



# KING'S CHAPEL

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## Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 2 - Day 5 - The Temple

### Approaching God

**Read Psalm 84:1-4** - *How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.*

As you begin your time with the Lord today, consider this love poem from the psalmist in Psalm 84. The psalmist finds the very courts of the temple to be beautiful, not for their architectural virtues but because God is there. He is fully aware that all of his heart's deepest longings will be satisfied not by belief in some remote, impersonal divine force but only by a *living* God. Start today by asking the Lord to help you live your whole life near to him, to build your "house" near his altar. Ask him to show you what that may entail, and to give you enough love and grace to do it. Pray that he would give you the strength to live life near to God.

### Theme Study: The Temple

**1 Peter 2:4-5** - *"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..."*

Yesterday we studied 1 Peter 2:4-8, where Peter referred to Jesus as a "living stone," and then began to describe his followers as living stones themselves and part of a new spiritual house ("oikos" - in the greek). The word "house" is often used to refer to God's house, the Jerusalem temple (1 Kings 5:5, Isa. 56:7, Matt 12:4, 21:13, John 2:16). What Peter clearly has in mind as he is describing these living stones is the temple of God, and therefore he is encouraging Christians to think of themselves as the *living stones* of God's new temple. But this imagery and its implications can easily be lost on us today. With this in mind, today's study is meant to help us understand the Temple theme throughout scripture and how it connects with Peter's instructions in chapter 2. Take some time to think through and meditate today on the what it means that God is calling us to be apart of his new and holy temple!

### Watch: The Bible Project Video on The Temple - 4 mins 40 seconds

#### **[Click Here to Start the Video](#)**

In this video, explore how Israel's temple in the Bible is described as the place where God's space and humanity's space are one. In fact, the whole biblical drama can be told as a story about God's temple. In the opening pages of Genesis, God creates a cosmic temple, and in the person of Jesus, God takes up personal residence in his temple-world. By the end of the biblical story, all of creation has become God's sacred temple.

## Read: The Temple

### **The temple is a place where heaven and earth meet.**

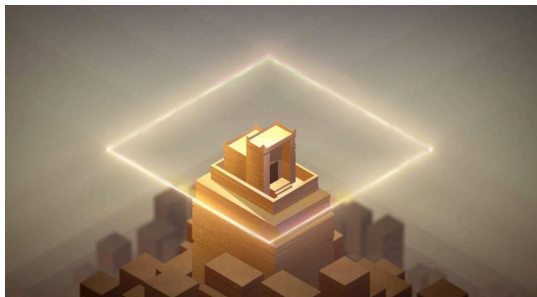
The ancient Israelite temple was a gigantic symbol that visualized God's desire to live together with his human creatures and rule the world through them.

If you were to ask any ancient Israelite to tell you the most important place on earth, you would get a clear and consistent answer: the temple in Jerusalem. It's the place where heaven and earth meet, where the creator God has chosen to take up residence among his people. It's a sacred place where Israel's priestly representatives enter into God's presence on their behalf to express thanks, confession, and praise. This building attracted Israelite pilgrims for centuries and was a cornerstone of their covenant relationship with God.



### **Was the temple just a building?**

But this amazing building did even more. It told a story through its visual symbolism, a story that reaches back to the beginning of humanity's story as told in Genesis chs. 1-3. There God appoints humanity as his royal and priestly representatives to rule the world on his behalf. And when the biblical authors start describing creation and the garden of Eden, any ancient Israelite reader would have understood these as temple images.



The seven-day sequence of creation in Genesis 1 outlines the daily, weekly, and monthly calendar of temple worship for the Israelites. And the garden of Eden is described with imagery that anticipates the gold, jewels, angels, and garden symbolism that permeated the temple. Eden was where God commissioned humanity to rule the world, and it's where humans rebelled and did what was right in their own eyes.

This resulted in humanity's exile from God's presence, estrangement from one another, and from creation itself. But in the biblical story God isn't giving up on humanity. He chooses one family out of the nations and eventually comes to take up residence in their midst, first in a mobile-temple structure called the Tabernacle, and later in the temple of Jerusalem. These spaces were designed as micro-Edens, and the priests who worked inside were symbolic representatives of Adam and Eve. The temple was a sacred re-enactment of humanity's return to the garden, to live together with God in peace. In this way, the temple was a prophetic symbol that pointed forward to the day when not just a select few priests, but everyone could enter into the divine presence in a renewed creation.

