

# Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 6, The Temple in the Old Testament

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 6, the temple in the Old Testament.

The next theme we want to look at is the theme of the temple or the tabernacle.

I would also include the Garden of Eden because, as we'll see, the Garden of Eden is closely linked to the theme of the temple. This is another example of how difficult it is to extricate any of these themes from the others because they're often closely intertwined. So, the garden was a relevant theme to creation and land, but we'll see that the garden also belongs to the theme of the temple as well.

Now, we're going to treat the temple and tabernacle together. Although they're distinct entities obviously historically in the Old Testament, I will treat them together because, basically, the tabernacle is a portable temple, and a temple is a more permanent tabernacle. They both function to serve very similar purposes.

So, I'm not going to talk about the tabernacle or the temple separately, and sometimes we'll talk about both. Sometimes, we'll refer mainly to the temple, and then again, I will often use the garden because, as we'll see, there's a close connection between the Garden of Eden and the temple and the Tabernacle. Just by way of summary, for our purposes, although there's more that could be said about the temple, the significance of the temple is that it is the place where God lives with his people.

It is the place that mediated the presence of God among his people. So, the temple signified that God was with his people. God was present with his people, the nation of Israel.

Now, having said that, then, the starting point for understanding and dealing with the temple is to go all the way back once more to Genesis 1-3. Especially chapter 2 and the Garden of Eden. Now, the reason for saying that is, as we've already mentioned in our very first or second session, where we talked a little bit more length about Genesis 1-3, we saw the Garden of Eden was meant to be a sanctuary.

It was a place of divine presence. It was sacred space. It was the place where God took up residence with his people, Adam and Eve.

In fact, in an article, Old Testament scholar Gordon Wenham summarized the function of the Garden of Eden by saying this: The Garden of Eden is not viewed by

the author of Genesis simply as a piece of Mesopotamian farmland but as an archetypal sanctuary, that is, a place where God dwells and where man should worship him. Many of the features of the garden may be found in later sanctuaries, particularly the tabernacle or the Jerusalem temple. These parallels suggest that the garden itself is understood as a sort of sanctuary.

And I would actually get rid of that word sort of, that the garden actually was a sanctuary. It was a temple tabernacle where God lived with his people. So, the garden is a sanctuary, the temple garden where God dwelled with humanity, with the first people that he created, Adam and Eve.

The best way to substantiate that is not only through the text of Genesis 1 where clearly God is found dwelling with his people and present with and resident with his people in the first creation, but as the quote by Gordon Wenham said, by noting a number of other parallels between the later descriptions of the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament and the description of the Garden of Eden and in fact the creation itself in Genesis 1 and 2. Now, what I am going to emphasize are not necessarily all of my own observations, but this is a compilation of observations that others have noted, as well as far as the parallels between the Garden of Eden and the later description of the Tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament. So, for example, we have already mentioned first of all that God in both the Garden of Eden and in the tabernacle and temple was a place of divine presence, a place where God dwelled with his people. So, you have that reference to God walking in the garden later on in Genesis chapter 3, which also reflects the language of God's presence in the tabernacle or temple in the Old Testament.

So, in both the Garden of Eden and the tabernacle and temple, it is a place where God dwells with his people; it is a place of divine presence. A second one that I find intriguing is when you read the account of the decorations in the tabernacle and the temple; you will find that often trees and plants play a key role embossed in the walls or carving in the walls or certain things. This is also true of the temple.

Those trees and plants engraved in the temple and some of its furniture were meant to reflect the plants, particularly the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, as emblematic of the fact that the garden was a place of life and fruitfulness. Perhaps even the lampstand that lit the temple reflects not only the light of the first creation in Genesis chapter 1 but also the lampstand in the temple, the candelabra, which was meant to represent the tree of life. To give you one example, in the tabernacle, Exodus chapter 25, the tree of life is what we have already referred to in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 9, the tree of life that is placed within the garden.

