



Temple and the Presence of God

II. THE TEMPLE OF MOSES (FROM SINAI TO JERUSALEM)



Sinai Tabernacle

I will dwell in the midst of the Israelites and will be their God. They shall know that I, the Lord, am their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, so that I, the Lord, their God, might dwell among them [Exodus 29:45-46].

- † Sinai of the Exodus is another sacred place, consecrated by theophany
- † Here God speaks to Moses entrusting a fundamental mission: the establishment of the Tabernacle
- † Moses is called to build a sanctuary that will be God's dwelling place with His People
- † Here God will be present

Sinai Tabernacle

They are to make a sanctuary for me, that I may dwell in their midst.

According to all that I show you regarding the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of its furnishings, so you are to make [Exodus 25:8-9].

The Lord gives Moses explicit instructions on making His Sanctuary:

- † Exodus 25: collecting materials; the Ark; the Showbread Table; the Menorah
- † Exodus 26: the tent cloth; the framework; the veils
- † Exodus 27: altar; court of the Tabernacle; lamp oils
- † Exodus 28-29: Vestments and liturgy

Sinai Tabernacle



Sinai Tabernacle

The Tabernacle consisted of a triple enclosure:

- † Outer Court
- † Tent - the Tabernacle proper
- † Sanctuary within the tent and divided off by a veil

Within the Holy of Holies is the Ark, with Mercy Seat and Cherubim - here God is to be present

Holy of Holies



Veil



Holy Place

Washbasin

Altar for offerings





The ark of the covenant you shall bring inside, behind this veil which divides the holy place from the holy of holies. [Exodus 26:33]

The Sinai Sanctuary

The Ark of the Covenant:

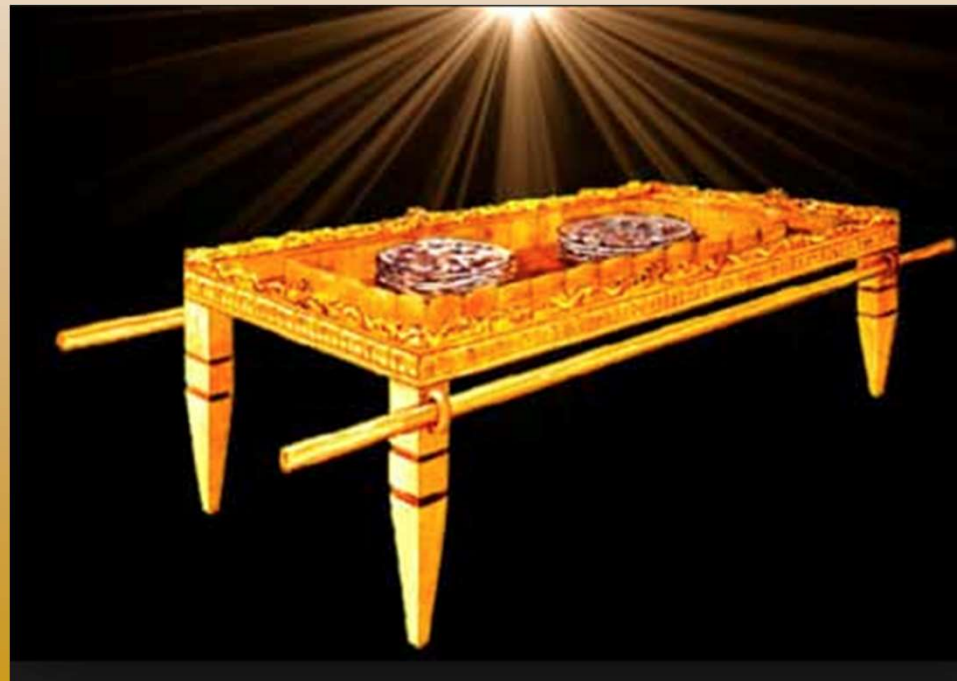
The Sanctuary's most prominent furnishing is the Ark of the Mosaic Covenant. Alone in the Holy of Holies, it contained:

- † The tablets of the Ten Commandments
- † Aaron's rod
- † A pot containing some of the manna God had provided for His people in the wilderness

The Sinai Sanctuary

The Showbread Table:

- ✚ On the Showbread Table were kept the 12 loaves of holy bread - the Bread of the Presence [Leviticus 24:5-9] - "You shall also make a table of acacia wood...and plate it with pure gold." [Exodus 25:23 ff.]



The Sinai Sanctuary

The Menorah:



- † The Menorah or lampstand made of pure gold - "You shall make a menorah of pure beaten gold..."
- † "You shall then make seven lamps for it and so set up the lamps that they give their light on the space in front of the menorah."

[Exodus 25:31 ff.]



