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The Living Word Series
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THE LIVING TEMPLE

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THE LIVING WORD SERIES

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The Living Temple

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Gen—Genesis
Ex—Exodus
Lev—Leviticus
Num—Numbers
Deut—Deuteronomy
Josh—Joshua
Judg—Judges
Ruth—Ruth
1 Sam—1 Samuel (1 Kings)
2 Sam—2 Samuel (2 Kings)
1 Kings—1 Kings (3 Kings)
2 Kings—2 Kings (4 Kings)
1 Chron—1 Chronicles (1 Paralipomenon)
2 Chron—2 Chronicles (2 Paralipomenon)
Ezra—Ezra (1 Esdras)
Neh—Nehemiah (2 Esdras)
Tob—Tobit (Tobias)
Judith—Judith
Esther—Esther
Job—Job
Ps—Psalms
Prov—Proverbs
Eccles—Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth)
Song—Song of Solomon (Canticle of Canticles)
Wis—Wisdom of Solomon (Wisdom)
Sir—Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Is—Isaiah
Jer—Jeremiah
Lam—Lamentations
Bar—Baruch
Ezek—Ezekiel
Dan—Daniel
Hos—Hosea (Osee)
Joel—Joel
Amos—Amos
Obad—Obadiah (Abdias)
Jon—Jonah
Mic—Micah (Micheas)
Nahum—Nahum
Hab—Habakkuk
Zeph—Zephaniah (Sophonias)
Hag—Haggai (Aggeus)
Zech—Zechariah (Zacharias)
Mal—Malachi (Malachias)
1 Mac—1 Maccabees
2 Mac—2 Maccabees

Mt—Matthew
Mk—Mark
Lk—Luke
Jn—John
Acts—Acts of the Apostles
Rom—Romans
1 Cor—1 Corinthians
2 Cor—2 Corinthians
Gal—Galatians
Eph—Ephesians
Phil—Philippians
Col—Colossians
1 Thess—1 Thessalonians
2 Thess—2 Thessalonians
1 Tim—1 Timothy
2 Tim—2 Timothy
Tit—Titus
Philem—Philemon
Heb—Hebrews
Jas—James
1 Pet—1 Peter
2 Pet—2 Peter
1 Jn—1 John
2 Jn—2 John
3 Jn—3 John
Jude—Jude
Apoc—Apocalypse

Chronology

PERSONS AND EVENTS	DATE B.C.	BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
Abraham	1900	
Isaac		Earliest oral tradition and written traditions which were later incorporated into Genesis
Jacob		
Joseph in Egypt		
Israel in Egypt	1500	
Moses and exodus from Egypt possibly under the reign of Ramses II of Egypt (1301–1234)	1250	Further developments of oral traditions. Laws and some associated traditions were put into writing
Joshua	1200	Records later used in the composition of the Book of Joshua
Judges		Records of contemporary heroes
Saul becomes king	*c.* 1030	
David becomes king at Jerusalem	*c.* 1000	Some psalms
Solomon succeeds David	970	Literary activity increases. State records collect material later used in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles
Solomon's temple begun	*c.* 965	Some wisdom literature

	B.C.	
		The sacred history of the Yahwist, later used by the editors of the Pentateuch (i.e. the first five books of the Bible)
The northern kingdom of Israel breaks with Judah	*c.* 930	
Elijah	850	
Elisha	800	The sacred history of the Elohist later used by the editors of the Pentateuch
		Amos; Hosea. Synthesis of Yahwist and Elohist narratives?
Samaria falls to the Assyrians: end of the northern kingdom	721	Isaiah (1–39 with some exceptions); Micah. During the reign of Hezekiah (716–687) considerable literary activity (Proverbs 25:1)
Jerusalem besieged by Assyrians	701	
	650	Zephaniah
Call of Jeremiah	627	
Discovery of the book of the law	622	
The fall of Assyria	612	Nahum. The great religious history of the deuteronomist school running from Joshua to 2 Kings
		Habakkuk (?)
Jerusalem captured for the first time by the Babylonians. First deportations	597	

PERSONS AND EVENTS	DATE B.C.	BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
Call of Ezekiel. Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians. Exile (or Babylonian captivity)	587	Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Isaiah 40–55
Fall of Babylon and end of the exile	539	
Some Jews return to Palestine	538	
Foundations of the second temple are laid	537	
	520	Haggai
	518	Zechariah
Ezra and Nehemiah active at Jerusalem	450	About this time the Pentateuch received its final form. The prophets Obadiah, Joel and Malachi were preaching. The following books were composed or received a more or less definitive form: Jonah, Job, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Ezra—Nehemiah and Chronicles, Tobit, some psalms and the final chapters of Isaiah (56–66)
Alexander captures Syria	333	
	300	Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth), Baruch, Esther
Greek translation of the Old Testament (known as the Septuagint)	*c.* 250	

	B.C.	
Maccabaean revolt	167	Daniel
	132	Greek translation of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus). 1 and 2 Maccabees. Judith.
	100	The book of Wisdom
Pompey takes Jerusalem	63	
Accession of Herod the Great	37	(The dates given for the books of the Bible do not prejudice the earlier or later dating of subsections of those books)
Birth of Jesus	6–7 (?)	
Death of Herod	4	
John the baptist begins to preach		
	A.D.	
Beginning of the public life of Jesus	*c.* 27	Earliest oral traditions
Death of Jesus—Easter. Coming of the Holy Spirit—Pentecost	30	Written sources later used by the authors of the four gospels
Martyrdom of Stephen and conversion of Paul	36–37	
Paul's first missionary journey	45–49	
Council of Jerusalem	49	
	50	Aramaic Matthew

PERSONS AND EVENTS	DATE	BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
	A.D.	
Second missionary journey of Paul	50–52	1 and 2 Thessalonians
Third missionary journey of Paul	53–58	
	56	Philippians
	57	1 Corinthians, Galatians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, James
Paul a prisoner at Caesaraea	58–60	
Autumn: Paul's journey to Rome; shipwreck and winter in Malta	60	Colossians. Ephesians. Philemon
Paul freed. Journey to Spain (?)	63	1 Peter. Mark
Martyrdom of Peter	64 (or 67)	
	65	1 Timothy and Titus
		Greek Matthew, Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (at latest, all before 80; others hold before 70). Hebrews; 2 Timothy
Martyrdom of Paul	67	
Jerusalem falls to the Romans; temple destroyed	70	Jude; 2 Peter
	c. 95	Apocalypse (Revelation). John and 1, 3 John
Death of John	*c.* 100	

CHAPTER ONE

The New Temple in the Gospels

From the synoptic gospels, we learn the attitude of Jesus to the temple. These gospels were written during the first century, at the time when the new temple, that is, the Church, was taking shape, and when the letters of the apostles were circulating in the different communities (*cf.* Col 4:16). The credibility of the "good news" which had spread far and wide must, however, be supported by reference to past events and prophecies.

Matthew, Mark and Luke, and later also John, who themselves lived close to the events, relate how Jesus journeyed through Palestine and went up to Jerusalem. They describe the whole life of Jesus as a "going-up to Jerusalem" and to his temple, of which he solemnly takes possession while the people proclaim him to be the messiah. The time has come to offer the sacrifice which will seal the new and eternal covenant promised by the prophets. It is certain that the evangelists were conscious that they were simplifying the historical course of the life of Jesus. But they wanted in the first place, even at the price of such simplification, to make clear the deep significance of his life. They wanted to show Jesus as the one who fulfils completely the oracles of the prophets. He is the messianic king, the awaited successor of David, the son of God in a completely new sense; the priest and the victim of the new covenant, he who prophesied the

destruction of the temple of Jerusalem and laid the foundation for the new temple, the Church. These facts are closely linked but the relation of Jesus to the temple has first claim on our consideration.

The gospel account of the public life of Jesus traditionally covers the period "from the baptism of John to the day wherein he was taken up from his people" (Acts 1:21 *ff.*). Matthew and Luke, however, introduced their accounts of the public life with a collection of traditions pertaining to Jesus' childhood.

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

When the evangelists were describing the ministry of John the baptist, they certainly had in mind the teaching of Isaiah about the way which would be prepared for the coming of the Lord (Is 40:3–5) as well as the prophecy of Malachi that a new Elijah would come to prepare a way for the Lord before he "enters the temple" to purify it "on the day of wrath" (*cf.* Mt 3:4 with Mal 3:1–2). Is the baptist the new Elijah? St. Mark unites the two prophecies in a single testimony:

> Behold I sent my messenger before thee, who shall prepare thy way, the voice of one crying in the desert: "Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" (Mk 1:2*ff.*).

The first part of the prophecy, attributed to Isaiah, derives from Malachi, who prophesied the purification of the temple and the people by Yahweh. The teaching of the baptist, "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mt 3:1; *cf.* 4:17; Mk 1:15), also alludes to the prophetic teaching about the kingdom of God, which will soon spread over the whole earth. Jesus began his public ministry with the

same words. For Zechariah the decisive sign of the coming of the kingdom of God (Zech 9:8; 14:9–21) was the purification of the temple; for Daniel it was the anointing and consecration of the mysterious holy of holies (Dan 9:24). Jesus describes himself as the "son of man," a term taken from the prophecies of Daniel, and our attention is thus drawn to the message of the book of Daniel.

It is the testimony of Isaiah that is foremost in the minds of Matthew and Luke:

> For this is he who was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, when he said, "The voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his paths'" (Mt 3:3; *cf.* Is. 40:3–5).

We must not forget, however, that the Qumran community set great store by this text. It explains why they retired into the desert to lay the foundation of a new—spiritual—temple.

In the account of the preaching of the baptist, the synoptics were already looking towards the "day" on which Jesus would enter his temple in order to purify it and would then announce the end of the old temple and the construction of the new one.

THE NEW ELIJAH

The people regarded John the baptist as the new Elijah, as the precursor of the messiah (Mt 17:10–12; Mk 9:11–13). In drawing attention to the outstanding character of John the baptist (Mt 11:7–15), Jesus quotes the text of Malachi 3:1:

> But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,

who shall make ready thy way before thee" (Mt 11:9–10; *cf.* Mal. 3:1).

In describing John as the angel or messenger sent to prepare the way of the Lord, Jesus draws attention to the fact that he himself is the Lord who is suddenly come to his temple to purify it (*cf.* Mal 3:1 *ff.*).

THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

One can perhaps already see a reference to the Church, the new building made from many stones (pagans and Jews), in the words of John the baptist:

> For I say to you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham (Mt 3:9; Lk 3:8).

In the prophecy of Isaiah (Is 51:1–2), Abraham is the rock from which the just are hewn (*cf.* Gal 3:29: "and if you be Christ's, then you are the seed of Abraham").

According to St. Luke, not only the Jewish people crowded to the baptist. Soldiers also came (Lk 3:14), among whom there were undoubtedly some of those belonging to the occupation armies—people, then, of all races.

THE NEW CITY ERECTED ON THE MOUNTAIN

In the first five discourses in which Matthew has collected the teachings of the Lord, the Church is compared to the new Jerusalem of which the prophets have spoken. Jesus compared the new city to the city on the mountain visible from afar which God had chosen and whose light would reach all peoples:

> You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. . . . Even so let your light shine before

men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven (Mt 5:14–16).

In Matthew 12:1–8, there is a collection of some of the teachings of Jesus regarding the sabbath. Jesus is reproached by the Pharisees because his disciples have broken the law of the sabbath. Matthew gives a more explicit account of the reply of Jesus to these reproaches than Mark and Luke:

> Or have you not read in the law, that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple break the sabbath and are guiltless? But I tell you that one greater than the temple is here (Mt 12:5 *ff.*).

In fact, Jesus, the true temple and the builder of the new temple, is there, surrounded by his disciples who, thanks to him, are about to form a new building, more precious and more vast than the temple of Jerusalem.

According to his usual custom, Matthew may have put together in one account words which Jesus said on different occasions. In any case, it is clear what role the temple played in the conception of the evangelist. Whereas Mark and Luke speak only of the sabbath, Matthew adds a word of teaching about the temple. Temple and cult laws form a unity.

THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE CHURCH

Jesus has proved by many signs that he is Christ, the messiah. We now come, according to the account of the evangelists, to the turning-point in his life (Mt 16:13; Mk 8:27; Lk 9:18). Recognised by his apostles as the messiah, the Lord now directs "his eyes towards Jerusalem, where he will suffer much at the hands of the high priests and elders."

Matthew gives us the account of St. Peter's confession of faith in Jesus and Jesus' reply (Mt 16:13–20):

> Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt 16:17*ff.*).

The building, rebuilding and purification of the temple were tasks for the messiah, as we have seen. Jesus, the messiah and the son of God, promised Peter that he would make him the foundation of his Church. According to the synoptics, Jesus spoke these words in Caesarea Philippi, a place near the source of the River Jordan, which formerly was called Pan after the god Pan, who was venerated there. Herod had a temple erected there in honour of Augustus.

Mark and Luke are more brief in their accounts. They omit the words "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," but they do not overlook the significant name which Simon received. They link this change in his name with the solemn call and choosing of the twelve apostles. Peter was, for the synoptics, the foundation stone of the new temple, the Church. John perhaps gives the most exact time of the changing of the name, namely, at the time of the first meeting between Jesus and Peter (Jn 1:42). In any case, the change of name is put in a significant context by each of the evangelists: St. Matthew mentions the fact at the time when Jesus had just been recognised as the messiah; Mark and Luke at the moment when Jesus called the twelve (Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14; *cf.* Mt 10:2). It is thus clearly linked with decisive developments in the unfolding of Christ's plan for his Church.

THE CLOUD AND THE GLORY

Soon after Peter's confession of faith, Christ was transfigured before the eyes of his favourite disciples, Peter, James and John (Mk 9:2–8; Mt 17:1–8; Lk 9:28–36). He led them up a "high mountain" and was there transfigured in "glory," the glory which formerly rested on Mount Sinai, later on the tent of meeting and finally on the temple. "A cloud enveloped him." A voice was heard which identified Jesus with the servant of God, the chosen one of Yahweh, the one pleasing to God in whom his spirit dwells (Mt 17:5; Lk 9:35; *cf.* Mk 9:7; *cf.* Is 42:1).

This reference to a "high mountain" is worthy of more than passing notice. In the Old Testament, mountains are the preferred places for divine revelations. The transfiguration, the choosing of the apostles (Mk 3:13), and the sermon on the mount (Mt 5) reflect the same pattern. Jesus prays on the mountain (Lk 9:28 and elsewhere). Matthew describes only one appearance of the risen Christ to his disciples, and sets it on a mountain in Galilee (Mt 28:16–20; *cf.* Dan 7:14). Isaiah had already prophesied that God would manifest his glory on a mountain in the messianic time (Is 24:23). The messianic banquet on the last days will take place on a mountain (Is 25:6).

THE LORD ENTERS HIS TEMPLE

Jesus went towards Jerusalem, where he was to suffer, die, and then enter into his glory. He arrived at Jerusalem in the humble apparel of the messianic king, whose entry into the holy city had been prophesied by Zechariah (Mt 21:1–11). According to Matthew and Luke, the first thing Jesus did on entering the temple was to cast out the

traders, thereby fulfilling the prophecies of Malachi and Zechariah. According to Mark, Jesus went to the temple on the evening of Palm Sunday as it were in the capacity of an owner inspecting his property. He only drove out the traders on the next day (Mk 11:11–18). This divergence is not, however, of any great importance. What counts is that, for the three evangelists, Jesus justified his deeds by recalling the teaching of the prophets concerning the temple and its frequent profanations:

> And he began to teach, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of thieves" (Mk 11:17).

