

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: A Mini-Series on The Temple (Lesson 1)

Scripture: Exodus 25

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: August 29th , 2004



PP 1-5

The Tabernacle

Exodus 25:1-9 (NASB) THEN the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. ³“And this is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, ⁴blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, ⁵rams’ skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, ⁶oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁷onyx stones and setting stones, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. ⁸“*And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.* ⁹“According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it

Introduction I always enjoy it when I hear about something that has been declared “cool” by some official, public organization, which *I had previously decided* already was “cool.” A case in point being that this week I read that some film critiquing organization declared that the best sci-fi film of all time is the 1982 film *Blade Runner* which I have always found to be a very interesting film (based on the 1968 book by Philip Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*)¹. So in hopes of this again, something which I already think is really, really “cool” and which I hope you too will ratify as “cool,” is the ancient Temple of God that was in Jerusalem. We are going to give a brief consideration to this topic, in taking a break from the exposition of Mark, for a few weeks. This ties into something the elders very much want to sell you on, which is the purpose statement for our church. The purpose statement which we adopted in 1992 says, “**The purpose of Dartmouth Bible Church is to honor God and one another through a balanced focus on worship, discipleship, fellowship and evangelism.**” We are also wondering if we should add a fifth focus, which would be the word “**ministry.**” A purpose statement is a good thing to have because it is a succinct encapsulation of *why we are here!* DBC isn’t here because it has always been here (the way the First Congregational Church of Middleboro can say, gathered in

¹THE BLADE RUNNER STORY: “By 2021, the World War had killed millions, driving entire species into extinction and sending mankind off-planet. Those who remained coveted any living creature, and for people who couldn’t afford one, companies built incredibly realistic simulacrae: horses, birds, cats, sheep. . . They even built humans. Emigrees to Mars received androids so sophisticated it was impossible to tell them from true men or women. Fearful of the havoc these artificial humans could wreak, the government banned them from Earth. But when androids didn’t want to be identified, they just blended in. Rick Deckard was an officially sanctioned bounty hunter whose job was to find rogue androids, and to retire them. But cornered, androids tended to fight back, with deadly results.” http://www.philipkdick.com/works_novels_androids.html

1696, I think) or the way a Catholic church might say. We are here for a specific reason, and with a deliberate history, of which even some that are here even remember the beginning! DBC is here to **honor God**, (which of course is through His Son, Whom we love and Who is the 'alpha and omega' of all that we do), to **honor one another** (because that is intimately connected to honoring God) and to do this honoring by means of **a balanced approach**, attack, engagement of four priorities (perhaps five): **worship, discipleship, fellowship and evangelism** (with perhaps ministry in there too). This little statement does not say ALL that we're about, but it lays out our purpose and why we exist. I want to study the ancient Temple, therefore, *as an aid to our pursuit of worship*, as one of the big reasons why 52 Morton Avenue is not just a field and a pond. We are driven by, motivated by, excited about, mystified by and compelled to worship. We derive meaning in adoration, awe and praise of the God who sent His Son to die for us to give us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We do not pass Him casually and say, "Yo, God."

- We stand before Him knowing that His ground is holy ground.
- We know He is a consuming fire.
- We know that before the foundations of the world, He chose us in Christ.
- We imagine being with Christ when He stood up in the boat and said to the rain squall on the Sea of Galilee, "Hush," and it did!
- We imagine being in the upper room, afraid, listening for the "cops" and the resurrected Jesus appearing out of nowhere and saying, "Fear Not."

We worship this God and this Savior. It's part of what we're about. We need to know more about worship, much more!

So we're going to do a little bit of thinking about the Temple in Jerusalem, which of course, is no longer there and has not been there for 1,934 years now. Only its foundation stones of the huge platform on which the Temple sat, remain, and most of them are underground.

PP 6,7

I think I have been fascinated with the concept of the Temple from my earliest days of learning about it. The notion of going to a place, where God is, amazes me. It fascinates me. Let me say at the very outset though that I am so glad, so overjoyed, that this is really quite irrelevant! We know that in Christ, our very individual bodies are now the temple of the Holy Spirit. We know that there is no one place, address, set of coordinates, and certainly not one church where God lives. So much do we know this, and love this, that we don't tend to call this building "the house of God" or "God's house." Some churches (strangely to me) use the word "Temple" or "Tabernacle" in their church name. But we know that those are really misnomers. God does not reside in this building or in any building large or small—not in the National Cathedral or in the little "tabernacle" in every Catholic church, nor in the icons of a Greek Orthodox church--any more than He does in any other building. The New Testament teaches that He lives in us, in Christians, in true Christians and that is how He chooses to dwell among men in this dispensation. We love that truth and that fact! So, this study of the

Temple is actually functionally irrelevant and misplaced, from a literal standpoint. As it is for Jews too, who still long for the Jerusalem Temple today! But in studying it, I am excited because somehow

- looking back on it steers me forward into the future! In the future we will be with the Lord, literally. I don't think conditions will be much like they were in the Old Testament period or around the ancient Temple (or, we should say, Temples, for there were four.) But still there will be a presence of the Lord that will be awesome.
- And, I think we can learn some things about the Lord Himself by studying the Temple, and ourselves, that will prove helpful. Our purpose as a church, in part, is to offer acceptable worship to the God who deserves it. Anything we can do, and any angle we can take to move us along in our understanding and practice of worship cannot but be profitable!

