

Day 52 – Apr. 11

With Solomon's temple the transition from wandering agrarian nomads to kingdom was complete. They had boundaries and a wall, they had a king, they had a capital, they had a palace, and they had a temple.

I wonder how God felt about this temple. When David proposed the idea to Him, He didn't seem too keen on the idea. While the final reasoning was that David's hands had seen too much blood and God's temple was to be divorced from the political and military conquest of the land, God first shared what I consider a better reason not to build a temple.

If you remember, God's first reason was that He didn't need one. He had been with, protected, and provided for His people from the Tabernacle for all these years. What did He need a temple for? The tabernacle was mobile and flexible, it was familiar to the people, and it was all that was required. The Temple would be stationary and solid, familiar as something the other kingdoms had to worship their gods, and was unnecessary for worshiping God. To go from skin walls to stone ones could seem like a need for protection, but what need does God have for protection from anyone? To go from simple dirt floors to gold-plated ones may seem like a way to show off God's grandeur, but what need does God have to show off with gold?

The temple seemed to be more for the people than for God, yet God recognized that the people need it and so allows it. But my guess is that He allowed it begrudgingly rather than gladly. And while yesterday we talked about the power of beauty to draw us closer to God, the beauty of God's nature is enough without gold plated walls and 15 foot high cherubim statues.

The temple would be the center of a lot of difficulties for God's people, from internal strife to external conquest. Jesus would come and, in His words, replace the temple as the dwelling place of God, and then Paul would further the metaphor to proclaim US as God's temple. This New Testament temple gets back to being mobile, to being familiar to us, and to being enough without the glitz. May we remember that the key to the temple is that it is where God dwells among us, not for the temple's sake but for the sake of the people around the temple. So be a good temple today!