Mark, who is more explicit here than Matthew and Luke, does not pretend to give us in all their detail the exact words spoken by Jesus on the occasion of the purification of the temple. With the aid of two biblical texts, we can discern the main themes: by quoting Isaiah Jesus recalled the glorious destiny of the temple—to be a house of prayer for all nations (Is 56:7). Then, quoting Jeremiah, he announced the dangers which threatened the profaned temple (Jer 7:11). It was probably in this context that Jesus referred to the replacement of the man-made temple by a temple not made by the hands of man, of which he himself would be the builder. These threats against the temple were brought against him at his trial (Mk 14:58; *cf.* Mt 26:61; Jn 2:19). They angered the high priest and the scribes, who decided to put him to death although the people were in admiration at his teaching. Jesus was condemned for the "blasphemy" he spoke against the temple.

Matthew relates that after the purification of the temple Jesus healed many in the temple (Mt 21:14). These miracles stressed the messianic character of his expulsion of the traders. On his entry into the temple, he was acclaimed by the crowds as the son of David:

> Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest (Mt 21:9; *cf.* Ps 118 (117):25–26).

This cry of joy is taken from Psalm 118(117), the psalm of the entry into the temple, and is a reminder of the ancient liturgy of the ark of the covenant. It is also the psalm of victory which praises God for saving his people from death. In this psalm there is mention of the stone rejected by the builders which has become the corner stone (Zech 4:7). Jesus also speaks of this stone to the high priests and the elders of the people (Mt 21:23–42) at one of the discussions which he held every day from then on in the temple (Lk 19:47). With the aid of a parable, Jesus makes clear to his enemies that the "vineyard," that is, the kingdom of God, will be taken away from them (Mt 21:33 *ff.*). They have killed the prophets and are going to assassinate the son and heir, thereby reaching the climax of their sins. But the vineyard will be entrusted to other vine-growers who will bring fruits to the Lord in their season:

> Did you never read in the Scriptures, "The stone which the builders rejected, has become the corner stone; by the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes"? Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people yielding its fruits. And he who falls on this stone will be

broken to pieces; but upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder (Mt 21:42–44).

In this stone, rejected by men and chosen by God, the first Christian generations saw Christ, unjustly condemned to death, but raised by God to become the keystone of the vault of the Church (Acts 4:11 *ff.*).

Once again, the anger of the Pharisees was roused. They felt that the order of things, which was so much to their advantage, was being threatened (Mt 21:45). But for the fact that they feared the crowds which took Jesus for a prophet, they would have arrested him immediately.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE SON OF MAN

According to Luke 19:41–44, Jesus had no sooner arrived in the holy city than he uttered grave predictions against Jerusalem. Later on he will express these "threats" more clearly (Mk 13:1; Lk 21:5). One evening, during the last week of his life on earth, when the disciples were admiring the marvellous stones of the temple of Herod, Jesus said to them:

> Do you see all these things? Amen I say to you; there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down (Mt 24:2).

All three evangelists then reproduce a long discourse by Jesus about the destruction of the temple and the final triumph of the son of man (Mk 13:5–37). Jesus is now seated on the Mount of Olives in sight of the city as if to judge it (Mt 24:3). Four disciples are with him and they ask him:

> Tell us, when are these things to happen, and what will be the sign when all these things will begin to come to pass? (Mk 13:4).

The answer, with its obscure reference, is similar to the apocalyptic writings. In terms borrowed from the prophets, and especially from Daniel, Christ spoke to his disciples of the coming of false messiahs who would lead the people astray (Mt 24:4–8), of the struggles they must endure and of the new profanation of the temple (Mt 24:15–22). This "abomination of desolation set up in the holy place" (*cf.* Dan 9:22) would collapse with the triumph of the son of man:

> And then they will see the son of man coming upon clouds with great power and majesty. And then he will send forth his angels, and will gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost parts of heaven (Mk 13:26*ff.*).

The disciples, therefore, have no need to fear. These events would be no more a catastrophe than a tree putting forth its leaves in spring. These trials make known that "summer is near," that the kingdom of God is at hand (Mk 13:28*ff.*).

The prophecy of Jesus concerning the coming of the kingdom of God is couched in terms derived from the prophets. The destruction of Jerusalem, the profanation of the temple, would culminate in "the kingdom of the saints of the most high" of which Daniel had spoken, that is, in the Church, already described by Jesus as the new building of which Peter was the foundation stone. He had prophesied the destruction of the temple within the lifetime of the present generation and this time it would be decisive. But at the same time, the glorified son of man sits at the right hand of God and triumphs in the Church, in all its chosen ones, who were gathered by the messengers of God from one end of heaven to the other (Mt 24:31;

Mk 13:27). After the ascension of Jesus, the persecution of the apostles began. In the years 66 A.D. and 132 A.D., false messiahs stirred up the Jewish people against the Romans, whose armies retaliated with unrestrained ferocity.

After a siege which lasted for three years, Titus, the Roman general, took the city by force in 70 A.D. and destroyed both it and the temple. A Roman soldier threw a burning torch into a side chamber of the sanctuary, thereby setting fire to the whole building. It was only with great difficulty that Titus managed to save some of the sacred implements: the seven-branched candlestick and the show-bread table. These were brought to Rome and figured in the triumphal procession of Titus. In the year 132, Bar Kokheba instigated a new revolt which resulted in an even more radical destruction of the nation. In 135, statues of the emperor Ḥadrian and of Jupiter Capitoline were erected in the temple square. Henceforward the Church, liberated from the temple and the synagogue, could lead its own life as it rapidly spread throughout the world.

All these events were only preparations for the final triumph of Christ at his second coming, which the first Christian generations had awaited hopefully and anxiously. Jesus sees the various manifestations of his glory as one: the birth and total emancipation of the Church which followed on his resurrection is linked with his intervention as omnipotent judge on the last day when heaven and earth will pass away (Mt 24:35–25:46; *cf.* 2 Pet 3:3–13; Apoc 21:1; Mk 14:31–37; Lk 21:33–36). At this last triumph of Christ, the Apocalypse relates, the new holy Jerusalem will appear, in which there will be no temple

but only the Lord himself and the lamb, slaughtered, yet living (Apoc 21:22).

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAN-MADE TEMPLE

Jesus was arrested and brought before the sanhedrin. Undoubtedly, his prophecy concerning the temple was one of the main reasons for the hostility of a great number of the priests and scribes. Formerly Jeremiah and Uriah had stood before a court for a similar reason (Jer 26:20–23):

> For while many bore false witness against him, their evidence did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, "We ourselves have heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple built by hands, and after three days I will build another, not built by hands.' " And even then their evidence did not agree (Mk 14:56–59).

Words like these were considered blasphemous and were punishable by death. Later on, Stephen was stoned to death on account of a similar accusation (Acts 6:8–8:3). In the case of Jesus, the evidence of the witnesses was not consistent on this point, and Jesus was condemned because he prophesied the future glory of the son of man at the right hand of God.

Matthew gives us Jesus' reply in a somewhat different form:

> This man said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it after three days" (Mt 26:61).

John later adds that he was speaking of the temple which was his body (Jn 2:21).

The high priest wanted to hear Jesus' own words concerning this decisive charge:

> But Jesus kept silence (Mt 26:63; *cf.* Mk 14:61).

But later on Caiaphas will force him to state his position in the clearest possible language:

> " I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the son of God." Jesus said to him, "Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming upon the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26:63–64).

Again we hear from the mouth of Jesus the testimony of the prophet Daniel as well as an echo of Psalm 110(109) which he had already quoted in his discussion with the Pharisees (*cf.* Mt 22:41–46). Psalm 110(109): "Sit at my right hand," announces the future glory of Jesus at the right hand of his Father, who will extend his empire over the whole world until the day of his glorious return.

We are reminded again of the passage in Daniel about the holy of holies. Jesus, the "holy one," will bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy by his death. The new "holy of holies" will be his glorified body and his Church, the splendid sanctuary of heaven.

THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Jesus is hanging on the cross while his enemies mock him for his blasphemous claims:

> And the passers-by were jeering at him, shaking their heads, and saying, "Aha, thou who destroyed the temple, and in three days buildest it up again; come down from the cross, and save thyself!" (Mk 15:29 *ff.*; *cf.* Mt 27:40).

A striking event marks the death of Jesus, the victim of the New Testament. The synoptics relate that at the moment when Jesus gave up the ghost:

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mk 15:38; Mt 27:51; Lk 23:45).

This remarkable event, which is described at length in the epistle to the Hebrews, has a deep significance. It is the sign that the sacrifice of Jesus was a victory, that he had won for us pardon for all our sins, and that his sacrifice which was acceptable to God, had rendered void those sacrifices of the Old Testament which were offered in the temple of Jerusalem. That testament is over and done with. The torn curtain in the temple means the end of Old Testament forms of worship.[1]

Henceforward, the way to the true, heavenly sanctuary is open again. Jesus himself promises the good thief who was crucified with him:

Amen I say to you, this day you shall be with me in paradise (Lk 23:43).

Already the pagans, represented by the Roman centurion, were professing their belief and were entering the kingdom of God (Mt 27:54; Mk 15:29; Lk 23:47). The triumph of the son of man was beginning and he was entering into his glory.

For forty days the glorified Christ remained in visible contact with his disciples. To those who would soon build the new earthly sanctuary, he promised the coming

1. The reference here is either to the curtain which separated the holy of holies from the holy place, which the high priest crossed every year on the day of expiation, Kippur, or to the other curtain between the outer court and the interior of the temple in the temple of Herod. Origen and Jerome assume that the second curtain was meant, for the tearing of this one would be a visible manifestation by God. With it, the crumbling of a whole world would be symbolized. For this curtain, a description of which has been given to us by the ancient historians, represented the universe. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews undoubtedly takes it to be the inner curtain.

of the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49). He would have to leave them but, even though invisible to them, he would be with them until the end of the world (Mt 28:20). From now on, the days of the temple of Jerusalem were numbered. It would be eclipsed by the heavenly sanctuary and the new sanctuary "not made by the hand of man," namely, the Church.

After the ascension of our Lord into heaven, however, the apostles and disciples still continued to frequent the temple:

> And they worshipped him [Jesus], and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God (Lk 24:52 *ff.*).

There was still a long time to go before the complete destruction of the temple and with it the total emancipation of the Church.

We have now seen the gospel text in its true light, as the fulfilment of a progressive revelation. We saw too that the day of the man-made temple was done, and that Jesus has laid the foundation for a new structure. We have been called upon to become the living stones of which this structure is built. May we be permitted, like the thief on the cross, to enter the eternal temple through the doors opened to us by the sacrifice of the new and everlasting covenant!

NOTE ON THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

The writings of the Old Testament which deal with the sanctuaries of Israel, and the teaching of the prophets, particularly Malachi and Daniel, have an important place also in Luke's accounts of the infancy of Jesus and of John the baptist (Lk 1 and 2). The temple itself is the privileged

place in which the third gospel starts and finishes. Matthew's gospel begins in Galilee, where the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Joseph to announce to him the forthcoming birth of Jesus (Mt 1:18–25), and ends also in Galilee, where the risen Christ gave his last instructions to his disciples (Mt 28:16–20). Luke leads his readers from the temple where Gabriel appeared to Zechariah (Lk 1:5–23) back to the temple where the apostles praised God after the ascension of the Lord (Lk 24:50–53). Although Luke was a convert from paganism, he was also a disciple of Paul whose devotedness to his own people is well known, and it was at the temple of Jerusalem which the Church would replace, that he set the beginning and the end of early Christian history.

Three of the most significant happenings in the childhood of the Lord take place in the precincts of the temple:

1. The annunciation of the birth of the precursor (Lk 1:5–25);

2. The presentation of Jesus, when Simeon welcomed the "glory" of the Saviour (Lk 2:22–39).

3. The first manifestation of the wisdom of Jesus when, at twelve years of age, he astonished the doctors by his knowledge "in the house of his Father" (Lk 2:41–50).

These texts of the infancy gospel become clearer in the light of the Old Testament texts.

The risen Christ revealed the meaning of the Scripture to his disciples (Lk 24:25). The infancy gospel clearly shows how the first Christian generations meditated on these Scriptures. The infancy narrative of Luke undoubtedly contains one of the earliest Christian documents and has numerous references to and quotations from the Old Testament.

The announcement to Zechariah of the birth of the baptist seems to have reminded the first Christians of the events which preceded the birth of Samuel, the scene of which was the ancient sanctuary at Shiloh (1 Sam 1:1–2:11; *cf.* Lk 1:5–25). Did not John the baptist play the same role in connection with Jesus as Samuel had played in connection with King David, the ancestor of Jesus?

The early Church remembered also the prophet Malachi and his prophecies concerning the coming of the new Elijah (Mal 3:23–24; *cf.* Lk 1:16–17; 1:76), and how he presented the messiah himself as the rising sun:

> But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays (Mal 3:20; 4:2).

> And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the most high, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give to his people knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins, because of the loving-kindness of our God, wherewith the Orient from on high has visited us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace (Lk 1:76–79).

The same angel Gabriel who announced to the priest Zechariah the birth of the precursor (Lk 1:9), also announced to Daniel the coming kingdom "of eternal justice" and the anointing of the "saint of saints," and in both instances it was at the time of the "evening offering" (*cf.* Dan 9:20–25; Lk 1:9–11) that the revelation was made.

In the account of the annunciation to Mary, there is a reference to the bright cloud which "overshadowed" the holy tent, while the glory of Yahweh filled it:

> The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the most high shall *overshadow* thee; and therefore the

holy one to be born shall be called the Son of God (Lk 1:35; *cf.* Ex 40:34*ff.*; 24:16).

The kingdom of Jesus, the kingdom of the son of man announced by Daniel, "will have no end" (Lk 1:33; Dan 7:14).

In the description of the presentation of Jesus in the temple it is easy to recognize the allusion to the "sudden" coming of the angel of the covenant to his temple (Mal 3:1). The old man Simeon says that Jesus is destined to be the cause of the "fall and resurrection of Israel" (Lk 2:34,) just as in Malachi the angel of the covenant comes in order to separate "the proud ones who dishonour his name" from those who "fear Yahweh" (Mal 3:2–22).

At twelve years of age, Jesus manifests his wisdom in the temple, which is the privileged dwelling place of Wisdom, the daughter of the Lord (Sir 24:5–12). Jesus also calls it "the house of my Father."

So it can be seen that the history of Christ began at the temple of Jerusalem. It is also at this temple that St. Luke will have us assist at the birth of the Church which is gradually to become detached from the temple.

This will be the object of our study in the next chapter which concerns the Church as it appears in the Acts of the Apostles.

CHAPTER TWO

From the Temple to the Church
(Acts of the Apostles)

St. Luke, who began his gospel by telling us of the apparition of the angel Gabriel to Zechariah in the temple, concludes it by bringing us back to the temple. The apostles knew well that the days of this sanctuary were numbered; yet, it is within its walls that they gathered to give thanks after the ascension:

> And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen (Lk 24:52–53).

This temple has also an important place in the second part of the work of Luke: the Acts of the Apostles. At the beginning of this book, in particular, it occupies a central position in the religious life of the faithful.

Every day, St. Luke tells us, the members of the first Christian community went to the temple:

> And continuing daily with one accord in the temple . . . (Acts 2:46; *cf.* 5:42).

The liturgical time-table in use in the sanctuary regulated the lives of the apostles. Peter and John therefore went to the temple for the prayers of the ninth hour (Acts 3:1).[1] At the "Beautiful Gate" of the temple, they

1. The Christian Church, which has preserved a great number of old customs, has set some special prayers to be said daily at this hour of "none." By the time of Christ, the evening sacrifice had been put forward to about 3 P.M. It was formerly offered at the close of day.

work a miracle (Acts 3:1–10), which creates such a sensation that it gives them an opportunity of preaching the power of the risen Christ under the portico of Solomon. And, like the prophet Jeremiah before them, this preaching at the temple gate leads to their arrest (Acts 4:1 *ff.*; Jer 26). The wide portico where Jesus had preached (John 10:23) was apparently the usual meeting place of the first Christians of Jerusalem:

> Now by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And with one accord they all would meet in Solomon's portico; but of the rest, no one dared to associate with them, yet the people made much of them (Acts 5:12–13).

