

## Session 8: Symbols: Temple and Torah

*What were the central unifying symbols of Judaism and how did Jesus affirm, challenge, or redefine them?*

*This session will look in particular at what Jesus had to say about the Temple and the Torah.*

## Symbols: Temple

For those with ears to hear...

Deuteronomy 4:7

1 Kings 8:27

Isaiah 57:15

John 1:14

John 1:51 (compare  
Gen 28:12-17)

John 2:19-22

John 4:19-23

'In the temple, Yahweh comes near. He does not remain at a distance to hear prayer and flick a distant switch. He enters into Israel's space, to open his eyes and ears to their cries and to stretch out the arms of his temple towards his people. For such a God, coming in human flesh is the most natural thing in the world' (P Leithart on '1 Kings 8:1-66' in 1-2 Kings: SCM Theological Commentary. SCM Press, 2006, p.70)

'The temple, from the beginning, had as its whole raison d'être the dwelling of Israel's God in the midst of his people, and the daily and yearly sacrifices through which fellowship with this God, and forgiveness from this God, were assured... the Temple has for too long been the forgotten factor in New Testament Christology' (NT Wright, Jesus' Self-Understanding, in The Incarnation, ed. Stephen T. Davis. Oxford, 1996)

# Symbols: Temple

## Out of House and Home

2 Samuel 7

David's tent

*Salom-on*

*Jeru-Salem*

| Law ( <i>Torah</i> )                                     | Prophets ( <i>Nevi'im</i> )   | Writings ( <i>Ketuvim</i> )                                     |
|--|---|---|
| Genesis<br>Exodus<br>Leviticus<br>Numbers<br>Deuteronomy | Joshua<br>Judges<br>Samuel<br>Kings (1-2)   | Psalms<br>Job<br>Proverbs                                       |
|  | Isaiah<br>Jeremiah<br>Ezekiel<br>The Book of the 12<br>(Ho, Joel, Am, Ob, Jonah, Mi,<br>Na, Hab, Zo, Hag, Zc, Ma) | Ruth<br>Song of Songs<br>Ecclesiastes<br>Lamentations<br>Esther |
|  |   | Daniel<br>Ezra-Nehemiah<br>Chronicles (1-2)                     |

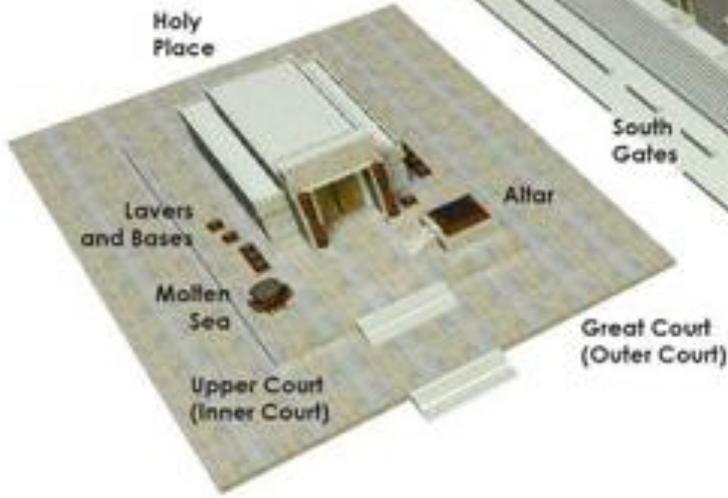
| When God moved in: Holy Fire       |
|------------------------------------|
| 2 Chronicles 7:1-3<br>Isaiah 6:1-6 |

| When God moved out: Unholy Fire          |
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| Jeremiah 7:4-11<br>2 Chronicles 36:18-19 |