The Sinai Sanctuary

- ✚ Following God's command Moses built this portable sanctuary where God resides in the midst of the People whom He will lead through the wilderness
- ✚ It is the dwelling in which the glory of YHWH, the divine presence or *shekinah*, abides

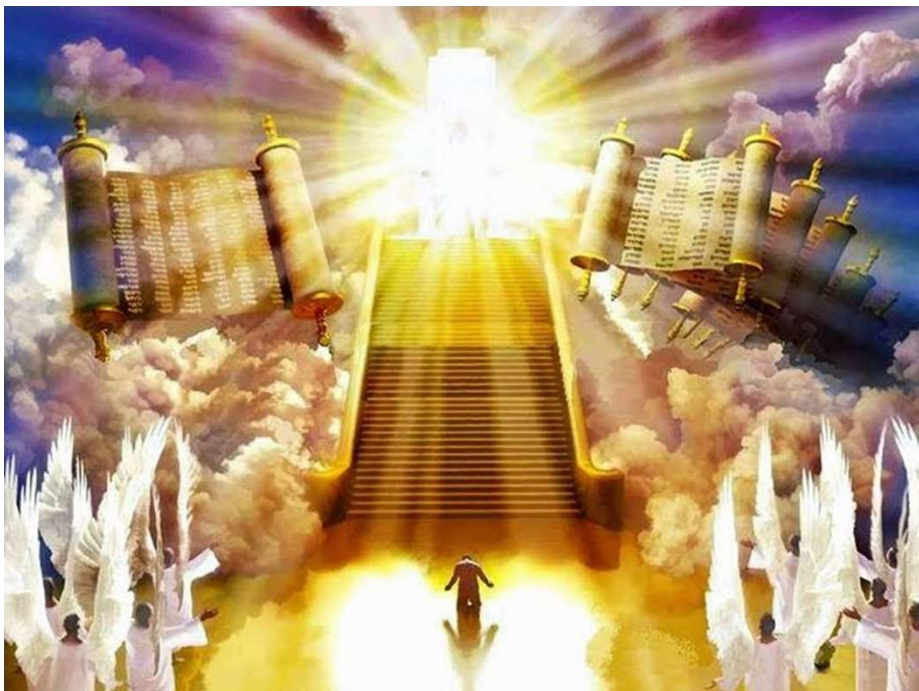
When Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with God, he heard the voice addressing him from above the cover on the ark of the covenant, from between the two cherubim; and so it spoke to him [Numbers 7:89].



The Glory of God

† Throughout Scripture we find many references to the manifestation of God's Presence - His glory - in the Tabernacle:

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud settled down upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. [Exodus 40:34-35].



The Glory of God

✝ It is here, in the Sanctuary - the Temple - that God meets His representatives

Then the spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner court. And there the glory of the Lord filled the Temple! I heard someone speaking to me from the Temple...The voice said to me: Son of man...Here I will dwell among the Israelites forever [Ezekiel 43:5-7].



The Sinai Sanctuary

The Cosmic Temple included three realms - heaven, earth, and the waters - all three are continued in the Mosaic Temple

- † Holy of Holies: Heaven (where God dwells in darkness)
- † Tabernacle: Earth - Altar of incense, showbread (first fruits), candlestick, holy oil - the elements of liturgy
- † Atrium, the sea of brass (Or bronze): The Waters

The entire Cosmos is mirrored in the Temple

Temple Described

The Temple is described throughout Scripture:

- † Exodus 40:1-35 – Instructions to Moses
- † 1 Kings 7:51-8:11 – Solomon's Temple described
- † Ezekiel 43-44:4 – Description of pre-Exilic Temple
- † Hebrews 9:1-7 – 1st Covenant worship described





Joshua Crossing the Jordan

The whole community of the Israelites assembled at Shiloh, where they set up the tent of meeting [the Tabernacle]; and the land was subdued before them [Joshua 18:1].

Movable Sanctuary

- † God's revelation to Moses is a pattern for the Temples that follow
- † First, portable Sanctuary the Hebrews carry with them in the wilderness
- † Sanctuary of the tribes successively located at Gilgal [Joshua 4:15-24], at Shechem [Joshua 8:30-35; 24:1-28], and at Shiloh [1 Samuel: 1-4]



Hannah, Samuel, Eli

Sanctuary at Shiloh

- † At Shiloh, Eli and Samuel ministered (C. 1050 BC)
- † Due to the sins of Eli's sons, priests at Shiloh, God allowed the Ark to be captured by the Philistines

Each year this man [Elkanah, husband of Hannah] went up from his city to worship and offer sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh... [1 Samuel 1:3]

The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, manifesting Himself to Samuel... [1 Samuel 3:21]



David enters Jerusalem
(2 Samuel 6)

Jerusalem Temple

- † David brings the Ark to Jerusalem after freeing it from the Philistines (C. 1000 BC)
- † He plans the Temple but God prohibits him from building it
- † God allows the Temple to be built by David's son, Solomon, binding it to His promise of an eternal kingdom [See 2 Samuel 7:5-17]

The king said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent!" [2 Samuel 7:2].

