

# God's Second Temple: Adam

## The bookstands

I like to argue in this study that just as the 'bookstands' of creation and recreation are presented as a temple in the Jewish and Christian Holy Scriptures<sup>1</sup>, there is also a parallel between Adam and those who are 'in the second Adam', namely, Christians. In the New Testament, Christians are called 'a temple of the Spirit':

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?<sup>2</sup>

Redeemed mankind is seen as a temple because God Himself, through his Spirit, lives in them. Later we will return to this theme. The first man, Adam, is *also* presented to us in the Holy Scriptures as a temple of God. Creation is God's Temple, and Man as the summit of creation was therefore from the outset the ultimate Temple where God could 'rest'.



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<sup>1</sup> See Study One, God's First Temple, Creation.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:19

## In Our image

When God created Adam and Eve, he made them 'in our image', 'in our likeness':

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.<sup>3</sup>

That man was made into the image of God must be seen as the precondition for man being able to have dominion over all creation. Mankind is part of creation, and at the same time, separate from it. Mankind was

made in God's image in order to take care of this world on behalf of God.



That man was made in the image of God, unlike the animals, suggest that this image of God is specifically that in which man is different from animals. We should think of our rationality, our will, feelings, our sense of right and wrong, our ability to judge, etc. Important to mention is that the above verse, Genesis 1:26-27, is one of the few in the Old Testament where God speaks about himself using the plural

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:26-27

‘us’.<sup>4</sup> As Christians we believe this is a reference to God being a Trinity. That the ‘community’ of God created man in his own image, entails that man is also a social being.

*How* God made man into his own image is described next:

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (ESV)<sup>5</sup>

Man is made of dust *and* of the Spirit. In a highly personal manner, God blew his breath, or his Spirit (*Ruach*), into Adam. The *Ruach* mentioned here, is the same word used in Genesis 1:2 where we see the Spirit of God hovering over the waters. Note that we do not read of the animals that God blew his Spirit into them; there is obviously a difference between mankind and animals. God poured of himself into man.



The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says this:

Of all visible creatures only man is "able to know and love his creator". He is "the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake", and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in

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<sup>4</sup> Three other examples are:

"Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever--" (Gen. 3:22, NASB).

"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." (Gen. 11:7, NASB).

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8, NASB)

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 2:7

God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity.

Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.<sup>6</sup>

That mankind was made for intimately relating with the Creator is also expressed in the creation story by the image of ‘the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of day’, assuming that during his walk, He would meet with Adam and Eve; after their Fall, however, they “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord”.<sup>7</sup> The presence of the Lord was the normal experience for Adam and Eve before they disobeyed.

That mankind was able to commune with God, was because God had poured of Himself in man and made man in His image. It is only because of this presence of something divine in him, that Adam could commune with God.

### **Temple of Clay and Spirit**

Most Bible translations use the word ‘dust’, some speak of ‘soil’ as the basic material for man’s creation. There is a wordplay here, because the Hebrew word for soil is *adama*. Josephus writes that *adama* is red earth mixed with water, hence, clay.<sup>8</sup> So, the image could be of God making Adam just as a potter makes a clay pot. This metaphor occurs a few times in the Holy Scriptures:

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<sup>6</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 356-357

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 3:8; this imagery shows beyond doubt that Genesis 1-3 was never intended to be read as a factual description of history.

<sup>8</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, I. 1. c.

But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.<sup>9</sup>



I would suggest that we can also, with justification, see in the creation of Adam, *not* in the first place God working as a potter making a pot, but of God building a house of clay where his own Spirit can rest: a temple. Imagine God building a house, or a temple, indwelled by His Spirit.

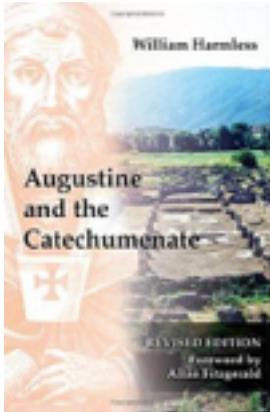
If all of the universe is portrayed as a temple in Genesis 1-3, and if mankind is its caretaker, then it is hardly surprising that man himself is in an even more intense manner, portrayed as a temple. The Spirit of God *hovered over* the waters at creation to make the Universe a resting place for God; the Spirit of God was *blown into* man at his creation for God to be present in his human temple.

In Judaism, this aspect of man as a temple has been recognized. “The universe, mankind, the nation, and [individual] man are in reality so many stages through which the Holy reveals Himself and in which It dwells. Consequently, it is reasonable to see in these stages so many parts of the temple of God.”<sup>10</sup> This statement is from a *kabbalistic*, mystical, Jewish source; a more mainline Jewish rabbi writes that “as every

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<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 64:8; see also Isaiah 29:16 and Job 33:6. I think Jeremiah 18:2-3 and Romans 9:21 should not be seen in the context of creation, but of God's covenantal relationship with his people and his freedom to do as He pleases.

