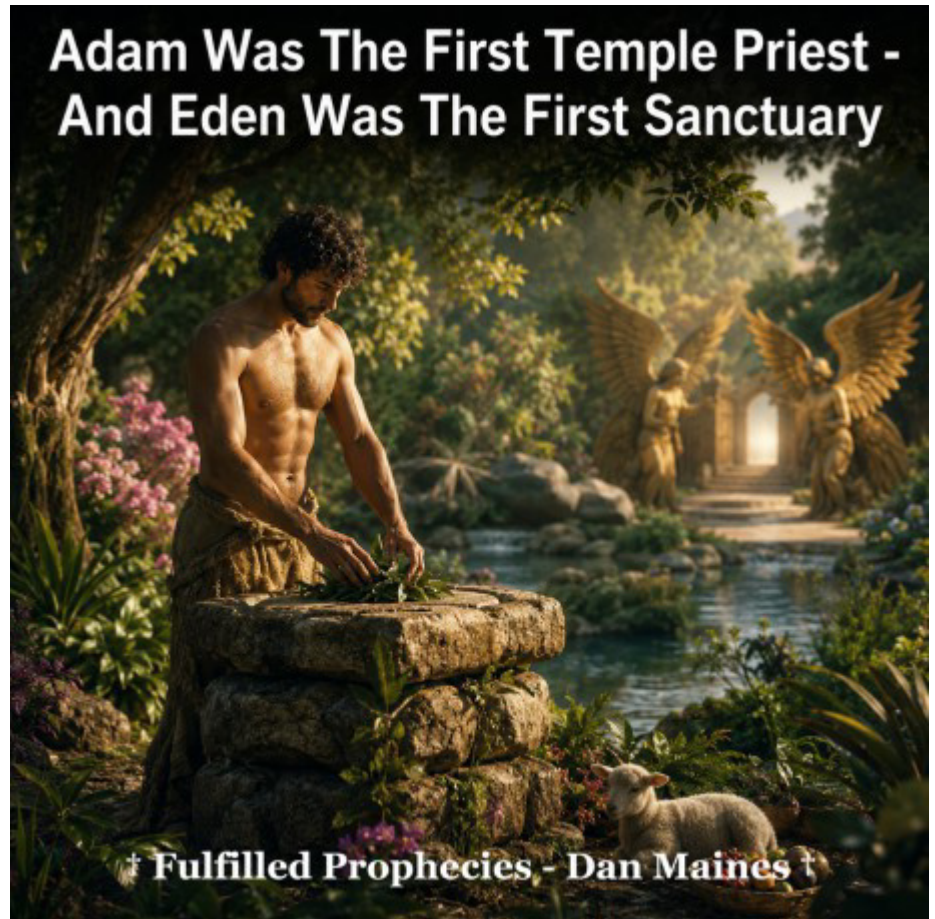


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**Adam Was The
First Temple Priest
- And Eden Was
The First
Sanctuary**



By Dan Maines

Adam Was The First Temple Priest - And Eden Was The First Sanctuary

Introduction

† The Temple story doesn't begin with Solomon. It doesn't even begin with Moses and the Tabernacle. The pattern begins in Genesis, where God planted a garden, placed His image-bearer within it, gave him sacred work, and walked in His presence.

† Eden contains remarkable features that later appear in Israel's Tabernacle and Temple: God's presence, an eastward entrance, cherubim guarding sacred space, precious materials,

a life-giving river, trees, and a man commissioned to serve and guard the place where God dwelled.

† This means Adam wasn't merely the first farmer. His commission used language later associated with priestly service. Eden wasn't merely humanity's first home. It functioned as the Bible's first sanctuary.

† Once this pattern is recognized, a magnificent biblical movement comes into view: Eden to Tabernacle, Tabernacle to Temple, Temple to Christ, Christ to His people, and finally the New Creation where God's dwelling is with humanity.

† The wow moment is simple but enormous: the Temple story may begin on the opening pages of the Bible, and the entire story moves toward God dwelling with His people without a physical Temple standing between them.

Genesis 2:8-10

The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God caused every tree to grow that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.

† Eden was a place specially prepared by God, and Adam was placed there by God. This wasn't simply a random piece of agricultural land. It was the place where humanity lived in fellowship with the Creator (Genesis 3:8).

† A river flowed out from Eden and carried life outward. Later prophetic Temple imagery also presents water flowing from God's sacred dwelling and bringing life wherever it goes (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

† Revelation completes the pattern with the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, with the tree of life beside it (Revelation 22:1-2). Genesis begins with garden, river, tree, and God's presence, and Revelation ends with those themes restored in their completed form.

Genesis 2:11-12

The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there as well.

† Genesis deliberately mentions gold and precious material in connection with the region surrounding Eden. Those same kinds of materials become prominent when Scripture describes sacred places associated with God's dwelling.

