

Temple
(Throne)

of
the

New Creation

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Laver
(Sea)

Bronze
Altar

Temple of the New Creation

Introduction

Many parallels exist between the account of creation in Genesis and descriptions of the various temples found throughout the Old Testament. Studying the creation in conjunction with the temples can help us gain a greater vision of Christ and a greater vision for the church.

Solomon's temple had elements of creation in it. Trees, flowers, and fruit adorned the architecture, and various animals were depicted in the ritual furniture (1 Kings 6:29; 7:18, 25, 29). Certainly, the creation in the temple was not one that had been seen before. It was a new creation, a world within the world.

Much later, Christ would claim that His own body was the true Temple (John 2:19). Paul also taught that if anyone is in this Temple, "he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17). This is what has eternally been in God's heart—Christ, the Temple of the New Creation.

To introduce Christ as the Temple of the New Creation is the purpose of this booklet. At times Moses's tabernacle will also be referenced, and it should be understood that the tabernacle and the temple are, in this study, interchangeable concepts. Solomon's temple was, in many ways, just an expanded, more permanent version of Moses's tabernacle, and there are places in scripture where the tabernacle is called the temple and vice versa (1 Sam. 3:3; 1 Chron. 9:23).

What will also be seen is that the Temple of the New Creation is the seed of God "which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). This seed was planted at the cross, and God is causing it to grow. For "the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in the field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree" (Matt. 13:32). Each pairing of temple furnishings and days of creation reveals an increase of the seed, a greater knowing of Christ to which the church is called. What we have in the creation story, then, is God "declaring the end from the beginning," and showing us His

entire plan in the first chapter of the Bible (Isaiah 46:10).

In the Beginning: The Ark: The Alpha

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

The entire creation was first conceived in the beginning, in God’s heart and mind. This beginning corresponds to the most holy place of the temple or tabernacle and to the ark of the covenant. In this chamber, veiled from every human eye, God alone dwelled. “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared” in this chamber, for, concealed in its heart, in the ark of the covenant, were the tablets of the law—the word of God. Every detail of the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the arrangement of Israel’s camp first existed in the word of the law, and through this word they were made. Likewise, the Spirit of God put all the plans for the temple in David’s mind, and so it first existed in David’s word to Solomon. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Through him, all things were made” (John 1:1-3). As the Word

of God, Christ is the Alpha, God’s beginning (Rev. 22:13).

Light: The Bronze Altar: The Cross

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness” (Gen. 1:3, 4).

On the first day of creation, the word “which for ages past was kept hidden in God,” came forth in a sweeping judgment—God separated between light and darkness and called the light good (Eph. 3:9). Judgment, then, became the foundation of creation and continued to pervade every aspect of it: waters were divided from waters, the sea from the dry land, day from night, heavenly creatures from creatures of the deep, man from the beasts. The first day of creation was a great altar, like the bronze altar that sat just inside the entrance to the tabernacle. Anyone drawing near to God would be immediately confronted by the consuming fire on the altar and the blood spilled at its base (Ex. 40:6). It divided what was inside the tabernacle

(light) from what was outside the tabernacle (darkness). Its judgment was also pervasive: the tabernacle and all its furnishings were cleansed by its blood, the Israelites were set apart from all other nations by its blood, incense was lit by its fire (Heb. 9:19-22; Lev. 16:12, 13; Numb. 16:46).

Shortly before dying on the cross, Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). The cross was God’s complete and final judgment. It separated what is of God from what is not of God (Eph. 5:8). Through the judgment of the cross the Word was planted in the formless, empty world (Gen. 1:2, 3). The cross is the foundation of any work of God. If we would be a part of His works, then we must first come to the altar—“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it” (Luke 9:23).

Sky: The Tabernacle: The Place of Union and Revelation

“And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse ‘sky’” (Gen. 1:6-8).

Psalm 19:4-6 says, “In the sky he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his wedding tent, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.” These verses suggest a connection between the second day of creation and the tabernacle, the tent structure itself. In looking at the sky and the tabernacle, two things are implied: union and revelation.