Now to start with, and since we're just going to be doing a brief look at all this, we need to consider the "pre-Temple," or rather, what is called "the tabernacle." It has its inception in Exodus 25 which is soon after the days when God brought His people out of Egyptian bondage and into the wilderness of the Sinai peninsula. You will notice in Exodus 25 that the idea is God's. In the first seven verses He details that the means of constructing a tabernacle will be by way of free-will contribution **from every man whose heart moves Him**. God said **raise a contribution for Me**. That is interesting. God looks at the heart and even then, He wanted His people to be moved with a longing for Him. To give tangibly out of that desire. And then God specified the building materials and the specific materials to used in the maintenance of the facility.

It was a large tent area and despite being very fancy, this structure was completely portable. Every time the Israelites moved their campsite in the wilderness, the tabernacle moved with them. Being portable, the tabernacle served as a symbol that God traveled with the Israelites. Moses went to the tabernacle to determine God's will for the people. Later, the temple (not a portable building) was constructed by King Solomon with the same basic layout as the tabernacle. The tabernacle was used daily **as the way the people related to God**. Incense and other things were offered up to God along with prayers and praises. God also established particular days such as the Day of Atonement when the people and the priests would perform special duties or make special sacrifices for God. The tabernacle became the center of the Israelite community while they were in the wilderness. Whenever they made camp, the camping place for each tribe was determined by the placement of the tabernacle. The Levites surrounded the tabernacle, and the families of Moses and Aaron always camped on the east side in front of the entrance. Even on the move, the tabernacle remained central, with six tribes preceding and six following.

PP 8-12

THE COURTYARD

The description of the tabernacle in the Bible begins with the inner room—the Most Holy Place. But when it came to constructing the tabernacle, the outer portions were built first. That is how we will describe the tabernacle—from the outside in. The biblical material on the tabernacle makes it clear that this was intended to be a very holy gathering place. All the materials used were rare and valuable, indicating that **anything associated with God was to be of the highest quality**. The frames were made of acacia wood that grows naturally in the Middle East. When the tabernacle was taken down to be moved, various families had specific jobs: the Kohathites transported the more sacred items, using the carrying poles (Numbers 4:1-20); the Gershonites dealt with all the soft furnishings, the altar of sacrifice, and its accessories (Numbers 4:21-28); and the Merarites carried the hard furnishings, such as the frames, bars, and bases (Numbers 4:29-33). The tabernacle was surrounded by a fenced courtyard 150 feet by 75 feet (Exodus 27:9-21). The fence frame was made of acacia wood overlaid with silver and resting on bases of bronze. Linen curtains 7 1/2 feet high covered this outer frame. They were hung on silver hooks from silver rods. The entrance, in the eastern face of the courtyard, was covered by a curtain embroidered in colors of blue, purple, and scarlet. This courtyard was the outermost part of the tabernacle and separated it from the Israelite clans that camped around it.

THE LAVER AND ALTAR

In this courtyard were the altar and laver, or wash basin. The altar stood immediately inside the courtyard. **Before sinful people could enter God's presence, they had to offer a sacrifice for their sins**. Of course, Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the sacrifice for the sins of everyone, so we can enter God's presence by being humble and asking forgiveness. But in Old Testament times, things—usually animals and grain—were offered up to God as a part of repentance for sin. This altar was designed for burning sacrifices. Seven feet square and four feet high, the altar was built of hollowed wood overlaid with bronze. That made it light enough, despite its size, to be carried on bronze—plated poles going through bronze rings at the corners (Exodus 27:1-8). A bronze grating was fitted in the middle of the altar to allow air to flow into the fire inside. Buckets for ash, meat hooks, basins for collecting blood, and fire pans were also made of bronze. At the corners of the altar were carved horns that were also overlaid with bronze. These horns may have been useful—to tie up animals about to be sacrificed—and they were also symbolic. For protection, a person in Israel could go to the altar and cling to the horns. In modern times, people who feel threatened still sometimes seek "sanctuary" in a church when they feel that there is no protection or justice for them anywhere else. Between the altar and the

inner tent of the tabernacle stood the laver, or washbasin (Exodus 30:17-21). By standing in front of the entrance to the inner tent, the washbasin could protect the inner portions of the tabernacle from being contaminated by dirt. God is holy, and he required that the priests must clean up before they begin ministering in the tent of the tabernacle. The washbasin was made of bronze and mirrors. Women who served at the entrance to the court of the tabernacle donated the mirrors. The bronze formed the pedestal and may have included a lower basin where the priests could wash their feet.