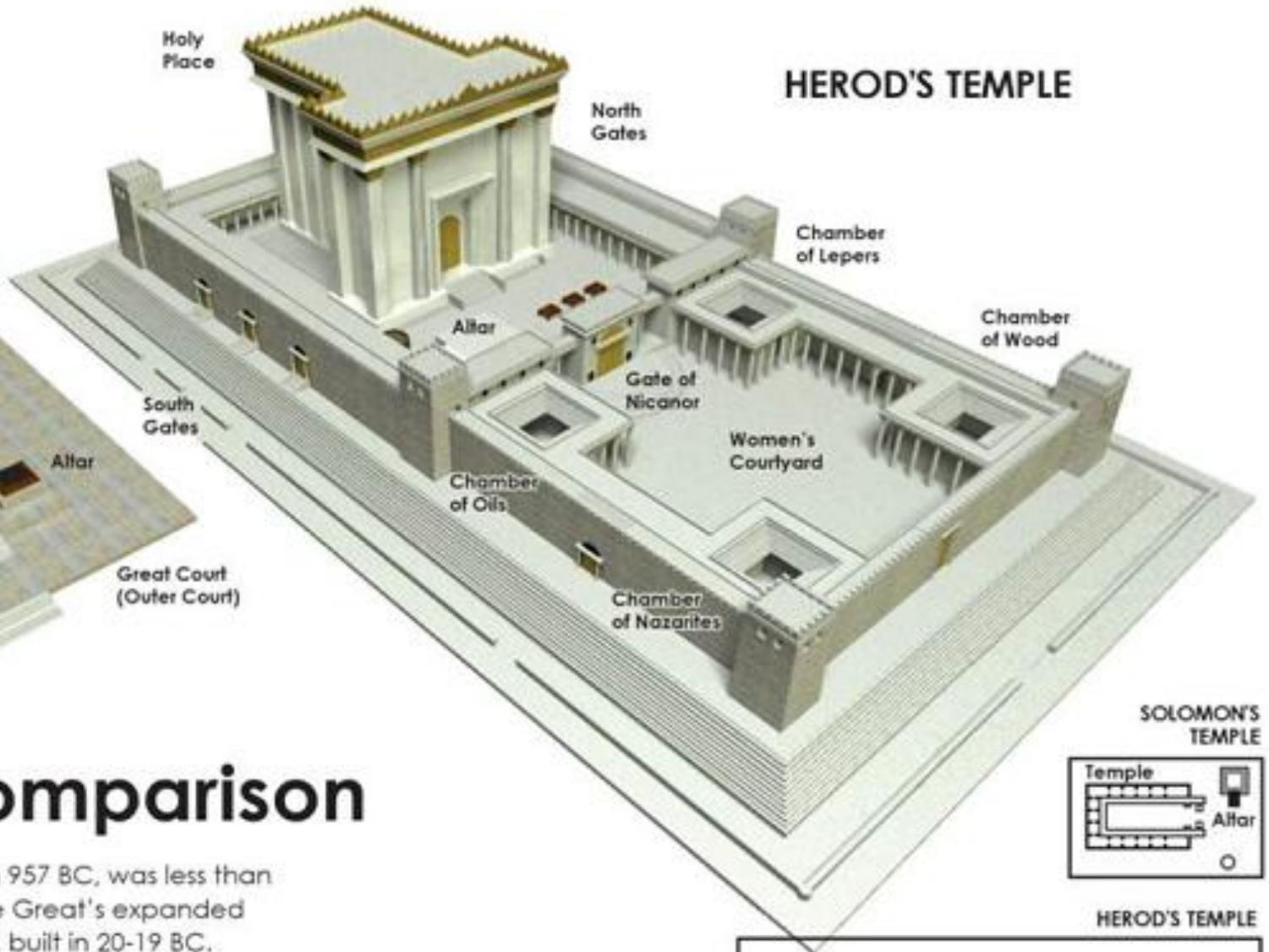
| A Long way from Home                |
|-------------------------------------|
| 2 Chronicles 36:22-23<br>Ezra 1:1-4 |

| Homecoming: Holy Fire                              |
|--|
| Malachi 3:1-2<br>(cf. Song of Songs 8v6-8; Luke 3) |

## SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

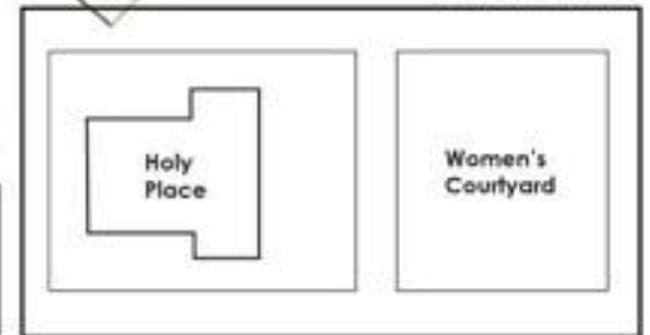
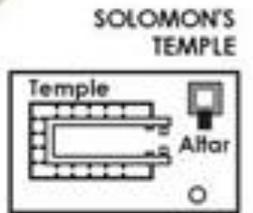


## HEROD'S TEMPLE



# Temple Comparison

Solomon's Temple, finished in 957 BC, was less than one-half the size of Herod the Great's expanded Second Temple in Jerusalem, built in 20-19 BC.



## Symbols: Temple

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“Someone greater than Solomon is here”

### Jesus and Herod's Temple (Luke 1, 2, 3)

#### Matthew 21:12-16

‘And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.” And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?”’

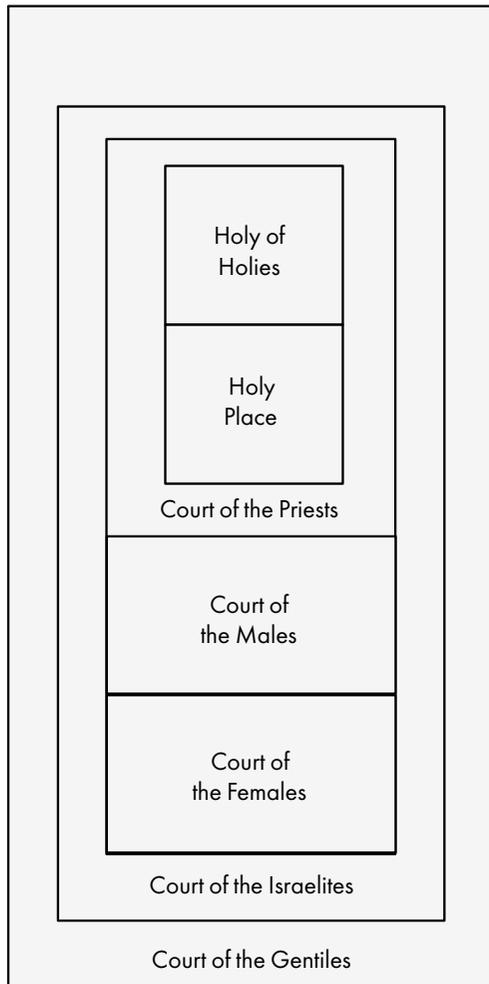
#### Matthew 21:19-22

‘Seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”’

‘The incarnate temple of God enacts the coming judgment on the architectural temple, a judgment he spells out at length in Matthew 24’. (Leithart, 1-2 Kings, p66)

## Symbols: Temple

### Location, Location, Location



‘This was no clean-up operation, but a sign that the Temple itself was under judgment. Jesus was challenging, in the name of Israel’s God, the very place where God was supposed to live...God would destroy the city and the temple, but... would vindicate Jesus himself.’

(N.T. Wright, Simply Christian, p.93)

‘Why would Jesus banish the traders? [...] I suspect the answer lies [in] the mechanics of what actually happened in the Temple. Without the Temple-tax, the regular daily sacrifices could not be supplied. Without the right money, individual worshippers could not purchase their sacrificial animals. Without animals, sacrifice could not be offered.

Without sacrifice, the Temple had lost its whole *raison d’être*. The fact that Jesus effected only a brief cessation of sacrifice fits perfectly with the idea of a symbolic action. He was not attempting a reform; he was symbolising judgment [...] The brief disruption Jesus effected in the Temple’s normal business symbolised the destruction which would overtake the whole institution within a generation.’

(N.T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God, p422-424 )

To be Continued...

Mark 15 and the stone the builders rejected

Acts 2-5 and the Temple made of people

# Symbols: Torah

## What is Torah and what is its purpose?

| The Law   |   |
|---|---|
| OT ( <i>Torah</i> )   | NT ( <i>Nomos</i> )   |
| <p>- The Law: Instructions which the people of God need to obey. Blessings accompany obedience and there are consequences for disobedience.</p> | <p>- What is required by the Law (Matt 5:18-19; Luke 2:22-24, 27, 39; John 7:19, 23, 51; 8:17; 19:7; Acts 6:13; 7:53; 13:39 etc)</p> <p>- A broad term for the OT Scriptures (Matt 22:36; Luke 10:26; John 7:49; 10:34; 12:34; 15:25, etc)</p> <p>- "The Law and the Prophets" as the Pentateuch (Matt 5:17; 7:12; 22:4; Luke 16:16; 24:44; John 1:45 etc.)</p> |

'In both the Old and New Testaments, the word law focuses on the commands and regulations of the Mosaic covenant. In most instances the word law does not refer to instruction in a general sense but concentrates on what God commands that his people do. In both the Old and New Testaments this is apparent, for verbs like "keep" and "do" are linked with the law.'

(Thomas Schreiner, *40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law*, p23)

- 'The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.' (Psalm 19:7)
- 'Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord... Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law... My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times... The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold... Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long... My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws... Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble... I long for your salvation, Lord, and your law gives me delight. Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me.' (Psalm 119:1, 18, 20, 72, 97, 120, 137, 165, 174-175)
- 'The more Torah the more life" (M. Aboth 2:7)

## Symbols: Torah

What did Jesus do with the Torah? Destroy it, reinforce it or fulfil it?

What does it mean that Jesus 'fulfilled' the law?

Some people differentiate between moral, ceremonial and civil laws. Is that a helpful distinction? If so, are any of these still binding?

Jesus said he didn't come abolish the law, so is it still binding? And if not, why not?

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-20)

What did Jesus mean about the need for righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees?

## Symbols: Torah

What was the original intention of Torah and how does Jesus apply it?



| Sabbath  | Food Laws   |
|--|---|
| <p><u>Healing on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17)</u></p> <p>What does Sabbath represent?</p> <p>How does Jesus fulfil the Sabbath law?</p>   | <p><u>What goes into a man... (Mark 7:1-23; Matt 15:1-20)</u></p> <p>What was Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees? (Mark 7:9-13)</p> <p>On what grounds does Jesus declare all foods to be clean?</p> |
| <p><u>Picking Corn (Mark 2:23-28)</u></p> <p>What was the context of the David story?</p> <p>If Jesus is like David, and the disciples are like David's crew, who are the Pharisees?</p> |   |