twelve apostles.

The second tabernacle is the First Temple, the temple of Solomon.

The third is the Second Temple, the temple of Zerubbabel, later called Herod's Temple when he expanded it. He actually used Ezekiel's vision of a temple as the blueprint to expand it along Greco-Roman lines to impress the Romans.

The fourth temple is the one that Ezekiel saw which, to the best of my understanding, is probably a millennial temple. Jesus spoke of His physical body as a temple (John 2:19-21). This is the fifth temple.

The sixth tabernacle or temple is our body. Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16).

The seventh, and final, tabernacle is the church. In at least seven places in the New Testament — 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; Revelation 13:6; 21:3 — the church is called the tabernacle of God.

Each of these seven tabernacles follow this pattern: it is constructed as a box, within a box, within a box. There is the sanctum sanctorum, or the 'holy of holies.' In Hebrew it is called ha kodesh kodeshim. Then there is the outer chamber and a third chamber. It is like a box, within a box, within a box.

The structure of the Temple
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The Outer Court or the Court of the Gentiles corresponds to our physical bodies. It is what everyone sees and everyone has contact with. At the inside edge of the Outer Court during Jesus' time there were signs warning Gentiles not to go any further.

Then there is the Holy Place. The Holy Place was entered by the Levites for sacrificial purposes.

Then there is the Holy of Holies, where God's Spirit dwells.

The 'innermost man'

It is important to understand this. If the Outer Court that everyone can see is our physical body, then the Holy Place is our soul: our emotions, our mind, our intellect. The Hebrew word is nephesh.

Then inside our soul is another box. That is our spirit, our 'innermost man'. The New Testament usually alludes to it by the metaphor of 'the heart'; the Old Testament uses the term 'kidneys'.

I saw a film by a medical missionary to a tribe in New Guinea which considered a person's throat to be their 'innermost man'. They would bury anyone who contracted laryngitis, because once the throat is gone, a person's life is over. The video shows them burying someone alive.

When these people got saved, they would ask Jesus into their throat. Even primordial peoples have a consciousness of an 'innermost man' that goes beyond the soul.

Man is made in God's image and likeness and even people with no background in Judaism or Christianity can still know certain things about the one, true God.

'Demonised' Christians?

"Can Christians be demonised?" is a question that is often asked. The answer depends on what you mean by 'demonised'.

Christians can be demonised in the Outer Court. Demons can afflict the bodies of Christians. They can even affect our emotions, our minds. Christians can be oppressed. They can be demonised in their minds. But a demon can never come into the innermost man. Only unsaved people can be demon possessed, whereby a demon occupies the innermost man instead of the Holy Spirit.

The only way a Bible believing Christian can have the innermost man entered by a demon is if he backslides beyond a terrible point, the way Saul did.

Unfortunately, some people involved in deliverance do not make these distinctions and they wind up convincing Christians that they are demon possessed. There is a difference between oppression and possession. There is a limit to how far Satan can go in dealing with a believer.

Walls of partition

The temple followed a pattern of a box, within a box, within a box. There were things called 'walls of partition.' Sin brings separation. The most important wall of partition was the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, which was torn from top to bottom when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:51).

There was a wall of partition at the place where the priests entered, another at the place where the men entered, and another at the court of women.

Women were separated from men by a physical barrier. The clergy were separated from the men by a barrier, and the high priest was separated from the rest of the priests by a physical barrier.

Around all of this there was a peripheral wall of partition, separating Jew from Gentile.

Divisions between Jew and Gentile, divisions between men and women, divisions between the clergy and the lay people and divisions between the ordinary clergy and the high priest are a result of the division between a holy God and unholy men.

Abraham's children

The Jews thought that they were special because they were physically descended from Abraham. Jesus told them that that was not true: God could raise up Abraham's children out of the stones.

Midrashically speaking, He was saying that He could make Gentile believers, Christians, into Abraham's descendants.

On Palm Sunday the Jews cried out, "Hosanna, hosanna, to the Son of David". And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." And He answered and said, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:39-40). He was saying, "If the Jews don't recognise me as the Messiah, the Christians will".

Bricks cemented together

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood...(1 Peter 2:5).

We are the stones. The Hebrew word for 'fellowship' comes from the verb chabar, meaning 'to join together.' The reference is to bricks that have been cemented together.

It is one thing to come to church, but it is very different to come to fellowship. If you come to church, you temporarily sit together. If you come to fellowship, you are cemented into a structure.