I have never dwelt in a house from the day I brought Israel up from Egypt to this day, but I have been going about in a tent or a tabernacle. As long as I have wandered about among the Israelites, did I ever say a word to any of the judges whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel: Why have you not built me a house of cedar? [2 Samuel 7:6-7]

God's Plan or Man's?

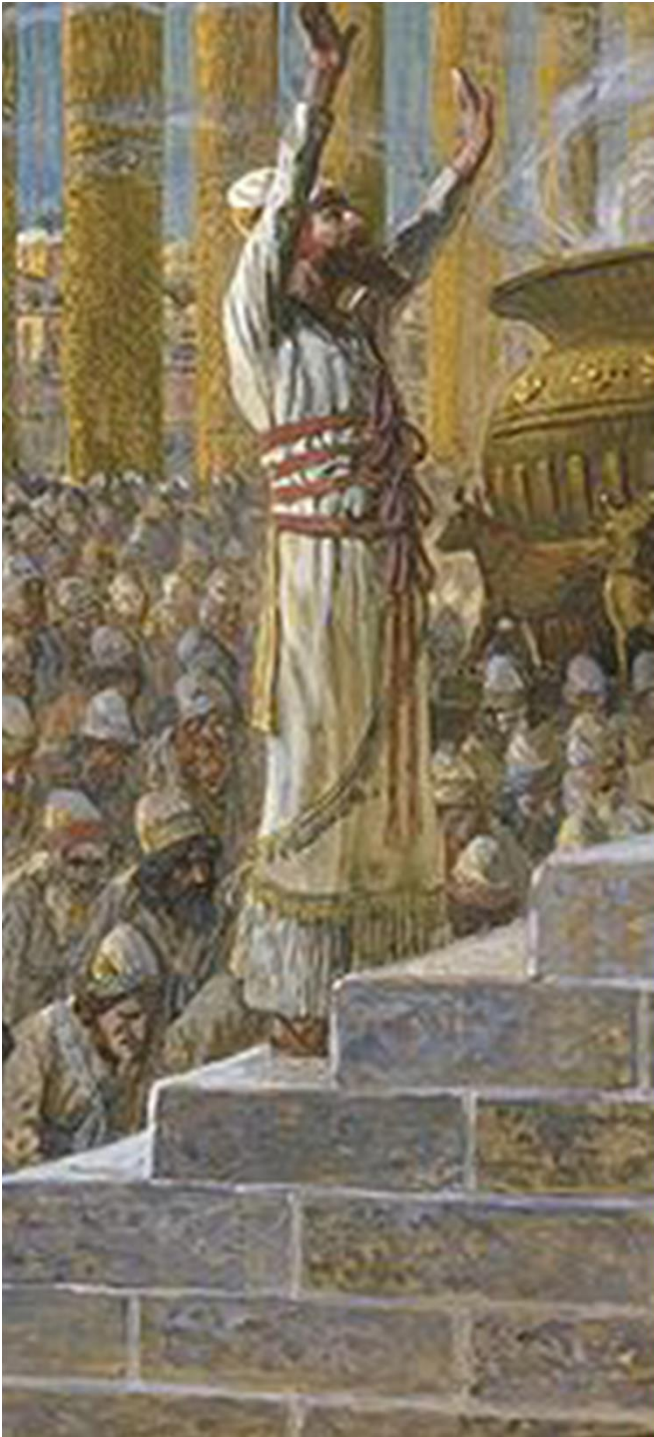
Interestingly, two major events that greatly affect God's people originated not with God, who opposed both, but with man

- † The idea of a King [1 Samuel 8:4-10]
- † The building of a "permanent" Temple in Jerusalem [2 Samuel 7:1-17]

Jerusalem Temple

- † Solomon builds and dedicates God's Temple in Jerusalem (c. 950 BC)
- † It will be God's dwelling place until it is destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II in 586 B.C.

I have built you a princely house, the base for your enthronement forever...Is God indeed to dwell with human beings on earth? If the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain you, how much less this house which I have built! [2 Chronicles 6:2,18]