THE INNER TENT

CONSTRUCTION

The main part of the tabernacle was the tent that stood in the western end of the courtyard (Exodus 26:1-37). Like the courtyard perimeter, this structure was primarily created from acacia wood that held curtains. Even the roof was cloth over a frame. The wooden supports were 15 feet high and 2.5 feet wide, overlaid in gold, and anchored in bases of silver. Because the tabernacle had to be easy to disassemble and carry, scholars believe that instead of solid wooden walls these were wooden frames with cross pieces that would have made them look like ladders. Twenty of these frames were lined up on the north and south sides of the tent while six went across the end. Corner pieces completed the framework. Five bars stabilized these frames by passing through gold rings on each of the upright pieces. The central bar on each side extended the whole way, while the other four bars were shorter. Over this framework was placed several layers of cloth that formed the walls of the tent. The bottom layer was embroidered with cherubim in blue, purple, and scarlet. Two huge sections of cloth were attached to each other by fifty golden hooks and loops. Above this layer of beautiful cloth was a layer made of goat hair. This was the longest layer, so it overlapped everything underneath and provided extra protection from the weather. A layer of ram's skins dyed red was next, followed by a layer of goat skins. There were two other sets of curtains in this tent. One, called a screen, created a doorway at the eastern end. It was also woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread and hung from golden hooks on five posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and anchored in bronze bases. The final curtain divided the Holy Place (one portion of the tent sanctuary) from the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:33). This curtain was hung inside the tent so that the Most Holy Place would measure exactly 15 feet on all sides. This curtain, called a veil, was made of the same rich linen dyed blue, purple, and scarlet and embroidered with cherubim. This veil shielded the Most Holy Place and protected what was inside—the presence of God. **The temple in Jerusalem had a veil like this, too, and when Jesus was crucified it was torn apart by the natural disaster that accompanied Jesus' death. Access to God was no longer limited.**

FURNITURE IN THE TENT OF THE TABERNACLE

IN THE HOLY PLACE

The Holy Place was the first part of the inner tent of the tabernacle. The priests could enter here to carry out their daily routines on behalf of God's people. Inside the Holy Place were three special pieces of furniture.

THE TABLE OF THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE

This table was made of acacia wood overlaid in gold (Exodus 25:23-30). When the tabernacle was moved, the table could be transported with poles through golden rings at the corners. Golden plates and dishes, pitchers and bowls were placed on the top of the gold-rimmed table. These probably related to drink offerings. **Each Sabbath, twelve loaves of bread were to be placed on this table, symbolizing God's provision for the twelve tribes of Israel.**

THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND

This stand for oil lamps had seven branches—one in the middle and two on each side—to hold the lamps (Exodus 25:31-39). These burned only the purest olive oil, and the stand was hammered from 75 pounds of the purest gold. The branches of the lampstand were shaped like almond blossoms with buds and petals. The snuffers and trays for trimming and refilling the lamps were also made of pure gold. It is likely that the lamps were supposed to burn continuously.

INCENSE ALTAR

Incense was something that gave off an odor pleasing to God (Exodus 30:1-10). Incense also came to **symbolize** prayer, as it still does in many modern churches such as Episcopalian, Catholic, and Orthodox. Unlike the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard, this altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, not bronze, and it was not used for sacrifices. However, like the bronze altar, it had horns at each corner and rings and poles for carrying. On this altar the priest would burn incense every morning and evening, and every year on the Day of Atonement the horns would be anointed with oil.

IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE

ARK OF THE COVENANT

The ark was a wooden box, like a trunk, overlaid in pure gold (Exodus 25:10-16). It measured about 4 feet long by 2 feet wide and 2 feet high. The ark represented God's dealings with humanity—his relationship with the nation of Israel. An ark was a common bit of religious furniture at that time in the Middle East, but this ark was different. In most cases arks contained a statue of the deity being worshiped. In this case, the ark contained three items that showed how God related to his people: the tablets with the Ten Commandments (God's guidance), Aaron's rod that blossomed (God's authority), and a jar of manna (God's provision for daily needs). The ark was portable like everything else in the tabernacle. Long wooden poles covered with gold passed through gold rings at each lower corner. These poles were never to be removed, and so they probably stuck under the veil into the Holy Place. These might have served as a permanent reminder to the priests in the Holy Place that the presence of God was next door.

PLACE OF ATONEMENT

The place of atonement was on the cover of the ark (it is also translated "mercy seat"). It was the place where God was thought to "sit." This seat was really a slab of pure gold that rested on top of the ark (Exodus 25:17-22). Thus, **God and his mercy were above the Law** that rested inside the ark. Two cherubim rested on each side of the slab, facing inward. Each year on the Day of Atonement blood was sprinkled on the place of atonement on the cover of the ark showing how the blood of the sacrifice related to the mercy of God.

