

- What's the biggest difference between the old and the new temples?
- What part do you have in this new kind of temple?

When God Moved into the Tabernacle

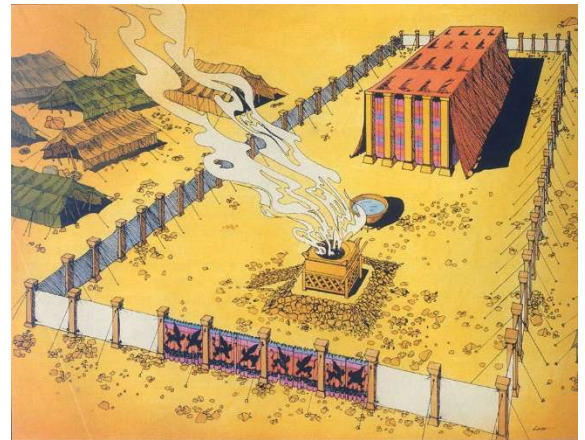
When the Jewish people left Egypt, and escaped being slaves, God met with Moses on Mount Sinai. While he was on the mountain, God gave him instructions so that there would be a special place where God could continue to meet with His chosen people after they left the area around Mount Sinai. Take a look at Exodus 40:34-35 to see what happened when God moved into the tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build.

God Moved into the Tabernacle

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:34-35, ESV)

God made His presence known. First, God descended from heaven onto Mount Sinai, where Moses met with God, and the sound of trumpets was heard (Exodus 19:13, 16, & 19). A trumpet makes a sound when wind is blown through it. We think of a trumpet as producing the sound, but actually it's the air being blown through a trumpet that creates the sound. The trumpet's sound then, is the sound of wind being blown through a trumpet. Second, fire descended from heaven onto Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:19). Third, when the tabernacle was dedicated, God's glory filled the tabernacle (Exodus 43:34).

Notice this pattern. A similar pattern occurred one other time. That time was when the temple that King Solomon built for God was dedicated.



When God Moved into the Temple Built by Solomon

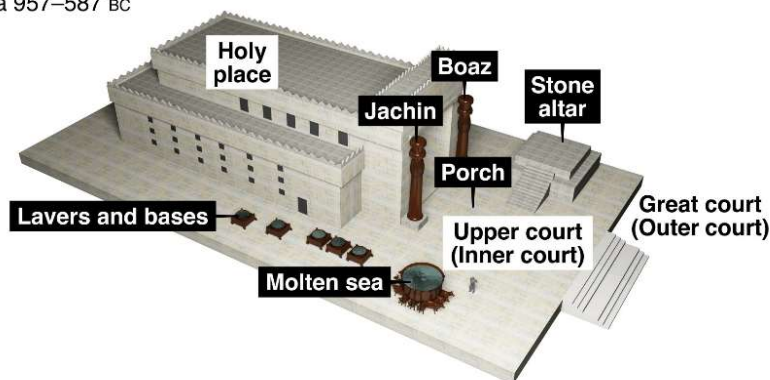
As I said earlier, David had wanted to build a permanent building where God could be worshipped, but God turned him down. The honor of building the Temple went to David's son, King Solomon. We find the account of the time when the presence of God moved into the Temple built by King Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:1-2.

God Moved into the Temple

¹As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. ² And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. (2 Chronicles 7:1-2, ESV)

Solomon's Temple

Circa 957–587 BC



The pattern is now familiar. God made His presence known. First, when fire came down from heaven and consumed the offering placed on the altar (2 Chronicles 7:1) it would have made a loud sound. When fire came down from heaven and burned up the offering on the altar it would have certainly made a lot of noise. There would have been wind also. Second, fire itself came down from heaven (2 Chronicles 7:1). Third, "the glory of the Lord filled the Temple" (2 Chronicles 7:1).

But No Mention of God Moving into Any Other Temple

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah we can read about a temple that was built when the Jewish people returned from exile. However, there is no mention of the presence of God moving into the temple. When Herod built the temple in Jerusalem that existed in Jesus' day, there was no mention of the presence of God moving into it. Yet, Jesus did refer to it as "my Father's house" (Luke 2:49; John 2:16). But it does leave us wondering if God ever moved into any other Temple than the one built by King Solomon, as God had also moved into the tabernacle.

A Different Kind of Temple

One day Jesus was talking to His disciples. They were visiting the Temple in Jerusalem. The disciples were impressed with the beauty and grandeur of the temple that King Herod had built.

Jesus said He was a temple

John 2:19–22 (ESV)

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Can you imagine what it was like to hear Jesus say, "Destroy this temple in and three days I will raise it up" (John 2:20). The disciples had no idea what Jesus meant. We're told that they didn't understand the meaning of Jesus' words until after He died on the cross and rose again. Shortly before He spoke these words Jesus had driven merchants and money changers out of the Temple.



It's different for us, when we read these words. Jesus' physical, human body was the living, breathing temple of God, even though it was not a building made of stone, the building near to where He stood when He spoke these words.

Years later, the Apostle Paul said that believers are "the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16). Paul develops this idea in Ephesians 2:21, where we read that we are being built into a dwelling for God.

The Apostle Peter stated that believers are "living stones" that are being built into a house for God or a temple. He goes on to say that Jesus was the cornerstone of this temple.

Jesus was "the stone that the builders rejected" (1 Peter 2:5-7). Jesus was the cornerstone, or the foundation of the temple. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 28:16, "therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'"

Jesus was the foundation of this new type of temple of the living God. Believers are living stones that are being fitted together to become a dwelling of God.

When did God take up residence in this temple?

When God Moved into the Expansion of the New Kind of Temple

Just after Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:6-11) the disciples were gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, one of the annual feasts of the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit came, as Jesus had promised (Acts 1:1-15).

The Holy Spirit Filled the New Temple

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4. ESV)

God made His presence known. First, came the sound of a “mighty rushing wind” (Acts 2:2). Second, “tongues” of “fire” rested on the head of each believer (Acts 2:3). Third, the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

We saw this pattern when God moved into the tabernacle and the temple built by King Solomon. It helps to explain the meaning of what happened on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came.

Just as Jesus had been a temple of God, because God lived in a human body, those who are in Christ become a part of the same temple. When a person believes in Jesus Christ as his or her savior, he or she becomes part of this temple. The events on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 show that the Holy Spirit was moving into the people who were becoming part of this temple. They were becoming part of the body of Jesus (2Corinthians 12:27). They were becoming part of the temple of God (1Corinthians 3:16). By the way, when Paul writes “you are the body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:16), the “you” is plural. Paul is saying that Christians, as a group, are the body of Christ. All Christians put together are one temple and are part of the temple where Jesus is the chief cornerstone (1Peter 2:7). There aren’t lots of different temples, there is one temple.

What’s the Biggest Difference Between Old and the New Temples?

Did you notice that when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and the temple that no one could enter? When the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, Moses was unable to enter (Exodus 40:35). When the glory of the Lord filled the temple, the priests were unable to enter (2 Chronicles 7:2).

But when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and came to rest as tongues of fire over the believers’ heads, He entered into them and filled them with His presence (Acts 2:4). Instead of preventing people from entering the temple, the Holy Spirit entered people and they became the temple.

How could things be so very different? Because in Christ, believers have been transformed into a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17) who have been “born again” (John 3:16). They are different than they were before believing in Jesus. To a large extent this transformation is invisible to human beings, but God is aware of the difference. Before this transformation a human being could not survive even seeing God’s face. After being “born again” God can indwell a believer, and dwell within him or her, by the Holy Spirit. This transformation will be visible to other human beings when the love of Jesus (John 13:35 & 1 John 4:7) and His righteousness (John 14:15 & 1 John 2:29) becomes visible in the actions and words of a believer.

Are You a Living Stone in God’s Temple?

The temple of the living God is where people can encounter the presence of God. That’s a tall order for believers. But, it really isn’t up to the believer to make it happen. God is the one who makes it happen.

Is it happening? If there are no indications of Jesus love or righteousness in your words or actions, then you really need to come to Jesus and ask Him to make you into a new person who is forgiven and transformed to be like Jesus. And, if you are seeing God’s transforming power at work then take a moment to praise God and give Him thanks that now you are a living stone in God’s living, breathing temple.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple (John 2:13–22)

S W E J T S R L G H A N F
R J S A W A Y O X E N V D
E G K D I I B A W O X K D
G E M S R D C L D D V S L
N X E S U O H L E I E U O
A T L L I A C N R S K S T
H F A N N E R Y U C A E G
C O S D V U I P O I M J N
- U U O T N O I P P G O I
Y N R R H P J G L L U D T
E D E R E B M E M E R S T
N V J E R E V O S S A P I
O T H R E E G N I L L E S
M S T H I N G S O L D A Y

The **Passover** of the **Jews** was at **hand**, and **Jesus** went up to **Jerusalem**. In the **temple** he **found** those who were **selling oxen** and **sheep** and **pigeons**, and the money-changers **sitting there**. And **making** a whip of **cords**, he **drove** them all out of the **temple**, with the **sheep** and **oxen**. And he **poured** out the **coins** of the money-changers and **overturned** their **tables**. And he **told** those who **sold** the **pigeons**, “**Take** these **things away**; do not **make** my Father’s **house** a **house** of trade.” His **disciples remembered** that it was written, “Zeal for your **house** will consume me.” So the **Jews said** to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these **things**?” **Jesus** answered them, “Destroy this **temple**, and in **three days** I will **raise** it up.” The **Jews** then **said**, “It has taken forty-six years to build this **temple**, and will you **raise** it up in **three days**?” But he was speaking about the **temple** of his body. When therefore he was **raised** from the dead, his **disciples remembered** that he had **said** this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that **Jesus** had spoken.

([ESV](#))