The high priest and his followers, the Sadducees, were filled with rage at the activity of the apostles within the very precincts of the sanctuary and had them arrested:

> But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison and led them out, and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." And when they heard this, they went into the temple about daybreak and began to teach (Acts 5:19–21).

CHRISTIAN SERVICES AT HOME

The Christian community soon began to have its own cult and celebrated it in certain houses (*cf.* 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philem 1:2 and 1 Cor 11:20–22):

> And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses, they took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favour with all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their company such as were to be saved (Acts 2:46–47).

> And they did not for a single day cease teaching and preaching in the temple and from house to house the good news of Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42).

In the descriptions of the meetings held by the Christians in their houses are to be found all the elements of a new cult which will ultimately take the place of the cult practised in the former sanctuary and now rendered void. In the temple, the ancient law was taught and commented on; sacred repasts took place there after the sacrifices. In their own houses, the Christians listened to the words of the apostles and celebrated the "breaking of bread." These words designate the rite by which the disciples commemorated the sacrifice of the Lord. It consisted in the offering of the victim of the new covenant which makes all the believers participate in the very life of their immolated and risen master. Time and again the Acts re-echo the praises and prayers which the people addressed to God in their houses (*cf.* Acts 1:24–25; 4:24–30).

While frequenting the temple the first Christians knew well that Jesus, "the holy one," who was rejected and later exalted, was the keystone in a new building. On the day after the curing of the sick person at the Beautiful Gate, when Peter was brought before the sanhedrin, he exhorted them:

> Be it known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God has raised from the dead, even in this name does he stand here before you, sound. This is "The stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the corner stone." Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:10–12).

The apostles see in Jesus, son of Mary, this precious corner-stone, rejected by men and chosen by God, whose glory is sung in Psalm 118(117).

The teaching of Jesus concerning the replacement of the temple by a new sanctuary is not forgotten. This new sanctuary, is Jesus himself; it is also the Church founded by him.

THE TEACHING OF STEPHEN

The apostles chose seven helpers to aid them in their work. One of these, Stephen, was abundantly endowed with the Spirit as was clear from the miracles he worked and the ease with which he met the arguments of his enemies. To silence him, these fell back on the methods employed in the condemnation of Christ. They undertook to have him condemned by bribing false witnesses who accused him of blasphemy against the temple:

> Then they bribed men to say they had heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God. And they stirred up the people and the elders and the Scribes, and, running together, they seized him and brought him to the sanhedrin. And they brought forward false witnesses to say, "This man never ceases speaking words against the holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the traditions which Moses handed down to us" (Acts 6:11–14).

As was the case with Jesus, these accusations of blasphemy against the temple were not without some foundation. Like Jesus, Stephen had affirmed the transitory character of the temple of stone and had predicted its disappearance in the near future.

The speech which the book of the Acts puts in the mouth of the first martyr ends with a veritable indictment of the holy place. The deacon Stephen has just reproached the people of God for their constant disobedience and their tendency towards idolatry. He then stresses, as the prophets did before him, the accessory role of a temple of stone in the religious life of the people of God:

1. The desert sanctuary, which lasted up to the time of David, was no more than an image of a mysterious heavenly model:

> Our fathers had in the desert the tent of the testimony, as God arranged when he told Moses to make it according to the model that he had seen. This tent also our fathers inherited, and they brought it here with them when under Joshua they took possession of the territory of the gentiles that God drove out before our fathers; and it remained down to the time of David (Acts 7:44–45).

2. The temple of stone which took its place in the time of Solomon has no exclusive claim to be the dwelling place of God. Indeed, the Lord cannot dwell in man-made houses:

> He [David] found favour before God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Yet not in houses made by hands does the most high dwell, even as the prophet says, The heaven is my throne, and the earth a footstool for my feet. What house will you build me, says the Lord, or what shall be the place of my resting? (Acts 7:46–50; *cf.* Is 66:1–2).

Those who always resisted the Spirit and persecuted the prophets could not tolerate such words. But Stephen kept his eyes on heaven, which the oracles of the book of Isaiah had called "the throne of God," and cried out:

> Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the son of man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56).

Moses had seen in the heavens the model of the tabernacle, the sanctuary of God; it was on this model according to the Wisdom of Solomon (9:8) that Solomon had built the temple. Stephen sees in heaven the son of man, the Lord Jesus, our true sanctuary which will soon receive his spirit.

St. Paul later declared that God does not dwell in man-made temples. He, in his turn, told a pagan audience in Athens:

> God, who made the world and all that is in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples built by hands; neither is he served by human hands as though he were in need of anything, since it is he who gives to all men life and breath and all things (Acts 17:24–25).

This God, whom one does not have to cross the seas to find, is close to every man:

> And from one man he has created the whole human race. . . . that they should seek God, and perhaps grope after him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:26 . . . 28).

THE NEW BUILDING

The building which counts in the eyes of St. Paul is the one which God himself constructs: he confides the Christians of Asia to this God at the end of his third missionary journey by telling them:

> And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, who is able to build up and to give the inheritance among all the sanctified (Acts 20:32; *cf.* Ps 127 (126):1).

He will speak to us soon of this spiritual edifice in his letters. Its construction began on the day of the first Christian Pentecost when the Spirit descended on the disciples in the upper room in the form of tongues of fire (Acts 2:1–4) just as Yahweh had appeared as fire on Mount Sinai on the first Jewish Pentecost (Ex 19:18–20; *cf.* Heb 12:18–24).

It is not only on the day of Pentecost that the meeting-place of the Christians is the setting for demonstrations of divine power which remind one of the coming of Yahweh to the sacred places of the Old Testament. No sooner had Peter and John been released by the sanhedrin than they joined the brethren who were assembled in a Christian house. They all united in thanking God for their deliverance and as they prayed,

> the place where they had assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31; *cf.* 10:44).

The earth had trembled also when God manifested himself to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 19:18), at the time when Yahweh was preparing to come and live amongst his people in the tent of the testimony.[2]

Indeed, ever since the time when the Spirit began to be active, a new edifice had been growing and expanding. St. Luke introduces the section of the Acts dedicated to the apostolic journeys of Peter with these words:

> Now throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria the Church was in peace and was being built up, walking in fear of the Lord, and it was filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31).

2. The temple also shook during the inaugural vision of the prophet Isaiah (Is 6:4).

This Church is truly the "house of prayer for all nations" (Is 56:7) wished for by the Lord. But the temple of Jerusalem refused to fulfil such a function in the new Church.

The last chapters of the Acts relate how Paul was arrested in the temple after he had been falsely accused of having "profaned" it by bringing gentiles into the sacred place.[3] Yet it was these very strangers, these gentiles, that God wanted "to bring to the holy mountain" (*cf.* Is 56:7 and Eph 2:13). The true Jerusalem is henceforth the Church which God compared to a city built on the mountain.

It was the year 58 A.D., and St. Paul had returned to Jerusalem after completing his third missionary journey. At the request of James, who wanted to pacify the Judaisers, he went to the temple accompanied by four members of the community of Jerusalem who had made a vow:

> Then Paul took the men, and the next day after being purified along with them he entered the temple and announced the completion of the days of purification, when the sacrifice would be offered for each of them (Acts 21:26).

Although Paul acceded to James' request, his action did not have the desired effect:

> But when the seven days were almost over, the Jews from the province of Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up all the people and seized him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help. This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place, and

3. This was forbidden under pain of death.

> moreover he has brought gentiles also into the temple and has desecrated this holy place." . . . And the whole city was thrown into confusion, and the people ran together, and seizing Paul, they proceeded to drag him out of the temple; whereupon the doors were immediately shut (Acts 21:27 . . . 30).

The temple not only refused to receive those who had been taken for gentiles but rejected Paul himself, a Jew by birth and a former zealot for the law.

It is not at the temple of Jerusalem that the book of the Acts comes to an end, but in the administrative capital of the civilised world of that time. For a long time, Paul knew that he must leave Jerusalem[4] to preach the gospel to the nations afar off (Eph 2:13).

God called him precisely for this purpose, to be a light to the gentiles. A short while after his conversion, Paul returned to the temple to pray, and the Lord appeared and revealed his plans to him. The following are the words spoken by Paul "to his brethren and to his fathers" (Acts 22:1) shortly after his conversion. After recounting his conversion, he goes on to say:

> And it came to pass that, when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I was in an ecstasy and saw him [Jesus] as he said to me, "Make haste and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. . . . Go, for to the gentiles far away I will send thee" (Acts 22:17 . . . 21).

Since the temple of Jerusalem had been unfaithful to its calling, it was now ready for destruction.

4. In the gospel of St. Luke, this order to leave Jerusalem to avoid being taken at the time of its chastisement had already been given by Christ (Lk 21:21). Compare the calls to leave Babylon given in Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; 51:6; 51:45; Apocalypse 18:4.

Soon the Lord would carry out his frequently-uttered "threat," and raze the temple to the ground. It was a disaster which none of the Jews had believed possible (*cf.* Acts 13:40–41; Heb 1:5; Acts 28:23-28), but the temple had ceased to serve the purpose of God since he had begun to build his Church throughout the world.

God who has created the world
does not dwell in temples
made by the hand of man.

CHAPTER THREE

The Spiritual Sanctuary
(St. Paul)

It is remarkable that the temple of Jerusalem finds no place in the thoughts of St. Paul when he addresses his letters to the members of the Churches he had founded, and to the Romans whom he hopes to visit one day. In them, there is only a brief allusion to the profanation of the "sanctuary of God" which the Lord foretold would be a sign heralding the glorious manifestation of the son of man.

On the other hand, Paul makes frequent references to the idea of the spiritual temple, already implied in the teaching of Jesus (Mk 14:58; Jn 2:19 *ff.*) and made explicit by the early Christian Churches. This spiritual temple, for St. Paul, is each Christian in whom the spirit of Christ, the spirit of God, has come to dwell; and still more significantly, it is the Church considered as a whole,

THE PROFANATION OF THE SANCTUARY

Around the year 51 A.D., Paul writes two letters to the Thessalonian Christians. These consider the parousia, the glorious return of the Lord, to be imminent. In his second message, Paul, in order to calm their indiscreet fervour, reminds them of the teaching of the Lord. Before the parousia takes place, he tells them:

. . . for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God and gives himself out as if he were God (2 Thess 2:3–4).

These words remind one of what Jesus had said in his discourse on the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple. One of the signs of the "end" would be the setting up of "the abomination of desolation in the holy place."[1]

St. Paul first of all recalls for them the discourse of Christ that is concerned primarily with the triumph of the son of man on the occasion of the fall of Jerusalem. But Christ passes on to consider the subsequent development of the Church. Henceforth free from its ties with the temple, it would move more easily towards its final triumph when the son of man would come in glory to judge all nations.[2]

Like our Lord in his discourse, St. Paul here speaks in the rather obscure style of the apocalypses. It is well known that in these works the various phases of God's plan are often mingled and confused. By recalling the teaching which he had already given to the Thessalonians, no doubt in greater detail (2 Thess 2:5), he draws attention once again to the profanation of the ancient temple foretold by Jesus.

1. Matthew 24:15; *cf.* Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. In the book of Daniel, this profanation is associated with the consecration of a new "holy of holies."

2. When St. Paul was writing his letter, the gospels—as we have them—were not yet written; but the teaching of Christ was being transmitted orally, and in writing to some extent, in the various Churches. It is possible that some written drafts of many sections of our gospels already existed.

In seven important passages of his epistles, St. Paul refers to the doctrine of the spiritual temple taught in the Churches: 1 Corinthians 3:9–17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 5:1–5; 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 2:19–22; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:19.

He frequently uses the verbs "build" and "build up" when referring to the spread of the Church throughout the world. These terms are also met with in the Acts of the Apostles.

This spiritual building, this new temple, which is the Christian Church, is the work of God, and is an edifice of a different kind from those made by the hands of man. It is the apostle's privilege to have a part in its construction, collaborating with the Lord to the very best of his ability. In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle combines two images, that of a field—an image often used in the gospels—and that of a building:

> For we are God's helpers, you are God's tillage, God's building (1 Cor 3:9; *cf.* Acts 20:32).

This building can have no other foundation but that which was laid by God himself, Jesus Christ:

> For other foundation no one can lay, but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus (1 Cor 3:11).[3]

3. This image of the foundation stone applied to Christ has its origin in an important oracle of Isaiah: "Therefore, thus says the Lord God: See, I am laying a stone in Zion, a stone that has been tested, a precious corner-stone as a sure foundation" (Is 28:16). The apostles recalled this often during the first years of Christianity. *Cf.* 1 Peter 2:6; and Acts 4:11. In other parts, as we shall see, Christ will be compared to a chief corner-stone (Eph 2:20–21).

So every worker must be careful about what he builds on this firm foundation; his materials should be of the best quality, capable of resisting fire:

> But let everyone take care how he builds thereon. . . . if his work abides which he has built thereon, he will receive reward; if his work burns he will lose his reward, but himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Cor 3:10,14,15).

The duty of collaborating with God in the construction of his building leads St. Paul to refer to the doctrine of the true temple of God, which he presumes his hearers have heard of:

> Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy; for holy is the temple of God, and this temple you are (1 Cor 3:16–17).

A little further on in the same epistle, St. Paul winds up a series of warnings by referring once again to this theme. He blames the Corinthians for having tolerated amongst them a case of extreme unchastity. He takes the opportunity to censure the disorders to which they are prone, especially unchastity, and completes his reasoning by saying:

> Flee immorality. Every sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God and bear him in your body (1 Cor 6:18–20).

The body of every Christian, redeemed by Christ and inhabited by the Spirit, is a temple which deserves to be

treated with the utmost respect. The Christian belongs to God who dwells in him and no longer belongs to himself. Besides, this sanctuary is destined to be an eternal temple since our body will be raised by God from the dead. St. Paul insists that it is the body itself of the Christian, the most humble part of our being, which is regarded as the "naos" of the Lord.[4]

In the second letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul returns to these ideas in a similar context. To the faithful of Corinth whom he reproaches for their excessive familiarity with unbelievers:

> Do not bear the yoke with unbelievers. For what has justice in common with iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what part has the believer with the unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God says, "I will dwell and move among them, I will be their God and they shall be my people" (2 Cor 6:14–16).

The presence of the Lord in these temples of the living God which Christians are, is, for St. Paul, the perfect realisation of what God had foretold in the prophets. The Greek translation of the oracles of Ezekiel concerning the new covenant has the following interesting passage:

4. In the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), the term "naos" is used for the most sacred part of the holy-place, the sanctuary itself where the Name of the Lord dwells. This word "naos" is encountered in the following passages of the letters of St. Paul: 1 Corinthians 3:16; 3:17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:4, and in the following passages of the Acts: Acts 17:24; 19:24. In two cases only it is applied to something other than the spiritual temple; in all probability, to the sanctuary of Jerusalem in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, and to little silver figurines representing the sanctuary of Artemis sold by the silversmiths to the pilgrims of Ephesus in Acts 19:24.

> I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Ezek 37:26–27; *cf.* Lev 26:11–12).

THE ETERNAL DWELLING-PLACE

For St. Paul, then, Christians, individually and collectively, constitute a holy temple, a sanctuary of the Lord in so far as they are members of the body of Christ.

The preoccupation of St. Paul, however, reaches beyond the condition of the Christian on earth, towards the eternal dwelling-place which should one day be his. On earth, our body, sanctified though it is, decays; but we are not to lose courage:

> For we know that if the earthly house [tent] in which we dwell be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made by human hands, eternal in the heavens. And indeed, in this present state we groan, yearning to be clothed over with that dwelling of ours which is from heaven, if indeed we shall be found clothed, and not naked (2 Cor 5:1–3).