CONSTRUCTION AND CONSECRATION OF THE TABERNACLE

Fulfilling God's explicit instructions for building the tabernacle required skills beyond those of Moses and Aaron. Bezalel and Oholiab were the primary architects, along with many skilled experts, all of whom probably learned their crafts in Egypt (Exodus 31:1-11). Beyond skilled labor, however, the Israelites needed materials. Where in a desert do you find gold, bronze, and silver? The Israelites did not dig mines. In fact, the people themselves donated the materials—their gold and silver jewelry. **They gave so generously that they eventually had to be told to stop giving** (Exodus 36:6-7). Then all the items had been completed, every piece except the place of atonement on the cover of the ark and the cherubim was anointed with special oil and thus set aside for its particular function. The climax of this setting aside came when the glory of the Lord filled the inner tent (Exodus 40:34-38). He came to be present among his people, and thereafter the cloud by day and fire by night provided reassurance of his presence and guidance. The tabernacle was erected exactly one year after the

deliverance from Egypt and a mere nine months after receipt of the Ten Commandments.²

PP 13,14

LESSONS:

1. God prescribed the tabernacle but He did not do so for a Temple. That is one of the interesting aspects of this. He intended to dwell among His people and to make His presence obvious. That presence was portable. But it was the heart of man that came up with a permanent building. God allowed it, as we shall see.
2. Details were important. From the materials to the order of tribes set in place, to the procedures for worship—all was taken very seriously by the Lord. And this, His people were told to follow specific directions... Although let me say here that in Christ, NOW, as Christians we are not bound by the details of worship of that time...

Colossians 2:16,17 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—¹⁷ things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Hebrews 8:4,5 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.”

But the details of worship that the New Testament specifies are very important to us. There is no room for sloppiness or carelessness or frivolity in the worship of God. There is grace, always grace. There is liberty on style I think. And there is room and even need for creativity. But there is no room for silliness, triviality or foolishness in the worship of the Living God, whatever dispensation we are living in...

3. Symbolism was important in the earliest days of the worship of Jehovah (i.e. the incense altar, the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, etc.) For us today it still is, although evangelicals tend to shy away from symbolism. But we have the Lord's table and baptism which are symbolic. Many wear crosses and we have a few crosses in this building. The music we sing can be very emblematic of deeper things. People respond to symbols sometimes, and we should probably not be anti-symbolic so much.
4. The altar and the wash basin (laver) spoke a huge message! People cannot enter near to the presence of God without a sacrifice for sins and the same is true now. Sinfulness must be atoned for. Our entry into the holy place,

² Material taken from *iLumina* Encyclopedia, Tyndale House Publishers, 2002.

is by means of the shed blood of God's *own* sacrifice, that of His Son. How conscious of this are you when you pray, when you worship with your brothers and sisters, when you participate in the Lord's table? To get close to God, nowhere does God say "be sure you sing a song first and do it with emotion." Nowhere does God say, in order to get in my presence you need to be a good person and deserve it." But a sacrifice must go before us every time we want to get near to Him, and in Christ there is that ever-present sacrifice.

5. God's abiding and real presence had meaning. It protected them, provided for them, guided them, helped them keep perspective. He did not show up some days and leave them unattended other days. The cloud and the pillar of fire made His presence visible every day and every night. This is a lesson for us too. Over and over again in the Bible the Lord tells us He will never leave us or forsake us. His presence now, is pledged by the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of us. We do well to learn how to discern His leading. There is no cloud or pillar of fire at the moment, but there is the still, quiet voice of the Spirit, the filling of Him, the fruits of Christlike character that He produces in us, and the warmth of good fellowship that happens between us that unbelievers know NOTHING about. His presence in your life is the most precious thing you have!
6. The people were intimately involved in the building of the tabernacle, its maintenance and the integrity of worship. God took THEM very seriously. The Levites were not the only ones involved. The people knew their very identity was connected to their worship.
7. God did not give a tabernacle to every nation on earth. He chose His own people, as He decreed. He dwelt among the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He dwells where He will. He chose them, an unlikely group of people. But whom He chooses are the apple of His eye. They are the very bride that He loves. Sometimes modern ethical theology says, "God must treat all people the same and if He blesses one group here, He is obligated to treat all people with the same privilege. Well, He does not do that. He blesses whom He chooses to bless, and always in complete righteousness. NO ONE deserves a tabernacle but any can come towards it, if they have faith in the sacrifice that He provides.

We are only getting started in this study of the Temple. The tabernacle started under Moses' administration and was used for several hundred years. Then King David thought up the idea of a permanent Temple. His Son Solomon built the first one and much history swirled around it. We will look at it in the weeks to come.