But then, when we start to read of the tabernacle, chapter 25, and starting with verse 31, make a lampstand of pure gold and hammer it out base and shaft. Its

flower-like cups, buds, and blossoms shall be of one piece with it. Six branches are to extend from the side of the lampstand, three on one side and three on the other.

Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, three on the next branch, and the same for all six branches extending from the lamp stand. On the lamp stand, there are four cups shaped like almond flowers, buds, and blossoms. One bud shall be under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second, etc.

I'll stop right there. But you get the idea. The lamp stands seem to reflect perhaps the plants or the fruitfulness of the first creation and also probably the tree of life in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 9 that stood in the center of the Garden of Eden.

Another intriguing connection, a third one, is the fact that gold is one of the key features of the makeup, precious metals used in the makeup of both the Tabernacle and the temple. In the description of the candelabra, the lamp stand that I just read, it was made of gold. If you were to turn to Exodus and read much broader than that section I just read, you would see that gold was an important metal in the makeup of the tabernacle.

Also, I won't refer to any specific text right now, but if you read through or even glance through 1 Kings 5-7, you will note that gold features all over the place in the construction of the temple. If I can just read one passage, Exodus 25, I would just like to demonstrate to you the key feature that gold plays in the makeup of the tabernacle. Chapter 25, 7-17.

Let's see here. Starting at verse 7, onyx, stones, and other gems are to be mounted on the ephod of the breastplate. Then, I will have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will draw among them.

Make this tabernacle and its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Have them make a chest of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, a cubit and a half high. Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it.

Cast four gold rings for it. Let me skip down to verse 31, at the beginning of the lampstand description. Make a lampstand of pure gold and hammer it out.

So, gold was the predominant metal used in the construction of the tabernacle and the temple. What is intriguing, though, is gold is also found in the Garden of Eden. Back in Genesis chapter 2, as the author is describing the surrounding area, he says, starting in verse 10 of Genesis chapter 2, a river watering the garden flowed from Eden.

From there, it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is Pishon. It winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.

Verse 12, the gold of that land is good. So gold is even associated with the Garden of Eden. So gold is an important metal found in the Garden of Eden, in the context of the Garden of Eden, and now it is an important metal in the tabernacle and temple, suggesting, I think, a connection, a deliberate connection between the temple, the tabernacle temple, and the Garden of Eden.

Another one that several people have recognized in Old Testament scholars is in chapter 2 and verse 15 of Genesis, Adam is told to till and keep the garden. Chapter 2 and verse 15. Intriguingly, these two words also occur later on in the Old Testament as words that describe the duty of the priests in the tabernacle or temple.

For example, in the book of Numbers, Numbers chapter 3 and verses 7 and 8. Numbers 3, verses 7 and 8 say they are to perform, let me back up; the Lord said to Moses, Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron, the priest, to assist him. They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the tent of meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle. They are to take care of all the tent furnishings for the meeting.

Also, in chapter 18 of Numbers as well, 18 and chapters 5 and verses 5 and 6, referring to the duties of the priest and the Levites, you are to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the altar so that wrath will not fall upon Israel again. I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the tent of meeting. So, we find a connection between what Adam was to do in the garden, to work it, to care for it. There are different ways it's translated in English, but the words are the same as what the priests were to do in the tabernacle, especially in the Book of Numbers.

Another connection is that in Genesis chapter 2, verse 10, a verse we just read in connection with gold, we find that a river flows out of Eden to water the garden. We find the same thing in Ezekiel 47 and verses 1 and 2, a text that we've already looked at in connection with Revelation chapter 22, but we'll look at it again because chapters Ezekiel 47 is in the context of a temple, the restored temple, and in Ezekiel 47 water flows from the temple in the same way that a river of water flows from Eden to water the garden. Also, there's a connection between trees planted by the river in the garden of Eden and trees planted by the river in Ezekiel 47.

One final one that's also very intriguing and seems to be intentional is when one reads the account of God entering the temple: he enters the temple from the east. For example, in the restored temple of Ezekiel chapter 43, in Ezekiel 43, as we said, the whole sections 40 through 47, in visions, the restored, the future vision of a restored temple, rebuilt temple. In chapter 43, after the author in 41 and 42, the

author basically takes a visionary tour of the temple and its measures, and he sees the different parts.