What then is this heavenly "dwelling" with which we yearn to be clothed without first being deprived of our earthly "tent"? Is it the glorious body that each person will have at the time of the final resurrection? It would indeed be strange to represent it as already existing in heaven. Is it sufficient to see in it "heaven," that is to say, the glory of God, in which Jesus is henceforth established "on the right hand of the Father"? The most natural interpretation is that which understands by the

permanent dwelling[5] existing already in heaven, the risen body of Christ, which St. Paul elsewhere invites us to put on.[6] It is he who is the "house not made by the hand of man," in the words of Jesus himself (Mk 14:58).

THE "HOUSE" OF GOD

We again meet with this idea of our incorporation into the risen Christ in the epistle to the Ephesians, where is also to be found St. Paul's most striking description of the new temple: its foundations are laid on earth, but the key of its vault is in heaven.

Paul, when a prisoner, reminds the Christians of Asia of all that they owe to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "out of his great love he chose us even before the creation of the world, in order to make us agreeable to his eyes in Christ"; thanks to him, we have been made alive, and the pagans themselves have been reconciled with him, so much so that the apostle can say to them:

> Therefore, you are now no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are citizens with the saints and members of God's household (Eph 2:19).

From this image of the house, St. Paul quickly passes to

5. The opposition between tent and house is better understood if one remembers the nomadic origins of the Hebrews and the customs of the pastoral life. During the winter season, the nomadic Semites lived in houses of stone; in the spring, they wandered through the pasture-lands, moving their tents from place to place.

6. The expression suggests that Paul is thinking of Christ when he speaks of the house, the eternal dwelling-place not made by the hand of man. In the epistle to the Galatians he says that all who are baptised have "put on" Christ (Gal 3:27). Elsewhere he invites the Romans to put him on more and more (Rom 13:14), or he speaks of "putting on the new man" (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

that of the temple, which was earlier called the "house of the Lord." He proceeds:

> You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole structure is closely fitted together and grows into a temple holy in the Lord, in him you too are being built together into a dwelling-place for God in the Spirit (Eph 2:20–22).

St. Paul tells us then what the foundations of the dwelling are: the apostles and the prophets of the new covenant; and the key of the vault which holds the building together is Christ. Christ is also, in a sense, the whole building, since whoever takes his place in the structure makes only one with him. In a similar way St. Paul elsewhere considers Christ as head of the body which is the Church, and at the same time as identical with the whole body.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul speaks of the apostles as the foundation of the Church. Elsewhere, he shows us how at least some of them were described as "pillars" of the edifice. It is in this way that he speaks of James, of Cephas (Peter) and of John in the epistle to the Galatians:

> James and Cephas and John, who were considered the pillars . . . (Gal 2:9).

In his first letter to Timothy, St. Paul refers to the Church of the living God as the "house of God":

> I write these things to you . . . in order that you may know . . . how to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and mainstay of the truth (1 Tim 3:15).

In his second letter to his favourite disciple, he seems to be alluding to the sacred vessels of the ancient temple (2 Kings 25:13–17) when he says:

> In a great house there are vessels not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; and some are for honourable uses, but some for ignoble. If anyone therefore, has cleansed himself from these, he will be a vessel for honourable use, sanctified and useful to the Lord, ready for every good work (2 Tim 2:20–21).

Some exegetes take this "great house" to mean the universal Church, an edifice infinitely vaster than the temple of Jerusalem. The temple, indeed, was not only too cramped to give fitting harbour to Yahweh; it was too constricted by the letter of the law at the expense of the spirit of the law to welcome men of every race, as Yahweh willed. In the "great house," the new and enormous structure of the Christian Church, we are invited by St. Paul to be precious vessels consecrated for the use and in the service of God.

The apostle of the gentiles is not alone in describing the Church by reference to the holy places of ancient times. St. Peter, as we shall see later on, tells us what idea the early Christians formed of the new edifice which was to replace the outmoded temple.

Before leaving St. Paul, however, let us ask ourselves if we are really conscious of being temples of God and if we treat our bodies with the respect due to the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. Do we endeavour to make common cause with our fellowmen, treating them as brothers in Christ so that we may all be united together to form one solid structure? Do we participate as fully as

God wishes in the building of the new temple? It is the bounden duty of every Christian to do his part in that blessed work.

We are
the temple
of
the living God

CHAPTER FOUR

The Living Temple
(St. Peter)

The very name which Jesus gave St. Peter constantly reminded Peter that the community of the faithful, the Church, was a solidly constructed building. He was "Peter," the rock on which the Church was built, but he was well aware that each Christian must also be a stone, a "living" stone of this sanctuary.

In his first epistle, he develops ideas close enough to those we found in St. Paul. The perspective, however, is a little different. St. Paul had stressed the role of God and of his collaborators, the apostles, in the construction of the new sanctuary. St. Peter emphasises the personal decision required from everyone who would take his place in the building.

It is often maintained that the first letter of St. Peter re-echoes an exhortation addressed by the chief of the apostles to a group of newly-baptized Christians. In fact, he compares his readers to "newly-born infants" (1 Pet 2:2), who have "purified their souls." Having been "regenerated," they are now engaged in "living in ardent, brotherly love" (1 Pet 1:22–25). To these neophytes Peter makes this appeal:

> . . . if, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is sweet. Draw near to him, a living stone, rejected indeed by men but chosen and honored by God. Be you yourselves as living stones, built thereon into a spiritual house, a holy

priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:3–5).

While Peter emphasises the active part that each must play if he wishes to become part of the building, he does not imply that such activity should cease when union with the Church has been achieved. He who believes in Christ is not merely an inert stone in God's building: he is called to exercise a vital function by offering "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

The apostle then develops two themes whose origins are to be found in the books of the Old Testament: that of Christ as the corner-stone, capable of assuring strength to whoever leans confidently on it; and that of the priestly body which is made up of those who, in Jesus, belong to the new people of God, to the new consecrated nation.

Peter immediately continues:

> Hence Scripture says, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen, precious; and he who believes in it shall not be put to shame." For you, therefore, who believe in this honour; but to those who do not believe, "A stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner, a stumbling-stone, and a rock of scandal" ... (1 Pet 2:6–8; *cf.* Lk 20:17–18).

Here we recognise a passage from the book of Isaiah (Is 28:16), and a verse from Psalm 118(117) and yet another allusion to the book of Isaiah (Is 8:14).

We know, from the Acts, how dear the meditation of such texts was to the members and to the heads of the primitive Church, in the first days after Pentecost.[1]

1. *Cf.* Acts 4:10–12, which shows how, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, the apostles grasped the meaning of the ancient Scriptures and the way in which the words of Scripture would be fulfilled in the new covenant.

St. Peter, following the Scriptures, shows how each person was confronted with a choice, when confronted with Christ: he must make up his mind whether to resist Christ, or to join the building of which the rejected Christ is the most precious stone, a living stone.[2]

St. Peter then develops the theme of this new priestly people. Alluding to the book of Exodus:

> You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Ex 19:6).[3]

to the book of Isaiah:

> The people whom I formed for myself,
> that they might announce my praise (Is 43:21).

To the book of Hosea:

> I will call "Not my people" "My people" (Hos 2–25).

He says to his readers:

> You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may proclaim the perfections of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. You who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Pet 2:9–10).

2. Christ is at the same time both a living and a life-giving stone: St. Paul compares him to the rock from which the water gushed out in the desert; the Jews of the time of our Lord thought that this rock had in some way accompanied the Hebrews during the whole of their journey (*cf.* 1 Cor 10:4).

3. The quotation here is from the Septuagint version. The New Testament authors usually make use of this version. The text is also quoted according to the Septuagint in Apocalypse 1:6 and 5:10. In the Hebrew one reads: "I shall take you for a kingdom of priests. . . ." just as one speaks of the kingdom of David. The text belongs to the tradition of the post-exilic priests. It is known that after the exile the people of God were governed by his priests and no longer by a king.

St. Peter has already spoken to us about sacrifices, the spiritual victims agreeable to God, which the members of this new priestly people must offer in the temple, of which they are at the same time both the living stones and the priests. What are these victims in fact? Peter does not say expressly what they are, but his message may be compared with a call addressed by Paul to the Romans:

> I exhort you therefore, brethren by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God—your spiritual service (Rom 12:1).

Under the new covenant the faithful are called to be at one and the same time the stones of the new temple, its priests, and the victims which are offered to God, just as Christ, with whom they are united, is at the same time the sanctuary, priest and victim—the true sanctuary, the sole priest and the only victim of the new covenant.

Whereas, in St. Paul, the temple was described under an aspect which always remained a little static, St. Peter, we notice, insists that we consider it as the continually living temple. Its corner-stone, Christ, is living; the stones with which it is built are living. It is the living sanctuary of a wandering people, of travellers who have not yet entered into possession of "the heritage which is reserved for them in heaven" (1 Pet 1:3–4). It is indeed with the holy nation and the pilgrim people of the exodus that Peter compares the members of the new people of God.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Heavenly Sanctuary
(Epistle to the Hebrews)

In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke tells us that a large number of Jewish priests joined the believers:

> And the word of the Lord continued to spread, and the number of the disciples increased rapidly in Jerusalem; a large number also of the priests accepted the faith (Acts 6:7).

We are still at the very first stage of the Church's development; Paul has not yet entered on the scene, and Stephen has not yet been martyred.

Luke later reports that James, the leader of the Jerusalem community, said to Paul on the latter's return from his third great missionary journey:

> Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, all of them zealous upholders of the law . . . (Acts 21:20).

The letter to the Hebrews was undoubtedly written for such converts, and as one would expect, the theme of the true temple is developed more fully for readers who set such great store by the temple of Jerusalem. The temple, of course, was still standing and the priests of the old covenant were still offering "the gifts prescribed by the law" (Heb 8:4). Men who were still attracted by this

temple and its glorious heritage needed encouragement in their adherence to a completely new order.

Passing over the rudiments of Christianity (*cf.* Heb 6:1–2) which the author of the letter presumes are well-known to them, he shows them the infinite superiority of the son of God over the angels and the great figures of the past, and the superiority of the new institutions over those of former times, which have served their purpose and are now about to disappear.

The perspective of the letter to the Hebrews is quite different from that of St. Paul, although there are some features in common.[1] On the other hand, it is in some ways similar to the first letter of St. Peter, and to the discourse of Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles. It foreshadows also some attitudes of the Johannine writings.

Once again, the "house," whose architecture Paul has described for us, will be mentioned. The inspired writer is, first and foremost, trying to raise the eyes of the converted Hebrews—and our eyes—to the heavenly sanctuary, which from now on will be wide open. It is the goal of our pilgrimage, the reality of which the former sanctuaries were no more than an image and a shadow.

THE "HOUSE" OF CHRIST

Having established the superiority of Christ over the angels by showing that he was the creator of all things, the author considers how Jesus surpasses Moses in word and work. It was true that Moses

> was faithful "in all his house" as a servant (Heb 3:5: *cf.* Num 12:7).

1. It is generally agreed that St. Paul did not write the letter to the Hebrews.

> was deemed worthy of greater glory than Moses (Heb 3:3).

He is of greater dignity,

> . . . as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house that he has built. For every house is built by someone; but he who created all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful "in all his house" as a servant, to testify concerning those things that were to be spoken; but Christ is faithful as the son over his own house. We are that house, if we hold fast our confidence and the hope in which we glory unto the end (Heb 3:3–6).

The word "house," as used here, conjures up both the image of a family and of a building.[2]

This house "over" which Jesus has been appointed already exists, since we are part of it. It is also a goal towards which we are moving and in which we shall find "rest," if we have been more faithful than the Hebrews during their journey towards the promised land. The majority of them "could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb 3:19).

"Let us therefore fear!"; if we are unfaithful, our fate will be worse than theirs (*cf.* Heb 4:1 *ff.*).

THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

From the idea of the house, the inspired writer passes at once to the heavenly sanctuary into which Jesus, "the eminent high priest of the new covenant," has entered "as our precursor." The first to enter into the "rest" of God and his glory, he has given us free access "to the

2. We are here reminded of the oracle of Nathan. See 2 Samuel 7:5-16.

throne of his grace," which we can approach with full confidence:

> Having therefore a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our confession . . . Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy. . . . (Heb 4:14 . . . 16; *cf.* Lev 4:2).

The main point which our inspired author wants to establish is, in fact, that

> We have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens, a minister of the holies, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has erected and not man (Heb 8:1–2).

The tent in which the children of Aaron practise their ministry is no more than "an image and a shadow" of that true tent. Moses himself was warned of this through the divine oracle which is referred to in the book of Exodus:

> that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee on the mount (Heb 8:5; *cf.* Ex 25:40).

Our high-priest himself has received "a ministry," a service much greater "in proportion as he is mediator of a superior covenant, enacted on the basis of superior promises" (Heb 8:6), promises which were proclaimed through the mouth of the prophets:

> For had the first been faultless, place would not of course be sought for a second. For finding fault with them [the descendants of the Hebrews] he says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their father on the days when I took them by the hand to lead

them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they did not abide by my covenant, and I did not regard them, "says the Lord. . . . Now in saying "a new covenant," he has made obsolete the former one; and that which is obsolete and has grown old is near its end (Heb 8:7 . . . 13).

The sanctuary of the old covenant must undoubtedly be regarded as antiquated and obsolete. While the author recalls its arrangement and its beauty (Heb 9:11), he cannot overlook its imperfections.

Its most sacred part which was curtained off, could be entered by the high priest alone, and at that, only once a year. The Holy Spirit

signified by this that the way into the holies was not yet thrown open while the first tabernacle was still standing. This first tabernacle is a figure of the present time . . . (Heb 9:8–9).

Up to now, the priests of the old law were only able to offer there

gifts and sacrifices . . . that cannot perfect the worshipper in conscience, since they refer only to food and drink and various ablutions and bodily regulations imposed until a time of reformation (Heb 9:10).

Now, however, Jesus, once for all, has entered for ever into the true "holy of holies":

But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things to come, he entered once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (that is, not of this creation), nor again by virtue of blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of his own blood, into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb 9:11–12). [3]

3. The inspired author recalls the ceremonies of the ancient feast of expiation, *cf.* Leviticus 16:1 *ff.*

The "holy of holies" will henceforth be wide open. The symbolic curtain which closed off the earthly "holy of holies" has been torn[4] from top to bottom, at the moment when Jesus

> by one offering . . . has perfected forever those who are sanctified (Heb 10:14).

The true temple is the heavenly sanctuary which Jesus has entered. It is also, from another point of view, the glorified body of Christ, whose side was opened by the spear after the passion. Our author may perhaps allude to events related to us by St. John (Jn 19:31–37). He concludes with the following exhortation which brings us back to the theme of the "house":

> Since then, brethren, we are free to enter the holies in virtue of the blood of Christ, a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil (that is, his flesh), and since we have a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience by sprinkling, and the body washed with clean water (Heb 10:19–23).

How can we prove the sincerity of our hearts? The author tells us:

> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has given the promise is faithful. And let us consider how to arouse one another to charity and good works; not forsaking our assembly as is the custom of some, but exhorting one another, and this all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Heb 10:23–25).[5]

4. We are here reminded of the synoptic account of the passion of the Lord; *cf.* Mark 15:38; Matthew 27:51; Luke 23:45.

5. Some commentators think that the author is here alluding to the Jewish War which heralded the imminent destruction of the temple.

