

THE TEMPLE

"One of the overarching themes in the Scriptures is the idea that God desires to live amongst His people. He loves us so much that He wants to live and be with us. This was the reality in the garden until we chose our way over God's way. Sinful, we could no longer be in the presence of the Most Holy God. We chose to go our own way, but He never chose to abandon us. He goes with us, draws near to us, moves heaven and earth to be with us. The Creator of the universe comes and lives in a box in order to be with His people. One of His greatest desires is for us to be in His presence."

A Follow Up from Last Week

Here's the graphic for the breakdown of the Biblical books:

The Sin & Atonement Bible Project Video

Here's the Bible Project's video on this theme: https://youtu.be/G_OIRWGLdnw

Old Testament - 39 books			New Testament - 27 Books	
The Pentateuch - 5	Wisdom Books - 5	Major Prophets - 5	Gospels - 4	General Epistles - 8
Genesis	Job	Isaiah	Matthew	Hebrews
Exodus	Psalms	Jeremiah	Mark	James
Leviticus	Proverbs	Lamentations	Luke	I Peter
Numbers	Song of Songs	Ezekiel	John	II Peter
Deuteronomy	Ecclesiastes	Daniel		I John
			History - 1	II John
			Acts	III John
				Jude
				Apocalypse - 1
				Revelation
Historical Books - 12		Minor Prophets - 12	Paul's Epistles - 13	
Joshua		Hosea	Romans	
Judges		Joel	I Corinthians	
Ruth		Amos	II Corinthians	
I Samuel		Obadiah	Galatians	
II Samuel		Jonah	Ephesians	
I Kings		Michah	Colossians	
II Kings		Nahum	Philippians	
I Chronicles		Habakkuk	I Thessalonians	
II Chronicles		Zephaniah	II Thessalonians	
Ezra		Haggai	I Timothy	
Nehemiah		Zechariah	II Timothy	
Esther		Malachi	Titus	
			Philemon	

Summarizing the Biblical-Theological Case for Eden Being a Temple-Garden

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The garden of Eden was not just some Mesopotamian farmland, but an archetypal sanctuary or a temple-garden.[1] Though we often speak of "the Garden of Eden" as a single place, a close reading of the text reveals that Eden and the garden are distinct. Note especially Genesis 2:8, "The LORD God planted a garden in Eden." It's been suggested that the garden is attached to Eden, with Eden itself being the temple since "a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. 2:10).[2]

However, Genesis 1-3 does not explicitly state that Eden has an architectural structure, nor does it even use the word "temple" or "sanctuary" to describe it. So how do we know that it was a temple? Numerous scholars have argued for this understanding of Eden based on the many parallels that exist between the garden and later Israelite sanctuaries.[3] Here are twelve of those arguments in summary form.[4]

Just as the temple was the place of God's unique presence experienced by the priests, so Eden was the place where God walked with Adam. G.K. Beale notes, "The same Hebrew verbal form (Hithpael)

used for God's "walking back and forth" in the garden (Gen. 3:8) also describes God's presence in the tabernacle (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14 [23:15 MT]; 2 Sam. 7:6-7; Ezek. 28:14)."[6]

Adam is depicted as a priest with respect to his task, namely, "to work" (עָבַד) and "to keep" (שָׁמַר) the garden, which is the priest's task in the temple (Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chron. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14).[7] Adam also donned priestly attire (Ezek. 28:13ff.).

The cherubim assumed Adam's function to guard the tree of life (Gen. 3:24), which became memorialized in the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 25:18-22).

The "tree of life" (Gen. 2:9) was probably a model of the lampstand in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:31ff). [8]

Israel's tabernacle and temple had wood carvings that gave it a garden-like ambiance (1 Kings 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18-20).

Just as the entrance to Israel's later temple was to face east and be on a mountain, and just as the end-time temple of Ezekiel was to face east (Ezek. 40:6) and be on a mountain (Ezek. 40:2; 43:12), so the entrance to Eden faced east (Gen. 3:24) and was situated on a mountain (Ezek. 28:14-16).

The ark, which contained the law, in the Holy of Holies echoed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as both lead to wisdom.

As a river flowed out from Eden (Gen. 2:10), so a river flows from the eschatological temple (Ezek. 47:1-12; Rev. 21:1-2; cf. Ps. 36:8-9; Rev. 22:1-2).

Just as gold and onyx are in the garden (Gen. 2:11-12), so they are used to decorate the later sanctuaries and priestly garments (Exod. 25:7, 11, 17, 31).

Just as the temple had a tripartite structure of concentric circles of holiness (Holy of Holies > Holy Place > Courtyard), so the garden of Eden had the same (Eden > Garden > Outer World).

Ezekiel refers to "Eden, the garden of God... the holy mountain of God" and also alludes to it containing "sanctuaries" (28:18; cf. 7:24; Lev. 21:23; Jer. 51:51).

Just as the climax and purpose of creation was rest (Gen. 2:1-3), so the construction of the tabernacle culminates with rest (Exod. 31:12-17).

[1] G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986), 19.

[2] J.H. Walton, "Eden, Garden Of." In T.D. Alexander and D.W. Baker (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 202. The same idea is presented by G.K. Beale in *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 22, which includes a helpful figure.

[3] The following arguments are indebted to G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," 19-25 and G.K. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 617-22; cf. Beale, G.K. "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse and its Implications for Biblical Theology of the Temple." In *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, T.D. and S. Gathercole (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 197-199; idem., *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos IVP, 2004), 66-80; idem., "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005), 7-10. For an argument against viewing Eden as a temple see Daniel Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence." In *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013). While I do not find Block's essay persuasive, it does call for more caution in connecting the garden and the tabernacle/temple.

[4] For more detail see Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 617ff. and Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism," 19-25.

[5] Beale, *God Dwells Among Us*, 51.

[6] Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 59.

[7] See Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 54.

[8] See Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult* (ASORDS 2: Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 180.