Then, in 43, God's glory and His presence that departed the temple in the early chapters of Ezekiel now return to the temple. Notice how chapter 43 verse 1 begins. Then, there is an angelic being who is showing Ezekiel this vision. Then, the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of the rushing waters.

When you go back to Genesis chapter 3 and verse 24, Genesis chapter 3 and verse 24, as Adam and Eve are expelled or exiled from the garden of Eden, we're told in verse 24 that after he drove the man out, after he drove Adam and Eve out, he placed on the east side of the garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. So, the connection between the eastern direction is that in Eden, the entrance to the garden seemed to be from the east. In the same way, it's from the east gate that God's presence and glory fills the temple in Ezekiel chapter 43.

So, all of those connections suggest that, most likely, the Garden of Eden was meant to reflect the temple and Tabernacle, or I would argue it's the other way around, that the Tabernacle and temple were modeled after the Garden of Eden, signifying the fact that Eden was the place of God's presence. It was a sanctuary, the place where God dwelled with his people, and so now the temple and tabernacle are meant to replicate that or reflect that. The temple and tabernacle are miniature gardens of Eden.

John Walton, in a book on the lost story of Genesis, argues that Genesis 1's record of creation is God is actually creating a cosmic temple, a sanctuary to dwell in. Greg Beal has likewise argued that the purpose of Genesis 1 and 2 is that eventually, Adam and Eve, who are placed in the garden, would extend it to embrace the entire world so that God's presence, his temple tabernacle presence in the sanctuary of Eden, Adam and Eve's job was to extend God's presence and rule beyond that to embrace the entirety of creation. In fact, when you read Jewish apocalyptic literature, for example, like 2nd and 3rd Enoch, I believe, and elsewhere, Adam is often described as a priest who serves God in the garden of Eden.

In one apocalyptic text, it describes the Shekinah glory of God flashing from one end of the garden to the other. So even in Jewish intertestamental literature, you sometimes find the garden of Eden portrayed as a temple, a sanctuary, and Adam is a priest who served and worshipped God in the sanctuary. The Garden of Eden was a place where God's glory resided and dwelled as his first temple.

So, in conclusion to the survey of Genesis 1 and 2 and its depiction of the garden of Eden as a temple or a sanctuary, I would conclude then that the author portrays and

depicts the temple as a sanctuary where God lives with his people, where God dwells with his people. They enjoy the blessing of God's presence in their midst. Adam and Eve then function as priests who worship and serve God in the Edenic temple.

They are to keep it, guard it, and maintain it as God's people. This is demonstrated by the temple and its connections with the temple and the tabernacle. We'll go back to that.

But once more, it appears to me that the tabernacle and temples are meant to be replicas of the Garden of Eden. And the reason is that after this description of the garden sanctuary where God dwells with his people, where Adam and Eve serve him as priests, following that we find in Genesis 3 that sin enters the world. Adam and Eve fail at their task.

They fail to maintain the sanctuary of God's divine presence. And because of sin and disobedience, they are exiled from the garden sanctuary. As we saw in chapter 3, verse 24, they are cast out of God's presence to cherubim, angelic-like figures, who guard the east entrance to the sanctuary, the place of God's presence.

And now Adam and Eve are forbidden from entering the temple sanctuary. So now the question, after chapter 3, arises, how will God reestablish his presence in dwelling with humanity and eventually extend it to embrace the entirety of creation as he intended to in Genesis 1 and 2? But now that sin has entered the world, there's kind of been a disruption in the story, and a conflict now ensues; how is God going to resolve that? How is God going to restore his intention to establish the earth as his dwelling place where he dwells with humanity in the entire cosmos? Well, one way to look at that is, as the rest of the New Testament goes on, we can look at that in terms of a series of steps or stages as to how that begins to take place. Again, I only want to paint in very broad brush strokes and look at the major movements or the major stages in God resolving the dilemma from Genesis 3, in God reestablishing his presence in the universe with humanity that will extend across the entire earth.