### **The Temple During Exile**

But it didn't last. The biblical books of Joshua through 2 Kings tell the story of how Israel entered into the Promised Land, rebelled against their God, and dishonored the temple in Jerusalem. And

so, after centuries of patient waiting, God handed Israel and its temple over to the imperial powers of Assyria and Babylon, who plundered and destroyed the temple and exiled Israel far from their homeland. Israel replayed the rebellion of Adam and Eve and suffered a similar result. And even though many Israelites eventually returned back to Jerusalem and rebuilt a smaller temple, the Israelites never experienced God's presence there in the same way. This is why the biblical prophets spoke of a future temple when Israel's God would return and take up residence once more among his people.

### **Jesus as the New Temple**

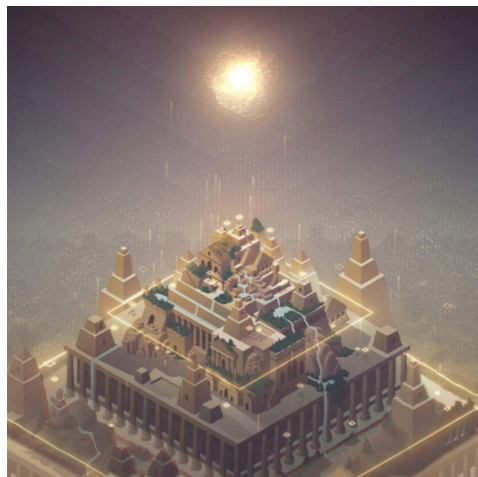
All of this is crucial for understanding the story of Jesus. The Gospel of John opens by telling us that Jesus of Nazareth was the glorious temple presence of Israel's God embodied as a human being. "The Word became flesh and pitched a tent among us, and we saw his glory" (John 1:14).

With these words, Jesus is described as the Tabernacle, as the divine temple glory that has become human. The claim is that Jesus is the ultimate reality to which the temple pointed all along. In fact, Jesus said that he was "one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:6) It's in Jesus that heaven and earth—God and humanity—have become one. Jesus was claiming to be the true royal-priest, the human who would partner with God and rule creation. Jesus is a human temple.



### **The Renewed Temple**

And this has huge significance for his followers. When the Holy Spirit came to take up residence among Jesus' followers at Pentecost, God's fiery appearance recalls when he came to dwell in the Jerusalem temple (see 1 Kings 8 and Acts 2). This also helps us understand why Jesus' earliest followers described themselves as human temples. After Pentecost, when God's fire came to dwell within his followers, the good news spread throughout the ancient world. Communities of people sprung up where God could rest and rule. Some of the New Testament authors picked up on the deeper meaning behind this, describing the vision of the church as a temple. It was no longer a building, but people! The apostle Peter called Jesus' people "living stones who are built up as a spiritual temple as a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus the Messiah" (1 Peter 2:5). Through Jesus, humanity is invited to reclaim their original calling, to rule the world together in partnership with God.



This is what we see on the last page of the Bible, where all creation is renewed, and heaven and earth come together in a new garden-city (see Revelation chs. 21-22). We're told that there is no temple building there (Revelation 21:22) because God himself is the temple, and his people can now live and rule directly in his presence.

## Daily Study Questions

### Questions for Study

- What was the most significant takeaway from today's study? What 1 or 2 things stood out to you about the Temple of God?
- How do you experience the Holy Spirit purifying you on a daily basis?
- What does it mean that we are collectively God's temple? How does this change the way you think about the church, both locally and globally?
- Paul challenged early Christians to behave in a way that honored their inner temple. What things in your life are not consistent with the sacred task of being God's temple?

### Close in Prayer:

- How can I rejoice today in light of what I learned today?
- What do I need to repent of today in light of this study on God's Temple?
- What requests do I need to make today in light of being part of God's Living Temple?