

# Understanding Church as the Temple of God

## Drama:

INTRO - Continuing Church Metaphors: Church as the Temple

- I. This metaphor doesn't "connect" as easily as the previous 3
  - A. Secularization
  - B. "Post-Reformation Christendom"

## SACRED SPACE

- I. When we forget how inherently religious we are...
  - A. Sacred Space examples
    1. Man Cave, She Shed, [Student] their own room, the corner office w/ a view, [athlete] the home field/court/gym, or just our own homes
      - a) The spaces are dedicated, consecrated, set apart for specific uses that we'd be willing to "religiously" defend
      - b) Not inherently bad, but we know how quickly we can fall prey to idolatry
  - B. Two characteristics of...?
    1. Protection
      - a) Echo of Eden
    2. Expansion
      - a) Echo of Eden

## BIBLICAL SACRED SPACE: God's Presence

- I. The Bible begins with God making all things
  - A. Quick Sweeping description climaxing in the creation of "sacred" people
    1. Sacred because the imago Dei sets Mankind apart from the rest of the created order
      - a) What makes sacred is NOT anything inherent or intrinsic in us, BUT in our relation to God [extrinsic]
        - (1) How He made us
          - (a) In Gen 1 we see a Kingly role - "Have Dominion"
    2. The rest of the created order has their own "space"
      - a) God forms space and then "fills" it
    3. Mankind is made special, given authority and commanded to multiply...
      - a) However, their "space" is the same as animals (earth)
- II. Eden
  - A. Genesis 2 slows down and zooms in on Day 6 of Creation
    1. More Detail of Adam and Eve's creation
    2. The Lord God "plants" a garden ["**And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.**" **Genesis 2:8 ESV**]

- a) Contrast His Creation of over spaces
      - (1) Planting vs Speaking
    - b) In line with His Creation of Mankind
      - (1) Forming vs Speaking
  - 3. Adam is placed in this Garden to “work it and keep it” [“**The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.**” **Genesis 2:15 ESV**]
    - a) A priestly role
- III. What makes space sacred biblically?
  - A. God’s Omnipresence and Sacred Space
    - 1. Eden as a Garden-Temple
      - a) God’s Presence
        - (1) God Dwelling with His image-bearers
          - (a) God’s unique revelatory presence
          - (b) God’s special relation to creature/space
- IV. Summary
  - A. Protection of the Space
    - 1. King-priest
  - B. This Space was to expand!
    - 1. Waters flowing out
    - 2. “Be fruitful and Multiply” [Gen 1:28]

#### THE DILEMMA

- I. The FALL
  - A. Failure of Kingly role: Rebellion
  - B. Failure of Priestly role: To live by and reflect God’s instruction
- II. EXILE
  - A. God exiles them from Eden, from His life-giving special presence
    - 1. First “temple” sacrifice
      - a) “**And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.**” **Genesis 3:21 ESV**
    - 2. ‘**He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.**’ **Genesis 3:24**
      - a) Drove them out “East”
- III. **PROBLEM**
  - A. **Mankind—You and Us—are designed, hardwired to be in the Presence of God**
  - B. **We can’t be in the Presence of God**
    - 1. If we don’t get this tension, we won’t see the significance of how the temple theme progresses

#### TEMPLE

- I. God working to solve the PROBLEM
  - A. Through an offspring/Family

1. This family sets up Sacred Spaces
  - a) Altars
    - (1) Implied Sacrifices
    - (2) Where heaven and earth could overlap
  - b) Tabernacle
    - (1) Holy of Holies
    - (2) Facing East
    - (3) Exodus ending into Leviticus
  - c) Temple
    - (1) Facing East
- B. Positive
  1. The Tabernacle/Temple was a sign of God's Presence with His people
- C. Negative
  1. Only the High Priest once a year could truly enter into God's Presence
    - a) There remains a barrier: the **PROBLEM**
- II. We keep adding to the **PROBLEM**
  - A. Due to Israel again failing in Kingly and Priestly roles the Glorious Temple is destroyed
    1. What seemed to be the answer to the **PROBLEM** is gone!
    2. Though a 2nd Temple is rebuilt it's remarked that its not as good
      - a) AND God's [special] presence does not return
        - (1) [cf Ezekiel 10]

## IMMANUEL

- I. John 1
  - A. Word became flesh and DWELT/TABERNACLED among us
    1. Here was God's special presence "housed" in the human body of Jesus
      - a) Instead of brick and mortar its flesh and blood
- II. John 2
  - A. Destroy this Temple...
    1. Jesus' death and resurrection brings us back to brick & mortar-less temple worship
      - a) The temple & priesthood under the Mosaic Covenant was insufficient
        - (1) Because of us
        - (2) For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. - Hebrews 10:4
      - (a) Never a permanent solution
    2. Jesus is the True Temple
      - a) Remember Positive and Negative
        - (1) Sacrifice
- III. 2 Samuel 7
  - A. David's "son" would build God a Temple
    1. That Temple was destroyed

2. Jesus the true Davidic Son is now building a better temple
  - a) One in which God's Spirit now resides

## Doctrine:

### CHURCH

- I. Through Jesus the true temple and perfect sacrifice we have access to God
  - A. Couldn't return to innocence only way was the way forward to the cross
    1. "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:19-22 ESV
      - a) Already - Not Yet
        - (1) Access is secured
- II. Davidic King building His temple
  - A. "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 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. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV
    1. Individually, but primarily corporately
      - a) Importance of Gathering (living stones coming together)
        - (1) Sacred Space
    2. Importance of Holiness
- III. Priesthood of All Believers
  - A. "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 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." 1 Peter 2:4-5 ESV

## Doxology:

- I. Revelation 21
  - A. Behold...!!!

## Discipleship:

- I. Questions for Discussion
  - A. Unclear?
  - B. What's stood out to you the most

- C. If the Church is the eschatological [last days] temple of God,
1. -How should that affect our understanding and pursuit of holiness? In what way are we responsible for holiness of our church?
  2. -Does this affect our understanding of the assembly/gathering? How so?
  3. -What are the "New Covenant" sacrifices we offer?