<sup>10</sup> From a description of the view of Elijah (Eliyahu) Benamozegh, 1822 -1900, an Italian Orthodox Rabbi, Kabbalist, on <http://www.saieditor.com/stars/zegh.html> (accessed 19 April 2015)



man is a sort of temple, therefore we do not see Adam specifically as a Temple.”<sup>11</sup> That is a circumspect manner of saying, ‘Yes, we see Adam as a temple, as we see all mankind as a sort of temple.’

St Augustine also saw a Temple in Adam; William Harmless summarizes what St Augustine wrote about this in his *Tractate X on the Gospel of John*:

In Christ’s death the old temple (=Adam) was destroyed; in Christ’s resurrection a new temple was built. [...] Christ the New Temple thus reconstructed the fallen temple of humankind and reconstructed it by restoring humanity as a true image of God.<sup>12</sup>

A Roman Catholic theologian, Fr. Maximilian Mary Dean, summarizes this idea:

Adam, in the state of original justice, was the first physical temple of the Holy Spirit. Before original sin he walked with God in the earthly paradise.<sup>13</sup>

This means, among other things, that God came to be present in all of Creation, and especially in mankind. Some go quite far in envisioning analogies between Adam and the Jewish temple. The Chinese Christian Watchman Nee, for instance, argues, that because the Christian is a

<sup>11</sup> Email by the Dutch Rabbi Evers to the author, 19 April 2015.

<sup>12</sup> William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Liturgical Press, 2014 ) p. 256

<sup>13</sup> Fr. Maximilian Mary Dean, F.I., in <http://absoluteprimacyofchrist.org/appendix-ii-creation-of-adams-body/> (accessed 22 April 2015)

Temple of God, man *in general* is also a temple. And according to him, man as a temple is analogous to the Jewish temple in its three parts:

We know that the temple is divided into three parts. [...] Man is a temple of God. Within man there are also three parts. The body is like the outer court; it is outside, and its life is seen by all. It is here that man should obey all God's commandments. It is also here that God's Son died for man.

Further in, there is man's soul, which is the inward life in man; it includes man's feelings, will, and mind. This is the Holy Place to a regenerated one. His love, thoughts, and desires are all here. In this place there is much light, everything is clear and obvious, and the priests come in and out to serve God.

However, further in, there is the Holy of Holies behind the veil, which is unreachable by human light and is a place invisible to the human eyes. This is "the secret place of the Most High" (Psalm 91:1). It is the habitation of God, a place that no man can reach unless God removes the veil. This is the human spirit. Man not only has a body and a soul but a spirit as well. This spirit is deeper than man's consciousness; it is the place unreachable by man's feelings. It is in this place that man fellowships with God.<sup>14</sup>

### **After the Fall**

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and the immediate result was that the the Temple of the Universe became spoiled:

To the woman he said,  
"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children.  
Your desire shall be for your husband,  
and he shall rule over you."  
And to Adam he said,  
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
and have eaten of the tree

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<sup>14</sup> Watchman Nee, The Spiritual Man, as on <http://www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?xid=UZXH31I7CZTJB> (accessed 20 April 2015)

of which I commanded you,  
 'You shall not eat of it,'  
 cursed is the ground because of you;  
 in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
 By the sweat of your  
 face  
 you shall eat bread,  
 till you return to the  
 ground,  
 for out of it you were  
 taken;  
 for you are dust,  
 and to dust you shall  
 return."<sup>15</sup>



The earth has never been the perfect Temple of God since then, and Mankind also lost its natural relationship with God. The soul of man is no longer the abode of God. Genesis 4 shows us murder (Cain) and *hubris* (Enoch). Things were clearly not well with the Temple of Humanity. This is underlined in the book of generations in Genesis 5, where we read:

This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man [*Hebrew*: Adam] when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Genesis 3:16-19

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 5:1-3

Adam was made in God's likeness; the generations after Adam were made in Adam's likeness. This was a radical fracture in the history of humankind. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Adam disappears behind the figures of Abraham and Moses, as the Scripture's focus was on redemption as promised to Abraham and as effected in the history of Israel. Adam is only mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1 in a list of generations, and in Hosea 6:7, where God says of Israel: "But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me."

Interestingly, the persons of Adam and Eve become important again in the intertestamentary period. They are often mentioned in the Jewish literature after 200BC. In this period, there was a clear interest in the concept that through Adam's sin, sin, death and disease had entered into humanity and into all creation.<sup>17</sup> In the Fourth Book of Ezra we read,

For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the people's heart along with the evil root, but what was good departed, and the evil remained.<sup>18</sup>

In line with this, the Apostle Paul built an important part of his thinking around the person of Adam. He presents modern humanity as a whole, the people of Israel included, as 'in Adam', and therefore as lost sinners in need of salvation. In Romans 5:12-14 Paul says it thus:

[...] Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Things went so bad from the beginning, that God took a dramatic decision, mentioned in Genesis 6:

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<sup>17</sup> Adam is mentioned, for instance, in the Book of Jubilees, in the Life of Adam and Eve, the Greek Apocalypse of Ezra, the Testament of Adam, 3 Baruch, etc.