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: A Mini-Series on The Temple (Lesson 2)

Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: September 5th, 2004

PP 1

The Temple of Yhwh יהוה Built Under Solomon

2 Samuel 7:1-17 (NASB)

¹Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, ²that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains." ³And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you." ⁴But it came about in the same night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁵"Go and say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?"' ⁶"For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle. ⁷"Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'" ⁸"Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be ruler over My people Israel. ⁹"And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. ¹⁰"I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, ¹¹even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. ¹²"When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³"He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴"I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶"And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.'" ¹⁷In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

PP 2

Introduction If you know about the cross of Jesus Christ, and you are trusting in it for your salvation, but you know nothing about the town in which the cross happened, nor about the Temple that was there—that's sort of like knowing the final score of a Super Bowl game in which your team won by a heavy margin. But you didn't get to see the game... (My personal favorite was 1988—Denver 10, Washington 42!). The story of redemption, of *our* salvation doesn't begin in 30 A.D. It begins back with Abraham.

The Story, in a Nutshell

The story goes like this: Abraham lives in what is now Iraq. God calls him (while his name is still Abram), and his family, to leave Iraq and move to Israel (which, of course, isn't called Israel yet). God made a promise to Abram—and renamed him Abraham—that he and his ancestors would be blessed beyond imagination. It would be through this one, a man from Ur—this ancient Iraqi, one might say—that the rescue from sin for all the planet, would unfold. From him came a son named Isaac and from Isaac a son named Jacob (who also got renamed to “Israel”). These were not Americans. They were not northern Europeans. This did not speak English and they had virtually no technology. Their community grew and made its way to ancient Egypt. There, they became enslaved and then were subsequently rescued by God Himself. God's agent was now a man named Moses, and to him God now gave His law for these people, His chosen people. For various reasons the people would wander in the Sinai wilderness, from campsite to campsite for 40 years. In that time, and even after when they DID settle in that sliver of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, God condescended to dwell in their midst in a special tent. It was not an ordinary tent, but one made to HIS specifications. And worshipping God, by His people, was enjoyed and carefully policed, usually, for generations. They had ups and downs. They drifted into carnality, but God would bring them back. Their affairs were governed by judges, a system invented also by God. Then one day, they said to Samuel, a prophet, a mouthpiece of God in their midst, “We want a king, like all the other nations have.” God said, “You have me.” “Yes, we understand that. But we want a human king too like all the nations have.” So God gave them one. His name was Saul. Saul is one of the most enigmatic people in the whole of the history of God's people. He falls. He falls into self-focus and is killed. Their second king is also a man whom God chose, an unlikely sheep-technician. His name was David son of Jesse. In this man, also not perfect but basically with a heart for God, God declared that His grand plan of redemption would focus, that Israel's MAIN deliverer would be through this man David's bloodline and in fact would occupy a ROYAL place, in the line of David. One day David decided that since he, king of Israel, had a nice house, that it somehow seemed inappropriate for God to dwell in a tent. He wanted God to have a magnificent house too. If we look at 2 Samuel 7 we see some interesting things about this idea of a Temple...

1. King David's (the original architect) initial feelings: felt bad that he was living in a nice house but the ark of the covenant stayed in a tent.
2. Nathan the prophet is the go-between between God and David.
3. God reasons, “I never asked you for a temple.”
4. In God's view, the significant thing is His gracious covenant with David, his son and the nation of Israel.

PP 3

5. Solomon will build the "house" for God's name, even though he will require discipline.
6. God's loyal love is not quenchable.

PP 4,5

An Insignificant Piece of Architecture

Outside of church, if you were asked to think of the great buildings of the world, what buildings would be on your "top ten" list? Wouldn't your "top ten" list include structures like the great pyramids of Egypt, the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame Cathedral, the Taj Mahal, the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (88 stories, 1,483 feet), the United States Capital Building or the Washington Monument, one or more of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs, St. Paul's Cathedral or Buckingham Palace in London. Few would think of the Temple of Yhwh (Jehovah) in Jerusalem, built by King Solomon in 966-959 B.C. It wasn't very big—about 100 feet by 30 feet by 45 feet. And yet that is a building that God himself dwelt inside of... The God of the universe manifested His presence, literally, inside of *that* building. | The Coliseum in Rome has stood for almost 2,000 years. The pyramids in Egypt for over 4,600 years. There are countless castles in Europe as old as 1,000 years. The Great Wall of China is 1,500 miles long and dates in present form from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The Temple of Yhwh in Jerusalem was there from 959-686 B.C. when the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it. That's only 273 years (or the equivalent now, of a building now that was built in 1731). Not very enduring!

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PP 9,10

Let me point out at this point that in the Bible there are four literal Temple buildings mentioned.