A physical building with a brick missing here and a brick missing there is what a church is like if people are only coming to church and not to fellowship. There is a big difference.

God's building

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building (1 Corinthians 3:9). This is a Greek text, but Paul is drawing on the Hebrew idea of binyon, 'what God has built.' We are God's structure, God's building. The church is, once again, the temple.

Ephesians is probably the most important text in the New Testament for understanding the temple. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple for the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-21).

Notice that the word skenoo in Greek, 'dwelling,' is the same root as the Hebrew word mishkan or shekinah, meaning God in the Spirit.

The church is to be the temple where God dwells. Never say there is no temple. There is a temple. Christians are the stones, Jesus is the corner stone and the apostles and prophets are the foundation stones.

Look at the 'Hallel Rabbah' from Psalm 118:22 that they sang to Jesus on Palm Sunday. The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief cornerstone.

Jesus is the cornerstone of this temple, the apostles and prophets are the foundation stones, and we are built on top of that.

Apostles

There are five kinds of apostles in the Bible. 'Apostle' in Hebrew is sholakh, the one who is 'sent' to establish a church. The Greek word is apostolos, meaning the same thing, one who is 'sent.'

First, Jesus is called the Apostle, the One who was sent, with the definite article. He is unique. All other apostolic authority must come from Jesus.

Second, there is the unique case of the twelve apostles. The twelve apostles correspond to the twelve patriarchs, or the twelve sons of Jacob in the Old Testament. As all the people of Israel were the descendants of the twelve

tribes of Jacob, we, in some way, are the spiritual descendants of the twelve apostles.

Even Paul did not have all the qualifications of the original twelve. He affirmed that he was not the least of the apostles; his authority was co-equal with theirs (2 Corinthians 11:5).

Yet he said he was the least because he had persecuted the church.

In Revelation chapter 4, you see the twenty four elders. They are mentioned twice in Revelation. An educated guess as to who they are would be that they are the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles. It is an eternally fixed number of which Paul is not a part.

Third, when they looked for a replacement for Judas, they had to pick someone who has been around from the baptism of John (Acts 1:15-26). Paul had not been around from the baptism of John. John is a pivotal character in the inter-testamental relationship.

After the twelve apostles, there is the almost unique case of Paul. He is someone who had the same authority as they did, but did not match all of their requirements in every sense — having seen the Lord, and so on.

Fourth, in 1 Corinthians we see that there were other apostles. Paul was dealing with the problem of party spirit. He rebuked it, saying, Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:12).

There is Jesus, who is totally unique. There is Cephas (Peter), who was one of the twelve. There is Paul. And then there is the case of Apollos, a fourth kind. He was not like Paul, and he was certainly not like the twelve, but he had an apostolic ministry.

Fifth, there are people today who are apostles in this sense: they are church planting missionaries. They are not pastors. Once the church is established, they need to go somewhere else and establish another church. They are not very good pastors usually, but they are very good at planting churches.

Apostolic authority

In the context of Ephesians, the foundation stones mainly mean the twelve apostles, Paul, the apostles in the early church who wrote the Bible, and the Old Testament prophets.

The same process holds true. If a church is planted, its foundation is going to be the apostle who planted it. In that sense apostolic authority can exist, but remember, the main New Testament thrust of apostolic authority is doctrine.

Does apostolic authority in the sense of the apostles exist today? Yes it does — in the New Testament.

The teaching of the apostles; that is apostolic authority. It is not heavy shepherding. It is not, “You do this and you do that.” It is doctrine.

Be careful of people in Restorationism who are appropriating to themselves the title of ‘Apostle,’ thinking themselves to be somehow foundational, and assuming an authority that the Word of God or the Spirit of God gives to nobody.

The only kind of apostles we have today are church planting missionaries. That is all. Apostolic authority as the apostles had it is preserved in the doctrine of the New Testament. Apostolic authority was always concerned with doctrine, not with organisation or politics.

Secondly, it was always plural, unlike the house churches, with their heavy shepherding and their leaders who claim to be “the apostle.”

The Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:1). Jesus sent the apostles out in pairs (Mark 6:7). In the book of Acts, when they wanted to see what was happening in Samaria, they sent two apostles (Acts 8:14). Not only that but there was a mutual submission to the general council in Acts 15.

Be careful of these head honchos who are appropriating to themselves the title of 'Apostle'. This mentality exists in the house churches and, unfortunately, has come into much of Pentecostalism, but it is not Biblical.