Once a year, on the day of atonement, the High Priest entered the most holy place in the temple/tabernacle to sprinkle blood on the ark. Having covered all sin, having removed the separation between God and man, having joined

God to His people, we can imagine the High Priest coming forth like a bridegroom from his wedding tent, like a champion rejoicing over the defeat of sin. As he emerges, he parts the bluish veil covering the entrance to the tabernacle, and his face, “shining like the sun in its strength,” is revealed to the people (Ex. 27:16; Rev. 1:16). Behind him, the cloud fills the tabernacle, and God’s glory is also revealed (Ex. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10, 11).

John’s gospel says, “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus also said of His body, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days” (John 2:19). It was in the temple of Jesus’s body that sin was forever removed, God was joined to man, and the glory of heaven was seen in earth.

Gathering the Waters: The Laver/Sea: Burial

“And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.’ And it was so.

God called the dry ground ‘land,’ and the gathered waters he called ‘seas’” (Gen. 1:9, 10).

On the 3rd day of creation, we find everything buried by water. Then God spoke. The waters rolled away, and something totally new appeared—dry land. In the tabernacle, waters were also gathered to one place in the laver (called “the sea” in Solomon’s temple: 1 Kings 7:23-26). Before and after performing sacrifices, the priest washed in these waters.

The laver was made of mirrors of polished bronze, given to Moses by the women of Israel (Exodus 38:8). Perhaps, as he washed away dirt and blood from the sacrifice, the priest could see a reflection. But like the dry land which appeared in the waters of Genesis, what appeared in the laver was something totally new—not the priest’s face, but a face reflected through water and blood.

The 3rd day, then, is a transition from death to life. On the 3rd day, Jesus rose again: the filth of sin and the stain of the cross was gathered into the tomb and buried. A new man appeared, “one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ” (1

John 5:6). “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom. 6:4).

Plants: Table of the Bread of the Presence: Communion

*“Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation...’
And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants
bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing
fruit with seed in it according to their kinds”
(Gen. 1:11, 12).*

After the dry land appeared, it brought forth vegetation and life of all kinds (Gen. 1:12, 24). “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground...The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear” (Mark 4:26-28). Clearly, this is resurrection. The word of God fell into the ground and died; the life He gave brought forth a harvest of believers. The gold table in the tabernacle—on which sat 12 loaves of

bread and a bowl of wine—brings another element to this day of creation. Resurrection is not just harvests and fruitfulness. The further purpose of seed is that it be ground into flour and made into bread; fruit is to be crushed and made into wine. Those whom Christ saves He calls to the communion table, that they “may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Phil. 3:10). Only through the grinding and crushing of the Lord will we know the bread of life in our daily experience. Only at His table can we truly enter into His life: “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:53).

Sun, Moon, Stars: Lampstand: The Light of the World

“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night...God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to

govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness” (Gen. 1:14).

As signs dividing day from night, the sun, moon, and stars bear the judgment of the first day in themselves. Even at night, “the light shines in the darkness” as a witness of God’s great judgment (John 1:5). This was also the purpose of the lampstand in the tabernacle. All day and night it was to shine in the tabernacle; it was never to go out (Ex. 27:20). Daniel wrote, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3). The wise in this verse are those who bear the judgment of the cross in themselves. Because they have died with Him and raised with Him, their hearts shine with “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Having endured with Him, they also reign with Him in the same way that the sun, moon, and stars governed the day and the night. And just as stars help ships navigate by their light, these shine in the dark world as they

“hold out the word of life,” and lead many who are lost to God (Phil. 2:16).

Living Creatures: Altar of Incense: His Body

“And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of sky...Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so” (Gen. 1:20, 24).

The fifth and sixth days involve the making of living creatures. Living creatures are also found in Revelation and in Ezekiel before the throne of God.¹ In each case, there are 4—an eagle, an ox, a lion, and a man—and between them, they represent nearly all types of animals mentioned in Genesis. Ezekiel also mentions that among the living creatures are burning coals, and this suggests the gold altar of incense in the temple (Ezek. 10:2). The incense burned on this altar was made of 4 different spices. The spices were

¹ Rev. 4:6-8; Ezek. 1:5-14.

ground up, mixed in equal amounts, and burned (Ex. 30:34-36). Each lost, in that sense, its individual scent, and in the fire of the altar became one new fragrance rising to please the heart of God. Paul says, “For we are to God the fragrance of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15). In the church, we often speak of individuals having the fragrance of Christ, and this is true in its own way. However, applying this verse individually misses the real significance of incense—that WE are the fragrance of Christ, that as we give up our lives for one another, the love of Christ removes the stench of sin and satisfies God. In this sense, an individual can’t have the fragrance of Christ, but a group of people surrendered to God and to each other can.