- 1) There is this Temple, the first whose construction was overseen by Israel's third king, Solomon (c. 966-959 B.C.).
- 2) There was the rebuilt temple which was dedicated in 515 B.C. under Zerubbabel (which we read about in the Book of Ezra.) Little is known about what this building looked like, although historians assume that it resembled the first in some ways. This one, though launched in contradictory and difficult circumstances, lasted 500 years, although it is looted under the Greeks in the second century.
- 3) By the time of the year "0," King Herod is on the scene who rebuilds the whole thing. It is bigger and more wonderful than either the original or the rebuilt one, but it is clearly empty of the presence of God. This is the Temple that the Romans destroyed thoroughly in 70 A.D.
- 4) The fourth Temple in the Bible is one of which Ezekiel saw a vision of and which he wrote about in Ezekiel 40-48. This picture is taken by Christians today as either metaphorical of the New Testament idea of Christians becoming God's new temple--the ideal worship which Christians would eventually develop and experience (although I don't think we're there yet) OR a rebuilt Temple during the Millennial reign of Christ. If that is the case, in which somehow worship would be carried

on in memorial fashion looking back upon the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Over the stretch of maybe fourteen centuries of time, God receives worship and blesses it, out of a tent and then a relatively small building. I believe that for most of those centuries, the later ones, His glory had departed but still that was the place to worship God. They did not have the Holy Spirit, in the way we do. They had no personal Bibles and there were times when the Word of God was even pretty much forgotten. Then Jesus walks into history. In John 2 (13-22) we read how He looks at Herod's magnificent building and the commerce and business that worship had degenerated into

PP 11

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.¹⁵ And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables;¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise."¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR THY HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."¹⁸ The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?"¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."²⁰ The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.²² When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

PP 12

The time of temple worship had passed. Now, God's people would worship in a less visible but more deeply spiritual way. Jesus had that powerful conversation with the Samaritan woman and in that conversation had said,

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.²⁴ "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23,24).

People would start to worship Him without even being Jews. People would come in large numbers from completely pagan backgrounds, NOT from a religious upbringing, and would rejoice in the Gospel of grace in Jesus Christ. The Church is launched, and worship is a whole new thing! At this point, let me quote something Rick Warren wrote:

PP 13

If you are seeking an *experience* of [God's] presence...you have missed the point. We don't praise God to feel good, but to *do* good. Our goal is not a feeling but a

continual awareness of the reality that God is always present. That is the lifestyle of worship.¹

PP 14

The original Temple was active daily. It was routine for sacrifices to be made and people brought sacrificial animals. Sometimes there were extraordinary events at the Temple like the Day of Atonement once per year. But I fear it became mundane and *too* routine by Jesus' day.

We remember BACK to the day of total atonement when Jesus died for us and then rose from the dead. It never gets old. But our sense of worship can slip away and our love for really sensing His presence among us. We must become students I think, of worship. And I hope I will still be studying it when I am old! He is worthy to be sought after. He is so giving and forgiving. There is not end to His excellencies. May we be seekers, driven by the need to get more and more awareness of who He is and how He is working among us, and how much He wants to fill us with His Spirit and work His purposes out in our lives. I hope you want Him! I hope you are hungry for Him. I hope you will not rest until your life is fully turned over for His glory.

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren, pp.89,90

Dartmouth Bible Notes

Notes from the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: A Mini-Series on The Temple (Lesson 3)

Scripture: Ezra 3:8-13

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.

Date: September 12th, 2004

PP 1

A Strange Joy

Introduction As far as this message is concerned, it isn't going to give you a simple, step-by-step look at how to live for Christ. A simple formula might be 1. Seek the Lord; 2. Believe the Lord; 3. Obey the Lord; 4. Wait on the Lord. That's about all you really need to know... But this message isn't going to be like that, I am afraid. I am lost in wonder more and more at some of the strange things that happen in the Christian life and some of the experiences we have that don't fit into little neat and clean packages and formulas.

Preachers will often speak simplistically, of the peaks and valleys when they talk about the spiritual life. We tend to focus on the highs or the lows.

- We like to describe the joy and clear thinking of being on the "mountain top," or
- we like to blast away at the tragedy and contradiction or foolishness of how the sheep sometimes wander into "the slime-pits sin wallow in the depths of debauchery" (as I heard a former pastor of mine describe the valley).

But today let me ask you, have you ever been in a spiritual funk? I don't mean open sin and rebellion; I mean a much more subtle state--that state

- where you "care" about spiritual things and you "like" the things of God well enough, and
- you "remember" all the right stuff, but you have gotten consumed with your own matters and business;
- you have gradually just sort of slipped into a spiritual funk, boredom, disinterest in whatever spiritual tasks you *used* to get pleasure in.