† The Tabernacle was filled with gold, and onyx stones were placed on the priestly garments (Exodus 25:10-22; 28:9-12). Solomon's Temple was likewise characterized by extensive use of gold (1 Kings 6:20-22).

† Revelation's New Jerusalem again uses gold and precious stones when describing God's completed dwelling with His people (Revelation 21:18-21). The Bible begins and ends with God's dwelling associated with garden imagery and precious materials.

Genesis 2:15

Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and tend it.

† This verse is one of the strongest connections between Eden and the later sanctuary. Adam wasn't merely told to enjoy Eden. He was given responsibility within sacred space.

† The Hebrew verbs translated dress and keep are 'abad and shamar. These words can describe ordinary work and guarding, but significantly, they appear together in connection with the Levites' responsibilities surrounding the sanctuary (Numbers 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6).

† Adam's assignment therefore anticipates priestly responsibility. He was to serve within the garden and guard what God had entrusted to him.

† This also makes Adam's failure more significant. When the serpent entered the sacred place, Adam failed to guard the sanctuary entrusted to him (Genesis 3:1-6). The first guardian of sacred space failed his commission.

Genesis 3:8

Now they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

† The defining glory of Eden wasn't its vegetation, gold, rivers, or beauty. Its greatest glory was God's presence.

† The same theme governs the Tabernacle. God instructed Israel to construct a sanctuary so He could dwell among them (Exodus 25:8).

† The same theme governed the Temple, and it ultimately reaches its fulfillment in Christ and the New Covenant people of God (John 1:14; Ephesians 2:21-22).

† From Genesis to Revelation, the central sanctuary question isn't ultimately, Where is the building? The deeper question is, Where does God dwell with humanity?

Genesis 3:23-24

therefore the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

† After Adam's sin, access to the garden was restricted, and cherubim guarded the way into sacred space.

† Notice that the guarded entrance is associated with the east. Later, the Tabernacle's entrance was on the east side, and the Temple likewise developed this eastward orientation (Exodus 27:13-16; Ezekiel 40:6).

† Cherubim also became prominent symbols within Israel's sanctuary. Cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat above the ark, and images of cherubim appeared throughout the Temple (Exodus 25:18-22; 1 Kings 6:23-29).

† Eden's cherubim weren't an isolated detail. They introduced imagery that reappeared when God established later sacred spaces among His covenant people.

Exodus 25:8-9

Have them construct a sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, so you shall construct it.

† The purpose of the Tabernacle is stated plainly: God intended to dwell among His people.

† That takes us directly back to Eden. The sanctuary wasn't introducing an entirely new biblical idea. It was developing the ancient theme of God's presence dwelling among humanity.

† Eden had sacred space, God's presence, guarded access, cherubim, precious materials, and a commissioned servant. The Tabernacle gathered these themes into Israel's covenant worship system.

1 Kings 6:29-30

Then he carved all the surrounding walls of the house with engravings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, for the inner and outer sanctuaries. And he overlaid the floor of the house with gold, for the inner and outer sanctuaries.

† Solomon's Temple visually recalled a garden. Cherubim, palm trees, flowers, and gold filled God's house.

† A worshiper entering this sanctuary encountered imagery that echoed the garden sanctuary of Genesis.

† The Temple wasn't Eden restored in its final sense. It was another stage in the biblical sanctuary story, pointing beyond itself toward something greater.

John 2:19-21

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and yet You will raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking about the temple of His body.

† Here the sanctuary story takes its decisive turn. Jesus identified His body as the Temple.

† God's presence was no longer centered ultimately in a structure made with human hands. God had come among His

people in Christ (John 1:14; Colossians 2:9).

† Jesus is where humanity meets God. The Temple wasn't the destination of the biblical story. Christ was.

† This is why destroying Jesus and raising Him again was described in Temple language. The reality had arrived to which the earlier sanctuary patterns were pointing.

Ephesians 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

† The movement continues from Christ as Temple to His people as God's holy Temple.

† Paul didn't tell believers that they were waiting for another physical sanctuary to become the center of God's redemptive program. He told them they were already being built together into God's dwelling in the Spirit.

† The dwelling place of God had moved from shadows and structures to Christ and His covenant people.

† Adam was placed in God's garden sanctuary. Israel worshiped at God's Tabernacle and Temple. Christ embodied God's presence. Now those who are in Christ constitute God's spiritual dwelling.

Revelation 21:2-3

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

† Revelation brings the sanctuary theme to its covenantal goal. The direction is important. The city comes down from God, and

the announcement is that God's Tabernacle is with humanity.

† The biblical story isn't primarily humanity escaping creation to reach God's dwelling. It's the story of God establishing His dwelling with His redeemed people.

† What was experienced in Eden, pictured in the Tabernacle, displayed in the Temple, embodied in Christ, and established in His people reaches its completed covenant expression in the New Jerusalem.

† The Bible begins with God dwelling with humanity in a garden and closes with God dwelling with His people in the New Creation.