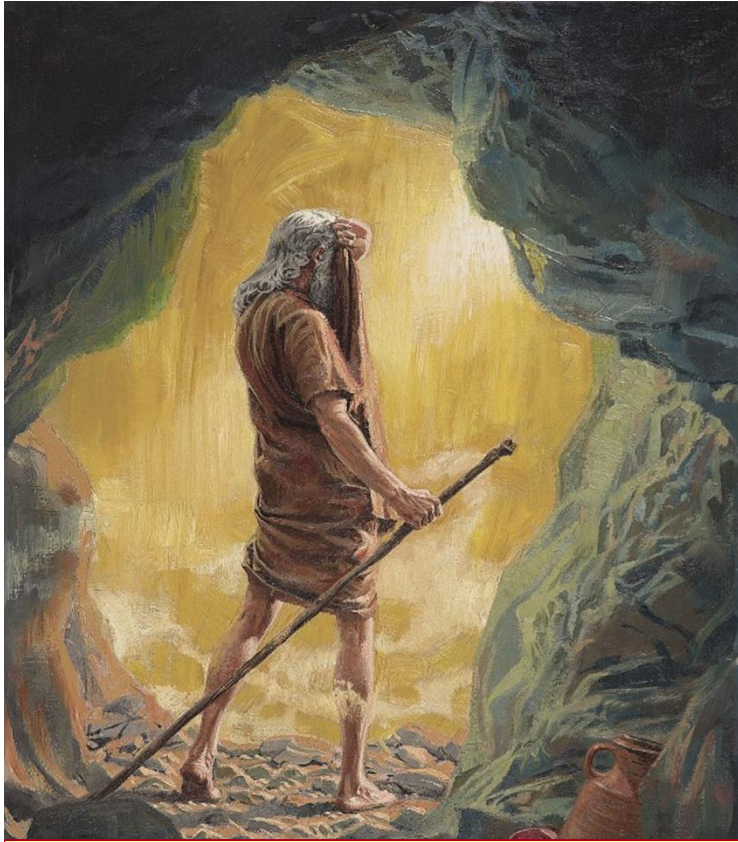


Temple Dedication

- † The people assemble and Solomon dedicates the Temple in Jerusalem
- † Animals are sacrificed; all the required furnishings are installed; the priests move the ark to the Holy of Holies



And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord [1 Kings 8:10].



“...a light silent sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, Why are you here, Elijah?” [1 Kings 19:12-13]

God and Prophets

- † As during the time of Cosmic Temple, God speaks, through Word and theophany, to those He has called
- † They condemn idolatry and false worship in God's house
- † Elijah takes up the cause of both true worship and justice
- † The Prophets, especially Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, attack not the Temple itself but the false worship within its walls



Temple & Exile

- † The prophets denounce the superficial character of worship in the Temple
- † These even include the importing of idolatrous practices
- † They envision God's abandoning His dwelling as punishment for the nation's sins
- † All is realized with the destruction and exile

The Prophets denounce false worship:

- Isaiah 1:11-17
- Jeremiah 6:20; 7:9ff
- Ezekiel 8:7-18

...and predict destruction:

- Micah 3:12
- Jeremiah 7:12-15
- Ezekiel 9

...which is realized:

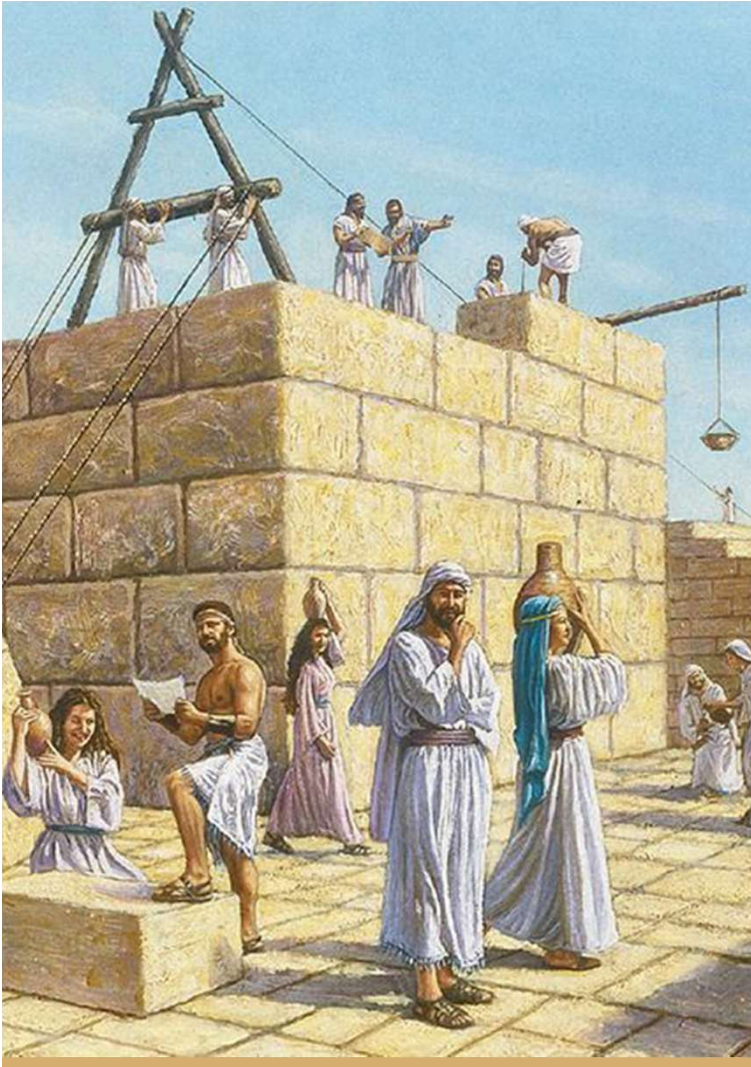
- 2 Kings 25:8-17

Idolatry and a Promise of Exile

But if ever you turn away and forsake my commandments and statutes which I set before you, and proceed to serve other gods, and bow down to them, I will uproot the people from the land I gave and repudiate the house I have consecrated for my name. I will make it a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house which is so exalted — every passerby shall be horrified and ask: "Why has the Lord done such things to this land and to this house?" And the answer will come: "Because they abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they embraced other gods, bowing down to them and serving them. That is why he has brought upon them all this evil." [2 Chronicles 7:19-22]

Jerusalem Temple

- † Babylon destroys the Temple and carries God's people into exile (597 BC)
- † Cyrus, the Persian king, conquers Babylon and allows the Jews to return and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (537-515 BC)
[See Ezra & Nehemiah]



Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: "Let them go up to Jerusalem in Judah to build the house of the Lord the God of Israel, that is, the God who is in Jerusalem"
[Ezekiel 1:3].

Ezra read clearly from the book of the law of God, interpreting it so that all could understand what was read. Then Nehemiah, the governor, and Ezra the priest-scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all the people: "Today is holy to the Lord your God. Do not lament, do not weep!" — for all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law. [Nehemiah 8:8-9].

Jerusalem Temple

- ✚ After allowing the Jews to return, the Persian kings - Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes - encourage the rebuilding of the Temple
- ✚ Ezra (priest) & Nehemiah (governor) carry out the rebuilding of the entire society - culturally, religiously and politically - and the enforcement of the covenant

See, days are coming...
when I will make a new
covenant with the house
of Israel and the house of
Judah...I will place my law
within them, and write it
upon their hearts; I will
be their God, and they
shall be my people...
Everyone, from least to
greatest, shall know me—
oracle of the Lord — for
I will forgive their iniquity
and no longer remember
their sin [Jeremiah
31:31,33,35].

New Temple

- † The first concern, then, is to rebuild the Temple
- † Encouraged by the prophets (Haggai & Zechariah) they see its coming glory
- † But there comes a new understanding - a more spiritual worship of the "religion of the heart" [Jeremiah 31:31]
- † Post-exilic prophets also warn against attachment to the temple of stone

The Temple was the focal point of every aspect of Jewish national life. Local synagogues and schools of Torah in other parts of Palestine, and in the Diaspora, in no way replaced it, but gained their significance from their implicit relationship to it. Its importance at every level can barely be overstated [N.T. Wright]

Jerusalem Temple

Sinai Tabernacle prefigures the Temples that will be built in Jerusalem. The Jews will ultimately consider them the:

- † Dwelling place of God on earth
- † Microcosm of heaven and earth
- † Sole place of sacrificial worship
- † Place of the sacrificial priesthood

This cloud [the glory cloud] so darkened the place, that one priest could not discern another; but it afforded to the minds of all a visible image and glorious appearance of God's having descended into this Temple, and of His having gladly pitched His Tabernacle there. [Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*]

God's Dwelling

- ✝ The Jews believed that the God of the universe condescended to dwell among His people and poured out the glory of His Presence upon this sacred place, set apart for Him
- ✝ Ancient Jews understood that the earthly Temple in Jerusalem was a replica of the heavenly Temple, where God really dwells.

For on his [the High Priest's] full-length robe was the whole world, and ancestral glories were carved on the four rows of stones, and your grandeur was on the crown upon his head. [Wisdom 18:24].

You shall make a veil woven of violet, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen twined, with cherubim embroidered on it [Exodus 26:31].

