



Finding Christ in the Tabernacle

HOLY PLACES

*“..., You shall be holy ones as I the Lord your God am a holy one.”
(Lev 19:1-2, Margaret Barker translation, see also Lev 20:7-8)*

Garden of Eden

The Garden was a place where God walked and talked with Adam and Eve, Genesis 3:8–10. It was sacred space—a holy place where God and other heavenly beings could be with Adam and Eve.

Because the Garden was holy ground, when Adam and Eve transgressed by partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they could no longer remain in that sacred place. For a time, they would be unable to return to God’s presence, Moses 4:28–31.

However, a plan already existed by which Adam and Eve could return to Heavenly Father, Moses 5:6–9; 2 Nephi

2 Nephi 9:10. Because of Jesus Christ, Adam and Eve—and all of us—will be able to return to the holy presence of Heavenly Father and His Son, 2 Nephi 2:8.

As part of this process, Adam and Eve were asked to make a sacrifice. This sacrifice was symbolic and represented the making of a covenant with God, Moses 5:4–7.

Because of the covenant Abraham sought with God, Abraham 2:9–11, Heavenly Father rescued the children of Israel from Egypt and prepared them to once again be with Him as a holy people, Leviticus 20:26; Exodus 19:4–6.

Other Holy Places

Symbolic of the Garden of Eden as a holy place to meet God, mountaintops and high places were often used (Psalm 68:15–17). These locations required preparation, effort, and sacrifice to reach, reminding worshippers of ascending into God’s presence.

Mountains such as Bethel and Sinai were considered sacred places Abraham 2:20; Exodus 19:2–3.

After escaping Egypt, the children of Israel prepared to meet God (Exodus 19:10). However, they were afraid of His presence and asked Moses to act as their mediator Exodus 20:19.

Moses sought the will of the Lord by placing the Israelites at the base of the mountain, Exodus 19:12, 23, Aaron and his sons along with the Seventy midway up the mountain (Exodus 24:1), and Moses climbed to the top of the mountain to be in the presence of God, Exodus 19:20. This arrangement

revealed a pattern of ascending in steps of holiness, or progression, toward Heavenly Father. To dwell among His people without overwhelming them, the Lord showed Moses how to build a sacred place. That mobile temple was called the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:8–9).

Once Israel established itself in the land of Palestine, King Solomon built a permanent temple (2 Samuel 7:13–14). After Solomon’s Temple was destroyed by conquering nations, it was rebuilt and eventually became known as Herod’s Temple—the temple used during the time of Jesus.

After Herod’s Temple was destroyed around 70 AD, the children of Israel never built another temple.

With the restoration of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, D&C 14:10, the Lord again commanded that temples be built, D&C 88:119; 124:40–42.



“THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THERE WILL BE TEMPLES ESTABLISHED OVER EVERY PORTION OF THE LAND, AND WE WILL GO INTO THESE TEMPLES AND WORK FOR OUR KINDRED DEAD NIGHT AND DAY.”

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW, MAY 1899

Scriptures

DESCRIBING SACRED PLACES

MOSES 7:2–4

Enoch on
Mount Simeon



EZEKIEL 28:13–14
The Garden of Eden as
the Garden of God



2 PETER 1:17–18

Peter's testimony of
hearing the Father
declare the Son



MOSES 1:1–2

Moses communing
with God on a high
mountain



1 NEPHI 11
Nephi's vision of the
Tree of Life and Christ
on a high mountain



MATTHEW 17:1–5

Peter, James, and John
with Jesus on the
Mount of
Transfiguration



ETHER 3:6

The brother of Jared
sees the finger of the
Lord on a mountaintop



The Pattern of Entering Sacred Space Revealed in the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle was also called the Tent of Meeting or the Tabernacle of the Congregation—a place where God could dwell among His people on earth, Exodus 33:7.

As a portable temple, the Tabernacle provided sacred space for God to dwell with the children of Israel. It also taught them how they could return to God's presence through vicarious ordinances performed by the High Priest to cleanse them of their sins. The Tabernacle symbolized the reversal of the Fall through the Atonement, guiding worshippers back into Heavenly Father's presence through three distinct levels or stages of progression, culminating in the Holy of Holies.

- The Courtyard, Exodus 27:9.
- The Holy Place, separated by a veil, Exodus 26:31.
- The Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place, Exodus 26:33–34.



Though Adam and Eve could not remain in the sacred Garden of Eden due to their transgression, they were given hope that through the plan of salvation – via Jesus Christ –that they could return to God's presence. Symbolic of that, we are told to be holy and seek the Lord in holy places, such as the Tabernacle and Temple, so that we might learn how to return to Heavenly Father's presence.

Moses, as prophet, and Aaron, as High Priest, were the only individuals permitted to enter the Holy of Holies—either to vicariously atone for the sins of Israel, themselves, and their households, or to receive revelation from the Lord, Exodus 33:7–11; Leviticus 16:17.

After Moses, the Levitical High Priest alone entered the Holy of Holies once each year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Hebrews 9:7; Leviticus 16:2.

Although the children of Israel feared being in the Lord's presence, God reassured them by covering the Tabernacle with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Exodus 13:21–22; Numbers 9:15–22. This visible sign gave Israel confidence that God was guiding and protecting them.

A thick, ornate veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, the Holy of Holies. This veil symbolized the separation between God and humanity caused by sin, and the need for an intercessor to bring God's children back into His presence.

