

TEMPLES

Text: Acts 17:24-25

INTRO: The Oxford Am. Dict. defines the English word temple: "a building dedicated to the presence or service of a god or gods." There are 2 Heb. words in the O.T. & 3 Greek words in the N.T. sometimes translated "temple." Both O.T. words are used to designate both the temple of Solomon & the tabernacle of Moses which preceded it. They are also used to describe temples dedicated to idols. Both Heb words have other meanings or shades of meaning that we will not be concerned with in this lesson.

The 3 N.T. words translated temple basically correspond to the same general uses as the O.T. words--the tabernacle, the temple, and idolatrous temples.

I. HEATHENS BUILT TEMPLES TO HOUSE THEIR MAN-MADE GODS.

...What have you to do with Me, O Tyre & Sidon... You have taken My silver & My gold, & have carried into your temples My prized possessions. (Joel 3:4-5).

[Demetrius:] "Not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised & her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia & the world worship." (Acts 19:27).

II. GOD GAVE MOSES A PATTERN FOR THE TABERNACLE. READ EXODUS 25:9; 26:30

- A. The tabernacle was called a temple in 1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3, etc. NKJ has "tabernacle," but KJV & ASV are more literal
- B. God's glory dwelt in the tabernacle. READ EX. 29:43-46.

III. DAVID WANTED TO CONSTRUCT FOR GOD A MORE PERMANENT DWELLING--A PALACE OR MANSION.

READ 2 SAMUEL 7:1-6

- A. David was not permitted to build the temple because of the

blood he had shed, but God gave him a pattern to pass along to his son, Solomon, by which the temple was to be built. READ I CHRONICLES 28:3, 11-12, 19.

- B. As the temple was dedicated, God's glory filled it and dwelled in it as He had previously dwelled in the tabernacle. But He warned that He would continue to dwell there only if Israel continued to keep His commands. READ I KINGS 9:3-7.
- C. In the process of time, Israel strayed away from God & the temple of Solomon was destroyed by invaders from Babylon.
- D. Later a righteous remnant from Judah & Israel returned & built another less elaborate temple under the leadership of Zarubbabel, Ezra, & Nehemiah.
- E. In 19 B.C. Herod the Great began to dismantle the temple of Ezra & replace it with a more expensive, elaborate edifice, more like that of Solomon. 83 years.
- F. Herod's temple was completed in 64 A.D.. But the Jewish nation had once again proven unfaithful to God & in 70 A.D. that temple was destroyed by Roman armies. It has never been rebuilt.

IV. PERHAPS THE MOST COMPLETE "TEMPLE" OR DIVINE DWELLING PLACE EVER TO BE ON EARTH WAS THE PHYSICAL BODY OF JESUS CHRIST.

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. 2:9).

READ JOHN 2:19-22.

V. GOD STILL HAS A DWELLING PLACE--A TEMPLE--ON EARTH TODAY.

- A. The universal church. READ EPHESIANS 2:19-22
- B. The local church. READ I COR. 3:16-17; 2 COR.

6:16-18.

C. Each individual Christian. READ I COR. 6:19-20

1. Our body is the temple of the H.S., vs. 19.
2. It is not our own, vs. 19-20.
3. It is for the Lord, vs. 13.
4. It is cared for by God, Matt. 6:33.
5. It will be raised in glory, 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 49.

VI. OF COURSE, THE ULTIMATE DWELLING PLACE--TEMPLE OF GOD, IS HEAVEN ITSELF.

A. David knew it, Psalm 18:6, 9

I called on the Lord... He heard my voice from His temple... He bowed the heavens also & came down...

B. Solomon was mindful of it.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven & the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built. (1 Kings 8:27).

C. John describes heaven thusly: "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty & the Lamb are its temple" (Rev. 21:22).

D. By behaving ourselves in such a way as to maintain fellowship with God in the here & now--Him dwelling in us & we in Him--we prepare ourselves for the ultimate dwelling with Him forever in heaven.

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