The first major step, then, is the construction of the tabernacle in the second half of the book of Exodus. So God rescues his people out of Egypt, brings them through the Red Sea, through the wilderness, and eventually into the land of Canaan, where God then will; when they get to Canaan, they will finally build a temple. But in the meantime, as they make that trek through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, to the promised land, God instructs them to build a tabernacle in the second half of the book of Exodus that will accompany them as they make their trek through the wilderness.

Now again, I don't want to go into a lot of detail about the construction of the tabernacle and what it looked like, nor am I equipped to or prepared to, but basically, the tabernacle consisted of an enclosed courtyard, and then inside that

courtyard was a larger tent-like structure that consisted of two parts, a holy place, and then what we know of as the Holy of Holies. And in the latter, in the Holy of Holies, was the Ark of the Covenant. It was in the Holy of Holies where God specifically met with his people.

The point of it, too, is this was a temporary structure. Israel could take it down and take it with them as they moved. It still would have been a lot more work than setting up your four-man tent or two-man tent or whatever, but it was meant to be temporary so they could take it with them as they moved.

But they constructed, we find in Exodus the account of God instructing Israel, and specifically Moses, as to what the tabernacle was to look like, how to build it, and then the account of Israel building the sanctuary, tabernacle. And then finally, in Exodus chapter 40, and starting in verses 34 and 35. So Moses, in verse 33, Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar, put up the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard, and so Moses finished the work.

Verse 34, 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 had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out, but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out until the day it lifted.

So, the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night inside of all the house of Israel during all their travels. So, the point is, at the conclusion of the construction of the tabernacle, God's glory, His presence, enters the tabernacle just as His presence resided in the Garden of Eden. So, let me make a handful of observations about the tabernacle in relation to God's intention to reestablish His presence among His people.

First of all, once more, this is the place where God dwelled with His people on earth, but at the same time, the very construction of the tabernacle, and what we read in chapter 40, verses 34 and 35 of Exodus that I just read, suggests that at the same time, God's presence in a sense is restricted. God's presence is not co-extensive with all of creation or available immediately to all people as it was in the Garden of Eden. But now, God's people enjoy God's presence on earth, but they enjoy it in a restricted manner.

Second, we've already noted the connections with the Garden of Eden, and that is the tabernacle; it's not so much the garden modeled after the Tabernacle, but probably the opposite, as I mentioned a moment ago. The tabernacle is probably meant to be modeled after the Garden of Eden. Since Eden was God's dwelling place, the tabernacle is now sort of another Eden, or a miniature Eden. Now, the tabernacle is God's dwelling place.

What God intended in the Garden of Eden is now beginning to be restored in the tabernacle garden, so to speak. A third thing is to recognize, in light of this observation and in light of what a number of other Old Testament scholars have said about the Tabernacle, is the tabernacle was also meant to be a microcosm of the entire cosmos, of the entire creation. We've already noticed the links to the Garden of Eden, and I've noted the argument of John Walton that even chapter 1, the creation of the world, was meant to be a tabernacle, a construction of a tabernacle, at least at one level.

So that the tabernacle then, as sort of a microcosm of what the whole world was to be, the tabernacle anticipates God's presence in the entire cosmos, in the entire creation, not just in a physical structure with Israel. So, what that means is the construction of the tabernacle, and I'd say the same is true of the temple, was never meant to be an end in itself. It was never meant to be the final answer for God's purposes for Israel or God's intention to dwell with His people.

But it was meant to point to and anticipate God's presence throughout the creation. And to jump ahead, we saw that in Revelation 21 and 22. To quote again from Greg Beal, in his work on the temple, he says the temple was a small-scale model and symbolic reminder to Israel that God's glorious presence would eventually fill the whole cosmos.