Heaven and Earth

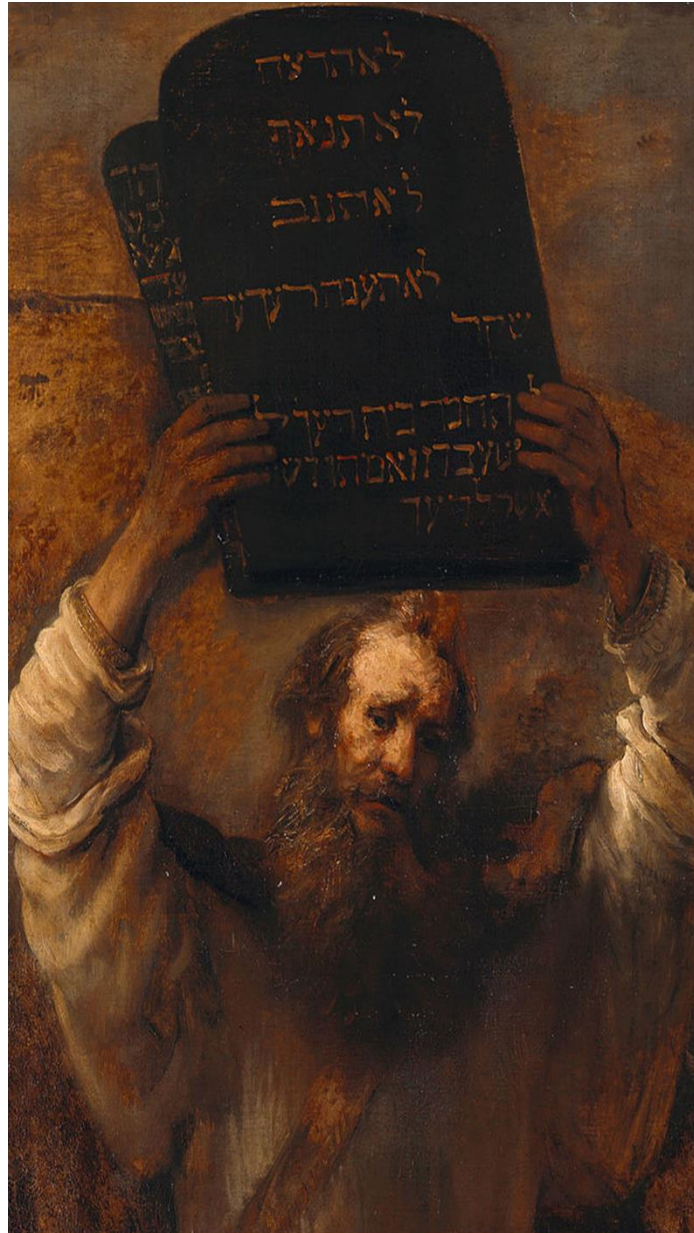
- † The Temple was designed and decorated, depicting the universe: heavens, earth, sea, stars.
- † The "Bronze Sea", the Menorah, the Veil - all had cosmic significance
- † The High Priest, too, represents the world
- † The Cosmos is a macro-Temple; the Temple a microcosm

Sacrificial Worship

- † From the time of Moses, only one Temple (in each of its manifestations) was the sole place of sacrificial worship [Deuteronomy 12:5-14]
- † God had a reason for this singleness of worship; it was not a step backward from the earlier worship of God in any place



Earlier, God allowed worship and sacrifice in many places



Moses and God's
Oneness

Sacrificial Worship

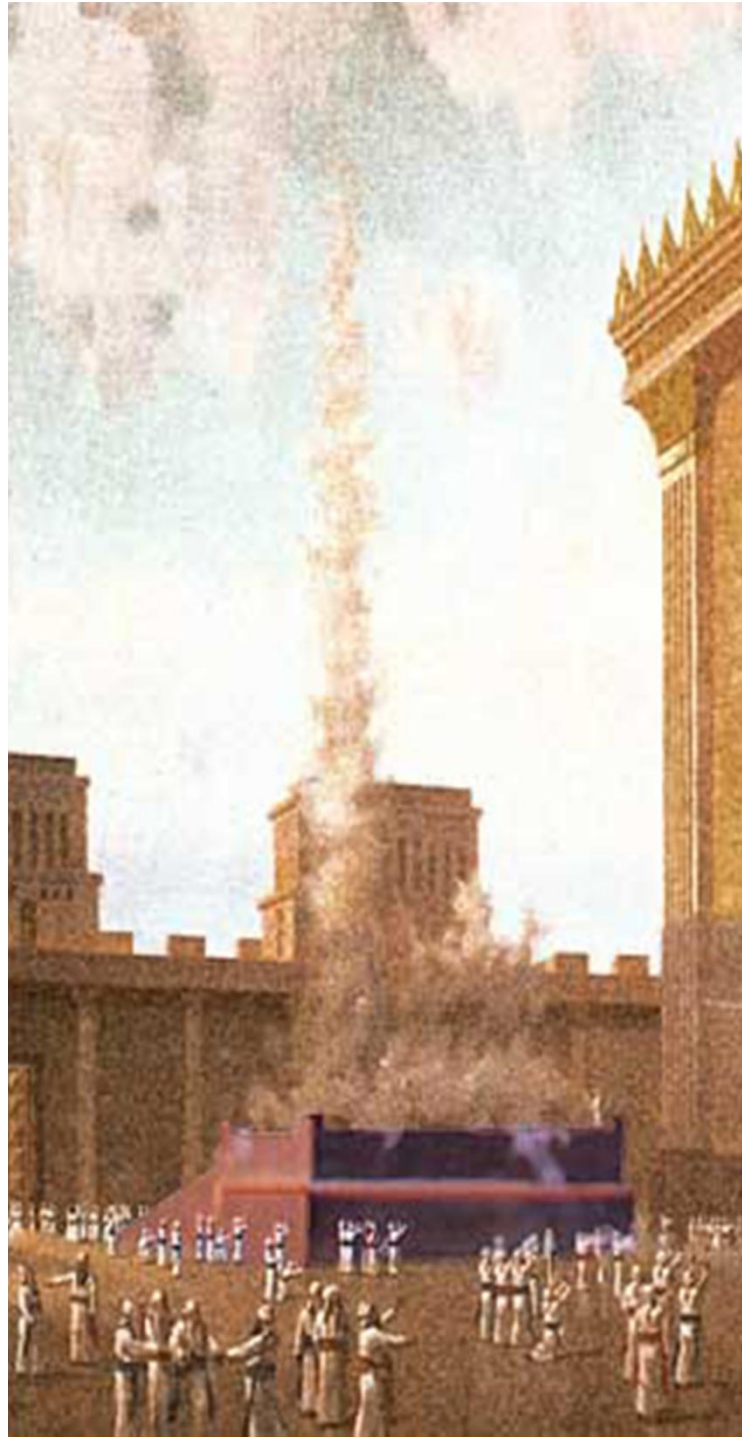
- † The Temple as the sole place of sacrificial worship was a strong sign of the Oneness of God
- † Darkness of the Tabernacle symbolizes the transcendent God's essential mystery
- † Helped the Jews to avoid the idol worship of pagans
- † Judaism, alone in the ancient world, remained monotheistic