<sup>18</sup> *Fourth Book of Ezra*, 3:20-22

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."<sup>19</sup>



At creation, God blew his Spirit into Adam; after the Fall, mankind is no longer the place where God through his Spirit abides (or rests). Many Bible translations, instead of saying 'My Spirit shall not abide in man', say: 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh. His days shall

be 120 years'<sup>20</sup> 120 years later, the Great Flood destroyed mankind.

Incidentally, the intertestamentary book of 3 Enoch uses temple-language to describe the God's withdrawal from mankind at the time of the Flood. God says,

When I saw that the men of the generation of the Flood were behaving corruptly, I came and removed my Shekinah from their midst.<sup>21</sup>

The *Shekinah* was the Hebrew term for the glory of God that appeared as a cloud and as fire above the temple; it was his glorious temple-presence that he withdrew from mankind. Man was no longer a resting

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<sup>19</sup> Genesis 6:1-3

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 6:3

<sup>21</sup> 3 Enoch 48:1

place for God, but he had become a battlefield. Man lost his good relationship with God. He has become a temple in bad repair.

### **Man only a little lower than the heavenly beings**

The Jewish view of mankind after the fall was not pessimistic only. This was mostly, because God continued to look for mankind, with a view of salvation. And in the Jewish Holy Scriptures, we also read about the glory of man as he is presently, even after Adam had sinned:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,  
what is man that you are mindful of him,  
and the son of man that you care for him?  
Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honor.  
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under his feet,  
all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,  
the birds of the heavens, and the fish  
of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the  
seas.<sup>22</sup>



The Psalmist underlines that mankind is higher than creation, and only ‘a little lower than the heavenly beings’. He is also crowned with glory and honor. This glory is the same word used for the presence of the Holy Spirit on or in the tabernacle and the Temple: “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Psalm 8:3-8

<sup>23</sup> Exodus 40:34

Mankind after the Fall has not fully lost the image of God; man is still essentially different from the rest of creation. The area where things have gone wrong, is in our relationship with God. Man is no longer a Temple of the Spirit but rather an empty temple: still a temple, made for serving God, but without the presence of God in his life, and maybe even filled with other gods. Think for instance of the words of Jesus about a spirit living in a man and not finding *rest* after he is cast out. Note that Jesus uses temple-language here: Compare this 'rest' with God resting in creation on the seventh day. And the Holy Spirit being blown into Adam to abide in him.<sup>24</sup>

God is very near, but without the divine Spirit in us, we cannot communicate with the Divinity. Man still carries the marks of being a unique creature, made for communion with God, but there is sense of missing something, as Blaise Pascal said so pointedly:

What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.<sup>25</sup>



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<sup>24</sup> Matthew 12:43-44, Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. "Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order.

<sup>25</sup> - Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) *Pensées* VII(425)

Mankind is maybe comparable to a fine computer of high quality, but a virus has damaged the software for communication with the Server. As long as that software has not been re-installed, communication remains impossible.

### **Man needs renewal**

In Israel's Scriptures, the prophets promised renewal of the Temple of Man. Joel, for instance, speaks on behalf of God who says,

And it shall come to pass afterward,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;  
[...] even on the male and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

Jesus also promised that man would become a true Temple of God again:

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.<sup>27</sup>



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<sup>26</sup> Joel 3:28-29

<sup>27</sup> John 7:37

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and said,

"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."  
And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."<sup>28</sup>

The symbolical act of our Lord derives significance from Genesis 2:7 where God breathed his Spirit into Adam. Christ who is "the New Adam," Himself imparts the life-giving Spirit to change those who by birth were mere sons of Adam.

The promised renewal, namely that man will become a Temple of God, with the Holy Spirit within, means the recovery of Adam.

### **Conclusions**

Adam, as the prototype of mankind, is presented to us in the Holy Scriptures as a Temple of the Spirit. God created him with the ability to communicate with God and to be God's caretaker on earth, by giving the Spirit of God to Adam. This was a wonderful gift of God to humankind that intrinsically placed mankind high above the rest of creation and very close to God.

After the Fall of Adam, things went terribly wrong; man was still made to be a Temple, but because of sin, God's Spirit no longer dwelled in the temple. We still notice the majestic aspect in mankind and at the same time we notice that something has gone wrong. Man still has the imprint of being created in a special way by God, but the natural ability to communicate with God has gone. Man is great and the Creator must be praised for each person; but man also gravitates to hiding from God.

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<sup>28</sup> John 20:22

Because individual humans are creatures and temples of God, men and women alike, each and every person, deserves respect and respectful treatment. They deserve to be loved for who they are and as God-created beings. Christians must stand in the forefront of defending human rights, of caring for the poor, of healing the sick.

Mankind is in a state of being not-finished-yet; we will only find our true destination as Temples of God, when the Spirit of God returns to his or her temple. This promise of the return of the Spirit is part of the message of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Man was made for worship; as long as the Spirit of God has not returned to a human being, he or she is incomplete and inwardly, distant from God.