And Greg Beal was talking about the temple there, but the same could be said about the tabernacle. Again, the tabernacle was basically a portable temple, and the temple was a more permanent tabernacle. So, the first major stage in answering the question is how God is going to restore and reestablish His dwelling with His people in creation, in the world, as He did, as it was His intention in Genesis 1 and 2. Now that sin has entered the world, how will God restore that? The first major step was through the construction of a tabernacle Eden, an Eden-type tabernacle, where God would dwell with His people, but which itself seemed to anticipate God's intention to eventually expand His presence to embrace the entire world.

The second major step then was the construction of the temple. And you can turn, we won't read in its entirety, but it may be referred to sections later on. You can read 1 Kings 5-7 for details of the construction and description of the temple itself. As you may recognize in Israel's history, David secures a spot, which was originally a threshing floor upon which the temple eventually would be built.

But David is not allowed to build the temple. His son Solomon will build the temple, and we find that God promised that to David and instructed David in that regard in 2 Samuel 7. But then, in 1 Kings 5-7, we finally find Solomon fulfilling that promise by constructing the temple. To also fill in a little bit more detail, how we got from the tabernacle to the temple? The tabernacle was eventually brought to Shiloh, and



there it was set up, and that's where we find Shiloh in connection with the story of Samuel, etc.

But because of corruption, God abandons the temple, and David then brings the ark to Jerusalem. David finally brings the ark to the city of Jerusalem. And then, as we said, it was eventually David's son Solomon who built the temple, a more permanent tabernacle.

So, we find basically the features of the tabernacle now transferred to the temple. First of all, the temple is now a place of God's dwelling. It's a place where God will reside with his people on earth, yet once more, it is restricted.

God's presence is restricted. God's presence is specifically manifested in the Holy of Holies. When you read the Old Testament carefully, only the high priest can enter the Holy of Holies once a year.

Hebrews also describes that, the book of Hebrews in the New Testament. So, first of all, although it's restricted, the temple still is a place of God's dwelling. Second, we noted the connections between the temple and the Garden of Eden.

So, like the tabernacle, the temple was meant to be a miniature Garden of Eden, in the same way that God dwelled with his people in the Garden Sanctuary, now he takes up residence with his people in the temple. And then, finally, the temple also, like the Tabernacle, was to be a microcosm of the whole cosmos. It was meant to symbolize the fact that God eventually intended for his presence to spread and become co-extensive with the entire creation, not limited to a specific structure.

Later on, some of the Psalms demonstrate the significance of the temple as the dwelling place of God and also seem to anticipate that the purpose was that God's presence would extend to include the entire earth. So, for example, in Psalm 84, Psalm number 84, we read this: How lovely is your dwelling place, O 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 a swallow, a nest for herself, where she may have her young, a place near your altar. O Lord Almighty, my King, and my God, blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is the Lord, who have set their hearts on a pilgrimage as they pass through the valley of Baca.

They make it a place of springs, and autumn rain also covers it with pools. They will go from strength to strength until each appears before the Lord. Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty! Listen to me, O God of Jacob! Look upon your shield, O God, with favor on your anointed one.

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield.

The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.

Notice, especially in that first verse, how lovely your dwelling place is, O Lord God Almighty! There are a number of psalms that exalt or praise God or revel in the temple as his dwelling place. However, a number of psalms also start to anticipate that God's presence will include the entire earth, not just the temple itself as a physical structure. Now, historically then, because of corruption and sin, God abandons his temple, his presence abandons the temple, and the temple is destroyed by foreigners.

The people are exiled from God's presence, just as Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden. So, now Israel is exiled from the land and from the temple, from God's presence. The primary difference is that God's presence doesn't seem to abandon Eden, and it's not destroyed.

But that's exactly what happens here in the Old Testament story. Because of the sinfulness of Israel, God abandons the temple, and his presence leaves it. You can read that in the first several chapters of Ezekiel, the account of God's presence leaves the temple as the place where God dwelled with his people.

And then God's people are likewise exiled or expelled from the land, garden, temple, and are taken over by foreign captors. Now, that brings us to the Old Testament prophetic literature. The Old Testament prophets anticipate a time when Israel's temple will be restored.