The "assemblies" proper to the Christians, as described in the Acts, are presented as the pledge of our full entry into the heavenly sanctuary on the day of the Lord which is at hand.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Like the Hebrew saints and the patriarchs of former times, we too are moving towards this true sanctuary. They knew well that they were on the way to another country, to a different city from the earthly Jerusalem. Enlightened by faith, they declared:

> . . . that they were pilgrims and strangers on earth. For they who say these things show plainly that they seek a country of their own. And indeed if they were thinking of the country from which they went out, they certainly would have had opportunity to return; but as it is they seek after a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city (Heb 11:14–16).[6]

This is a city which because it is completely holy has no need of a temple. We shall read about it in the Apocalypse.

You will have noticed that throughout the whole of this epistle, it is always to the tent of the desert, the tabernacle, that the author refers. He does not mention the temple of stone at Jerusalem.[7] To the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, the years of their wandering in the

6. *Cf.* Genesis 23:4; Psalm 39(38) :13; 1 Corinthians 29:15.

7. It is possible that the readers of the epistle or its author were attached to a Jewish group hostile to the temple of Jerusalem. The people of Qumran had similar sentiments. They may not have been the only ones amongst the Jews of our Lord's time who were influenced by the passages in the Bible which were averse to the temple building. Had the latter not been built in spite of the divine refusal? The tent in the desert, however, was built on the orders of God, according to the heavenly model which had been shown to Moses on Sinai. Stephen spoke of it to his adversaries (*cf.* Acts 7:30–34).

desert, when their mobile sanctuary was the tent, constituted the ideal. This period most resembles the time during which Christians live as "travellers and strangers" on the earth.

At the end of his epistle, the author remembers Sinai, the mountain of the great revelation and how great a contrast there was between this holy mountain, which no one dared to approach, and the heavenly Jerusalem:

> For you have not approached a mountain that may be touched, and a burning fire, and whirlwind and darkness and storm, and sound of trumpet, and sound of words; which sound was such that those who heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them. . . . And so terrible was the spectacle that Moses said, "I am greatly terrified and trembling." But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the Church of the firstborn[8] who are enrolled in the heavens, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant, and to a sprinkling of blood which speaks better than Abel (Heb 12:18 . . . 24; *cf.* Ex 19:16–23).

We should be moving towards this city; we should leave the camp of those who still adhere to the former sanctuary and the ancient sacrifices[9]:

8. The expression "first-born" reminds us of one of the titles of the ancient people of God. In our epistle Jesus, who has made himself our brother, is presented to us as the first-born *par excellence*. We share this title with him in so far as he has made us sons and heirs to the kingdom of heaven through grace (*cf.* Rom 8:15–17; and Gal 4:6–7; *cf.* also Heb 1:6; Rom 8:29; Col 1:15; 1:18; Lk 2:7; Apoc 1:5).

9. When this epistle was being composed, the siege of Jerusalem was about to begin. Perhaps the author is echoing the invitation which was at that time addressed to the Christian community by one of its prophets. Warned by God, he transmits to the Jerusalem community the order to leave Jerusalem and to go to Pella in Transjordania. *Cf.* p. 64.

We have an altar, from which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle. . . . Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his blood, suffered outside the gate.[10] Let us therefore go forth to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach; for here we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come (Heb 13:10–14).

THE TRUE CULT

Our true city is the heavenly Jerusalem; our true victim is Jesus; let us offer, through him, at all times, our sacrifice of praise and our songs:

Through him, therefore, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise always to God, that is, fruit of lips praising his name (Heb 13:15; *cf.* 1 Pet 2:9).

As the ancient prophets said, love is worth far more than any sacrifice. Our author recalls this and adds:

And do not forget kindness and charity,[11] for by such sacrifices God's favour is obtained (Heb 13:16; *cf.* Hos 6:6).

Our whole life, transformed by charity, forms an essential part of the true "spiritual cult" which should be offered to God by those who are of his house, who are already on their way towards the true sanctuary (*cf.* 1 Cor 10:31).

10. Once again, the author alludes to evangelical memories of the past (*cf.* Jn 19:20).

11. Literally the "koinonia" (the communion), that is, the pooling of all resources, so that there are no longer any poor people and all are brothers (*cf.* Acts 2:42; 4:32–37).

CHAPTER SIX

The Destruction of the Man-Made Temple

THE REVOLT

It is generally assumed that the epistle to the Hebrews was composed around the year 67 A.D. In the year 66, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had rebelled against Florus, the Roman procurator then in office.

Already in difficulties with the Jews, he exasperated them even more by imposing a substantial levy on the temple treasury. In the time of the Maccabees, Heliodorus had also provoked rebellion by laying hands on temple funds.[1]

A riot broke out in Jerusalem. The oppression was so brutal that a state of rebellion gradually extended throughout the whole country.

The Jewish activists of the time, the Zealots, seized one of the Roman fortresses and killed all its defenders; they then transformed the temple itself into a fortress. The Sadducees and a great number of Pharisees tried to stop the insurrection and to calm the rebels, since they were anxious above all to avoid having the temple profaned and its sacred vessels looted by the Romans.

1. 2 Maccabees 3:7 *ff.* The riches of the temple had already aroused the greed of other foreign leaders in the course of history, for example, that of the Pharaoh Shishak (1 Kings 14:26).

According to the Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea (265–340), the Christian community of Jerusalem had, from the very beginning of the upheaval, taken refuge in Pella in Transjordania.

> But before hostilities broke out, the whole body of Christian believers in Jerusalem, warned by a divine revelation, deserted the Jewish capital and all the land of Judaea, and removed to a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella (*Ecclesiastical History*, III, 5:3).

THE OPPRESSION

At the beginning of this holy war, the rebels gained the upperhand, but in spring of the year 67 A.D., Nero sent Vespasian to put down the revolt. The Romans entered the campaign with an army of considerable size, about 60,000 men in all, and Galilee was quickly reconquered.

We know of these events from several profane authors including the Roman Tacitus,[2] and, of course, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who held the post of military governor in Galilee during the war, and was later taken prisoner. In his great work *The Jewish War*, he has related to us the succession of events which led to the complete ruin of the temple in the year 70.[3]

The following are the words of Tacitus:

> Vespasian was sent by Nero, and by the help of his good fortune, his high reputation, and his excellent subordinates, succeeded within the space of two summers in occupying with his victorious army the whole of the level country and all the cities except Jerusalem (*History* 5:10).

2. Tacitus, *History*, Book 5, Chapters 10 and 12; *cf.* also Suetonius in his *Lives of the Cæsars*.

3. The account of Josephus begins in Chapter 14 of the second book.

> The temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outwork. It contained an inexhaustible spring; there were subterranean excavations in the hill, and tanks and cisterns for holding rain water. . . . Their numbers were increased by a vast rabble, collected from the overthrow of the other cities. All the most obstinate rebels had escaped into the place, and perpetual seditions were the consequence (*History* 5:12).[4]

From then on, the horrors of battle, famine and plague overwhelmed the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were openly at war with one another. The historian Eusebius, quoting Josephus, writes:

> For the rich, to remain in the city was a death-warrant. On the pretext that they were planning to escape, they were put to death for their wealth. As the famine grew worse, the frenzy of the partisans increased. Nowhere was food to be found.[5]

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

Preparations for the siege of the city began in the year 68, but operations were delayed for more than a year on account of Nero's death. Vespasian became emperor and the command of the armies passed to Titus, his son. Four legions were put at his disposal, not counting the auxiliary corps.

The time was just before Easter of the year 70. Crowds of pilgrims were arriving in the holy city. The Romans made no attempt to prevent them from entering the city,

4. *History of Tacitus*. Translated by A. J. Church and N. J. Brodribb, London, 1813, pp. 198–9.

5. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 6; *cf.* Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 5.

but when the celebrations were over, they found it impossible to leave:

> The Jews, unable now to leave the City, were deprived of all hope of survival. The famine became more intense and devoured whole houses and families. The roofs were covered with women and babes, the streets full of old men already dead. Young men and boys, swollen with hunger, haunted the squares like ghosts and fell wherever faintness overcame them. To bury their kinsfolk was beyond the strength of the sick . . . Everyone as he breathed his last fixed his eyes on the Temple, turning his back on the partisans he was leaving alive.[6]

The Romans who had surrounded the city with trenches, attacked each of the defence-works in turn.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

For five months, the Jews fought courageously, but the Antonia was taken in July. Titus wanted to spare the "naos," the sanctuary itself, but on the 29th of August in the year 70 a flaming torch thrown by a soldier into one of the side-chambers of the temple set fire to the whole building. Josephus remarks that this date was truly a fatal one for the temple: on this day many years before, it had already been burnt by the king of Babylon:

> One of the soldiers, without waiting for orders and without a qualm for the terrible consequences of his action but urged on by some unseen force, snatched up a blazing piece of wood and climbing on another soldier's back hurled the brand through a golden aperture giving access to the chambers built round the Sanctuary. As the flames shot into the air the Jews sent up a cry that matched the calamity . . .[7]

6. Josephus, *The Jewish War,* trans. Williamson, Penguin Classics, p. 297.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 323.

On hearing of the fire, Titus, who was resting in his tent, rose immediately. He did what he could to put out the fire but his efforts were in vain. Because of the panic he could not make himself heard. In the sacred precincts the Jews were being slaughtered; bodies accumulated round the altar and blood flowed down the steps. Eventually the whole building which Jesus had condemned was consumed by the flames.

Only some of the sacred vessels escaped the disaster: the seven-branched candlestick, the golden show-bread table and some sacred trumpets.[8] The last stronghold of Jewish resistance in Jerusalem fell in September.

During the second Jewish revolt, in 132 A.D., Jerusalem was taken for a short time by the armies of Bar Kokeba, but the city was quickly reconquered by the Romans.

Whatever remained of the temple from the earlier destruction was razed to the ground in 135 A.D., and in its place were erected opposite each other two "abominations": statues of the emperor Hadrian and of Jupiter Capitoline. All that remained of the Jewish sanctuary was the rock which earlier had served as the Jebusite Araunah's threshing-floor.

Certainly the Jews had experienced "tribulations such as had not been from the beginning of creation" (Mk 13:19). Their city had been "surrounded and shut in" (*cf.* Lk 19:43). Of the magnificent temple, not a stone remained upon a stone (*cf.* Mk 13:2).

8. Before being placed in the Roman temple of victory, these objects were brought in procession through Rome when the city was celebrating the triumph of Titus in June, 71. A bas-relief on the Arch of Titus near the Forum in Rome depicts the scene. Some of these objects were given to Titus by a priest named Jesus and by a guardian of the treasury of the temple (*War of the Jews,* Book 6:41).

We have just seen how the predictions of Jesus concerning the ruin of the man-made temple were fulfilled. Whilst the Jews were forced to flee from the devastated city of Jerusalem, the Church, fully freed from Judaism, continued to grow and expand. The persecutions which were launched against it were of little consequence; instead of weakening the Church, they showed that it is truly the "house built on the rock" of which Jesus had said that it would withstand the onslaught of the winds and the floods (Mt 7:25).

Not only was the Church spread far beyond the boundaries of Palestine, but the spiritual riches bequeathed to it by its founder were gradually being revealed.

Two inspired writings appeared after the ruin of the temple, the Apocalypse and the fourth gospel. We shall now examine what these two books teach us about the new holy city and the sanctuary of heaven where the Lord dwells.

Do you see these great buildings?
Of these
there shall not be left
a stone upon a stone.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Bosom of the Father
(St. John's Gospel)

Although the fourth gospel is often described as more "spiritual" than the synoptics, it is probably more exact in recording some historical details of the life of Christ, especially in what concerns his visits to the holy city. It has therefore much to offer on the subject of the temple.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

The first three evangelists presented the life of Christ in a simplified manner, but John described in greater detail the unfolding of the drama which reached its climax in our salvation.[1] Thanks to St. John, we know that Jesus often frequented the temple of Jerusalem during his public life. The portico of Solomon, under which the Christians assembled after Pentecost, was the setting for some of his most valuable teaching (Acts 3:11; 5:12; *cf.* Jn 10:23).

It is around the various journeys to Jerusalem that St. John arranges the events of Jesus' life.

In Chapter 2 of his gospel he tells us:

> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem (Jn 2:13).

in Chapter 5:

1. *Cf.* p. 74.

> After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem (Jn 5:1).[2]

and further on:

> Now the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was at hand . . . When, however, the feast was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple . . . (Jn 7:2 . . . 14).

and later still:

> Now there took place at Jerusalem the feast of the Dedication; and it was winter. And Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's portico (Jn 10:22–23).

> Jesus therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany . . . Now the next day, the great crowd which had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of palms and went forth to meet him (Jn 12:1 . . . 12).

Jesus made this pilgrimage several times at the risk of his life (*cf.* Jn 7:10; 7:25), and was often forced by the rising anger of the Jews to leave the temple precincts. He would eventually abandon it to its fate as Yahweh had done in the time of Ezekiel (Ezek 9 and 10). (*Cf.* Jn 7:30; 7:44; 8:59; 10:39; 12:36.)

More important than the record of the events which happened in the temple is the detailed teaching which St. John gives concerning the true temple which will replace it. He considers this future temple in two ways: as the place in which God dwells in order to transmit his grace to the faithful; and as the place towards which mankind must make its way.

As the source from which flows the stream of sanctifying grace, the temple will also be the body of Christ, the

2. This "Jewish feast," which is not mentioned by name, may have been the feast of Pentecost.

Word incarnate, and those to whom he transmits his Spirit.

As the place towards which we make our way, it is the divine glory itself, the bosom of the Father where Jesus has prepared a place for us.

THE PROLOGUE

This double aspect already appears in the prologue of the fourth gospel where St. John teaches us that the Word of God, by becoming flesh has "dwelt among us," literally: "has pitched his tent among us" (Jn 1–14a).[3]

We are at once reminded of the tent of God set up in the camp of the Hebrews during the exodus, the tabernacle which the glory of God was going to fill (*cf.* Ex 40:34*ff.*). St. John also adds:

> And we saw his glory—glory as of the only-begotten of the Father (Jn 1:14b).

When the Word, the only-begotten Son, became man, God dwelt among men in a way which far surpassed the presence of his glory in the tent set up at the command of Moses. St. John continues with the following words:

3. The verb used by St. John, "skēnoō," had lost its original force at the time when the apostle was writing; however, it is useful to know its etymological meaning: "to pitch a tent, to live in a tent." This verb is used with this meaning in the Greek version called the Septuagint, in Genesis 13:12; it is also to be found in Numbers 35:34 and Ezekiel 37:27. In the New Testament, the verb is found only in the Johannine writings: once in the fourth gospel (Jn 1:14, passage quoted) and four times in the Apocalypse: Apoc 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; and 21:3. In each case it refers to the dwelling of God with men, or men with God in glory.

The related term "skenoma," "dwelling-place" or "tent," is used once in the Acts of the Apostles (7:46); twice in the second letter of St. Peter (1:13; 1:14). And the word "skēnē," "tent," in Matthew 17:4=Mark 9:5=Luke 9:33; Luke 16:9; Acts 7:43; 7:44; 15:16 (*cf.* Amos 9:11); Hebrews 8:2; 8:5; 9:2; 9:3; 9:6; 9:8; 9:11; 9:21; 11:9; 13:10; Apoc 13:6; 15:5; 21:3.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17).

In earlier times, the wise men described the Wisdom of God, the creative Word which dwells with the Lord, coming to take his pleasure amongst men:

. . . playing on the surface of his earth
And I found delight in the sons of men (Prov 8:31).

God speaks to Wisdom:

In Jacob make your dwelling,
in Israel your inheritance (Sir 24.8).

It is in this way then that Wisdom which ministered before God in the holy tent of the heavenly sanctuary came to settle in Zion (*cf.* Sir 24:10). At this time in Israel's history wisdom was represented especially by the law of Moses; the two are almost identified:

All this is true of the book of the most high's covenant,
the law which Moses commanded us
as an inheritance for the community of Jacob (Sir 24:22).

But now there is present in his tent one whom Moses never saw: "No one has seen God at any time," not even Moses, since the Wisdom of Solomon tells us that he saw only something of his glory (Sir 45:3; *cf.* Ex 33:18).