These things are true of the living creatures as well. Ezekiel wrote that “wherever the Spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went” (Ezek. 1:12). In other words, none of the living creatures lived and moved according to what kind of animal it was. The eagle did not fly off on its own for God while the lion roared and ran his own race of faith. Sometimes they all flew, and sometimes they all roared “Holy, holy,

holy,” but whatever they did, they did unto the Lord as one (Ezek. 1:19; Rev. 4:8). Christians gathered together, then, do not constitute the body of Christ. We are only living as His body when we move together by one Spirit to express one Person—“not I, but Christ” (Gal. 2:20).

Man/Sabbath: Ark: Omega

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26).

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them...And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” (Gen. 2:1-3).

When man was unveiled, God finished all His work of creating, and on the seventh day He rested. Solomon also finished the temple in the seventh year (1 Kings 6:38). The temple, which had only existed in a vision given to David, was built by Solomon “in all its parts.” The heavens

and the earth, which had only existed in the beginning, were finished by God's word "and all the host of them" (Gen. 2:1).

The Temple of the New Creation is being built in heavenly places, without hands. From the quarry of the earth, God is bringing living stones to "Christ Jesus, himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:20, 21). At the appointed time of the Father, this Temple will be unveiled, and "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). The Father's vision will then be manifest in all its parts, in all its hosts. This day is also referred to as the second coming or "the day the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke 17:30).

Before creating man, God could look on every kind of plant and animal and call it good, but there was nothing of His own kind on which He could look and call it god (John 10:34-36). As the image of God, man satisfied the deep purpose in God's heart, the purpose that first moved Him to speak. For God did not create so that He could

have a creation. He created so that His glorious image could fill the universe (Eph. 4:10).

God is 3 persons in One who is love. God's image—Christ—is “many parts but one body” building itself up in love (1 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:16). When this man, this Temple of God's love, is revealed, He will fill the creation and subdue it (Gen. 1:28). “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end” (Isaiah 9:7).

The One God has chosen to rule in peace is the Sabbath. Him God has blessed and set apart as the day in which God and man find rest and enjoyment in each other. At the close of each of the first 6 days, Genesis records that “there was evening, and there was morning.” But on the 7th day, there is no mention of evening or morning because it is a day without end. “It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to the LORD” (Zech. 14:7). This day also existed in Solomon's temple. In the temple, peace was made between God and man through sacrifice. Because of this, Solomon prayed, “Now arise, O LORD God, and come to your resting place” (2 Chron. 6:41).

With the ascendancy of this Man to the throne, we return once again to the ark, called the throne of God throughout the Old Testament (1 Sam. 4:4). The Word, once hidden in the ark in the beginning, came forth as the Alpha; He accomplished everything for which God sent Him and returned in a many membered body as God's Omega, ruler of a "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). Just as God gave man authority over all beasts, so He has given this Man "authority over the nations," represented by beasts throughout scripture (Rev. 2:26; 13:1; Dan. 7:17). Just as God was mindful of man and put "all things under his feet," so He has decreed "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10, 11). Most importantly, scripture assures us that this Man will not hand over His kingdom to Satan, as did Adam. Instead, He will hand over "the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power...When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made

subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24-28). This is the 7th day which God has set aside and blessed: “one body...one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:4-6).