The place of God's presence, a symbol, an emblem of God's dwelling with his people. And probably the most extensive account is found in Ezekiel chapter 40-48, which we've read a couple sections of that already. But in Ezekiel 40-48, at least 40-47 are an account of the construction of an end time temple, and then God's presence entering that.

And then in chapter 47 we find the water of the river that flows out from under the threshold of the temple. This is to be understood in light of Ezekiel 8-10. It is in Ezekiel 8-10 where because of corruption and sin, God leaves the temple.

And interestingly he leaves it from the east, drawing another link with Eden. And now in Ezekiel chapter 43, God's presence enters the temple from the east gate as well. So, in the wake of the destruction of the temple and the exile of God's people

from the land, the Old Testament prophets such as Ezekiel anticipate a time when God will one day restore his temple and God's people will enter it or be restored to the land and to the temple.

But more importantly, God's presence will once again enter and take up residence in his temple with his people, much like he did in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 1-2. The detailed description in Ezekiel 40-48 resembles very closely the description and some of the details in 1 Kings 5-7.

Although the vision of Ezekiel's temple far exceeds the latter one. But the whole point is to demonstrate God's intention to dwell with his people. How will God resolve the problem of Genesis chapter 3? How will God restore and renew his dwelling and his presence with his people? And now, in the wake of the same thing happening with Israel, as happened with Adam and Eve, they are expelled from God's presence.

Now Ezekiel anticipates a restoration of the temple as far as God once again dwelling with his people, fulfilling his original intention from Genesis 1-2. Now exactly how this gets fulfilled will be seen later on. We will look at the New Testament in just a moment and see exactly how this begins to reach its fulfillment and to find its climax.

So, at this point the Old Testament ends with God's judgment on Israel and the temple, but with the expectations of the restoration of God's temple and his presence with his people, which will eventually fill the entire earth in fulfillment of God's intention from the Garden of Eden. So far, we have seen that the Garden of Eden was meant to be a sanctuary. The Garden of Eden was meant to be a temple or tabernacle as it were, where God dwelled with his people and where they functioned as priests to worship God and to care for the sanctuary.

But because of sinfulness, Adam and Eve are expelled from and exiled from the Garden, and so the question then is how is God going to restore that state of affairs? How is God going to restore his presence with his people on earth? And that happens in a couple of stages, first of all by the construction of a tabernacle, a temporary tabernacle that Israel takes with them through their trek through the wilderness, the tabernacle where God dwells with his people, but which was also at least at one level meant to be an anticipation of the fact that one day God's presence would infuse the entire cosmos. The next stage was a more permanent version of the tabernacle, and that was the construction of a temple in Jerusalem, which again was meant to recall God's presence in the Garden of Eden with his people but also was meant to anticipate God's presence extending to embrace the entire creation.

But the temple was God's, the place where God dwelled, where his presence was manifest among his people. And then finally, in the wake of Israel once more being exiled like Adam and Eve were from the garden, from the land, from the temple

because of sinfulness, and because the temple was destroyed, you find the prophets like Ezekiel, but some other prophets like Zechariah for example, anticipating a renewed restored temple, a renewal of God's presence with his people in fulfillment not only of the tabernacle and temple but again going all the way back to the Garden of Eden. How is God going to restore and renew his presence with his people? And so we have the Old Testament ending with prophetic expectations of a restored and renewed temple where God would live and dwell with his people.

Now, when we get to the New Testament, we find a number of places that pick up temple language and temple imagery. Part of the question is whether the temple language we find in the New Testament is only a sort of symbolism and metaphor or if it is meant to recall the fulfillment of the Old Testament. We'll talk about that in connection with a number of texts. But what I want to do I first of all want to begin with Jesus and look at a couple of texts just briefly as far as how Jesus himself begins to bring to fulfillment the promises of a temple, the promise of God's presence with his people, and then move on to the Pauline literature and note a number of places where Paul himself uses temple imagery and temple language to depict God's presence with his people.

