

“In My Father’s House”

***The Theme of TEMPLE from Genesis to Revelation -
What the Bible is All About From Start to Finish***

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Title: *Trinity – Before the World Began*

Text: John 17

Reading: Job 38

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Introduction

T - Trinity (John 17:5, 24)

E - Eden

M - Moses

P - Poetry & Prophets

L - Lamb

E - Eden Excelled

This morning we begin to trace the TEMPLE from Genesis to Revelation – we begin before the world was, in eternity past when there was only – God. This is why we have called the “T” *Trinity*. Before the beginning, there was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity. One God, one divine essence, with three Persons in that One.

Some Preliminaries

TEMPLE. What is a temple? A temple is a structure of some kind *where deity and humanity meet*. Right? Most of the world’s temples are, of

course, devoted to idols and false gods. But you still see the thing – their purpose is to facilitate the meeting of the gods with men. Often there are some mediatorial trappings – a priesthood, an altar, sacrifices, and so on. Perhaps some idol statue. Never take the word “temple” lightly, by the way. When something is designated “temple” – there is some “god” involved in the thing, and unless that god is the living and true God, then that temple is somehow connected with idolatry (Elks club temple, Masonic temple, Scottish Rite temple, Mormon temple, etc).

Our study of TEMPLE in the Bible is going to demonstrate that the true temple of the living and true God is radically different than any other temple. All temples are built by man, according to man’s design, prompted by man’s idolatrous and selfish motives. But the true temple of God is God’s doing, according to God’s design. Man’s temples are the product of man looking up – like the tower of Babel. God’s true temple is the result of God coming down among us, and as we will see, the design of His temple grows more and more and more radically different as the ages have progressed.

As we saw last time, TEMPLE is the Father’s desire, decreed in eternity past and carried out through the Son by the Spirit, of dwelling among His people, being their God, manifesting His glory to them, adopting them into His family in His Son, in perfect fellowship – to have us dwell in the Father’s House, as we have put it.

Revelation 21:3-4 ESV

(3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

(4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 21:3-4 NBLH

(3) Entonces oí una gran voz que decía desde el trono: "El tabernáculo de Dios está entre los hombres, y El habitará entre ellos y ellos serán Su pueblo, y Dios mismo estará entre ellos. (4) "El enjugará toda lágrima de sus ojos, y ya no habrá muerte, ni habrá más duelo, ni clamor, ni dolor, porque las primeras cosas han pasado."

A Dream House

Recently I have been doing some reading on the history of Tillamook County, particularly around Pacific City and Oretown. In the history books there are pictures of houses built over 100 years ago. Some of them – many of them – were people’s dream houses. One is the present Health Department building in Cloverdale, built by Charles Ray. Another of them that is still standing is the Clyde Hudson house which is now a bed and breakfast on highway 101. Dream houses. But most are long since gone – or the people who built them from their dreams are gone, and most likely life in those houses turned out to be not such a fine dream after all. Our dream houses are quite imperfect, and they don’t last.

And worse yet – “*My Father’s House*” is a term of grief and pain and terror for many people. In this sinful and fallen world, the place where we should be the safest, the most loved, the most joyful, too often turns out to be a most dangerous place, a place of abuse and scarring –

“Sylvia Fraser, in her book My Father’s House – A Memoir of Abuse and of Healing, writes, ‘My father’s house was a 3-story, frame building on a shady street in Hamilton, Ontario. Our lawn was always neatly trimmed, our leaves raked and our snow shoveled. No one drank in my father’s house, no one smoked, and no one took the Lord’s name in vain. My mother planted a victory garden and canned the tomatoes. My sister and I made seasonal dandelion chains, leaf piles, and snow angels. Though my father worked on shifts at the Steel Company of Canada, he always wore a white shirt, navy suit and tie to his job as a steel inspector...I was born into my father’s house before noon on March 8, 1935...

I feared the house that knew. In my imagination, monsters prowled the cubbyholes – my monstrous secret – the familiar had proven to be treacherous. Inside my own house, among people I knew, was where the danger lay.”

Sylvia, sadly, never came into the true Father’s house – at least at the time she wrote her book. In fact, her parents’ façade of regular church attendance and active church membership embittered her against her heavenly Father who was offering her a house and home that would give her all she needed and more.

If you do a search through the Psalms for the term “house,” you will find many references to the “house of the Lord.” And in those references you find descriptions of what life is like in the Father’s house. It is all you have ever dreamt of, and far, far more – more than man is even capable of conceiving of. The Father’s House is –

- Permanent
- A Home with real family
- No separations
- No evictions
- No fear of break in or crime
- No death, no sickness, no broken relationships
- Plenty of room for all
- *And perfect relationship with the Father*

THIS is what the Bible is about. THIS is the TEMPLE – God’s unstoppable purpose in Christ to bring His people into His house to live with Him. To bring us, in other words, back to Eden and even beyond Eden. Is that relevant? Well, just ask people to pause for a moment and take a look at “life” in this world. Things have gone badly *wrong*. By God’s sheer mercy, we enjoy some good things. But we live under the shadow of death – sin has had its terrible effects. The Bible is the account of how our Creator is rescuing and repairing, renovating and redeeming it all.