The Word has come from the bosom of the Father in which he dwells, and he has come to lead all those who believe in him back to the bosom of the Father. This "bosom of the Father," the eternal sanctuary, is the "place"—if one can describe it as such—towards which Jesus is leading us, the "place" where our exodus should terminate.

During this exodus, Jesus is the true tabernacle in whom the glory of God really dwells. It is this glory that St. John presents to us in his gospel.

JESUS AND THE "HOLY PLACE" OF BETHEL

Before relating the episode of Cana which was the first revelation of the glory of the Lord before the eyes of his disciples (Jn 2:11), St. John draws our attention to some words spoken by Christ to one of the disciples, Nathanael of Cana:

> Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man (Jn 1:51).

"The angels of God ascending and descending" is an expression borrowed from the famous account of the vision of Jacob at Bethel at the end of which the Patriarch had cried out:

> This is none other than the house of God[4]; this is the gate of heaven (Gen 28:17).

By these words to Nathanael, Jesus may have wished to show that this term may truly be applied to him, the son of man. He is the "gate of heaven"—through him heaven comes to men and men go to heaven. Jesus would say later on: "I am the door, the door of the true fold" (Jn 10:7).

DESTROY THIS TEMPLE

During the first visit to Jerusalem described by St. John, Jesus spoke of the building of a new temple, but this

4. Beth = El. This Hebrew name for the ancient sanctuary of Luz really means "house of God."

veiled reference to his resurrection was missed by his audience.[5]

Jesus, eaten up with zeal for his Father's house (*cf.* Jn 2:17), had just driven the traders from the temple, when the Jews challenged him:

> What sign [of thy authority] dost thou show us, seeing that thou dost these things? (Jn 2:18).

Jesus replied:

> Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (Jn 2:19).

During the trial of Jesus, his accusers recalled particularly the "threats" he uttered against the sanctuary at Jerusalem.[6] After the resurrection, the apostles understood for the first time that Jesus had really spoken of "the sanctuary of his body." It was only then that they grasped the real significance of his actions and words on this occasion, and saw the prophetic import of Psalm 69(68). This psalm which begins with a bitter lament and concludes with a song of triumph, pulsates with the feelings of a just man, persecuted for his zealous love for the house of God.

5. The first three evangelists, having collected all they remembered concerning the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem in the last section of their gospels, placed this particular item at the end of his public ministry. St. John gives the time more exactly.

6. Mark and Matthew transmit the words of Jesus to us as they were reported by the false witness of the trial in a slightly different way (*cf.* Mk 14:57–58; Mt 26:61).

None of the evangelists claims to have given a full account of the teachings of Jesus after the expulsion of the traders. What St. John recalls draws our attention to the true temple which was the humanity of Jesus. Christ's adversaries are preoccupied with the threat against a temple whose construction and improvement has been going on "for 46 years" (Jn 2:20). This perhaps enables us to fix the date of the first Easter of Christ's public life. The reconstruction of the temple was begun by Herod in 20–19 B.C. It is therefore the year 28 or 29 of our era.

Inspired, perhaps, by the memory of Jeremiah who was persecuted for his attitude to the temple,[7] this psalm is prophetic when read in the context of Christ's passion:

Save me, O God . . .
I have become an outcast to my brothers,
a stranger to my mother's sons,
Because zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me. . . .
as an answer for my enemies, redeem me. . . .
But I am afflicted and in pain;
let your saving help, O God, protect me.
I will praise the name of God in song,
and I will glorify him with thanksgiving;
This will please Yahweh more than oxen
or bullocks with horns[8] and divided hooves:
"See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your hearts be merry!
For Yahweh hears the poor,
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.
Let the heavens and the earth praise him,
the seas and whatever moves in them!" (Ps 69(68):1, 9–10, 19, 30–35).

NEAR GERIZIM

Once again Jesus moved away from Judaea. On his way to Galilee, he stopped towards midday in Samaritan country, at the foot of Mount Gerizim. About 330 B.C., the heirs of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom had built a rival sanctuary to Jerusalem on this mountain.[9] The place where Jesus stopped was, moreover, proud of a

7. *Cf. The Temple of Yahweh*, No. 2 in this series, p. 59.
8. *Cf.* Hebrews 13:15–16.
9. For this sanctuary, *cf. The Temple of Yahweh*, p. 105. The Samaritans of the present time still hold gatherings on this mountain, especially at the time of the Easter feast.

glorious past. The well on which Jesus sat, "wearied as he was from the journey," was said to have belonged to the patriarch Jacob (Jn 4:5).

A Samaritan woman came to the well to get water. Setting aside the prejudices of his people, Jesus asked this schismatic for a drink, and engaged her in conversation for the good of her soul. The snippets of their conversation preserved for us in St. John can help us even now.

THE SPRINGS WHICH FLOWED FROM THE TEMPLE

To the woman who said to him:

> How is it that thou, although thou art a Jew, dost ask drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (Jn 4:9).

Jesus replied:

> If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is who says to thee, "Give me to drink," thou, perhaps, wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water (Jn 4:10).

This is the place to recall the prophecies which foretold an abundant outpouring of living water in the time of the messiah, and announced that a spring would emerge from the right side of the temple (*cf.* Is 35:6–7; 41:18; 43:20; 48:21; 55:1; Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 13:1; 14:8). We are here invited to see in Jesus the source of this spring. Jesus quickly added:

> Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again. He, however, who drinks of the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life everlasting (Jn 4:13–14).

It is not only from Jesus that this living water will flow, but also from those who drink deeply of it.

There is an obvious relation between this first part of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman and the words which he will utter a little later in Jerusalem, on the most solemn day of the approaching feast of Tabernacles[10]:

> If anyone thirst, let him come to me; let him who believes in me drink. As the Scripture says: "From within him there shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn 7:38).

From whom will the water flow? From Jesus or from the believers? The text is perhaps purposely ambiguous.[11] The reference to Scripture does not permit of any certain solution. In fact, Jesus must be alluding to the theme of the living waters as it is to be found in several passages of Holy Scripture.[12]

Their source is both Jesus, the true rock,[13] the true sanctuary, and the believers, who are now transformed by contact with him, and have become temples of God, thanks to the outpouring of the Spirit on them.[14]

10. We know that the feast of Tabernacles, which was a harvest festival and also commemorated the time when Israel lived in tents in the desert, was for the most part a feast of water. At it, the water which sprang from the rock was recalled, and some of the prophetic passages we have just been considering were read during the ceremonies (Zech 14:8; Ezek 47:1).

11. The following translation is also suggested: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture says, 'From within him there shall flow rivers of living water.' "

12. The words pronounced by Jesus are not to be found as such in any passage of the Old Testament. Jesus is referring in a general way to the teaching of the prophets and wise men. *Cf.* the references quoted above p. 76.

13. *Cf.* 1 Cor 10:4.

14. St. John tells us (7:39) that the flowing of the living waters is an image of the outpouring of the Spirit "which those who believe in him were to receive." He adds that at the moment when Jesus is speaking "the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." This outpouring of the Spirit will take place when the decisive hour of the Christian drama has come.

The Samaritan woman, undoubtedly scornful of Jesus, has just said:

> Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, or come here to draw (Jn 4:15).

Jesus replies to her mocking with an embarrassing request:

> Go, call thy husband and come here (Jn 4:16).

This woman, who belongs to a race unfaithful to the God of the covenant is herself living in adultery. She tries to keep Jesus off this embarrassing subject:

> Sir, I see that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that at Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship (Jn 4:19–20).

Jesus replies:

> Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . But the hour is coming, and is now here[15] when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth . . . (Jn 4:21 . . . 24).

Jesus has declared that the rivalry between the ancient sanctuaries is at an end. Now that men are called to pass from the realm of figures and images to that of reality, it is no longer of any significance. Men are no longer subject to the law, but to the Spirit who will be given to them. Nevertheless, Jesus points out to the Samaritan woman that Jerusalem was indeed up to now the only "holy place" wanted by God:

15. It is difficult to decide whether the words "and is now here" form part of Jesus' declaration or reproduce a comment of St. John which was valid for the time he was writing.

> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews (Jn 4:22).

At the same time, Jesus recalls the ancient prerogatives of Jerusalem and announces that the new era has arrived. Henceforth, meetings with God will not take place in particular parts of the world. Men of all races, who have been filled with the Spirit, will be able to come together with their Father.

AFTER THE LAST SUPPER

Once again, in his discourse after the Last Supper, Jesus speaks to us of "the house" towards which we are moving and of the dwelling of God in the hearts of his people. But, this time, it is the glory common to the Father and to the Son which is presented to us as dwelling in us on this earth, and as the goal of our journey.

On the one hand, Jesus promises his apostles that he will prepare a place for them "in the house of his Father." He tells them not to be upset by his approaching departure:

> Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house[16] there are many mansions. Were it not so, I should have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and I will take you to myself; that where I am, there you also may be (Jn 14:1–3).

The way which leads to this "place," of which the temple of Jerusalem, the goal of Jewish pilgrims, was no more than an image, is Jesus himself who, although present here on earth, dwells unceasingly in the house of the Father, in his bosom.

16. We must remember that the word "house" also means "family."

On the other hand, Jesus also promises them that he will come and dwell in them, with his Father. If the disciples keep his commandments, they will make their "dwelling"[17] in them:

> If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him (Jn 14:23).

The Spirit will come also to guide them towards a complete understanding of the truth (Jn 16:13; *cf.* 14:15–17).

During their journey, then, they will not be like orphans (Jn 14:18). Already, the "glory of God" will be in them, as it is in Jesus here on earth (Jn 17:22), pending the time when they will take their place with the son of God and enjoy to the full the sight of his glory. When he had spoken to his disciples, Jesus addressed the following prayer to his Father:

> Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me; in order that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world (Jn 17:24).

The temple where the glory will dwell here on earth will be the faithful follower of Christ, just as formerly it was Jesus. The temple in which all will be fulfilled, will be the divine unity: the eternal glory which the incarnate Word possesses in full with his Father.

17. The word "dwelling place" conjures up the idea of a permanent relationship. In the Old Testament, the temple is considered as the dwelling of the glory of God, the dwelling of his name, for God himself could not be contained in a temple. In the new temple which Christians are, the whole Trinity will make their home.

Soon Jesus is going to be condemned and put to death, but the "sanctuary of his body" will rise again on the third day as he had foretold. For St. John, the immolated body of Jesus seems indeed to be the true sanctuary announced by the prophets and from its side, when opened by the lance, there bursts forth a spring of blood and water:

> . . . but one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who saw it has borne witness, and his witness is true (Jn 19:34–35).

Finally, the risen Jesus says to Magdalen:

> I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God (Jn 20:17).

As he had promised, Jesus returns to prepare a place for us in the bosom of the Father, to make us members of his family, and to give us a home in the house of God.

The gospel according to St. John has directed our minds to a new order of things where earthly sanctuaries will have lost their significance; our attention will be focussed on the life and the glory of God himself, common to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is this glory which revealed itself in Jesus (*cf.* Jn 1:14), and has come to dwell in us as we wait to take our place in the bosom of the Father where the eternal Word, the son of God, has always dwelt.

Having ceased at last to speak in parables (*cf.* Jn 16:25; 16:29), and no longer using words which are laden with the imagery of temple and sanctuary, Jesus teaches clearly that the true religion consists in sharing—even on this earth—in the very life of God himself, one might almost

say in the family life of the three divine persons united in eternal love. St. John has told us in the prologue:

> In him was life, and the life was the light of men (Jn 1:4).

It is this eternal life, the life of God himself, that Jesus has come to bring to us (*cf.* Jn 1:1 *ff.*).

> If anyone love me, he will keep my word,
> and my Father will love him,
> and we will come to him and make our abode with him.

SOME IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE AREA

Second Jewish revolt	A.D. 132–135
Recapture of Jerusalem by the Romans	134
The site of the temple is razed to the ground and the statues of Hadrian and Jupiter are set up on the temple site	135
Julian the Apostate authorises the Jews to rebuild the temple. The work is stopped	362
The Muslims capture Jerusalem (the Caliph Omar)	687–691
The Mosque of Abd el Malik (i.e. the Mosque of Omar)	691
The Crusaders make a church of the mosque	1099
Saladin takes Jerusalem and reconverts the church into a mosque	1187

CHAPTER EIGHT

The New Holy City
(Apocalypse)

In this work, there is no longer any question of the temple of Jerusalem. The eyes of St. John, exiled to Patmos, are fixed on the true sanctuary of God which is his eternal home. It appears to him as a holy city which needs no temple because it is entirely consecrated by the all-pervading glory of God and the lamb.

LIKE THE PROPHETS OF EARLIER TIMES

Already many prophets had seen heaven open before them:

Moses, when he contemplated the model of the tabernacle on Mount Sinai (Ex 25:9–40);

Micaiah son of Imlah, who, in the ninth century B.C., cried out before the impious king Ahab:

> I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne and all the army of the heavens standing by him (1 Kings 22:19).

Isaiah, the great prophet of the eighth century B.C., at the time of his calling and inaugural vision. In the book which relates the major events of his life, and his oracles, we read:

> In the year King Uzziah died (740 B.C.), I saw Yahweh seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed

above . . . "Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of hosts!" they cried one to the other. "All the earth is filled with his glory!" (Is 6:1 . . . 3).

Ezekiel, the exiled priest, also saw "the heavens opened" by the banks of the river Chebar, in the Babylonian plains:

> In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens opened, and I saw divine visions. . . . As I looked, a stormwind came from the North, a huge cloud with flashing fire (enveloped in brightness), from the midst of which (the midst of the fire) something gleamed like electrum. Within it were figures resembling four living creatures . . . each had four faces and four wings . . . Each had two wings spread out above so that they touched one another's, while the other two wings of each covered his body . . . Over the heads of the living creatures, something like a firmament could be seen, seeming like glittering crystal, stretched straight out above their heads. . . . Above the firmament over their heads something like a throne could be seen looking like sapphire. Upon it was seated, up above, one who had the appearance of a man. . . . downward from what resembled his waist I saw what looked like fire; he was surrounded with splendour. Like the bow which appears in the clouds on a rainy day was the splendour that surrounded him. Such was the vision of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh (Ezek 1:1 . . . 28).

In the course of such "divine visions" he contemplated the model of an ideal temple, an ideal holy city and holy land, when Jerusalem and its temple had lain in ruins for fourteen years. A river which rises at the right side of the temple gives this holy land extraordinary fertility. A mysterious voice addresses him from the temple and says to him:

Son of man, this is where my throne shall be, this is where I will set the soles of my feet; here I will dwell among the Israelites forever. . . . describe the temple to the house of Israel (that they may be ashamed of their sins), both its measurements and its design (Ezek 43:7 . . . 10).

During a nocturnal vision, *Daniel* sees a mysterious old man seated on a throne:

His clothing was snow bright,
and the hair on his head as white as wool;
His throne was flames of fire,
with wheels of burning fire.
A surging stream of fire
flowed out from where he sat;
Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him,
and myriads upon myriads attended him (Dan 7:9–10).

A son of man approaches to receive from him an eternal empire, and power over all peoples:

One like a son of man coming,
on the clouds of heaven;
When he reached the Ancient One
and was presented before him,
He received dominion, glory, and kingship;
nations and peoples of every language serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not be taken away,
his kingship shall not be destroyed (Dan 7:13–14).

The triumph of our Lord, with whom the son of man is identified, is here foretold in apocalyptic terms.[1]

1. The apocalyptic type of literature flourished during the last centuries of Judaism, and even after the coming of Christianity. The library at Qumran contains quite a number of fragments of different Jewish apocalypses. Similar writings are also known in the primitive, non-canonical Christian literature, as, for example, the apocalypse of Peter and the apocalypse of Paul.