Then we'll look at a couple of other letters in the New Testament outside of Paul's letters, and then we'll end once more in Revelation 21 and 22. That's often where we'll end up since, as we said, Revelation 22 picks up most of the themes that get started in Genesis 1 and 2 and then get developed in the Old and New Testament and find their climax in Revelation 21 and 22. But again, we'll begin with the Gospels with Jesus because, as we said, the promises of the Old Testament don't simply jump to God's people, the church, or even to the consummated new creation, but the promises begin first of all in Jesus Christ.

The promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled first and foremost in Christ and then, by virtue of being joined to Christ, are fulfilled in his people as well. And I would argue then that in the New Testament, we find God's intention to restore the Garden of Eden and the temple presence now being fulfilled first of all in Jesus Christ, that is, the promise of a restored temple, and the restoration of God's presence participates in the already but not yet tension. So, first of all we find the promises of the temple already fulfilled in Christ and also in his people by extension, by virtue of his people being joined to Christ, being in Christ, some of Paul's in Christ language or he talks of belonging to Christ.

By virtue of being in Christ or belonging to Christ then God's people, the church, become the temple too. But there is still a not yet dimension when in the new creation of Revelation 21 and 22 we find the ultimate restoration of the temple, we find the ultimate restoration of God's temple presence with his people. So let's begin with the Gospels and I simply want to draw attention to the Gospels and to three

passages in the Gospels, one of them in Matthew and then two of them in the Gospel of John.

Actually, there are two in Matthew and then the other two in the Gospel of John. Matthew is actually bookended by two intriguing references to God's presence with his people through the person of Jesus Christ. So, Matthew, Matthew chapter 1 as part of Matthew's book Birth Narrative and Infancy Narrative, Matthew chapter 1 begins with the story of Jesus' birth in verse 18, and then the story of how Joseph discovers that Mary is pregnant and he's not sure what to do and so an angel comes to him and says she will give birth to a son, you will give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.

Then Matthew adds all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet, the prophet Isaiah, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, and then Matthew goes on and interprets that which means God is with us. So, already, Matthew has set up how he wants you to understand Jesus Christ as God with us. God's presence will now be resident in or God's presence will now come to earth in the form or in the presence of the person of Jesus Christ.

Matthew chapter 1, verse 23. But then the book ends, and I think we need to read the end of this statement. We are going to read it in a moment, and the book ends similarly to the way it begins. So in Matthew 28 in the famous and well-known great commission passage, Matthew ends by having Jesus say, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me; therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all I have commanded you and here is how Matthew ends, and surely I am with you always to the end of the age.

So, Matthew begins and ends with God's presence with his people through the person of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ, God is now with us. Christ is with us and in the person of Christ God's presence is now with us.

So at least the book of Matthew seems to anticipate that God's presence is now resident in or visible, and God's presence now resides in the person of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ God is now with his people. Now two other texts in the gospel, and that is in the gospel of John.

Probably the most well-known one is found in John chapter 2. John chapter 2 and verses 19 and 20, I believe, are the ones I want. John chapter 2. More than any of the other gospels, John frequently has Jesus eclipsing or replacing or, better, bringing to fulfillment various institutions or things from the Old Testament. Now, in chapter 2, we find Jesus saying this.

This is in the context of Jesus clearing or cleansing the temple. Then, in verse 18, the Jews demanded of him. This is John 2 verse 18. What miraculous sign can you show us to prove you have the authority to do all this? Then Jesus answered them, destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days. The Jews replied, it has taken 46 years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days? Verse 21, but the temple he had spoken of was his body.

So, already, John has this statement that seems to equate Jesus' body with the temple or suggests that Jesus now replaces the temple or, better, that Jesus brings fulfillment to what the temple intended. That is God's intention for the temple. That is God's intention to dwell with his people now takes place in the person of Jesus Christ.

But before you ever get to chapter 2 there is something else that sets you up to read it this way. That is all the way back in John chapter 1 and verse 14. John chapter 1 and verse 14, the so-called prologue to the gospel, basically has one of its functions to prepare you to read the rest of the gospel.