Summary

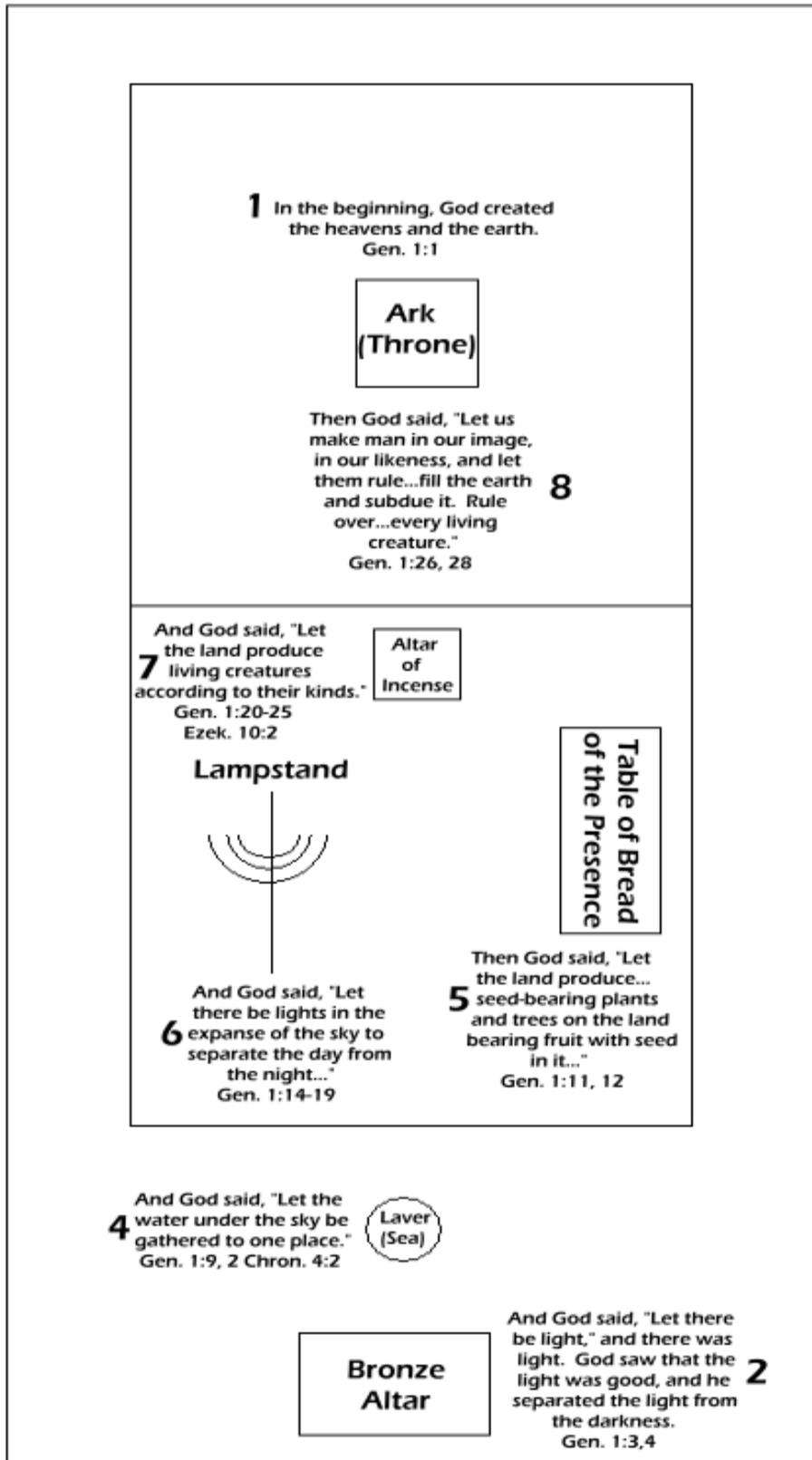
“The kingdom of God...is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches” (Mark 4:30-32).

Before leaving this study, a clearer sense of the progression, the growth of God’s seed is needed. In the beginning, the seed of the Word was veiled in God. Through the judgment of the cross, He was planted in the formless, empty world, and God was joined to man. For 3 days, He lay buried, but then rose as a sprout from the earth and brought forth a harvest of believers. These He calls into communion, that they “may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and

the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death” (Phil. 3:10). Remaining in communion with Him changes them into heavenly creatures who “shine like stars in the universe as [they] hold out the word of life” (Phil. 2:15, 16). As Christ continues to increase, however, the prominence of individuals in the church should decrease (John 3:30). Just as stars fade in the light of the rising sun, so individual expressions of Christ should fade as the Son rises among us and is expressed in a corporate manner. Finally, Christ will be revealed in the creation at His coming, and God’s redemption will be extended to all things. This whole process can be understood as the Word becoming flesh. Jesus of Nazareth, was the seed of this vision; Christ, that same seed revealed in many sons, in the church, and in all of creation, is much fruit and a harvest (John 12:24).

The Temple of the New Creation

The Tabernacle (Tent)
 3 And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters..." God called the expanse "sky..."
 Gen. 1:6-8, Ps. 19:1, 2, 4, 5



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