Sacrificial Worship

Destroy entirely all the places where the nations you are to dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every green tree.

Tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, burn up their Asherahs, and chop down the idols of their gods, that you may destroy the very name of them from that place.

That is not how you are to act toward the Lord, your God. Instead, you shall seek out the place which the Lord, your God, chooses out of all your tribes and designates as His dwelling to put His name there [Deuteronomy 12:2-5].



Sacrificial Worship

- † Sacrifice is the essence of religious worship; for the Jews it was reserved for the Temple
- † During Passover thousands of sacrifices would be offered since Jews from the world over came to the one place of sacrifice
- † Any Jew, hearing Jesus' words at the Last Supper would know He, too, was talking about sacrifice



Between the porch and the altar let the priests weep, let the ministers of the Lord weep and say: "Spare your people, Lord" [Joel 2:17].

Sacrificial Priesthood

- † For a Jew during the time of the Temple, sacrifice meant the priesthood
- † Temple was the locus of the priesthood because it was the locus of sacrifice and *vice versa*
- † On every Sabbath the priests offered the Bread of the Covenant, which they consume in the "holy place"



But when Christ appeared...
He entered once for all into
the Holy Place, taking not
the blood of goats and
calves, but His own blood,
thus securing an eternal
redemption [Hebrews
9:11,12].

Sacrificial Priesthood

- † Once a year, on the day of atonement, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies
- † There he would sprinkle sacrificial blood which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people
- † This foreshadowed the high priesthood of Jesus



The High Priest enters
the Holy of Holies

God and Man

- † Another characteristic of the religion that stemmed from Sinai is the separation it fixed between God and man
- † The relationship enjoyed by the patriarchs is no more
- † God now dwells in the Holy of Holies, guarded by the threefold enclosure



God and Man

- † The threefold enclosure means separation.
- † Only Jews can enter the first enclosure after purifying themselves
- † The second is confined to the priesthood
- † And only the High Priest may enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year, filled with awe and reverence



They [the priests] shall teach my people to distinguish between sacred and profane and make known to them the difference between clean and unclean [Ezekiel 24:23].

God and Man

The Temple reflects the barrier placed between God and man, between the sacred and profane:

- † Demonstrates God's holiness and greatness, that He is OTHER
- † Draws attention to man's sinfulness, that the Law does not save, but that man needs a Redeemer
- † Prevents man from becoming sufficient to himself

Lord, I love the refuge of your house, the site of the dwelling-place of your glory [Psalm 26:8].

How lovely your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh cry out for the living God...Better one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. Better the threshold of the house of my God than a home in the tents of the wicked. [Psalm 84:2-3,11]

Love of the Temple

- † The Jews' love of the Temple is manifested often in the Psalms
- † Although these verses first related to the Temple, today we see them prophetically referring to the Church

One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: To dwell in the Lord's house all the days of my life, To gaze on the Lord's beauty, to visit His temple [Psalm 27:4].



Then Judas and his brothers said, "Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary^{*} and rededicate it" [1 Maccabees 4:36].