But in John, chapter 1, verse 14, we read the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father full of grace and truth. Now, this is a text that we frequently read at Christmas time, and we find this sometimes on Christmas cards, those that have a religious flavor to them.

But there are far more far-reaching effects of this verse than just something that we read at Christmas time. The key is the understanding of that word. The word became flesh and dwelt among us.

That word is often what we are told, and it is even translated as tented or tabernacled. So, some have concluded that what this verse is saying is that Jesus took up temporary residence on this earth. He came and kind of set up a tent for a short period of time before dying and ascending to heaven.

But I think this utterly misses the connection to the Old Testament, and this misses exactly what John is trying to tell us, and that is John is forging a connection with the Tabernacle and the temple in the Old Testament. In fact, the Greek verb used here, tabernacled or dwelt, depending on how the English translation is translated, recalls God's dwelling in the Tabernacle or the temple in the Old Testament. The Greek word is probably close equivalent to the Hebrew Mishkan, which is translated as dwelling.

For example, in Exodus chapter 25 and verse 9. Exodus 25 and verse 9. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. And then actually Leviticus 8. A couple of books and chapters later, Leviticus chapter 8 and

verse 10. Then Moses took the anointing, the oil, and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them.

And the Greek word here, the verb dwelled or tabernacled, recalls that word to describe the tabernacle where God dwelled with his people in the Old Testament. So, the point here is not that God, Jesus Christ, took up temporary residence among his people. Yes, he did that.

But that is not the point of this word. The word dwelt deliberately recalls the tabernacle and temple and God's presence in them from the Old Testament. In fact, the next word, glory, also recalls the Old Testament.

We saw in Ezekiel that God's glory filled the temple, and God's glory filled the Tabernacle elsewhere. So, the word glory once more recalls God's tabernacling or his temple presence in the Old Testament. One very interesting text in connection with this is Ezekiel, chapter 43.

In Ezekiel chapter 43 I want to read the first seven verses. We have already read a couple of them in connection with the Garden of Eden and facing east. But what I want you to note is in John chapter 1 verse 14, those two words, the word became flesh and dwelt among us, the verb dwelt, and we beheld his glory.

Those same two words, the verb for dwell and the word glory, occur together in Ezekiel 43 in connection with God's glory dwelling in or entering the temple. So, I will start with verse 1 of Ezekiel 43. Then the man, the angel showing Ezekiel this vision, brought me to the gate of the temple facing east, and I saw the glory, the glory of God of Israel coming from the east.

His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. The vision I saw was like the vision I had when he came to destroy the city, and like the visions I had seen by the Kibar River, I fell face down. The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east.

Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner court, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple, saying, Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I live among the Israelites forever.

The house of Israel will never again defile my holy name, nor will the kings by their prostitution and lifeless idols, and their kings and their places. So that language, the place where I will live, and then the language of glory are both now reflected in John chapter 1 and verse 14. So what John is saying is not that this was a temporary or temporal sojourn of Jesus on earth, though that was true, but instead, he is once

more saying, in the person of Jesus Christ, God's intention for the temple has now been fulfilled.

God's glory that entered the temple in the Old Testament has now taken up residence in Jesus Christ, and it's in the person of Christ that God now dwells with his people. The tabernacling presence of God is now present with his people in the person of Jesus Christ. So then later on, John can say in chapter 2, Jesus is the temple.

Jesus was speaking about his temple, the body, not a physical structure. So, in the gospels, we already find anticipations that God's intention for the garden of Eden to dwell with humanity, which then began to be fulfilled in the tabernacle and temple where God's glory dwelled in and filled the tabernacle and temple, and anticipated in the prophets after Israel was exiled, even when they returned to their land. God's intention to dwell in his temple, anticipated in the prophets, now begins to find its fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ, the true temple of God, where God's presence now resides and where God now begins to dwell with his people.

And so, in the next section, we'll look briefly at the book of Acts and then begin to look at some of the other literature in the New Testament and how they begin to develop the temple theme as well.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 6, the temple in the Old Testament.