Have you ever experienced that? In the Bible a man named Zerubbabel¹ had drifted into such a "funk." Here's an interesting guy and a fellow who was a

¹ **ZERUB' BABEL** (born at Babel, i.e., *Babylon*), the head of the tribe of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity in the first year of Cyrus. The history of Zerubbabel in the Scriptures is as follows: In the first year of Cyrus he was living at Babylon, and was the recognized prince of Judah in the captivity—what in later times was called "the prince of the captivity," or "the prince." On the issuing of Cyrus' decree he immediately availed himself of it, and placed himself at the head of those of his countrymen "whose spirit God had raised to go up to build the house of the

second generation immigrant—not born in the homeland of his ancestors (Israel), but born to Jewish parents who had been deported to Babylon after they had conquered Israel. In fact his name means “born at Babel, or at Babylon.” He was living still in Babylon and had a proud ethnic heritage and was head of the tribe of Judah-in-exile. He got appointed by the Persian king CYRUS to go back to Jerusalem and be governor. In Ezra 1 we read the incredible decree of Cyrus, which brings together predictions by each of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel that Israel would be disciplined by God, in exile in Babylon, for 70 years, but would be restored.

PP 2,3

Ezra 1:1-4

¹ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, ² “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³ ‘Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴ ‘And every survivor, at

Lord which is in Jerusalem.” It is probable that he was in the king of Babylon’s service, both from his having, like Daniel and the three children, received a Chaldee name, Sheshbazzar, and from the fact that he was appointed by the Persian king to the office of governor of Judea. On arriving at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel’s great work, which he set about immediately, was the rebuilding of the temple. In the second month of the second year of the return, the foundation was laid with all the pomp which could be commanded. The efforts of the Samaritans were successful in putting a stop to the work during the seven remaining years of the reign of Cyrus and through the eight years of Cambyses and Smerdis. Nor does Zerubbabel appear quite blameless for this long delay. *The difficulties in the way of building the temple were not such as need have stopped the work; and during this long suspension of sixteen years Zerubbabel and the rest of the people had been busy in building costly houses for themselves.* But in the second year of Darius light dawned upon the darkness of the colony from Babylon. In that year—it was the most memorable event in Zerubbabel’s life—the spirit of prophecy suddenly blazed up with a most brilliant light among the returned captives. Their words fell like sparks upon tinder. *In a moment Zerubbabel, roused from his apathy, threw his whole strength into the work.* After much opposition and many hindrances and delays, the temple was at length finished, in the sixth year of Darius, and was dedicated with much pomp and rejoicing. The only other works of Zerubbabel of which we learn from Scripture are the restoration of the courses of priests and Levites and of the provision for their maintenance, according to the institution of David, Ezra 6:18; Neh. 12:47; the registering the returned captives according to their genealogies, Neh. 7:5; and the keeping of a Passover in the seventh year of Darius, with which last event ends all that we know of the life of Zerubbabel. His apocryphal history is told in 1 Esdr. 3–7. The exact parentage of Zerubbabel is a little obscure, from his being always called the son of Shealtiel, Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2, etc.; Hag. 1:1, 12, 14, etc., and appearing as such in the genealogies of Christ, Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27; whereas in 1 Chron. 3:19 he is represented as the son of Pedaiah, Shealtiel or Salathiel’s brother, and consequently as Salathiel’s nephew. Zerubbabel was the legal successor and heir of Jeconiah’s royal estate, the grandson of Neri and the lineal descendant of Nathan the son of David. In the New Testament the name appears in the Greek form of Zorobabel. *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*; Libronix Digital Library System, Logos, 2003.

whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.”

Isaiah 44:28

“*It is I* who says of Cyrus, ‘*He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.*’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘*She will be built,*’ And of the temple, ‘*Your foundation will be laid.*’”

PP 4

Jeremiah 25:11

‘And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

¹⁰“For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. ¹¹‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ¹²‘Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³‘And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴‘And I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

PP 5,6

Daniel 9:2

in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years.

They again start to re-build the Temple of Jehovah but then get involved and very busy with building costly homes for themselves. And so the Temple project goes on hold... But after years of this, in a moment Zerubbabel, roused from his apathetic funk all of a sudden throws his whole strength into the work. When “the spirit of prophecy suddenly blazed up with a most brilliant light among the returned captives. Their words fell like sparks upon tinder. The people needed several months of preparations before actual construction began on the site at the end of April 536 B.C. (Let me correct myself from last week when I mistakenly said Jerusalem was sacked in 686 B.C. It was 586 B.C.) It commenced about 70 years after the first group of exiles had departed for Babylon in 605 B.C. Extensive foundation repair work was necessary because the temple stood on a hilltop.² After much opposition and many hindrances and delays, the temple was at length finished, in the sixth year of Darius, and was dedicated with much pomp and rejoicing.”

Now in the passage we began with today—and I wish for you to see something in this passage--

Ezra 3:8-13 (NASB)

⁸ Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem in the second month [Apr./May 536 B.C.], Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all who came from the captivity to Jerusalem, began *the work* and appointed the Levites from twenty years and older to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. ⁹ Then Jeshua *with* his sons and brothers stood united *with* Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah *and* the sons of Henadad *with* their sons and brothers the Levites, to oversee the workmen in the temple of God. ¹⁰ Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel. ¹¹ And they sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, *saying*, "For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. ¹² Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' *households*, the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy; ¹³ so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away.