The Temple and Christ

We will also notice that the TEMPLE cannot be traced through the Bible apart from Christ. After all, as we will learn, Christ Himself is the Temple of God – He came to *tabernacle/tent* among men and He spoke of His body as the Temple [“destroy this temple and in 3 days....]. He is the door through which men must enter the Temple. His perfect obedience for us, His role as our Great High Priest, Himself given for us as spotless Lamb – all of these things are intimately interwoven in God’s great purpose of dwelling among us, of turning our rebel hearts into hearts that love Him, so that we might see His glory and praise Him forever and ever.

A temple is *a place of meeting between man and God*. The accompanying temple service facilitates that meeting (sacrifices, a priesthood, etc). When Christ entered this world in human flesh, he was the Temple of God, the High Priest of that Temple, and the Lamb sacrificed. To come into the Father’s House is to come into Christ.

“Another way of saying this is that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). God’s word to us in the Bible is mediated to us through Jesus Christ. There is no direct word from the Father to you or me. Every word of the Father comes to us through the person and work of Jesus. Even the words of the Old Testament are mediated through Christ in that we only know what God is saying to us through them when we see them fulfilled in Christ. Linked with this is the fact that the relationship of Jesus to the Father is the relationship to the Father that we share with him; we are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). All facts in the universe, including the facts of the Bible, must be interpreted in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.” [According to Plan – The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible, Graeme Goldsworthy].

The Progression of the Temple

And we will see a *progression in the intimacy of God's dwelling among His people* as the various forms of the Temple appear –

- The pillar of cloud and fire in the Exodus
- A tabernacle in the wilderness with a tent of meeting where the Lord would speak with Moses
- The temple built by Solomon upon which the glory of God descended (and from which it departed in judgment)
- The rebuilt temple after the exile, under Ezra and Nehemiah
- The Word become flesh, tabernacling among us, revealing the Father's glory more clearly than ever before
- The coming of the Spirit on Pentecost, now come to inhabit the temple of the believer's own body, and the temple which is the Church
- Until finally there will be no need for a temple, because God and His people will be in perfect union

With each advance into the next stage of the history of God's redemption of His people in Christ, *He draws closer and closer and closer to us, until one day* –

1 Corinthians 13:12 ESV (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:12 NBLH

(12) Porque ahora vemos por un espejo, veladamente, pero entonces veremos cara a cara. Ahora conozco en parte, pero entonces conoceré plenamente, como he sido conocido.

1 John 3:2 ESV (2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2 NBLH

(2) Amados, ahora somos hijos de Dios y aún no se ha manifestado lo que habremos de ser. Pero sabemos que cuando Cristo se manifieste, seremos semejantes a El, porque Lo veremos como El es.

I hope that your appetite is adequately primed now – let’s begin our journey with the first letter - **T**

T – Trinity (John 17)

Now, we are going to spend much more time and go into more detail in this sermon series than you will need to in your presentation of TEMPLE to someone. You are only going to need to remember the particular stage of redemptive history that each letter stands for, and one or perhaps two Scripture references that explain and illustrate each stage. You don’t even have to have the Scriptures memorize, though you certainly can.

The **T** stands for Trinity, as a way of representing eternity past before God created the universe. And if you will turn with me in your Bible to John chapter 17, the Lord Jesus Himself will take us back to that “time.”

John 17:5 ESV

(5) And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with **the glory that I had with you** before the world existed.

John 17:5 NBLH

(5) "Y ahora, glorifícame Tú, Padre, junto a Ti, con **la gloria que tenía contigo** antes que el mundo existiera.

John 17:24 ESV

(24) Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, **to see my glory** that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

John 17:24 NBLH

(24) "Padre, quiero que los que Me has dado, estén también conmigo donde Yo estoy, **para que vean Mi gloria**, la gloria que Me has dado; porque Me has amado desde antes de la fundación del mundo.

"...the glory that I had with you before the world existed...because you loved me before the foundation of the world."

John chapter 17 is, of course, called "the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ." He is prayed for the people He represents, the elect whom the Father has given Him. Notice carefully that He specifically says that He does not pray for the salvation of the whole world, but only for those the Father has given Him. Why? Because as High Priest, He is about to do an effectual work of redemption for the elect and will actually redeem them out of the world.

In the course of this prayer, the Lord Jesus makes reference at least twice to that era of eternity past – before the world existed – which we are calling T-rinity. This is really the beginning of the story – prior to the "in the beginning" of Genesis 1. For all eternity past, without beginning, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit existed in perfection, in glory, in need of nothing. In the beginning, *God* – because God was already there. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All created things were created by decree of the Father through the Son by the Spirit.

Now, here is the thing to take note of. Our Lord says that before the foundation of the world, he enjoyed –

- Perfect glory
- Perfect love

Why is this so important? Because, we must understand –

"God did not need us! God does not need us. God lacked nothing before man ever entered Eden. Until we understand

this, and until we admit this, we will never really understand the grace of God in Christ. God does not need me! Yet He wants me - for no reason to be found in me.”

God is self-sufficient, self-existent. He is reliant upon no one. He needs nothing. He is eternal, his very existence or rather – *being* – proceeds from Himself.

Psalm 90:2 ESV

(2) Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:2 NBLH

(2) Antes que los montes fueran engendrados, Y nacieran la tierra y el mundo, Desde la eternidad y hasta la eternidad, Tú eres Dios.

Job 38:4 ESV

(4) "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

Job 38:4 NBLH (4) ¿Dónde estabas tú cuando Yo echaba los cimientos de la tierra? Dímelo, si tienes inteligencia.

Acts 17:24-25 ESV

(24) The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,

(25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Acts 17:24-25 NBLH

(24) "El Dios que hizo el mundo y todo lo que en él hay , puesto que es Señor del cielo y de la tierra, no mora en templos hechos por manos de hombres , (25) ni es servido por manos humanas, como

si necesitara de algo, puesto que El da a todos vida y aliento y todas las cosas.

The gods of the pagans most often are portrayed as being in some way dependent upon man's service. Man creates such gods. A god with a need can be manipulated, appeased, bribed. *But what are we to do with a God who needs NOTHING, who doesn't even need US? Such a God can never be bought because there is nothing He needs to buy!* His glory is perfect – He does not even need our worship.

What is your concept then, of God? Of yourself? Do you understand that right now we are back in eternity past? That is to say, we are still at **T – rinity**. We have not yet arrived at Eden, and certainly not yet at the Fall and the entrance of sin and death into the world. No. We are back before the foundation of the world when there was only – *God*. So we are not yet speaking of God's grace toward sinners properly. What we are talking about is this –

“That God did not even need Adam in his unfallen, perfect state. Adam and Eve, before their fall, were not meeting some need in God. God, for all eternity past, without beginning – enjoyed glory and perfection in fellowship – Father, Son, and Spirit.”

Notice that Jesus, in His prayer, speaks of “the glory” He had with the Father before creation. And notice that *it is this glory, and specifically the display of this glory, that is driving this whole plan of bringing us into the Father's House*. “ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, **to see my glory** that you have given me...”. The Father's glorification of the Son is motivated by the Father's love for the Son. Now that love is set upon the elect, so that they might see this thing! It is the very same thing Paul is talking about in Ephesians 1 –

Ephesians 1:3-12 ESV (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

(4) **even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

(5) he predestined us **for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ**, according to the purpose of his will,

(6) **to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

(7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

(8) which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

(9) making known to us the mystery of his will, **according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ**

(10) as a plan for the fullness of time, **to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**

(11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

(12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory.**

Ephesians 1:3-12 NBLH

(3) Bendito sea el Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, que nos ha bendecido con toda bendición espiritual en los lugares celestiales en Cristo.

(4) **Porque Dios nos escogió en Cristo antes de la fundación del mundo**, para que fuéramos santos y sin mancha delante de El. En amor

(5) **nos predestinó para adopción como hijos para sí mediante Jesucristo**, conforme a la buena intención de Su voluntad,

(6) **para alabanza de la gloria de Su gracia** que gratuitamente ha impartido sobre nosotros en el Amado. (7) En El tenemos redención mediante Su sangre, el perdón de nuestros pecados según las riquezas de Su gracia

(8) que ha hecho abundar para con nosotros. En toda sabiduría y discernimiento
(9) nos dio a conocer el misterio de Su voluntad, **según la buena intención que se propuso en Cristo,**
(10) con miras a una buena administración en el cumplimiento de los tiempos, es decir, **de reunir todas las cosas en Cristo,** tanto las que están en los cielos, como las que están en la tierra.
(11) También en El hemos obtenido herencia, habiendo sido predestinados según el propósito de Aquél que obra todas las cosas conforme al consejo de Su voluntad,
(12) a fin de que nosotros, que fuimos los primeros en esperar en Cristo (el Mesías), seamos **para alabanza de Su gloria.**

And isn't this glory what the Apostle Paul saw, at least a glimpse of it – and could not even put into words?

Conclusion

Revelation 21:3-4 ESV

(3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

(4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

*How wonderful, how beautiful,
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
And awful purity!*

*No earthly father loves like Thee,
No mother half so mild*

*Bears and forbears, as Thou has done
With me, Thy sinful child.*

*O how I fear Thee, living God,
With deepest, tendrest fears;
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears.*

*Yet I may love Thee too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art;
For Thou has stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.*

*Father of Jesus, love's reward,
What rapture will it be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie
And gaze, and gaze, on Thee! [Frederick Faber]*

“Tell me please – what is the Bible all about anyway? How could it possibly have any relevance to me?”

Answer: The Bible is a book given to us by God in which He tells us what has gone wrong with us and how, through His Son Jesus Christ, we can be put right with Him again. The story begins before the world ever began -

T – Trinity. John 17:5, 24. Needing nothing – not even us – God desired to share the wonders of Himself – His glory. Father, Son, and Spirit agreed – and set out to accomplish it.

Genesis 1:(1) In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (2) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (3) And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.