John, too, on Patmos, sees heaven open before him. He contemplates the glory of the Lord who sits in triumph on his eternal throne, and the victory of the lamb which was won by his sufferings, and the holy city made splendid by both as she descends from God.

All this is described in symbolic terms, borrowed, to a large extent, from the prophets who preceded him. But these images must not deceive us; John himself repeatedly takes pains to give us their true meaning[2]; to stop at the symbols would be to miss their message.

The Apocalypse of John, like the book of Ezekiel in the state in which it has come down to us, comprises two cycles of visions: Apocalypse 1 to 3 and 4 to 22.

In the first cycle, that of the letters,[3] only some brief allusions to the theme of the temple are to be found. The throne of God is mentioned (Apoc 1:4), and the son of man is presented to us for the first time in his glory (Apoc 1:12–20). In one of the letters a promise is made to the conqueror that he will be established as a pillar in the sanctuary of God (Apoc 3:12).[4]

THE LITURGY OF THE TRUE TEMPLE

In the second cycle (Apoc 4 to 22), we are repeatedly

2. For example, in Apocalypse 5:8, and in a more enigmatic fashion in 1:20.

3. Perhaps it is not out of place here to note that the first vision of the prophet took place on the day of the Christian assemblies designated for the first time by the name of "the Lord's day" (Lev 1:10). In the Acts and St. Paul, Sunday, the day of the resurrection, is still called, as in the gospels, by the Jewish name of "first day of the week" (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1; 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

4. On this pillar, the son of man will engrave the name of his God and that of the new city of God . . . In ancient times, it was the custom to put dedicatory inscriptions on foundation stones and also on the headstones of monuments (*cf.* Zech 3:9).

brought back to the presence of the divine glory, to the eternal sanctuary and the throne of God. These are presented to us in terms borrowed from the prophets, especially from Ezekiel and Isaiah:

> . . . behold, a door standing open in heaven . . . and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne One was sitting. And he who sat was in appearance like to a jasper-stone and a sardius, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in appearance like to an emerald . . . And before the throne there is, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal, and in the midst of the throne, and round the throne, are four living creatures[5]. . . And they do not rest day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is coming" (Apoc 4:1 . . . 8).[6]

A whole liturgy then unfolds itself in the heavens; it is directed first of all to the Creator. Twenty-four elders in white garments and crowned with gold, in whom we are undoubtedly meant to see the holy men of the Old Testament, lay down their crowns before his throne, and address him with these words:

> Worthy art thou, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and because of thy will they existed, and were created (Apoc 4:11).

John, apparently, puts in the mouths of the elders acclamations in use at the time in the Christian assemblies[7]:

5. These four living beings seem to personify the angels to whom the administration of the four elements, i.e. of the whole of creation, was confided.

6. *Cf.* Is 6:1; Ezek 1:26–28; 1:10.

7. *Cf.* Acts 4:24. Our Christian liturgy today still resembles very closely that of the Apocalypse.

> . . . and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as if slain (Apoc 5:6).

This lamb is also called by the messianic names of "lion of Judah" and "root of David" (Apoc 5:5; *cf.* Gen 49:9; Is 11:1–10). In him, we must see Christ, immolated but victorious, who controls the unfolding of history as it has been handed down in the book of divine decrees.[8]

The twenty-four elders bow down before him. They offer him a gift of perfume which symbolises, the book itself tells us, "the prayers of the saints" (*cf.* Apoc 5:8; 8:4). Accompanying themselves on the harp, they sing him a "new song":

> And they sing a new canticle, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them for our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign over the earth" (Apoc 5:9–10; *cf.* 1 Pet 2:9).

The book of Exodus had shown Moses and the Israelites singing a song in honour of the God of salvation and redemption after the passage through the Red Sea (Ex 15:1 *ff.*). In the second part of the book of Isaiah, those who experienced salvation by being released from Babylon were asked to sing a "new song" from the ends

8. In the apocryphal book of Henoch, for example, future happenings were inscribed beforehand on mysterious tablets which could be read by celestial beings, that is to say, by angels and those who shared their lot, as for example, the patriarch Henoch. According to Jesus and the New Testament, the mystery of the future is impenetrable, even for the angels; it is the secret of God.

of the earth, in honour of Yahweh, the Saviour.[9] In the Apocalypse, a new "redemption" is acclaimed; it is the redemption of which St. Peter wrote Christians in his first epistle when he referred to the priestly function of Christians in making known the great deeds of God:

> You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may proclaim the perfections of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. You who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Pet 2:9–10; *cf.* Ex. 19:5–6; Is 61:6).

Multitudes of angels take part in these praises of the lamb and of him who sits on the throne:

> And I beheld, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing." And every creature that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are on the sea, and all that are in them, I heard them all saying, "To him who sits upon the

9. The expression "new song" (*cf.* Is 42:10) is found elsewhere in similar contexts as, for example, in the chants of victory, Psalms 96(95) 98(97), 149; *cf.* also Psalm 33(32):3; 144(143):9; Judith 16:13. Further on in the Apocalypse there is reference to a new song. The new song in honour of the lamb in Apocalypse 14:3,5 (*cf.* 15:3) is compared to the song of Moses: while standing on the "sea of glass" which stretches out before the throne of the lamb, the participants in the new exodus sing out (Apoc 15:1–2; *cf.* 4:6): "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages. Who will not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? for thou alone art holy. For all nations will come and worship before thee; because thy judgements are manifest" (Apoc 15:3b–4). They were inspired by the following passages of the psalms and the prophets: Psalm 111(110):2; 145(144):17; Jeremiah 10:6–7; Psalm 86(85):9.

throne, and to the Lamb, blessing and honour and glory and dominion, forever and ever" (Apoc 5:11–13).

This is the festal gathering of the innumerable angels in the heavenly Jerusalem described in Hebrews 12:22–24.

The lamb is not the only victim mentioned in the Apocalypse. Others who were slain seek by their prayers to hasten the coming of the day of the Lord:

> And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God, and for the witness that they bore. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord (holy and true), dost thou refrain from judging and from avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and their brethren who are to be slain, even as they had been, should be complete (Apoc 6:9–11).

By referring to an altar in the heavenly sanctuary, John reproduces a feature which was characteristic of the sanctuary of the Old Testament. In Apocalypse 8:3, he describes the incense of prayer ascending from an altar which corresponds to the altar of incense before the tabernacle of the old law (Ex 30:1–10). Tradition justifies his seeing these features in the heavenly sanctuary, since Moses, when first equipping the earthly sanctuary in the desert copied the heavenly model which was shown to him (Ex 25:9).

The victims whose prayers rise from beneath the altar are those who had joined in the sacrifice of the lamb by giving their lives in martyrdom for the Word of God.

THE NEW EXODUS

At various points in the heavenly liturgy, messengers of

God depart to execute his commands (*cf.* Apoc 14:15,17). An exodus is taking place. Successive plagues strike down the enemies of God, whilst those whom he has singled out, his chosen (elect) ones, his faithful ones, acclaim him in his eternal tent (*cf.* Apoc 14:1–5; 15:5 . . .).

Amongst those who have access to the sanctuary are holy men from all the tribes of Israel (Lev 7:4–8); but people in great numbers "from every nation and tribes and peoples and tongues" come and swell their ranks while the angels, the elders and the whole of creation renew their praise in honour of the Lord (Apoc 7:9–11).

Those who have experienced "the great tribulation" are admitted to the throne of God to serve him day and night (Apoc 7:14–15) and in the tent of God they enjoy the happiness foretold by the prophets for the friends of God:

> And one of the elders spoke and said to me, "These who are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence have they come?" And I said to him, "My lord, thou knowest." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits upon the throne will dwell with them. They shall neither hunger nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike them nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and will guide them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Apoc 7:13-17).[10]

What is this "tent"? Is it the eternal tent of heaven, or the Church? It is perhaps both at the same time, since the saints on earth and those in heaven are part of the one

10. *Cf.* Isaiah 25:4–8; 49:10; Psalm 23(22).

Church. God had already stretched "his canopy" over his people who were journeying towards the holy land and towards his sanctuary.[11] This tent is an image of the divine protection given to the saints. Whoever lives in the shadow of this divine protection while still on earth is also, in a sense, at the end of his journey.

THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND ITS COURT

Ezekiel had seen a new temple in a vision and had noted its dimensions (Ezek 40). A section of the Apocalypse deals with a similar episode when John is invited to measure the temple (Apoc 11:1–2). John, however, is not to concern himself with its outer court which, for the moment, will be given over to the pagans:

> And there was given me a reed like to a rod, and I was told: "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar and those who worship therein. But the court outside the temple, reject it, and do not measure it; for it has been given to the nations, and the holy city they will trample under foot for forty-two months" (Apoc 11:1–2).

What does this outer court of the temple mean? It has been suggested that it symbolises ancient Israel, the former Jerusalem, which was besieged by the pagans from 68 to 70.[12] It is much more likely that it refers to the persecution of the Church by the Romans in the time of Nero.

11. *Cf.* Wis 10:17. One of the passages in the book of Isaiah (49:10) to which John refers (*cf.* Apoc 7:16) belongs to an oracle of promises made to the Jews who are going to leave the country of their exile and return to the holy land.

12. This interpretation may be supported with Luke 21:24: "Jerusalem will be trodden down by the gentiles." Elsewhere in Daniel, there is mention of half a week of years (i.e. $3\frac{1}{2}$ years) but the discrepancy between the length of the siege and the forty-two months of Apocalypse 11:2 may not prove decisive because three and a half years is a symbolic number and is the *typical*—not necessarily the real—length of persecutions (*cf.* Dan 7:25).

The book of Ezekiel concludes with a grandiose plan for a new Jerusalem, the ideal capital of a liberated Israel. Its wealth and beauty remind one of paradise (Ezek 40–48).

The description of the city itself, which bears the name "Yahweh is there," with its twelve doors, one for each tribe, is short enough (Ezek 48:30–35); Ezekiel had spent more time in describing the temple (Ezek 40–47:1). But the oracles of the second and third parts of the book of Isaiah portray the sparkling beauty of this city of the future:

I lay your pavements in carnelians,
and your foundations in sapphires;
I will make your battlements of rubies,
your gates of carbuncles,
and all your walls of precious stones (Is 54:11–12).

No longer shall the sun
be your light by day,
Nor the brightness of the moon
shine upon you at night;
Yahweh shall be your light forever,
your God shall be your glory.
No longer shall your sun go down,
or your moon withdraw,
For Yahweh will be your light forever,
and the days of your mourning shall be at an end.
Your people shall all be just,
they shall always possess the land (Is 60:19–21a).

A similar description is found towards the end of the book of Tobit (Tob 13).[13]

13. *Cf.* p. 85. The apocryphal apocalypses speak of this Jerusalem as a city built at the beginning of time by the Lord and preserved by him until the day appointed for its revelation.

The Apocalypse of St. John also concludes with a description of the new holy city (Apoc 21–22). He sees it "coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." A loud voice coming from the heavenly throne proclaims:

> Behold the dwelling of God with men, and he will dwell with them; And they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Apoc 21:3–4; *cf.* 7:15–17).

John, transported in his vision to a high mountain (Apoc 21:10; *cf.* Ezek 40:2), contemplates its beauty; it shines with the glory of God:

> Its light was like to a precious stone, as it were a jasper-stone, clear as crystal. . . . And the wall of the city has twelve foundation stones, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb . . . And the material of its wall was jasper; but the city itself was pure gold, like pure glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone. The first foundation, jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, agate; the fourth, emerald . . . (Apoc 21:11 . . . 19).

We know what these foundation stones are, and the precious stones which make up the walls of the building St. Paul and St. Peter have spoken to us about them (Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4–6).[14]

St. John notes a feature which unmistakably distinguishes the new Jerusalem from the ancient city of the same name:

14. *Cf.* p. 50.

> And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof (Apoc 21:22).

The gospel of St. John has already taught us that the Lord's wish is that there should be no other temple besides himself.[15]

The prophet on Patmos continues:

> And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it. For the glory of God lights it up, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. And the nations shall walk by the light thereof; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it. And its gates shall not be shut by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and the honour of nations into it. And there shall not enter into it anything defiled, nor he who practises abomination and falsehood, but those only who are written in the book of life of the Lamb (Apoc 21:23–27).

The new Jerusalem is a great city, open to all, provided they are holy (*cf.* Ps 87(86)).

The river which waters the holy city was seen by Ezekiel to flow from the right side of the temple (Ezek 47:1–7; Zech 14:8; Ps 46(45):5) but in the Apocalypse it flows from the throne of God and from the lamb (Apoc 22:1–2) who since the time of Ezekiel have been revealed as the source of the Spirit.

St. John concludes his description of the city without temple as follows:

> And there shall be no more any accursed thing; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no

15. *Cf.* Chap. 7.

more, and they shall have no need of light of lamp, or light of sun, for the Lord God will shed light upon them; and they shall reign forever and ever (Apoc 22:3–5).[16]

What, then, is this magnificent city whose temple is the Almighty himself, whose light is his glory and whose sacred lamp is the lamb?[17]

What is this new Jerusalem which the exile on Patmos sees "coming down out of heaven from God"?

It is the Church in which God dwells as in a sanctuary, and of which God alone is the temple. But is it the Church of today? or the heavenly Church? Is it possible to speak of two Churches at all?

Some features of John's description refer to the Church in its present state, to the great, open city into which God has brought us. Many features, however, can refer only to the Church in its glorious state which will follow the final judgement.[18]

What we have said concerning the synoptic apocalypses[19] is true of all apocalyptic literature, and indeed of the majority of prophecies as well. Whoever speaks in the name of God sees everything from God's viewpoint, in which human perspectives can easily be lost. In fact, it is often impossible to distinguish in an oracle the different phases in the realisation of the divine plan.

In his discourse concerning the end of the world, Jesus

16. This text is full of Old Testament reminiscences, *cf.* Zechariah 14:11; Psalms 43(42):3; Isaiah 60:19; Daniel 7:8; 7:27.

17. The word used by St. John for "lamp" is to be found also in the Greek version of Exodus 25:31–40, in the description of the seven-branched candlestick.

18. This final judgement is described in Apocalypse 20:11–15. Note the promise that the just will see God (*cf.* Mt 5:8; 1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12).

19. *Cf.* above, p. 20. The principal apocalyptic passages in the synoptic gospels are found in Matthew 24; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 21:5–36.

had announced the destruction of the temple and the first triumph of the son of man which would result in freedom for the Church. At the same time, the ultimate triumph of the son of man is revealed in a more distant perspective, when he will return as judge and will bring us into his eternal kingdom.

Similarly, in the Apocalypse, St. John salutes the triumphant inauguration of the Church and also gives us an impression of the last act of salvation, when God will fulfil his promise to make "all things completely new," when the son of man will return on the clouds of heaven to reward fully those who, like him, will have conquered (Apoc 1:7; 20:11–15).

We have followed the path of revelation which leads from the old sanctuaries of Canaan, from the "menhirs" and "cromlechs" through the temple of Jerusalem to the universal Church, towards the city which is all temple, the temple city. We have seen that its goal is ultimately the divine glory itself, "the bosom of the Father."

Let each of us endeavour to become a truly precious stone in the new building, whether sapphire, chrysolite or topaz. As each stone contributes its special radiance to the total effect, so each of us by fulfilling his own vocation can help to produce that harmony in diversity which makes for the wealth and beauty of God's building.

A precious stone should be cut in such a way as to show its brilliance. The hymn for the dedication of a church extols the excellence of God's craftsmanship. He has cut and blended the living stones of the faithful to produce the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem:

> Jerusalem, heavenly city, blest vision of peace!
> Built from living stones,

You are raised on high to the heavens
And attended, like a bride, by countless thousands of angels.
How happy the bride of such a favoured destiny!
Your rich endowment is the Father's glory
And your comeliness is from the Bridegroom's grace—
Queen most beautiful, bride of Christ the King,
Radiant city of heaven.