Revelation 21:22

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

† This is one of the greatest surprises in the entire Temple story. The New Jerusalem has no physical Temple.

† Why isn't there a Temple? Because the Temple's purpose has reached its fulfillment. God and the Lamb are its Temple.

† The Bible's sanctuary story therefore doesn't end with the reconstruction of another sacred building. It ends with unrestricted access to God through the Lamb.

† Eden had a sanctuary. Israel had a Tabernacle. Jerusalem had a Temple. Jesus came as the true Temple. His people became God's dwelling. The New Jerusalem needs no separate Temple because God's presence fills the covenant reality.

Revelation 22:1-2

And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

† Now the pattern reaches its breathtaking conclusion. Genesis opened with a river and the tree of life in God's garden.

Revelation closes with the river of life and the tree of life in God's completed covenant world.

† The guarded tree of Genesis 3 is accessible again in Revelation 22. The story has moved from lost access to restored access through Christ (Revelation 22:14).

† This is why Eden matters so much to understanding biblical prophecy. Genesis established the sanctuary vocabulary that the rest of Scripture develops.

† The Bible's Temple story wasn't moving toward another stone building in the Middle East. It was moving toward Christ, His people, and the restored presence of God in the New Creation.

Historical References

† Josephus described the Jerusalem Temple as a sacred structure filled with symbolic features and magnificent materials, including extensive gold, showing how deeply sacred-space imagery remained embedded in Jewish worship during the first century (Josephus, Wars 5.5).

† Josephus also described the Temple veil as embroidered with imagery representing the created order, demonstrating that ancient Jewish sanctuary symbolism could connect the Temple with God's creation itself (Josephus, Wars 5.5.4).

† Philo described the Tabernacle and its furnishings using cosmic symbolism, showing that ancient Jewish interpreters recognized connections between God's sanctuary and the ordered creation (Philo, On the Life of Moses 2.88-135).

† These historical witnesses don't prove that Genesis explicitly calls Eden a Temple, but they support the larger ancient Jewish understanding that sanctuary, creation, divine presence, and sacred symbolism belonged together.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't need to look for another physical Temple to restore access to God. In Christ, believers have access to the Father and are already members of God's household (Ephesians 2:18-22).

† God's great purpose has always been fellowship with His people. Sin disrupted that fellowship in Eden, but Christ accomplished what Adam couldn't accomplish and brought His

people into the presence of God (Romans 5:17-19).

† We aren't waiting for God to return to a stone sanctuary. God's people are His dwelling through the Spirit, and Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of that living Temple (Ephesians 2:20-22).

† The story that began in Eden has reached its New Covenant reality. The river flows, the tree of life stands available, the nations receive healing, and God dwells with His people in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1-2).

† The Temple story begins far earlier than many people realize. Once Eden is recognized as the Bible's first sanctuary pattern, the entire storyline becomes clearer: Eden to Tabernacle, Tabernacle to Temple, Temple to Christ, Christ to His people, and His people dwelling with God in the New Creation.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does Genesis actually call Eden a Temple?

A: No. Genesis doesn't use the later word Temple for Eden. The connection comes from the accumulation of sanctuary features: God's presence, cherubim, an eastern entrance, precious materials, sacred service and guarding, the tree of life, and a life-giving river (Genesis 2:8-15; 3:8, 23-24). The claim is that Eden functions as the Bible's first sanctuary pattern, not that Genesis directly labels it a Temple.

Q: Why call Adam a priest if Genesis doesn't use the word priest?

A: Because Adam was placed in sacred space to dress and keep it, and the Hebrew verbs behind those words are later used together for Levitical service and guarding associated with God's sanctuary (Genesis 2:15; Numbers 3:7-8; 8:25-26). Adam's commission therefore has a strong priestly pattern.

Q: Why were cherubim placed at Eden?

A: They guarded access to the tree of life after humanity was expelled. Cherubim later appeared prominently in the Tabernacle and Temple, especially around the place representing God's throne and presence (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18-22; 1 Kings 6:23-29).

Q: Does the New Covenant require another physical Temple?

A: No. Jesus identified His body as the Temple, believers are God's holy Temple and dwelling in the Spirit, and the New Jerusalem explicitly has no separate Temple because God and the Lamb are its Temple (John 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:19-22; Revelation 21:22).

Q: What is the biggest wow moment in this study?

A: The Bible's sanctuary story doesn't begin with Moses and doesn't end with another building. It begins with God's presence among humanity in Eden and reaches its goal in God's presence with His people through Christ in the New Creation (Genesis 3:8; Revelation 21:2-3, 22; 22:1-2).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Genesis 2:8-10; Genesis 2:11-12; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 3:8; Genesis 3:23-24; Exodus 25:8-9; 1 Kings 6:29-30; John 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:19-22; Revelation 21:2-3; Revelation 21:22; Revelation 22:1-2

† Josephus, Wars 5.5; Josephus, Wars 5.5.4; Philo, On the Life of Moses 2.88-135

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