

The Temple

A Temple Meditation

1

This is what the Lord then said to Moses . . . “They shall make a sanctuary for me that I may dwell in their midst. This dwelling and all its furnishings you should make exactly according to the pattern that I will now show you.” (Exodus 25, 1 & 8)

Then the Lord said to Moses. “On the first day of the first month you should erect the dwelling of the meeting tent. Put the ark of the commandments in it, and screen off the ark with the veil. Bring in the table and set it. Then bring in the lampstand and set up the lamps on it. Put the golden altar of incense in front of the ark of the commandments, and hang the curtain at the entrance of the Dwelling. Put the altar of holocausts in front of the entrance of the Dwelling of the meeting tent. Place the laver between the meeting tent and the altar, and put water in it. Set up the court round about and put the curtain at the entrance of the court.

Take the anointing oil and anoint the Dwelling and everything in it, consecrating it and all its furnishings so that it will be sacred.” (Exodus 40, 1-9)

“You are to give the Levites charge of the Dwelling of the commandments and all its equipment and all that belongs to it. It is they who shall carry the Dwelling with all its equipment and who shall be its ministers. They shall therefore camp around the Dwelling. When the dwelling is to move on, the Levites shall take it down; when the Dwelling is to be pitched, it is the Levites who shall set it up. Any layman who comes near it shall be put to death.” (Numbers 1, 50-51)

The Lord said to Moses, “It is I who have chosen the Levites from the Israelites in place of every firstborn that opens the womb among the Israelites. The Levites, therefore, are mine, because every first-born is mine. When I slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I made all the first-born in Israel sacred to me, both of man and of beast. They belong to me; I am the Lord.” (Numbers 3, 11-13)

The Lord said to Moses: “Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify them. This is what you shall do to them to purify them. Sprinkle them with a water of remission, then have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes and so purify themselves. They shall take a young bull, along with its cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil; you shall take another young bull for a sin offering. Then have the

Levites come forward in front of the meeting tent, where you shall assemble also the whole community of the Israelites. While the Levites are present before the Lord, the Israelites shall lay their hands upon them.” (Numbers 8, 5-10)

2

Send forth your light and your fidelity; they should lead me on and bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling place. Then will I go in to the altar of God, the God of my gladness and joy; then when I give you thanks upon the harp, O God my God. (Psalm 43, 3-4)

Be bountiful, O Lord, to Zion in your kindness by rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem; then shall you be pleased with due sacrifices, burnt offerings and holocaust; then shall they offer up bullocks on your altar. (Psalm 51, 20-21)

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (Psalm 84, 2-3)

Sing joyfully to the Lord all you lands; break into song; sing praise. Sing praise to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and melodious song. With trumpets and the sound of the horn, sing joyfully before the King, the Lord. (Psalm 98, 4-6)

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; give thanks to him; bless his name, for he is good: the Lord whose kindness endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100, 4-5)

I will rejoice because they said to me, “We will go up to the house of the Lord.” And now we have set foot within your gates O Jerusalem — Jerusalem, built as a city with compact unity. (Psalm 122, 1-3)

3

So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned upon the cherubim. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were with the ark of God. When the ark of the Lord arrived in the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth resounded. The Philistines, hearing the noise of shouting, asked “What can this loud shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” On learning that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, the Philistines were frightened. (1 Samuel 4, 4-7)

The Philistines fought and Israel was defeated. Every man fled to his own tent. It was a disastrous defeat in which Israel lost 30,000 foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured and Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas were among the dead.(1 Samuel 4, 10-11)

Hearing the outcry of the men standing near him, Eli inquired, “What does this commotion mean?” (Eli was 98 years old, and his eyes would not focus, so that he could not see.) The man quickly came up to Eli and said, “It is I who have come from

the battlefield; I fled from there today.” He asked, “What happened, my son?” And the messenger answered: “Israel fled from the Philistines; in fact, the troops suffered heavy losses. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are among the dead, and the ark of God has been captured.” At this mention of the ark of God, Eli fell backward from his chair into the gateway; since he was an old man and heavy, he died of a broken neck. He had judged Israel for forty years. (1 Samuel 4, 14-18)

The ark of the Lord had been in the land of the Philistines seven months when they summoned priests and fortunetellers to ask, “What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us what we should send back with it,” They replied, “If you intend to send away the ark of the God of Israel, you must not send it alone, but must by all means make amends to him through a guilt offering. Then you will be healed and will learn why he continues to affect you.” (1 Samuel 6, 1-4)

David again assembled all the picked men of Israel, 30,000 in number. Then David and all the people who were with him set out for Baala of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which bears the name of the Lord of hosts enthroned above the cherubim. The ark of God was placed on a new cart and taken away from the house of Abinadab on the hill. (2 Samuel 6, 1-3)

When it was reported to King David that the Lord has blessed the family of Obededom and all that belong to him, David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David amid festivities. As soon as the bearers of the ark of the Lord had advanced six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. Then David, girt with a linen apron, came dancing before the Lord was abandon, as he and all the Israelites were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and to the sound of the horn. (2 Samuel 6, 12-15)

When all of the work undertaken by Solomon with the temple of the Lord had been completed, he brought in the dedicated offerings of his father David, putting the silver the gold and all the other articles in the treasuries of the house of God. At Solomon’s order the elders of Israel and all the leaders of the tribes, the princes of the Israelite ancestral homes, came to Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the Lord’s covenant from the city of David (which is Zion). All the men of Israel assembled before the king during the festival of the seventh month. When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the Levites took up the ark, and they carried the ark and the meeting tent with all the sacred vessels that were in the tent; it was the Levitical priests who carried them. (2 Chronicles 5, 1-5)

When the trumpeters and singers were heard as a single voice praising and giving thanks to the Lord, and when they raised the sound of the trumpets, cymbals and other musical instruments to “give thanks to the lord for he is good, his mercy endures forever,” the building of the Lord’s temple was filled with a cloud. The priests could not continue to minister because of the cloud, since the Lord’s glory filled the house of God. (2 Chronicles 5, 13-14)