In this city the gates of glittering pearls
Stand open for all to enter;
For every man that follows the path of virtue
Must come to those gates—
Every man that endures suffering here
For love of Christ.
Its stones are fashioned by many a stroke and blow
Of the Saviour-mason's hammer and chisel.
Thus shaped they go to the making of this mighty structure,
Each being fitly joined to each
And finding its appointed place in the whole building.

From the summit of the highest heaven
Came the sovereign Father's Son,
Like the stone that was hewn from the mountain
And fell to the plains beneath.
He was the cornerstone
Where met the earthly house and the heavenly one.
Now that heavenly one is always resounding with praises
And ever in unceasing song
Honouring the Triune God.
And when we sing our hymns of praise,
We are one with heaven,
Our purpose the same as that of holy Zion.

King of those that dwell in heaven,
Fill this temple with your kindly light.
Come down to it at our calling,

There to receive your people's prayers,
And fill our hearts unceasingly with heavenly grace.
Here may the prayers and entreaties of your humble suppliants
Find their answer in graces from our home above
And may they find joy and comfort in graces received
Until, being freed from the body,
They take their place among the blessed.
Let due glory be given
To the Father most high,
To his only Son,
And to the renowned Paraclete.
To God be praise, power and glory
Through everlasting ages.[20]

20. Translation from Joseph Connelly's *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy* (Longmans, Green & Co, London, 1957).

APPENDIX

Stages in the Building of the Church

(The history of the people of God is intimately bound up with that of their sanctuaries)

STAGE	REFERENCE	PERIOD
ALTARS OF THE PATRIARCHS		
Abraham: Shechem (Oak of Moreh)	Gen 12:7	19th to 18th centuries B.C.
Bethel (between Bethel and Ai)	Gen 12:8; 13:4	
Hebron	Gen 13:18	
Isaac: Beersheba	Gen 26:25	
Jacob: Bethel	Gen 28:10*ff.*	
Sacred Tree: Tamarisk planted by *Abraham* in Beersheba	Gen 21:33	
Worship in the "high places": *Isaac*'s sacrifice	Gen 22	
DESERT SANCTUARIES		
Altars of the Israelites:		13th century B.C.
after defeat of Amalekites	Ex 17:15–16	
memorial of the Covenant (12 pillars)	Ex 24:4*ff.*	
altar of the Covenant	Ex 20:24–26	
destruction of Canaanite pillars (steles)	Ex 23:24; 34:13	
Theophanies on Mount Sinai:		
God calls *Moses*	Ex 3:1–4:18	
sacrificial meal on the mountain	Ex 18:12; 24:9–10	
Moses on the mountain	Ex 19:16–24; 33:18–23	
The Ark of the Covenant and Tent:	Ex 33:7*ff.* Num 11:16	
the Tent	Num 10:33–35	
the Ark	Ex 13:21–22; 14:19; 33:9–10	

the golden calf	Ex 32	
THE FIRST SANCTUARIES IN CANAAN		end of 13th century B.C.
The stones at Gilgal	Josh 4:20	
The altar by the Jordan	Josh 22:10	
The altar on Mount Ebal and the inscribed stones	Josh 8:30*ff.*; Deut 27:3*ff.*	
Shechem (stone under oak-tree)	Josh 24:26–27; Judg 9:6	
Bethel (Bokim)	Judg 2:1–5; 20:26; Judg 21:4	
The tent at Shiloh	Josh 18	
ALTARS AND SANCTUARIES OF THE JUDGES		12th and 11th centuries B.C.
The Canaanite temples:		
in Shechem (El-berith)	Judg 9:4*ff.*	
in Gaza (Philistine god, Dagon)	Judg 9:46	
in Ashdod (do.)	Judg 16:23	
Altar of Gideon	1 Sam 5:2	
Altar at Mizpah	Judg 6:25–26	
Holocaust on the rock	Judg 11:11	
Family sanctuary of Micah and sanctuary of Dan	Judg 13:19	
The sanctuary of Shiloh:	Judg 17; Judg 18:27*ff.*	
Israelites assemble for Yahweh's festival	Judg 21:19	
Family of Eli	1 Sam 2:12*ff.*	
Samuel	1 Sam 1:18*ff.*, 1 Sam 3	
Loss of Ark of the Covenant	1 Sam 4:1*ff.*	
Destruction of the sanctuary	*cf.* Jer 26:6; and Jer 7:12–14	
The Ark brings misfortune to the Philistines	1 Sam 5	
Various sanctuaries in the time of Samuel and Saul: Mizpah, Gilgal, Bethel, Ramah, Bethlehem, "high places"	1 Sam 7:5,12,16; 9:12; 11:15; 13:8; 15:12; 16:2	*c.* 1040 B.C.

STAGE	REFERENCE	PERIOD
JERUSALEM		
David (1010–970 B.C.):		*c.* 1000 B.C.
transfers the Ark to Jerusalem	2 Sam 6 (1 Chron 13); *cf.* Ps 131(132)	
Nathan's prophecy	2 Sam 7 (1 Chron 17)	
buys Araunah's threshing-floor and erects an altar thereon	2 Sam 24:18–25; 1 Chron 21: 18–28	
"high places" continue in use:		
Hebron	2 Sam 15:7–9	
Mount of Olives	2 Sam 15:32	
Gibeon	2 Sam 21:6	
Solomon (970–931 B.C.):		
his prayer at Gibeon	1 Kings 3:4*ff.*	
construction of the temple	1 Kings 5:15*ff.*	*c.* 966 B.C.
transfers the Ark and consecrates the temple	1 Kings 8	*c.* 959 B.C.
pagan "high places" at Jerusalem	1 Kings 11:7	
RIVAL SANCTUARIES TO JERUSALEM		
Jeroboam's schism	1 Kings 12	*c.* 931 B.C.
Northern kingdom:		
Golden calves of Bethel and Dan	1 Kings 12:28	
Samaria founded by Omri	1 Kings 16:24–25	*c.* 870 B.C.
Idolatry and polytheism (Ahab 874–853)	1 Kings 16:29	
Prophets' reaction—*Elijah*	1 Kings 18:16*ff.*	841–835 B.C.
Cult of Yahweh on the hills—Elijah and *Elisha*	1 Kings 18:20*ff.*; 20:23; 2 Kings	

Amos and the sanctuary of Bethel	Amos 7:9*ff.*	*c.* 750 B.C.
against foreign forms of worship	Amos 5:21–26	
Hosea against the golden calf	Hos 8:4–7; 10:5–8	*c.* 735 B.C.
against foreign worship	Hos 6:1–6; 8:11; 4:12–14	
Southern kingdom:		
Rehoboam plunders the temple treasury to pay tribute to Egypt's king	1 Kings 14:26–27	926 B.C.
Asa does the same to pay for alliance with Damascus	1 Kings 15:18	
Jehoash of Judah is hidden and crowned in the temple	2 Kings 11,12	842–835 B.C.
Jehoash of Israel plunders the temple	2 Kings 14:14*ff.*	*c.* 800 B.C.
Calling of *Isaiah* in the temple	Is 6	740 B.C.
Ahaz encroaches on temple funds, etc.	2 Kings 16:8–18	732 B.C.
FIRST REFORM AT JERUSALEM		
Fall of northern kingdom	2 Kings 17:5–6	721 B.C.
Prophecy of *Micah* against the temple	Mic 3:1–12	
Hezekiah demolishes the idolatrous symbols in the temple and elsewhere	2 Kings 18:3–4	716–687 B.C.
Oracle on the future glory of the temple	Mic 4:1–3	
Hezekiah raids the temple treasury	2 Kings 18:14–16	
Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib: the temple threatened	Is 36,37	*c.* 700 B.C.
Hezekiah's prayer in the temple: Isaiah prophesies deliverance	2 Kings 19:14–34	
Under Manasseh and Amon: worship of false gods in the temple	2 Kings 21	687–640 B.C.
THE TEMPLE IS THE ONLY SANCTUARY		
Jeremiah is called	Jer 1	627 B.C.
Religious reform of Josiah: restoration and purification of temple; discovery of the book of the law; destruction of the "high places," in particular, Bethel; the deuteronomist law helps to establish Jerusalem as sole sanctuary	2 Kings 22, 23; 2 Kings 23:8–15; 19–20; 2 Kings 23:8–9; Deut 12:2–12; 18:6–8	

STAGE	REFERENCE	PERIOD
DOWNFALL OF THE FIRST TEMPLE		
Josiah is killed at Megiddo	2 Kings 23:29–30	609 B.C.
The "high places" and idolatry under Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin	2 Kings 23:31*ff.*	
Jeremiah's prophecy against the temple	Jer 26; 7:1–15	
First capture of Jerusalem and pillage of the temple	2 Kings 26:10–12	597 B.C.
First deportations	2 Kings 24:14–16	
Ezekiel is called in a vision	Ezek 1 and 2	593 B.C.
Jeremiah writes to the exiles	Jer 29	
Ezekiel announces the destruction of the temple	Ezek 8 and 9	
Second siege and capture of Jerusalem; destruction of temple	2 Kings 25:1–21; 2 Chron 36: 17*ff.*; Jer 37 and 38; Ezek 33: 21–22	587 B.C.
PEERING INTO THE FUTURE		
Worship at the temple of Jerusalem will continue	Jer 41:4–6	
The future temple described by Ezekiel	Ezek 40–44; 47:1–12	573 B.C.
The "priestly" school works upon old traditions (creation, deluge, desert wanderings) assimilating them to a theology in which the temple plays an essential part	Gen 1; Ex 25–31; 35–40; Num 26	6th to 5th centuries B.C.
"Prophet of the consolation"	Is 40–55	
IN THE TIME OF THE PERSIANS		
Construction of the new temple: Edict of Cyrus, ordering the return of the Jews from exile and the rebuilding of the temple	2 Chron 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 6:3–5; Is 44:28	538 B.C.
Restoration of the altar of holocausts	Ezra 3:3	Autumn of 538

Work stopped	Ezra 4:1–5; 4:24	537–520 B.C.
Work resumed thanks to intervention of *Haggai* and *Zechariah;* difficulties	Hag 1; Zech 1:12–14; 4:6–10; 6:9*ff.*	520 B.C.
Dedication of new temple	Ezra 6:16–18	515 B.C.
Prophecies concerning the new temple: Haggai, Zechariah and a disciple of Isaiah announce that it will be the place of assembly of the nations	Hag 2:1–9; Zech 2:5–17; 8:1–13; 20–23; Is 56,60,61,62	
Malachi announces the future entry of Yahweh into his temple	Mal 3	*c.* 450 B.C.
Petition of the Jews of Elephantine after the destruction of their temple		*c.* 410 B.C.
Samaritan schism and construction of a temple on Mount Gerizim	Zech 11:14? (*cf.* Flavius Josephus)	*c.* 330 B.C.?

UNDER GREEK DOMINATION

High priest Simon, son of Onias II, has works carried out in the temple	Sir 50:1–4	between 220 and 195 B.C.
The temple flourishes under Onias III	2 Mac 3:1–6	*c.* 196 B.C.
Heliodorus plunders the temple	2 Mac 3:7–40	*c.* 175 B.C.
Antiochus IV plunders the temple	2 Mac 5:15–21; 1 Mac 1:21–29	169 B.C.
Defilement of the temple and cessation of lawful worship	1 Mac 1:35–42; Dan 8:11; 11:31*ff.*	
"The abomination of desolation" (book of Daniel)	Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; 1 Mac 1:57; 2 Mac 6:2	167 B.C.
Insurrection of the Maccabees	1 Mac 2:1*ff.*; (2 Mac 5:27)	164 B.C.
Purification and dedication of temple	1 Mac 4:36; 2 Mac 10:1–8; Dan 9:24	do.
Onias IV builds a temple in Leontopolis, Egypt		*c.* 150 B.C.
Destruction of Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim		*c.* 120 B.C.

STAGE	REFERENCE	PERIOD
UNDER ROMAN DOMINATION		
Pompey captures Jerusalem and temple		63 B.C.
Temple plundered by Crassus		*c.* 53 B.C.
Reconstruction of temple by Herod		20–19 B.C.
Dedication of reconstructed temple		10 B.C.
Vision of the priest Zechariah (Zachary) in the temple	Lk 1:5–22	*c.* 7 B.C.
Presentation of Jesus in temple	Lk 2:22–38	*c.* 6 B.C.
The young Jesus among the doctors in the temple	Lk 2:41–50	*c.* 6 A.D.
Jesus' talk with Nathanael	Jn 1:43–51	
Jesus at Jerusalem for his first Passover	Jn 2:13–25	28 A.D.
Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman	Jn 4	
Jesus in the temple:		
at Harvest feast (feast of Weeks)?	Jn 5	
at feast of Tabernacles	Jn 7	29 A.D.
at feast of Dedication	Jn 10	do.
at his last Passover	Mk 11–12; Mt 21–23; Lk 19:28–21:4; Jn 12:12–36	30 A.D.
Jesus talks about the ruin of the temple	Mk 13; Mt 24; Lk 21	
Judas and the temple treasury	Mt 27:5–6	
The curtain of the temple is torn in two	Mk 15:38; Mt 27:51; Lk 23:45; Heb 6:19; 10:20	
The Apostles at the temple after the ascension	Lk 24:53	
OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT		
First Christian community continues to frequent the temple	Acts 2:1–41	Pentecost 30 A.D.
Cure of cripple at Beautiful Gate	Acts 2:42–47	
Arrest of Peter and John	Acts 3	30 A.D.

Stephen preaches against the temple	Acts 6:8*ff.*	36–37 A.D.?
Paul's ecstasy in the temple	Acts 22:17	39 A.D.?
Paul's second missionary journey:		50–52 A.D.
2nd epistle to Thessalonians: "future profanation of temple"	2 Thess 2:4	*c.* 51 A.D.
Paul's third missionary journey:		53–58 A.D.
1st epistle to Corinthians "Christians are the temple of God"	1 Cor 3:16; 6:19	*c.* Easter 57 A.D.
2nd epistle to Corinthians: "a house eternal"	2 Cor 5:1–5	*c.* end 57 A.D.
epistle to Galatians: "the pillars"	Gal 2:9	*c.* 57 A.D.?
Paul goes up to the temple after his third journey	Acts 21:26; *cf.* 24:11	Pentecost 58 A.D.
Paul's arrest in the temple	Acts 21:30	do.
St. Paul at Rome:	Acts 28:16	60–63 A.D.
epistle to Ephesians: "the Church a temple holy in the Lord"	Eph 2:19–22	*c.* 62 A.D.
1st epistle to Timothy: "the Church the house of God"	1 Tim 3:15	after 63 A.D.
St. Peter's first epistle: the living temple	1 Pet 2:4–6	*c.* 64 A.D.?
Completion of construction of temple		64 A.D.
BEGINNING OF FIRST JEWISH REVOLT		66 A.D.?
Epistle to Hebrews: "the heavenly sanctuary"		67 A.D.?
2nd epistle to Timothy: "a great house"	2 Tim 2:19–21	do.
Preparations for siege of Jerusalem		68 A.D.
Titus resumes the siege		70 A.D.
The old sacrificial worship discontinued		early in Aug.
		70 A.D.
Burning of temple	*cf.* Jer 52:12	29 Aug. 70
Titus' triumph at Rome		Summer 71 A.D.
Apocalypse of St. John: the heavenly Jerusalem		*c.* 95 A.D.

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Gerard S. Sloyan, chairman of the Religious Education Department at the Catholic University of America, is General Editor of THE LIVING WORD SERIES. Author of **Christ the Lord** and **To Hear the Word of God** and editor of **Shaping the Christian Message** and **Modern Catechetics**, Father Sloyan is recognized here and abroad as a leader of the catechetical renewal in the United States.

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