The Body of Christ

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being fitted together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Ephesians combines the language of architecture with the language of anatomy and structure. We are the body of Christ — bones, flesh, eyes, feet, etc.

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation and says to Zion, your God reigns (Isaiah 52:7).

“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him.” That is what Paul is drawing on in Ephesians.

...having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). We are the body of Christ. Who are the feet? They are the evangelists.

The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light (Luke 11:34). The eye sees. The eye is the teacher.

Good conduct is very important, but do you know what? The New Testament exhorts Christians to right doctrine twice as much as it exhorts them to right conduct. Why? Because if you do not have right doctrine, you won't know what right conduct is.

Tabernacle of David

“After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name”, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old (Acts 15:16-18).

This is a prophecy taken from Amos 9:11, out of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament.

“After these things I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it.” Before the temple was built by Solomon, David's tabernacle was the tent that was in Shiloh. David's tabernacle was dynamic. It was meant to be transported, even though it was usually found in Shiloh.

Amos predicted that the tabernacle of David would be restored. Somehow we would go from a fixed building back to something dynamic.

Both the text and the context of Acts 15 shows that the dynamic structure which fulfills the prophecy is the church. The church has re-established the mobile tabernacle of David.

Pillars of apostolic authority

And recognising the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised (Galatians 2:9).

The original twelve apostles recognised the apostolic ministry of Paul and Barnabas, but the twelve apostles were said to be 'pillars.'

There were two pillars in the temple, “Boaz” and “Jakin” (1 Kings 7:21). Boaz means ‘in His strength,’ and Jakin means ‘he will establish’ or ‘Yahweh will establish.’

Pillars hold the roof up. If the pillars go, the roof collapses. If apostolic authority goes, the building will collapse.

Unfortunately, apostolic authority is going. Why? Because the church is departing from the teaching of the apostles into Restorationist Theology, with its false concept of apostolic authority.

Notice that physical components of the temple are identified with different kinds of Christians.

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God... (Revelation 3:12).

There is no temple in the eternal city. There is a tabernacle because Jesus is there; the whole place is a tabernacle, but not a building, not a temple as such.

This has something to do with the church because there is no temple in heaven: a tabernacle, yes, but not a temple (Revelation 21:22). The people who overcome will be the pillars.

To be a real apostle, to be a real church planter, you have to be somebody who is, above all things, an overcomer. Look at the lives of the apostles. They were overcomers. They were people who faced terrible opposition, persecution, heresy, and betrayal, but they overcame.

Raising up the temple

In so many places, over and over, the New Testament defines the church, or identifies the church, as the tabernacle. God has always had a tabernacle, ever since the first one, but now it is us.

Jesus spoke of His body as the temple. "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19). But the church is the body of Christ. What happens to Him, happens to us.

He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him (Hosea 6:2).

His resurrection is replayed, or recapitulated, in the experience of the church in the last days. Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19).

That happened to His temple — His body, and somehow it also happens to us.

This is very important when you read Matthew 24. They were marvelling at the stones of the Herodian temple, and He said, "not one stone will be thrown down upon another." Jesus was referring back to the prophecies of the prophet Daniel chapter 9. The Messiah would have to come and die before the second temple would be destroyed.

Somehow that destruction of the temple is a type of what happens to the church at the end. The stones are thrown down, but then resurrected in glory to an eternal temple, the way His body was.

We are made in God's image and likeness. We are a tri-unity. We are the outer court, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, because God is triune.

Jesus is God's prototype. We are made in His image. He was a temple, so we are a temple.

Marriage and temple typology

When you understand temple narrative and the temple typology, you understand the reasons why God said that marriage is to be held sacrosanct and to let the marriage bed remain undefiled.

If you are a Christian and you have a wife, her body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. You do not enter God's temple irreverently. It does not mean that it is not erotic. It does not mean that it is not fun. It does mean that it is not to be with sin. It is God's temple.

Somehow, sexuality in marriage is like the high priest going into the temple, or it is Jesus going inside His bride, the church, causing the church to be fruitful. We are made in His image and likeness. Sex replays spiritual things.

“Keep the marriage bed undefiled.” “Don’t you know that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit?” Hassidic Jews understand this idea. They say that the Shekinah dwells over the marriage bed when a couple is making love. They understand that there is this spiritual aspect to it and that God’s Spirit hovers over it.