What do they sing about? 3:¹¹ And they sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, *saying*, "For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever." The Lord's goodness and His love are what they sing about. We have no record that they were singing about this in the years when they were there, but in that funk. I think praise music becomes dull and routine if the people singing it are not excited about God's goodness and love. Sure, maybe they HAD Sabbath-go-meeting clothes ("apparel") and trumpets and cymbals. But when the foundation was laid (vs.11), they SHOUTED WITH A GREAT SHOUT... In Verse 12 it is some of the old people, who remembered Solomon's original temple and the presence of God. They were moved to tears. They saw the foundation going in and they were overwhelmed with joy. I can relate to that feeling. When I saw the foundation of this building going in, I realized, "It's really going to happen!" After a wait, well, not of 70 years but of 16 years, it was very joyful." For me as for those priests and Levites in 536 B.C. it wasn't the building itself. It was what it represented. This is a place dedicated unto the Lord. It isn't a dual-purpose building, like a school or a store. It is a NEW place for the kingdom alone! It will be His place. I am sure, at that moment at least, that the priests and Levites weren't imagining their own little kingdom any more than I was. But there was joy at how the Lord might be honored in His place.

Verse 13 is a strange and wonderful verse. ¹³ so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away. Why were they so happy, do you think? "The first temple had been destroyed 50 years earlier. The old men, who would have been about 60 years or older, knew that this second temple did not begin to match the splendor of

PP
7-11

Solomon's temple **nor did the presence of God reside within it** (cf. Hag. 2:1-43; Zech. 4:9, 10⁴). The nation was small and weak, the temple smaller and less beautiful by far. There were no riches as in David and Solomon's days. The ark was gone. But most disappointing was the absence of God's Shekinah glory. Thus the weeping, shouted ... for joy. For those who did not have a point of comparison, this was a great moment. Possibly Ps. 126 was written and sung for this occasion."⁵

PP 12

Psalm 126

¹ *A Song of Ascents.* WHEN the LORD brought back the captive ones of Zion, We were like those who dream. ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with joyful shouting; Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." ³ The LORD has done great things for us; We are glad. ⁴ Restore our captivity, O LORD, As the streams in the South. ⁵ Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. ⁶ He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying *his* bag of seed, Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves *with* him.

This is an interesting thing. On the one hand some are overjoyed at the moment. "We're going to get a new Temple!" Thus the shouts of joy. On the other hand "The glory is gone. God is not here like He once was." Thus the weeping by others. What a strange day it was!!!

Principles of praise to be gleaned from these verses include the following:

- (1) Praise is the act of publicly exalting God's person and work.
- (2) Praise can be enhanced through the use of music and songs.
- (3) Praise is a participating activity, not a spectator sport; it is worship people join in, not a program people watch. Praise involves God's people in singing and playing, boasting and testifying to the greatness and goodness of the Lord!⁶

So much for Israel centered on the place of worship, the Temple—even when there *wasn't* a Temple or just an empty one. It meant everything to them.

³ON the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet saying, ² "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, ³ "Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? ⁴ "But now take courage, Zerubbabel," declares the LORD, "take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage," declares the LORD, "and work; for I am with you," says the LORD of hosts.

⁴ "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish *it*. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you."¹⁰ "For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—*these are* the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

⁵MacArthur, John Jr. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed., Ezr 3:12. Nashville: Word Pub., c1997.

⁶Tom Constable. *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*, Ezr 3:10. Galaxie Software, 2003.

This is strange for us because we do not associate the presence of God with a building. But this is really a great point—its not about a place. We carry the presence of God WITH us. We can praise Him with every bit of “realness” today, in the Spirit, as any Old Testament saint did with the Temple. Do you look at worship that way? You can offer honor and thanksgiving and praise to the Lord in your car, in your basement, out for a walk AND in this church. It isn’t about a Temple or a place because WE are the Temple. The Spirit resides inside of us just as real as the glory dwelt in the holy of holies in Solomon’s Temple.

I’m fascinated with the Temple mainly perhaps because it is no more. I am interested in how they worshipped, and what happened to them—inside their hearts that would allow them to keep doing Temple worship and yet wander so far from the Lord. So far, that they earned a 70 year exile of discipline.

PP 13

It’s not about a Temple and its not really about us feeling this way or that way. It’s about Him and His glory and honor. It re-calibrates and humbles me to study the Temple. People took it very seriously. Even the pagan generals, when they invaded Jerusalem made a point to attack the Temple because they realized it was important.

Worship is a main part of our purpose. We study it from the New Testament standpoint but we don’t ignore worship from the days of the Old Testament. There is much to learn there too. I encourage you to read your Old Testament prayerfully and to ask the Lord to teach you things about Him from those pages. It is the same God, Old or New Testament. And the two Testaments are intertwined together. The New is in the Old, concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed.