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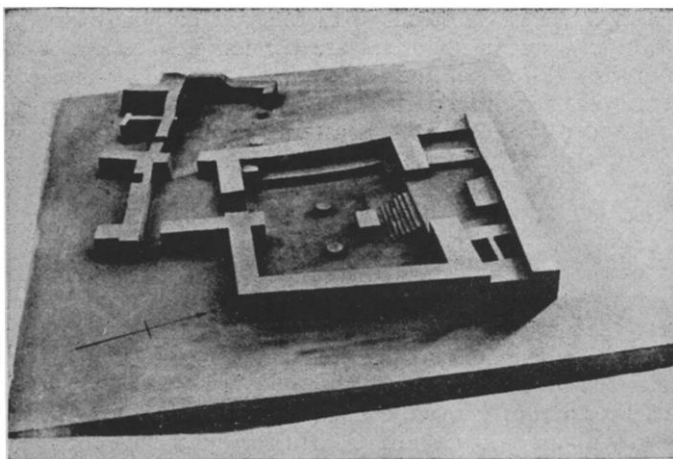


Fig. 1. The plan of a Canaanite temple at Beth-shan (Level VI, 12th century B. C.). A rectangular room with entrance on the long side, and with podium for the god's statue on the opposite side, was the typical temple-form in Syria-Palestine during the third and second millennia B. C. (From Rowe, *Topography and History of Beth-shan*, Pl. 56:2)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN THE
ANCIENT NEAR EAST

PART III. THE TEMPLE IN PALESTINE-SYRIA

G. Ernest Wright

From Parts I and II in the last number of this journal which dealt with the temples of Egypt and Mesopotamia we have gained or may infer the following information:

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1. In the pagan world of ancient times men could scarcely believe in the Divine as an all-pervading Spirit. Divinity did not reveal itself at any time or in any place chosen by the worshiper. The common man could pray, but his prayers were more likely to be heard when they were uttered *in particular spots* where a divine being was believed to have manifested itself in times past. In other words, certain places on the earth had become sacred or holy, and worship was largely confined to them.

2. At these holy places it was customary, when resources permitted, to build temples, sacred buildings, to the god or gods there worshiped. Modern churches and synagogues are the temple's successors, but their function is very different. The modern church building is a place where worshipers assemble to participate in acts of corporate devotion, praise, and confession, and to be instructed in the things pertaining to God and his service. By contrast, the temple was erected as the house or palace of a deity, comparable to the palace of a king or noble. No such word as "temple" existed, but the divine abode was called by the same names (i. e. "house" or "palace") as the abode of a king. Being the divine dwelling place, it was holy and was erected in a special compound which separated it from the outer world. The common man could never enter it for religious assemblies; that was not the building's purpose. The rites of worship carried on in a temple by specially ordained priests took the form of ministrations to the physical needs which a god was believed to have: that is, food (sacrifices and offerings), drink (oblations), incense, etc. Man's duty was to supply divine wants, and in return for the service thus rendered, he could hope for divine rewards.

3. In no country, however, as far as we know, were thinking people naive enough to believe that a god could be confined to a particular building. Re (Sun) in Egypt, for example, not only had various abodes (temples) as did kings and nobles, but he was a cosmic god who was believed to control the times, seasons, and destiny of earth. His palace, therefore, naturally reflected the cosmos as it was then understood. "Its ceiling is painted blue for the sky and is studded with a multitude of golden stars . . . The floor . . . is similarly conceived as the earth out of which plants grow" (Nelson, Pt. I, pp. 47f.). The same is true in Babylonia where the most elaborate cosmic symbolism was employed in a temple's construction. Most characteristic in that country was the temple-tower (see B.A.V. 4, Fig. 3; VII. 3, Fig. 9). This type of structure originated as an artificial platform, the purpose of which was to raise the temple above the water level and preserve it

from the danger of floods. As time went on, however, the original purpose was forgotten, and the tower was built higher and higher in order to lift the temple on top of it toward the sky (cf. Gen. 11:4). The main temple was now built at the base of the tower, while the building at the top "was destined to receive the deity alighting there in its descent from heaven" (Oppenheim, Pt. II, p. 54). Thus while a god "dwelt" in the earthly palace built for him, he was not confined to that building. Instead it became a symbolic microcosm of the deity's world.

4. In all ancient temples the proof of the deity's presence was his statue, which somehow was thought to house his essence. In neither Egypt nor Mesopotamia did religious leaders, at least, believe that the statue *was* the god, or that it confined him. Nevertheless, he was believed to be *in* the statue. Such a careful distinction, however, was probably not understood by the ordinary worshiper (Nelson, Pt. I, p. 50).

5. The great temples and their services of worship were largely aristocratic or upper-class affairs; and the poor peasant could hardly afford to participate in them to any extent. In common practice, therefore, the religion of the common people concerned itself chiefly with lesser deities who were closely connected with a farmer's daily life. The Divine was not one, as we believe, but many. Nature was alive, and its powers and forces since time immemorial had been personified and worshiped (see B.A. VI. 1, p.6.). The official pantheon of the gods might be accepted by all and elaborately systematized by theologians; but the religion of the common people was certainly far less sophisticated, preserving many more primitive attitudes and beliefs. This point may be over-stressed, as it has often been in the past, but it does explain many of the contradictory currents of thought which are common in every age and so clearly seen, for example, in the Old Testament. Thus country shrines, sacred trees, springs, stones, mountains were the common heritage of the ancient world, having survived from the life of prehistoric times.

6. Inevitably, the temples of the great gods were a source of tremendous power in community life. Here were the points where the divine touched the human, where the sources of ultimate power were available to alleviate human need, and from which directions were issued for the conduct of life's affairs. The whole stability of the social order was dependent on the temple. This situation is vividly illustrated by the names given temple-towers in Babylonia, some of which are as follows (the translations have been given to me by Professor Albright): "The house (which is) the link of heaven and earth"; "the house (which is) the mooring post of heaven and earth"; "the house (which is) the foundation-platform of heaven and earth"; "the house (which is) the destiny [i.e. divine prefiguration] of heaven and earth".

Temples were also centers of the economic life of a community. In both Egypt and Mesopotamia they were heavily endowed with landed properties and received a tremendous income. At certain periods they probably owned nearly all the land of the country and acquired almost an economic strangle-hold over the people.

THE TEMPLE IN CANAAN

Turning now to Syria-Palestine in pre-Israelite times, we find that the role of the temple was basically similar to that in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The temple as abode of a god was called the god's "house" or "palace" (*hekal*), and precisely the same words were used as in Babylonia.

The most popular god in whom the Canaanites believed was one familiarly called Baal ("Lord"; his proper name was Hadad). In the religious texts of Ras Shamrah (see B. A. II.1) Baal, like the Lord of Israel in David's time (II Sam. 7), had no "house", though other gods and goddesses did have them. So with the permission of El, the father of the gods, an elaborate structure was completed. This suggests that while such a house was not absolutely required by Baal, it was something he greatly desired.

Baal, moreover, was believed to be the god of the storm, the controller of rain, and the giver of all fertility. He was called the "Rider of the Clouds", the "Lord of Heaven", the "Lord of Earth". He reigned over gods and men, and his kingdom was "eternal, to all generations". This god could certainly be no more confined to a physical building as his sole dwelling than could the great gods of Egypt or Babylonia. As a result, the many temples built for him were undoubtedly conceived to be his abode in the sense that they were the mirrors of the cosmos in which he moved.

There appears to have been in Canaan, however, a sharper conflict than in Egypt and Mesopotamia between the official views regarding the oneness of such a god as Baal and the views of the common people. We are told in the Old Testament, for example, that "the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim" (that is Baals, Judg. 2:11)—as though there were many Baals about the country. From the same source we learn of some of these Baals: the Baal of Peor in Moab, Baal-zebul of Ekron, Baal-hazor, Baal-hermon, Baal-meon, Baal-tamar, etc. (the last four are names of towns). Thus, though theoretically Baal was one, in practice his being became split up into many, each locality having its own shrine or temple. The same can probably be said with regard to the chief goddesses in whom Canaanites believed, particularly Asherah (the mother-goddess) and Ashtoreth (the goddess of fertility).

It is legitimate to suppose that the geography of Syria-Palestine may have had something to do with this situation. Canaan possessed no geographical unity. Instead, the mountains and valleys tended to accentuate local differences. As a result, the city-state system was the political organization developed, and each city-state had its rival temples to the Canaanite deities. In Egypt and in Babylonia (and in Israel too), during periods when there was a strong centralized government, there was a central temple or temples for the chief god or gods. But a unified Canaanite state never came into being. The result was that no one temple of Baal, for example, could be said to be his main abode.

The attempt, then, to localize a god's accessibility in a sacred building, and the geographical disunity which encouraged the erection of rival

shrines and temples to any one god *without a counter tendency toward centralization*—these two factors appear to have resulted in a greater tendency toward splitting up and localizing divine beings than was the case in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Thus it could happen, as stated in the books of Deuteronomy and Judges, that the more Israelites took over Canaanite beliefs and practices, the greater the weakening of the national unity and the accentuation of local differences.

Probably to counteract this situation the so-called “plural of majesty” came into being among the Canaanites. Thus the name for Ashtoreth frequently appears in the plural (Ashtaroth). An important town in Transjordan was so named (Deut. 1:4, etc.). It is most improbable that a city would be named “Ashtoreths”. This plural name must have had another



Fig. 2. One of the earliest temples yet found in Syria-Palestine. It is at Megiddo, and dates from about 3000 B. C. (Stratum XIX). Note the simple rectangular form and the heavy compound wall at the rear, separating the sacred structure from the rest of the city. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

significance. One of the common names for God in the Old Testament is Elohim, also a plural meaning “gods”, though when used of Jehovah it certainly meant one God. It is now recognized that this plural word used to designate a singular being was thus employed in Canaan before it was in Israel.¹ Such plural names when referring to deities, therefore, must often have designated the totality of a god’s appearances or attributes. Ashtaroth would mean the sum total of all the appearances and attributes of the goddess Ashtoreth. Such a usage would arise in all probability only as a result of an attempt to counteract the popular tendency to believe in numerous Ashtoreths. (For a somewhat similar problem in Egypt, see Nelson, Pt. I, p. 49 f.)

1. See Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, pp. 166 f.; and Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Vol. I (5th-6th ed.), p. 173. Professor Albright calls my attention to one of the important proofs of this point in the *Tell el-Amarna* letters of Canaanite kings to the divine Pharaoh of Egypt. In them Canaanite (or Semitic) scribes address the Pharaoh as “my *ilani* (i.e., my gods), my sun-god”, while non-Canaanite scribes use the singular of this word. Yet the Pharaoh was one, not many. Thus *ilani*, “gods”, here can only be a translation of Elohim, and used as a “plural of majesty”, or better a plural designating the totality of the deity’s personality and attributes.

TEMPLE-FORM AND RITUAL IN CANAAN

It is comparatively simple to describe the physical features of the Canaanite temples, since a considerable number of them have been found. One at Jericho and one at Megiddo dating c. 3000 B.C., and three at Megiddo dating c. 1900 B. C., are of the broad-house type: that is, they have a single long room with door on the long side (Figs. 2, 4). One of the most extraordinary and one of the finest examples of architecture recovered in Palestine is a building at Ai which has been called a palace. There can be no doubt, however, that this too was a temple; and it belongs to the same type as those just mentioned at Jericho and Megiddo (see Fig. 3). Later temples, at least after 1500 B. C., have more of a tendency to be square, with a special vestibule or portico for entrance provided. At Bethshan the most interesting addition was a special room or cubicle at the rear, raised above the main room and reached by steps, in which the divine statue or statues were placed (Fig. 1). In other words we have here the beginning of the *Debir* or "Holy of Holies" which is a main feature of the Solomonic Temple and also present in the temples of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In the main sanctuary room were benches on which offerings were placed, a small altar before the raised shrine on which incense was probably offered, a libation stand or stands, and lamps. Outside was the court and the main altar for burnt offerings (cf. Fig. 4).

The only Phœnician temple recovered from the period following 1000 B. C. is a small one at Tell Tainat in Syria (B.A. IV. 2, Fig. 3). This, together with the earliest Greek temples which were influenced by Syrian models, indicate that the general plan of the temple of Solomon was typical for the age: that is, a long narrow structure with entrance at one end and with the "Holy of Holies" at the other (B.A. IV. 2, Fig. 4).

It was the duty of both king and commoner to provide for the upkeep of the temples, as in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The sacrifices and oblations provided food and drink for the gods; as the Ras Shamrah texts put it poetically, "The gods eat the offerings; the deities drink the offerings". Temple ritual was apparently elaborate. Judging from such information as we have in the Ras Shamrah texts, the Old Testament, Phœnician, and other archaeological sources, we may presume that this ritual was in major essentials that described in the early chapters of Leviticus, though more elaborate. The mythical background of the ritual, however, was far cruder than anywhere else in the Near East at the time. In fact, the primitive nature and the brutality of the mythology are surprising. And in addition, there were cultic practices of an especially degrading nature: "human sacrifices, long given up by the Egyptians and Babylonians, sacred prostitution of both sexes . . . , the vogue of eunuch priests, who were much less popular in Mesopotamia and were not found in Egypt, serpent worship to an extent unknown in other lands of antiquity."²

2. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization", *Studies in the History of Culture* (Menasha, Wis., 1942), pp 28 f.

THE TEMPLE IN ISRAEL

When we turn to Israel, we note first of all that the worshipers of Jehovah, like their pagan neighbors, believed that worship must take place at holy sites and not in any spot chosen by the worshiper. Before the Deuteronomic reform in 621 B. C. (II Kings 22-23) the particular places where God revealed himself were numerous: Mt. Sinai, Kadesh-barnea, the Tabernacle, Shechem, Mamre, Beer-sheba, a place between Bethel and Ai, Shiloh, Mizpah, Gibeon, etc.

Some of these places (Shechem, for example) were Canaanite holy sites before the days of Israel. But the important point to notice is that

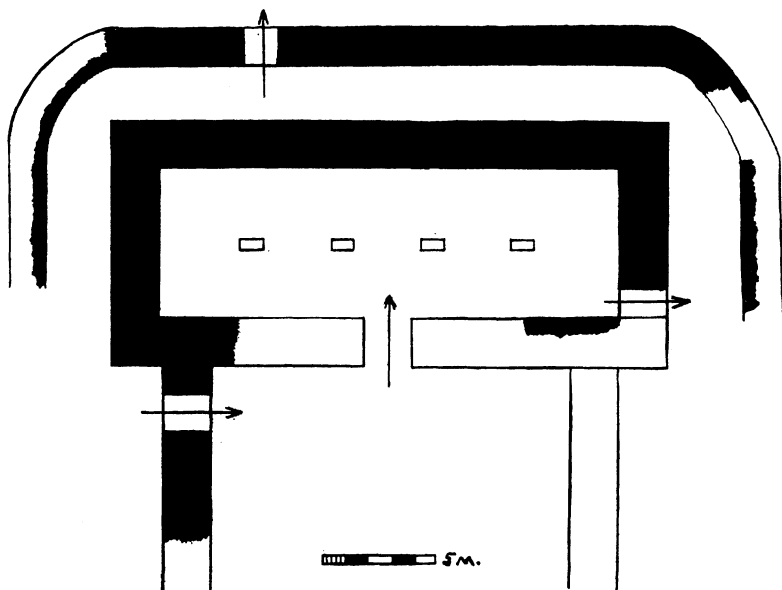


Fig. 3. The plan of a building at Ai, dating c. 2500 B. C., which has been thought to have been a palace. It is one of the finest pieces of architecture yet found in Pre-Exilic Palestine. Professor Albright has long considered it a temple because the site was too small to be the capital of a city-state. Its form when compared with that of other Canaanite temples, and contrasted with that of palaces, indicates that he is right. (Reconstructed from *Syria* 16)

such places were not conceived primarily as dwellings of Jehovah. Rather they were places where he revealed himself. This is especially clear in Genesis, and is an important point of difference between Israel and the surrounding peoples. Thus there was no real localizing of Deity in the various shrines, as appears to have happened in popular Canaanite religion. The danger of splitting up the Divine Being into numerous local manifestations was thus avoided.

In Israel the consciousness that the being of God was opposed to confinement in any one place was evidently stronger and more explicit than elsewhere. The dynamic character of the Lord meant that he used even Canaanite holy places for his revelation. At the same time, however, his favorite place was believed to be Sinai. And at least as early as the 10-9th

centuries, the people believed that his real dwelling was in the heavens (Gen. 24:3,7;28:12,17; cf. 11:5;18:21; Exod. 19:11,18,20).³ While there was a tendency on the part of some to believe that Jehovah was confined or at least especially connected with his own land,⁴ yet there appears to have been a more general belief that he heard and answered prayer (i.e. was present) wherever his people were. He revealed himself to Moses and Israel in Egypt and Sinai, to Abram and Eliezer in Paddan-aram (Gen. 12:1ff.;24:10ff.), and to Absalom in Geshur (II Sam. 15:8).

In early Israel, therefore, two tendencies, the one counter-balancing the other, appear to have been in operation. The one, emphasizing the immanence of God, localized his appearances in particular places, though it did not regard these places as his "dwellings". The other, emphasizing the transcendence of God, believed in his omnipresence and in his heavenly abode (cf. the similar conflict in Canaan, noted above). As a result of the first emphasis, it was possible for sacred trees, high places, pillars, etc., to play a role in religious life just as they did in Canaan, though as the issues became clearer such things were vigorously denounced by prophets and priests (cf. Deut. 7:5; 16:21-22; I Kings 14:23-24; etc.). The greater the extent of this particularizing influence, the greater the tendency for Israelites to forget their covenantal relation with God, indeed the very bond which held them together.

THE TABERNACLE

These two opposing tendencies in Israelite conceptual life are seen in sharper focus in the Tabernacle and in the Temple of Solomon. During the wilderness wanderings the central religious focus of the people had been the portable "Tabernacle". This English word is used to translate the Hebrew *mishkan*, which properly means "tent-dwelling":⁵ that is, the tabernacle was God's dwelling. We are immediately reminded of the pagan temples which were conceived to be divine abodes. But the Tabernacle was also called the Tent of Meeting: that is, a place before which people assembled to meet God. In addition, when Moses and the people did meet God at the Tabernacle, we are told that the Lord *descended* on the structure and enveloped it with his glory or pillar of cloud (Exod. 33:9; 40:34; etc.). Thus, on the one hand, the Tabernacle was thought to be God's dwelling; and yet, on the other, it did not confine him because his proper abode was in the heavens above. He descended to this earthly building as a gracious condescension to the people's needs, giving himself thus to direct and guide their journey (Num. 9:15ff.). This gracious element in the Lord's dealing with Israel was fundamental to the latter's thought of God, and is one which does not receive a similar emphasis in the conceptions of deity held by surrounding peoples.

3. See also Eichrodt, **Theologie des Alten Testaments**, Vol. I, pp. 44 ff.

4. Cf. II Kings 5:17 where Naaman is said to have requested some Israelite earth for transport to Damascus, so that he might build an altar on it and worship the God of Israel.

5. On the basis of Ras Shamrah evidence.

6. See Albright, **Archaeology and the Religion of Israel**, pp. 103 f.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

During the early days of the settlement in Palestine Israel seems always to have had a central holy place where the Tabernacle was erected. Best known was Shiloh, though this town was destroyed by the Philistines c. 1050 B. C.⁶ According to II Sam. 7 David consulted the prophet Nathan about his desire to build a permanent "house" for the Lord. But Nathan did not appear at all enthusiastic about the idea. He said that God had been quite satisfied with the Tabernacle up to that time and placed no requirement upon his people to build him a temple. Later, when the Chronicler wrote about David's plans, he was confronted by an accomplished fact; the Temple had been built. So his explanation was that God would not

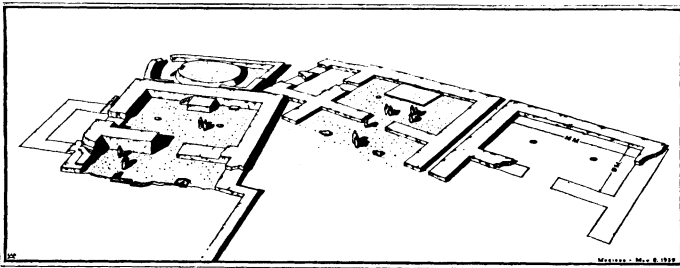


Fig. 4. Three temples at Megiddo, dating from the 19th century B. C., probably erected to three different deities. Note the large altar of burnt offering at the rear: for photo, see B. A. III. 4, Fig. 4. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

permit David to build the structure because the latter had been a man of war and had shed much blood (I Chron. 22:8; 28:3). Nathan's lack of enthusiasm for the Temple is paralleled by the purist reactions against the course of events to be seen among the conservative, tent-dwelling Rechabites (cf. Jer. 35) and perhaps in the early prophetic movement as a whole.

The Temple was built by Solomon according to Phœnician designs (I Kings 5 ff.). There were three parts to it (B.A. IV. 2): the vestibule ("porch"), called the *Ulam*; the main room or "Holy Place", called the *Hekhal*; and the "Holy of Holies" or "oracle", called the *Debir*. The last mentioned was an unlighted room in which were placed two high olive-wood cherubim or winged sphinxes. Beneath their outstretched wings the Ark of the Covenant was placed. On them the Lord was believed to be invisibly enthroned (see B. A. I.1 and IV 2, pp. 27 f.). It is clear, therefore, that there was to be no statue of God in this Temple. Instead of a podium with statue characteristic of the "Holy of Holies" in pagan temples (see Figs. 1, 2, 4), a different symbolism was used for which we have no parallel in temple arrangements. The cherubim with their outstretched wings bearing the invisible God must certainly refer to the belief in the cosmic, omnipresent Deity, and they presuppose a somewhat different situation from that in known Canaanite and Babylonian temples. In the latter the image of the god was raised upon a platform in a special little room in such a way as to signify his kingship (cf. Oppenheim, Pt. II, p.56 and Fig. 10). The differing symbolism in the closed and dark *Debir* of

Solomon's Temple undoubtedly was occasioned in large part by the Israelite prohibition against images of God.⁷

The name for the whole structure was simply "House of Jehovah" (I Kings 6:1, etc.). The term "house", as previously noted, was also used by Canaanites and Babylonians. Albright suggests that since Solomon's Temple was a Canaanite product, the names for the three parts of it, *Ulam*, *Hekhal*, and *Debir* were also borrowed from Canaan. Before the fifteenth century, when the average Canaanite temple was a single-roomed structure, it was called both "house" and *hekhal*, "palace" (see above). After the addition of the other rooms, the term *hekhal* continued to be used for the central or main room. No specific name or term was ever applied to the Solomonic "House" as a whole, and in this respect we may contrast the situation in Babylonia where temples were given proper names (see Oppenheim, Pt. II, p.57). But for Israel the godhead was one; there was no pantheon of deities on the same level. Thus there was only one sacred "house" and this became "The House".⁸

"THE HOUSE OF THE LORD"

The very fact that the Temple was called "the House of the Lord" indicates that the structure, under Canaanite influence, was an attempt to localize God. But in what sense was it his abode?

A study of the symbolism clarifies this point. The large bronze "sea" (I Kings 7:23ff.; B.A. IV. 2, pp. 24 f.) closely resembles the Babylonian *apsu*, a word used both as the name for the subterranean fresh-water ocean from which all life and fertility were derived, and also as the name of a basin of holy water in the temples. The great altar for burnt offerings was built in stages like a Babylonian temple-tower (see Oppenheim, Pt. II, Fig.9), and the lowest stage or foundation of both was named "bosom of the earth".⁹ The uppermost stage of the altar was crowned with four horns at the corners (as were Babylonian temple-towers) and was named *har'el*,¹⁰ explained most convincingly by Albright as meaning "mountain of God", and to be compared with the meaning of the Babylonian word for temple-tower (*ziqquratu*), which meant "mountain-peak". Old Sumerian names of temple-towers in Babylonia often designated them as cosmic mountains. This and other evidence indicates that the Temple and its paraphernalia were rich in cosmic symbolism, just as were Babylonian and presumably Canaanite temple installations.

7. An occasional scholar has maintained that there was a golden image of the Lord in the Temple, but this view scarcely rests on solid, objective evidence. Others claim that images of Jehovah must certainly have existed. Considering the fact that so many of the common people in Israel fell into idolatry, it would be surprising if an occasional image were not made. But the fact remains that whereas male idols occur in nearly every excavation in known Canaanite ruins, not one to my knowledge has ever been unearthed in the vast amount of debris moved by excavators from Israelite towns. This fact has to be reckoned with. It can only mean that deeply engrained in Israelite religion from the time of the settlement in Palestine on there was a strong belief that Jehovah was simply not to be honored or worshipped in this fashion. While male images may turn up, the evidence is already overwhelming that, if they were made at all, they were exceedingly rare (see further B. A. VI. 1, p. 16).
8. Of course, after the division of the kingdom, North Israel had its rival royal shrine at Bethel. But as far as we know, there was no elaborate building ever erected there comparable to the Solomonic Temple in Jerusalem.
9. Ezek. 43:14 which the R. V. misunderstands as "from the bottom upon the ground." For these points see Albright, *op. cit.*, pp. 148 ff.
10. Ezek. 43:15 where R. V. has "upper altar."

It is clear, therefore, that Solomon's Temple was to be the abode of the Lord in the sense that it was the earthly representation of the heavenly abode; or, in the words of Dr. Nelson in describing the Egyptian temple, the physical building envisaged "the limitless world in which the deity moved. The Temple was thus pictured as a microcosm of the world, the realm of the god."¹¹ Numerous passages in the Old Testament support this view. Thus the perennial problem of the distant, transcendent God and the knowledge of and desire for his nearness or immanence was solved in Solomon's Temple, as in the temples of surrounding peoples, by means of a rich, sacramental symbolism which possessed deep significance for those who understood its meaning. It is probable that this interpretation of the Temple's significance remained the dominant one, at least among Israel's priestly circles.

The evidence that there was a conflict in some Israelite minds over the idea that the Temple was in any sense God's dwelling is first encountered in the writings of the Deuteronomic school. Perhaps the clearest example (though cf. Deut. 12) occurs in Solomon's prayer of dedication at the Temple's completion (I Kings 8). This is a remarkable prayer, though scholars generally believe that its present form represents an expanded edition prepared by the Deuteronomic editors of the books of Kings. It would be difficult to say, however, just when many of the conceptions contained in the prayer first appeared in Israelite thought. Whatever their precise date, we have in the prayer these words (vv. 27-30):

"But will God really dwell upon the earth? Behold, neither the heavens nor the heaven of heavens can contain thee; how much less this house that I have built! Yet do thou turn unto the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God . . . that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place whereof thou hast said, 'My name shall be there' And do thou hearken unto the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place. Yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, forgive."

In other words, there is a clear rejection of the whole attempt to localize God or to consider the Temple as his dwelling. What is the Temple's significance then? It is the place where God's name is.

The importance of names in the ancient Near East is well known. In Mesopotamian literature great stress was laid upon the names of gods, buildings, and objects. Somehow people could scarcely believe in something, or conceive what it was, until it was identified with a name. Frequently, a name had of its own right some independent mythological significance and could be revered.¹² Thus this emphasis upon the name of God had a long history in the religious thought of the ancient world. But here the old usage has been transformed in a new setting. The Temple is not important because it is God's dwelling, but because it is the bearer of the name of the Lord. It is his building only because he has chosen to regard it so and because he has allowed it to be known by his name.

This interpretation of the significance of the Temple, not as God's dwelling, but as the bearer of his name, represents the most important solu-

11. See also Eichrodt, *loc. cit.*

12. Compare our modern tendency to be satisfied once we have a large clinical or psychological label for some malady, even though the name does not advance our understanding one whit. The very fact that we have a name somehow makes it more familiar to us.

tion of the problem of immanence and transcendence with regard to the Temple which the Old Testament contains. It bridges the gap most satisfactorily between the distant heavenly God and the desire for and knowledge of his nearness. The Temple was important in the eyes of God, not because it was his palace, but because humble prayer beseeched him so to regard it. He had no need of a Temple; the importance of the structure in his sight was an accommodation to the needs of the people, a gracious consideration for human necessity.

Though it is not generally recognized, at this point Old Testament religion attains an extremely high level of religious thought. Indeed, it may be a clearer witness to truth than some modern conceptions of churches as "houses of God". It is an assertion of the centrality and sovereignty of God, who is not confined or bound by human wishes. Canaanite worship which supplied the physical needs of a god and pleased him with the erection of temples to the end that the capricious and unpredictable being might look favorably upon the worshiper's desires—all that is here discarded and superseded.

THE TEMPLE IN COMMUNITY LIFE

Space does not permit an extended discussion of the Temple's significance in Israelite life. Jerusalem was captured by David, made his personal property, and called "The City of David". The Temple was erected primarily as a royal chapel, adjoining the king's palace, as were many temples in other countries. It had, of course, a national significance throughout its history, but during the Divided Monarchy a rival shrine of some sort existed at Bethel in North Israel, as is clear from the statement of the Bethel priest to Amos (7:13). Only with the fall of Israel and with the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah did the Jerusalem Temple assume paramount importance as the religious focus of the national life.

The chief priests in Jerusalem were all of the line of Zadok (I Kings 4:4). They were not independent of the king and therefore his rivals for power, as was the case in Egypt. Instead, they were actual members of the successive royal administrative cabinets. "By identifying the religious focus of the tribal confederacy of Israel with the court of the king, David and Solomon forestalled the most serious threat to national unity, and prevented the high priest from setting himself up as the head of the state."¹³

It seems highly probable that the elaborate religious practices described in Leviticus were substantially those used in the Temple. Both this and Deuteronomy prescribe tithes for Temple support (Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 14:28-29). From the days of the settlement when the land was parcelled out among the tribes, there was a strong belief that ancestral property must not be sold to those outside the clan or family. Probably for this reason the Temple was supported not by large grants of land, as happened in Egypt and Mesopotamia, but by the system of tithes. Such gifts to the Temple service, together with the numerous vessels and instruments employed in the sacrificial ritual, must have required considerable storage

space. The three stories of small rooms or vaults around three sides of the Temple were undoubtedly used for this purpose.¹⁴

In Israel as in other countries the Temple was a center where learning and literature were cultivated. Priests had to be educated. Careful records had to be kept. Both the First and the Second Temples played an exceedingly important role in the editing, compilation, and preservation of the literature of the Old Testament that it later might be transferred to synagogue and Church.

PART IV—TEMPLE, SYNAGOGUE, AND CHURCH

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The Temple was never an adequate expression of the religious life of Israel. Although the Temple at Jerusalem gave that city a convenient place of worship, communities at a distance from the capital city were left without sufficient means of corporate worship and religious training. Thus the centralization of worship in the time of Josiah, while animated by the worthy purpose of stamping out the paganism of local shrines and high places, left an empty place in the life of the people.

Furthermore, the Temple never corresponded to the distinctive features of the religion of Israel. This religion centered in the revealed will of God for all of existence. It had a healthy application to moral and social life. No system of sacrifice and ritual could provide the instruction and stimulus needed for the mature knowledge of God. The Mosaic and prophetic streams were the distinctive elements of the religion of Israel, and the Temple did not adequately express and cultivate them.

A suitable supplement to temple worship does not appear to have arisen before the exile. Such a supplement could not come by multiplying temples. To be sure, in the days of the divided monarchy the rulers of the Northern Kingdom naturally provided places of worship within the borders of their realm (cf. 1 Kings 12:26-29), but high spiritual leadership did not mark the priesthood of the Northern Kingdom. In the sixth century B.C. some Jews at Elephantine in Egypt built a temple for their worship, just as later in the second century B.C. another Jewish temple was built at Leontopolis in the same country. These, however, were isolated events which had no wide support.

More in keeping with the best in the religious life of Israel were prophetic expressions of the will of God for the people. These often took place near the central sanctuary, but such was not always the case. Reli-

13. Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

14. In a recent article in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (11, 1943, pp. 284 ff.) Professor Leroy Waterman rightly emphasizes the importance of these vaults. But then he continues and vastly overworks the point by maintaining that the Temple was originally erected to serve as the royal treasury and was only later converted into a Temple. This surely exceeds both the evidence and common sense. In fact, it is probable that we should minimize the importance of these vaults as the royal or state treasury, because when subsequent kings (beginning within 100 years after the Temple's completion) found it necessary to pay tribute, they stripped the treasuries of both the king's house (governmental headquarters in the palace) and the Temple of their valuables (cf. 1 Kings 15:18; 11 Kings 16:8; 18:15)—as though the palace and Temple treasuries were distinct entities.

gious leaders of prophetic spirit spoke to communities wherever and whenever they were impelled to do so.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE SYNAGOGUE

The actual origin of the synagogue as an institution for regular worship and instruction is usually dated in the exile. The temple had been destroyed, and the people of Israel had no center of worship. They desperately needed fellowship, comfort, and instruction. Moreover, those in exile were the real leaders of the people, possessing native resourcefulness and initiative. It is quite reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the synagogue did arise during this period.

Under Cyrus, Persian conqueror of Babylon, the exiled Jews received permission in 538 B.C. to return to their native land and re-establish their worship. The more devoted and daring of the group went back and promptly restored the sacrifices upon the altar (Ezra 3:2). The rebuilding of the temple, however, was delayed for eighteen years (Ezra 4:24; Hag. 1:1-4). The delay was due to the poverty of the Jewish community, local resistance, and the fact that the people, having altar sacrifices, were content until a better time for rebuilding presented itself. This Second Temple, begun in 520 B.C. and completed four years later, was by no means the equal of that of Solomon. It no doubt adopted the location and basic plan of its predecessor, but of the details of its appearance and equipment we are not informed.

The synagogue, however, continued to function after the temple was restored. The exiles still needed a place of worship and fellowship, as did Jews in Palestine who did not live near the Temple. Moreover, the latter was the special precinct of the priesthood; it did not give the instruction in the Law and the common participation in worship which the synagogue provided. As time went on and the priesthood became heavily involved in political life, the temple ministry proved unable to satisfy the hunger of the people for spiritual leadership and help. The synagogue assumed the Temple rites, and did not seek to displace them. It even kept alive a loyalty to the Temple on the part of people who could never or rarely visit it. Yet increasingly the synagogue played a role of its own. By the first century A. D., every town in Palestine must have had its synagogue. Jerusalem itself is reported by Rabbinical sources to have had 394 or 480. Even when we discount these figures, we know that the number of such buildings in the metropolis was very large. In every Gentile center where loyal Jews were found there was also to be found a synagogue.

Archæological evidence for the synagogue prior to the first century A.D. is meager. At Alexandria in Egypt a synagogue inscription has been found which dates from the reign of Ptolemy III (246-221 B.C.). On the island of Delos, in the southern Aegean Sea, excavators uncovered the remains of what appears to have been a synagogue. The conclusion is supported by the discovery of an ornate seat which may be regarded as the Seat of Moses (cf. Mt. 23:2). This structure may be dated in the late second century B.C. Later synagogue buildings on the island of Aegina and at Miletus and Priene in Asia Minor testify to the Jewish practice of es-

tablishing a synagogue wherever they settled in any numbers.

At Corinth a fragmentary inscription reads "(Syn)agogue of the Hebr(ews)." This inscription is in Greek, but appears to identify the building as the synagogue of Aramaic-speaking Jews. The building itself has not been found, but it may well have been standing when Paul visited the city. At Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates River, a synagogue of the third century A.D. has been excavated. It was made by remodeling a private house, but later was reconstructed and decorated within, not only with botanical and geometric designs, but most strikingly with mural paintings of Biblical scenes.

As Professor May pointed out in his instructive article, "Synagogues in Palestine," in B.A. VII.1, the earliest archaeological evidence for a Palestinian synagogue is the Theodotus inscription of the first century A.D. This synagogue was for Greek-speaking Jews and included guest-rooms for pilgrims. The earliest remains of synagogue buildings date from the (second or) third century A.D.

The function of the synagogue in Gentile lands may have been more important than in Palestine itself. It was in no sense the dwelling place of the deity. Instead it was a building in which Jews could assemble and hear the reading and exposition of the law. Thus it symbolized the religious faith and loyalty of the isolated Jewish communities. It was a rallying point to sustain and unite Jews in the midst of a pagan civilization. *And as a place of worship it was a radical departure from anything the world had yet seen. Here religious exercises were carried on without benefit of sacrifice or Holy of Holies, and without requiring the presence of a priest.*

There was still no thought of displacing the Temple, whose importance in the minds of loyal Jews was seen in the Maccabean period. For a time (c. 168-165 B. C.) the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, controlled and desecrated it. After three years the Jews regained it and the Feast of Dedication, on the twenty-fifth day of Chislev (approximately December), so impressed them that it has always remained one of the festival days of the Jewish calendar.

HEROD REBUILDS THE TEMPLE

In view of this loyalty of Jews to the Temple, it is not surprising that Herod the Great, king of Palestine under Roman supervision from 37 to 4 B. C., undertook to rebuild the structure on a more imposing scale (c. 20-19 B. C.). He thought thereby to please the Jews as well as win recognition for himself. He avoided the risk of offending Jewish feelings concerning the sanctity of the Temple by using specially trained priests to do the work. To provide a fitting setting, he enlarged the Temple area by building heavy retaining walls which enabled him to extend the level court over the natural slope of the hill.

The rebuilding of the Temple itself was completed with the greatest possible despatch, in order to interfere as little as possible with the Jewish rites and worship. The time required, Josephus says, was eighteen months (*Antiquities*, XV.11.6). Reconstruction of the other parts and buildings of the sacred area lasted for decades. In fact, Herod did not live to complete it. To this longer process the Gospel of John refers when it says,

"Forty and six years this Temple has been under construction" (2:20). It continued, with interruptions, until 64 A. D.; the full project was thus finished just before the Jewish revolt which ended with the building's final destruction.