Temple Defiled

- † When the Greeks rule Israel they try to destroy Jewish culture, replacing it with Greek culture and its pagan religion
- † King Antiochus profanes the Temple and installs in it a pagan shrine
- † The people rebel with the goal of restoring proper worship (167 BC)

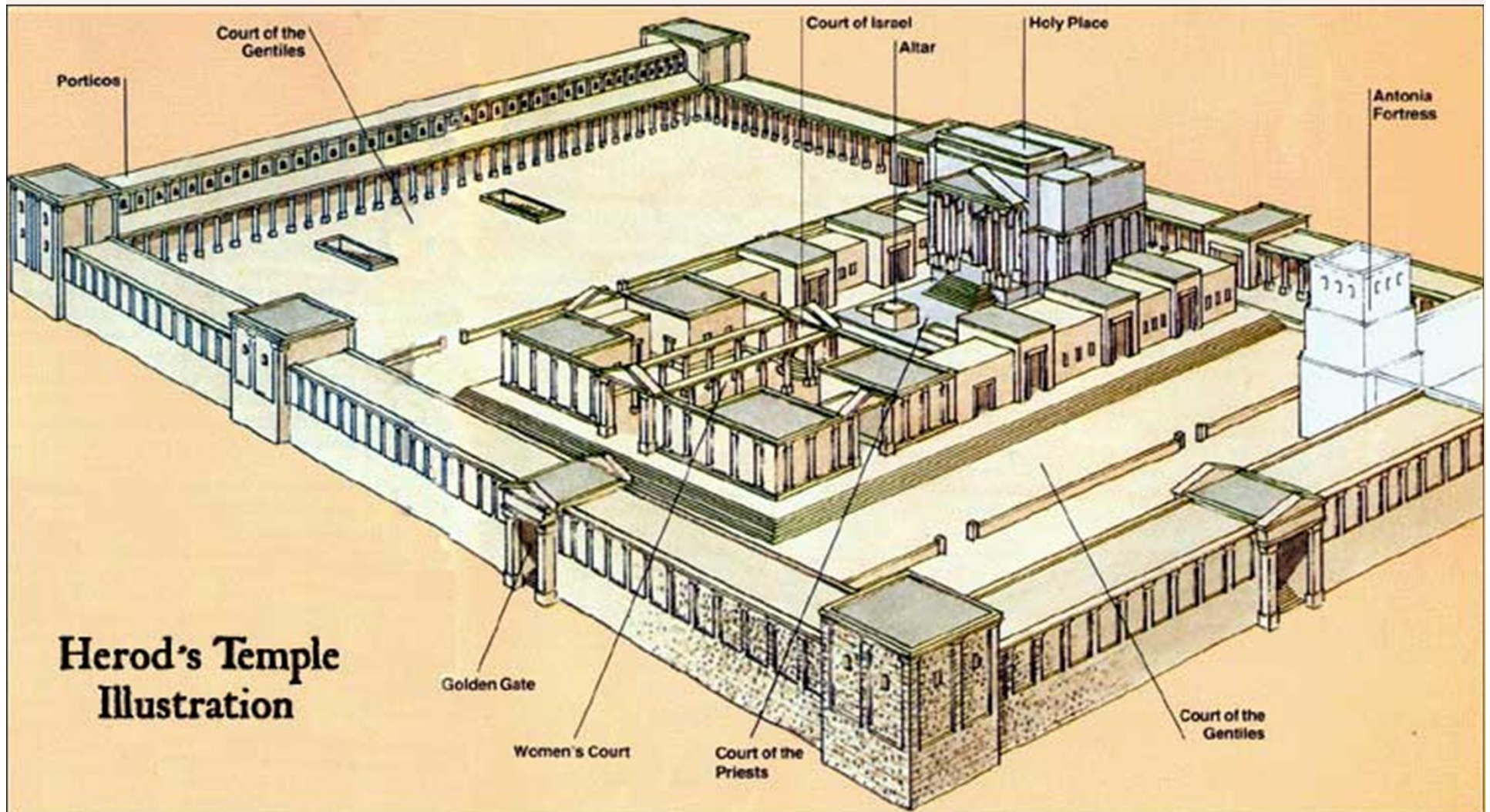


Herod's Temple -
destroyed in 70 AD

Herod's Temple

- † Herod the Great rebuilt the Jerusalem Temple, making it one of the wonders of the world
- † Construction started in 19 B.C. and continued until 64 A.D.
- † This was the Temple that Jesus visited and where He worshipped and taught

Herod's Temple





And behold, the curtain of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom [Matthew 27:51].

Sinai Sanctuary and the Temple

- † This revelation to Moses became an ideal pattern for the Temple(s) that followed
- † The essential fact, the Presence of God in the Temple, endures for over 1,000 years, from Moses at Sinai until the death of Jesus



You have bid me build a temple on your holy mountain and an altar in the city that is your dwelling place, a copy of the holy tabernacle which you had established from of old [Wisdom 9:8].

An Imperfect Temple

- ✚ Before the coming of Christ the Essenes (among others) broke with Temple worship – believed to be defiled by an illegitimate priesthood
- ✚ Essene community went into the desert and considered itself a spiritual Temple where God is adored worthily
- ✚ The signs are there: Temple, also a sign, is an imperfect image of the heavenly Temple – it will be replaced by a Reality⁴⁴