From Josephus (cf. *Wars*, V. 5. 1-7), the Mishnah (tractate *Middoth*), and other sources a fairly clear conception of the ground plan of Herod's temple can be formed (see Fig. 5). The entire sacred area was marked off by a heavy outer wall, which had military strength. Just within this wall a portico extended around all four sides of the area. The wider porch on the south side was called the Royal Porch. On the east was Solomon's Porch, to which reference is made in Jn. 10:23; Acts 3:11; 5:12. On the northwest corner, stairs led down from the nearby Tower of Antonia to the portico and Temple court. This Tower, a strongly manned citadel, gave the civil ruler a means of controlling what went on in the sacred area. However, as events in the Jewish revolt of 66-70 A. D. proved, the stairs could be cut and the Temple isolated. From this Tower the Roman captain and soldiers ran down to rescue Paul when the mob was trying to kill him, and from the stairs leading up to the Tower Paul addressed the angry crowd (Acts 21:31 ff.). Josephus also tells of an underground passage which Herod built from Antonia to the eastern gate of the "inner temple" area (*Antiquities*, XV. 11.7). It was intended to aid the military control of the temple, but probably was easily blocked.

Entrance to the Temple area was also possible by at least eight gates, four on the west, two on the south, one on the east, and one on the north. These entrances led into the large outer court, the only one which Gentiles could enter. Notices placed at the gates leading into the inner courts warned Gentiles not to proceed further. Two of these inscriptions have been discovered. They read as follows: "No foreigner is allowed within the balustrade and embankment about the sanctuary. Whoever is caught (violating this rule) will be personally responsible for his ensuing death." It was the charge that Paul had taken a Gentile companion into one of the inner courts which precipitated the riot against the Apostle.

In this large outer court groups could meet; the early Christian brotherhood gathered in Solomon's Porch (Acts 5:12). Other uses of the outer court, less religious in character, were common. Worshipers planning to make sacrifices or gifts needed unblemished animals, acceptable doves, and proper Jewish coins. The most convenient place to find them was in the outer court, and the priests not only encouraged but even controlled and profited by such traffic. It was the resulting confusion which aroused Jesus on the occasion of his last trip to Jerusalem. Such disturbances were particularly serious in the mind of those who wanted the Temple to be "a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mk. 11:17; cf. Is. 56:7). This goal was possible only if the one court open to Gentiles was free from distractions.

By an ornate gate in the eastern part of the area, probably called the Beautiful Gate, Jews could go up into the Court of the Women. Here were receptacles for gifts of charity (cf. Mk. 12:41). Jewish women could go no further. Jewish men could ascend another stairway and

enter the Court of Israel, which appears to have been on the same level as the court around the altar, but marked off from it by a definite barrier.

At the altar of burnt-offering the priests ministered in turn. Their storerooms and workrooms were mainly on the north side of this area. The altar, a large structure on which daily burnt offerings and other sacrifices were offered, was probably located where the famous Dome of the Rock, a Mohammedan mosque, now stands (Fig. 6). Some scholars hold that the huge rock which today lies under the Dome was the site of the Most Holy Place of the ancient temple. This rock, however, is so large (58x51 ft.) that it would have extended beyond the limits of the Most Holy Place. We therefore conclude that the rock probably marks the site of the ancient altar; to locate the Most Holy Place at this point

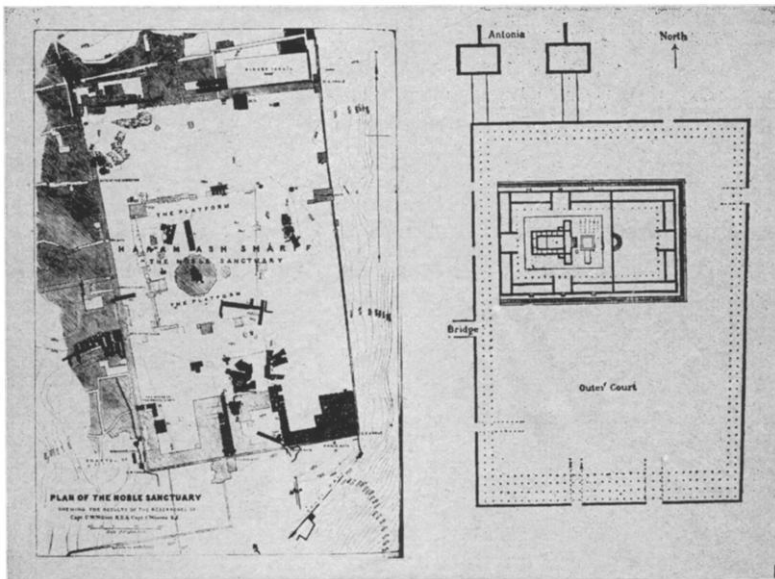


Fig. 5. Plans of the Temple Area. On the left, the modern site (from Warren and Conder, *Survey of Western Palestine*, Vol. 5, opp. p. 117). On the right, a reconstruction of Herod's Temple (from Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, p. 712).

would push the altar court, the Court of Israel, and the Court of Women so far east as to locate the Beautiful Gate at the eastern edge of the Temple area. (I think it worth while, however, to bear in mind a caution, suggested by Professor Albright, that the contour of the hill may have been altered by subsequent events.)

The Temple building proper was approached by steps which led up to a porch flanked by a large pillar on either side. A curtain was hung between the Porch (vestibule) and the Holy Place. Into the latter the properly chosen priest could enter to perform the prescribed ministries (cf. Lk. 1:8). It contained the seven branched candlestick, altar of incense, and table of shewbread. A "veil," consisting of two parallel cur-

tains, likewise separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (cf. Mk. 15:38), into which the High Priest entered alone one day a year, on the Day of Atonement (cf. Heb. 9:6 f.). Store chambers or treasuries were in the north, west, and south sides of the temple building. They were used as a kind of bank or safety deposit vault, protected not by locks and steel, but chiefly by the awe inspired by the sacred surroundings.

The implication of the increasing sense of sanctity which was felt as one moved towards the inner precincts might seem to be that the deity resided in the Most Holy Place. This conclusion would have been generally denied in the first century. The Most Holy Place was unlighted and empty. This was probably true even of the Second Temple, and Josephus, a priest, explicitly states (*Wars*, V. 5. 5) that such was the case in Herod's Temple. A dark and empty room can hardly have been meant as a reproduction of the heavenly home of God. However, the absence of any image is a negative witness to a spiritual conception of God, and the panorama of the heavens which Josephus tells us (*Wars*, V.5.4) was embroidered on the curtain before the Holy Place appears to suggest that here was worshiped the one God of earth and heaven. Probably it would have been said that God was approachable in the temple and especially in the Most Holy Place and had decreed that worship of him should center there.

The positive significance of the Temple must not be underestimated. It was a necessary center for the fulfilment of Pentateuchal injunctions to offer sacrifices. Every good Jew was bound to seek the fulfilment of these laws. Moreover, the Temple offered opportunity for those near at hand to attend services of worship and for those living at a distance to deepen their religious life by special pilgrimage. Furthermore, the Temple stood as a center and rallying point of the devotion and loyalty of all Jews. Human beings are creatures of space and time, and the visible temple served as a useful symbol and expression of unity in faith. By payment of an annual tax each Jew took his part in the upkeep of the services and felt himself part of the united people.

Nevertheless, the Temple was never the most fitting or adequate expression of the distinctive features of Judaism. It rather laid stress on the things which Judaism had in common with many other cults, and was compromised by elements which made its worship imperfect and incomplete. It was a military stronghold, and its involvement in affairs of war blurred its expression of spiritual devotion. Built by Herod the Idumæan, it did not embody solely the consecration of Israel to the ancestral faith; it also expressed the ruler's cultural interest and political pride. Indeed, the architecture reflected Hellenistic motifs to some degree, and one of the tense times in Herod's reign came (4 B. C.?) when two Rabbis cut down the golden eagle which Herod had placed over the gate of the Temple (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII. 6. 2.). The temple was under foreign domination much of the time, and the priesthood, who, as civil rulers, collaborated with Rome, became worldly and were compromised by these connections. The maximum service of the Temple was to the local community; it could never supply fully the religious needs of those at a distance. Accidents of sex and tribal connection determined the opportunity to take

a prominent place in the worship; the consecration and obedience of the individual was not basic in determining the worshiper's status and privileges.

The most important fact is that the Temple, bound as it was to animal sacrifice, was permanently unable to rise to the heights of pure spiritual worship. The modern visitor to Jerusalem sees the huge hewn stones which formed part of the western outer wall of the Herodian temple area. There are always Jews present to bewail the loss the Temple and pray for its restoration. With such feelings any sensitive Gentile should have great sympathy. Yet he cannot but remember that apparent calamity is often the stern prelude to spiritual growth. The fall of Jerusalem in 587

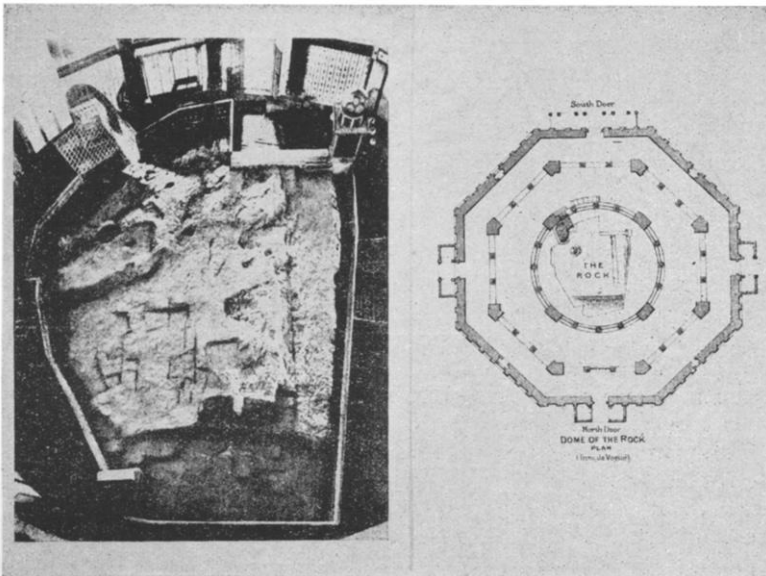


Fig. 6. The Sacred Rock. On the left, a view looking down upon the rock (from Hempel, *Die Althebraeische Literatur*, Fig. 32). On the right, the plan of the Mohammedan Dome of the Rock, showing how the rock lies directly under the Dome (from Strange, *Palestine Under the Moslems*, opp. p. 114).

B. C. brought on the destruction of the Temple, the exile of Israel's most able leaders, and immense agony of spirit to the entire people. Spiritual blessings resulted, however, not only in the growth of the synagogue idea but also in the development of prophetic vision in chosen leaders. Later, in 70 A. D., the apparently ruinous loss of the Temple gave Judaism deliverance from the primitive and spiritually inadequate practice of animal sacrifice. The supreme calamity which Judaism could suffer today would be to have its Temple restored and its prescribed system of animal sacrifices re-established.

THE ROLE OF THE SYNAGOGUE

The future of Judaism was in the synagogue. During the centuries since its origin its worship had developed. Its meaning to the Jews had

increased; of this the existence of so many synagogues in Jerusalem itself is ample evidence. Thus when the Temple was destroyed, the synagogue was ready for a more inclusive role than it had sought, and it proved able to provide a more complete spiritual ministry than the Temple could ever offer. It is therefore important to study the rule of the synagogue.

1. For practical purposes the synagogue replaces the Temple. It did not disown the Temple. While the latter stood, the synagogue kept alive loyalty to the sacrifices and other services by reading the laws concerning those rites. When the Temple was destroyed, the hope of its restoration was kept alive in the synagogue, and the Law which called for a sacrificial system continued to be the synagogue's basic Scripture.

Yet in practice the synagogue succeeded to the role of the Temple. Perhaps the reading of the Law concerning the sacrifices was early regarded as an acceptable substitute for actual sacrifice; the Rabbis later explicitly said this, and such passages as Ps. 51:16 f. may be an early expression of this view from the time of the exile. As time went on, the synagogue gathered to itself much of the loyalty which had been given the Temple. This process was never completed. To great numbers the Temple is still a mental rallying point and its ancient site a geographical expression of the unity of Judaism. But the synagogue became the practical substitute for the Temple in the religious life of the Jews.

The suggestion has been made that the architecture and plan of the synagogue was a conscious imitation of the Temple. Lack of any evidence from the days when the Temple was standing hampers discussion of this hypothesis. Later evidence may be misleading; after the Temple had been destroyed the idea of reproducing temple features in the synagogue might have occurred much more readily than before 70 A. D. For example, the Ark of the Law became almost a substitute for the Most Holy Place of the temple. However, the synagogue was always basically different in plan from the temple. The latter was not entered by laymen. But the synagogue differed radically in that the assembly was held *inside* the building. It was a gathering place of laymen. It replaced rather than imitated the temple.

2. The synagogue gives Jewish worship a new focus by making the Law rather than the sacrifices the center of thought and devotion. It is true that the sacrifices were performed to fulfil the Law, and that the study of the Law led to loyalty to the sacrificial system. But it is also true that the center of attention is decidedly different in the synagogue, which stresses the study and daily practice of the Law.

3. This means that in the synagogue regular instruction and discussion of God's will for daily life have an importance which they could never have in the temple. That features resembling those of the synagogue service were introduced into the Temple during its later period is true, but they were of minor importance and not essential to the Temple system. Instruction in God's revealed will and reverent common worship are basic in the synagogue way of life.

4. The priest is not essential in the synagogue. When present, he is shown deference and given prominent parts in the service. But he

is not needed. The synagogue was essentially a lay institution. In fact, it is the greatest and most durable system of lay leadership and lay education in religious history. Any ten Jewish men could form a synagogue and hold services. Any Jewish man could read the Scripture and, if gifted, speak to his comrades in the faith. This radical departure from the priest-controlled religious life of antiquity was unique and permanently significant.

5. The synagogue frees the Jewish religion from geographical limitation. A synagogue can be built in any city in any country. There is no rule about its location, although in the earliest period for which we have archaeological evidence the choice of a site was influenced by elevated situation or convenient access to water supply. But these things were not mandatory; the Dura-Europos synagogue was established at first in a private home in the midst of a group of houses. The specific place is not essential. In this as in the respects already noted the synagogue is the institution fitted to play a permanent role in Judaism and to express the high spiritual and ethical aspects of that faith.

THE CHURCH AND THE TEMPLE

The Apostolic Church was related to both Temple and synagogue, but it did not find either adequate to its needs for a place of worship and fellowship. It had relations with the Temple both in life and thought. Jesus himself had a deep feeling of loyalty to it. If we accept the witness of the Gospel of John, he made several trips to Jerusalem during his ministry to attend feasts of the Jews (2:13 f.; 5:1; 7:10,14; 10:23; 12:12). The Gospel of Luke states (2:42) that he visited the Temple at the age of twelve, when he entered upon the duties of a man in Jewish religious life. The fact that at the time of his last visit he blazed with indignation at the graft and confusion in the Temple shows that he thought of it as a place where God was to be worshiped (Mk. 11:15-17). It is true that he predicted its destruction (Mk. 13:2), but as a judgment rather than as a welcome advance.

In like manner the earliest Christians began their work in the Church with an attitude of loyalty to the Temple. They went there at the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1). They gathered in the outer court (Acts 5:12). Some years later even the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, undertook to fulfil a vow in the Temple (Acts 21:26). The Church was seeking to win the remaining Jews to believe in Christ, and their purpose was not to renounce Judaism but to convince the non-Christian Jews that Christianity was the full and true Judaism. They therefore did not ignore the rites and institutions of Judaism; they may have looked for judgment on the Temple but they did not seek at once a religious practice without sacrifice. Later the Jewish rejection of the Christian message and the rebellion against Rome which broke out in 66 A. D. prepared the Christians to listen to an oracle (a saying of Jesus or of some early Christian prophet?) which directed them to flee the city and thus break with the Temple and its sacrificial system entirely (Eusebius, *Church History*, III, 5).

It may trouble some Christians that the earliest Christians did not break at once with the Temple. The fact is, however, that a new move-

ment must have time to find its proper form through the outworking of its nature. Christianity in its early days found in the Temple a place of worship. But forces were at work to alter this situation. Jesus had predicted the destruction of the Temple (Mk. 13:2). The coming of Gentiles into the Church raised the general question of the necessity of Jewish rites; under the leadership of Paul the Church came to the position that a Christian was not required to keep the ceremonial law to be a full Christian (cf. Gal. 2:16; Rom. 10:4). This in principle undermined the Temple's prestige. Moreover, Christians thought of the death of Jesus as a sacrifice. The result was that for his followers the Temple could no longer take the central place it had had in the past, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews could argue (chs. 9, 10) that the sacrifice of Jesus marked the end of the sacrificial system. The Lord's Supper eclipsed the Temple rites. These facts, coupled with the important fact that within a few decades the Church became prevailingly Gentile and thus was made up largely of those who had no emotional attachment to Judaism, operated to eliminate the Temple as an essential part of Christian thought and worship. Temple imagery continued to be used in Christian thinking, but both the events of history and the considered thought of the Apostolic Church led the Church to a position where the Temple was no longer a necessity in Christian worship.

THE CHURCH AND THE SYNAGOGUE

There is far more connection between the Church and the synagogue. It was the custom of Jesus to attend the latter (Lk. 4:16) and teach there whenever permitted to do so. The first Christians in Jerusalem taught in synagogues; Stephen probably first encountered Paul in one (cf. Acts 6:9). That Paul began his work in every city by visiting the synagogue is well known (e.g., Acts 13:14; 14:1).

It has been argued that the earliest Christians at Jerusalem formed a synagogue of their own. Ten Jewish men could do this. More likely, however, the Christians entered existing synagogues to teach other Jews about their faith. Moreover, they met Gentiles as well as Jews, and particularly in Gentile lands this proved the strategic starting point of mission work. Present at synagogue services might be not only full proselytes, i.e., Gentiles who had become full adherents of the Jewish faith, but also "God-fearers," Gentiles attracted by the spiritual and moral aspects of Judaism but unwilling to become circumcised and keep the ceremonial law. Particularly among the "God-fearers" a fruitful field of evangelism was found.

The Christians thus used the synagogues for worship and especially for missionary appeals, and took over for their own later use the basic elements of the synagogue service of worship—Scripture reading, prayer, and preaching. Nevertheless, the Christian movement was not bound to the synagogue any more than it was to the Temple. Just as it had broken with Jerusalem and the Temple before they were destroyed in 70 A. D., so, when the synagogue group in a city proved unresponsive or hostile, the Christian leaders felt free to withdraw and continue missionary work and worship elsewhere. In other words, the Christian movement soon proved

free of any geographical center and independent of any existing institution. But of the Jewish institutions, the Church was most closely related to the synagogue.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOME

It could be argued with much force that the Christian Church grew out of the home rather than out of the Temple or synagogue. There is both literary and archaeological evidence for this statement. In the Book of Acts, the first disciples joined other Jews in Temple and synagogue, but when they wished to have their own worship and fellowship, they met either in the outer court of the Temple (5:12) or in the homes of the more well-to-do members of their group (2:46; 12:12). The home was the center of the specifically Christian worship, fellowship, and planning. It was particularly important as the place of the common meals.

This seems to have been true in Gentile lands as well. At times Paul

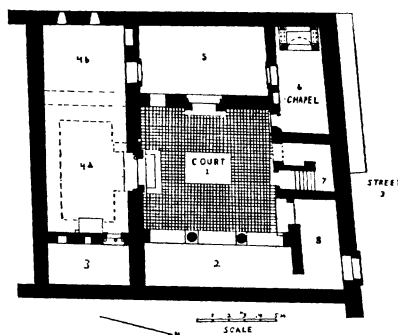


Fig. 7. Ground plan of the Dura House Church. Room 4a was enlarged for Christian meetings when 4b was added to it. The Baptistry is in Room 6 (from *Excavations at Dura-Europos*, 1931-32, edited by Rostovtzeff; lower part of Pl. 39).

rented a public hall for his preaching (Acts 19:9), but the home was widely used for Christian meals, teaching, and worship. The specific references to Churches in homes (e.g., Phm. 2) clearly indicated where the early Gentile Church centered. This was inevitable. With no temple, with the synagogue closed sooner or later to Christian preachers, with no other institution meeting the need for a quiet and private place of common worship and meals, the home was the key location of the young Church. This is a remarkable proof of the Church's freedom from dependence upon a separate sacred sanctuary.

The close connection of the place of worship with the scenes of daily life follows from the fact that the early observance of the Lord's Supper appears to have been connected with a hunger-satisfying meal in which the members of the Christian group participated (Acts 2:46; cf. 1 Cor. 11:20, 21). In a home large enough to accommodate the members a meal was shared, and a definite remembrance of the Last Supper was early, if not from the beginning, connected with this meal. The home was thought a fit place for the most sacred observances of the Church.

Archaeological data support this view. There is some evidence that the later Church of St. Clement in Rome was built upon the site of a

home which was an early meeting place of Christians. But the most striking evidence is the discovery, at Dura-Europos on the Euphrates River, of an early Christian Church (Fig. 7). Since Dura was destroyed shortly after the middle of the third century A. D., the developments now to be traced must all be prior to that date. A room in a home had been used for Christian worship. Later, it appears, an enlarged room was prepared for such gatherings, and the entire first floor was dedicated to specifically religious purposes. There was not only a place of meeting but also a baptistry, and walls were decorated with paintings of religious character. Two points emerge from a study of this "house church." The use of the home for worship is confirmed. In the second place, the growth of the church can be traced, and the tendency to add church features, such as the baptistry, and to make use of ornamentation, shows how the development resulted in the separate church building.

For the ancestry of most elements of early church worship we must look to the synagogue rather than the home. Moreover, it is not to be denied that the Temple and synagogue influenced the development of the church building. This was particularly true in later days. Nor need it be denied that features of pagan temples and other structures found their way into Christian acceptance. But the evidence cited above agrees well with the information of Acts and the letters of Paul, and shows that the home was of the greatest importance as an early place of meeting for the Christians.

LATER TRENDS

We cannot trace here the later development of the church building. In general, it is clear that the Roman Catholic Church, which has always made use of special objects and places, has drawn on many ideas derived from the Temple. In particular, the conception of the mass as a sacrifice reminds one of the Temple, and the concentration of ministry and leadership in the hands of the priesthood is consistent with this view. Recent years have seen the Roman Catholic Church give more emphasis to ideas which we associate more with the synagogue than the Temple and which formerly distinguished Protestant churches: an example is the recent Roman Catholic emphasis upon Bible reading. But the general observation remains true that the Roman Catholic Church strongly resembles the Temple in the main elements of its worship.

The Protestant churches, with their rejection of the mass and their inclusion of lay leadership in the control of the Church, obviously resemble the synagogue rather than the Temple. To the extent that they emphasize the sacraments and the priesthood of the ministry, they recall features of the Temple type of worship, but in their stress upon Scripture, common prayer, and preaching, in their large use of lay leaders and teachers, and in their greater independence of specific places and object-aids to worship, they are in line with the synagogue. If consistent they cannot have a Temple, though in recent years many have been attracted by features of Temple worship and symbolism. Thus a number of groups which earlier would have rejected Temple ideas have now made the "altar" rather than the Bible the focus of attention in the Church edifice.