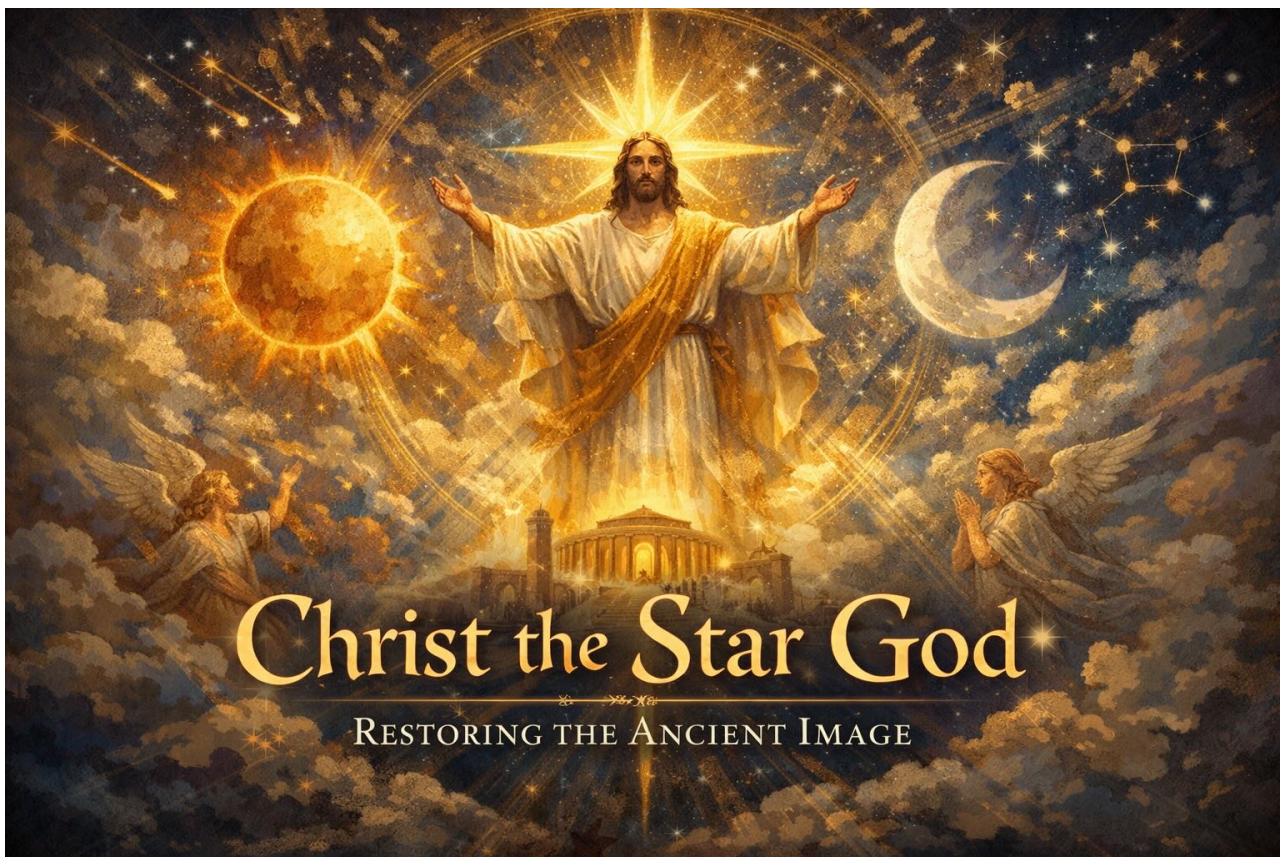


2 The Mission of Christ:

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

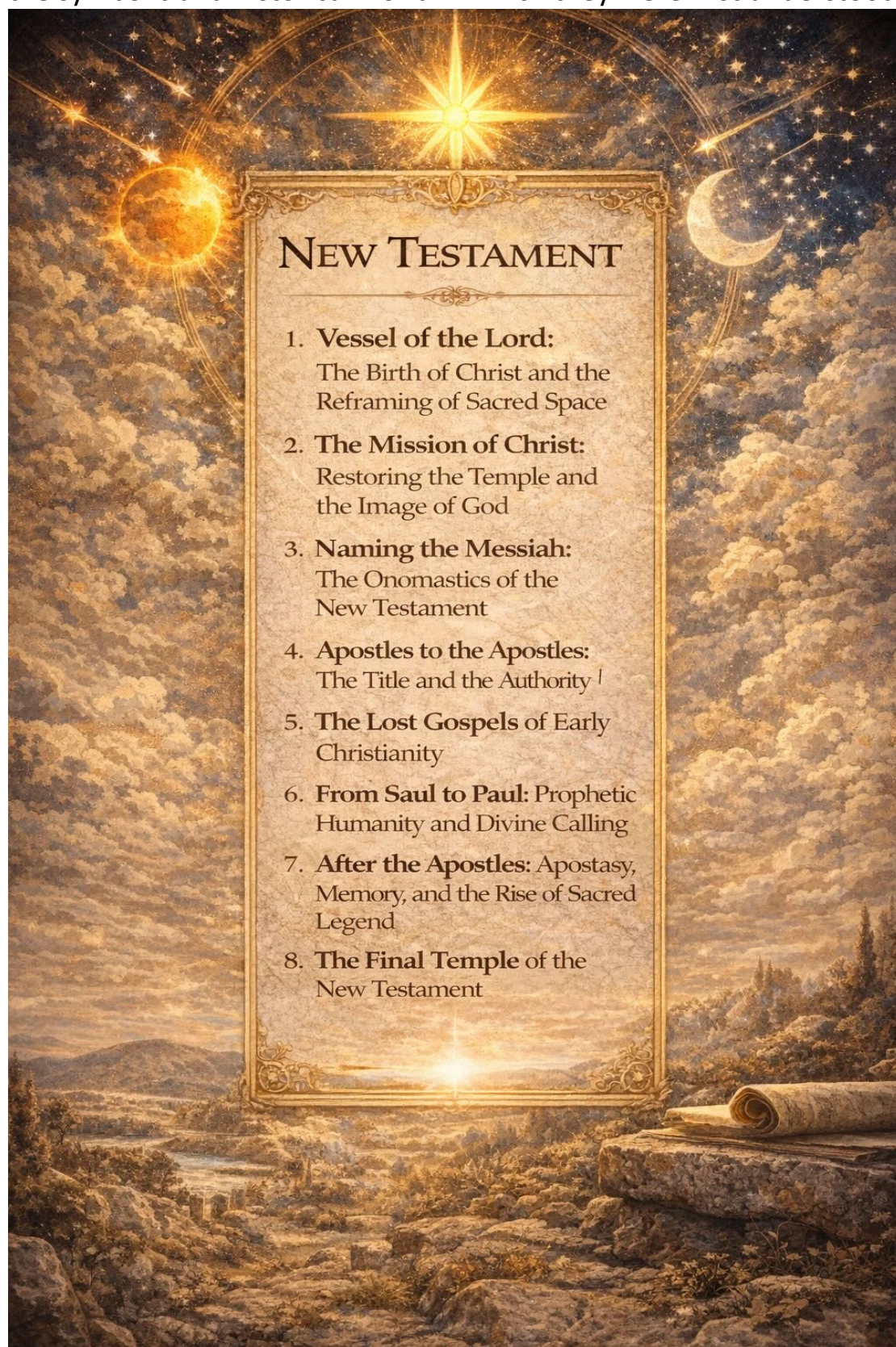
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Restoring the Temple and the Image of God



This homework is meant to help you slow down and see the larger picture that often gets lost in modern readings of the New Testament. In class, we explored the idea that Christ's mission was to restore an older temple pattern that had been narrowed, simplified, and reinterpreted over time. We also introduced the importance of schemas, the mental frameworks ancient readers used to understand symbols and see the main mission of Christ. These schemas show us interpretations of common symbols like the sun, the moon, the stars, the temple, and covenant. So, as you work through this assignment, pay close attention to how these patterns appear in the text, how later interpretations may shift their meaning, and how restored revelation helps bring parts of that old world back into

their meaning, and now restored revelation helps bring parts of that older world back into view. The goal is not just to gather facts, but to train yourself to read the scriptures within the symbolic and historical world in which they were first understood.





The Bible as we understand it today was formed through the ecumenical councils which were gatherings of early Christian leaders who came together to resolve disagreements about doctrine with the ultimate goal of creating unity across this rapidly growing state church. While their main goal was defining beliefs about Christ and God, these councils were the main influence on the formation of the biblical canon that was being organized and stabilized at the same time. As a result, the scriptures were preserved, read, and prioritized within the theological frameworks being developed at these councils. This means the Bible emerged within certain schema lenses and interpretations that became the primary lens, while others were set aside, and complex ideas were then clarified or simplified to create consistency. When we can understand this process we can then recognize and trace how scripture has been layered with interpretive meaning and later frameworks.

Overview of the ecumenical councils:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/canon-law/History#ref216830>

Ehrman's work on the differences of Christianity of the time:

<https://ehrmanblog.org/why-were-some-of-the-earliest-christian-books-left-out-of-the-nt/>

Be sure to click to his next post as well to continue the article.

Activating Different Schemas

COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PRINCIPLE

- ✧ Schemas are mental frameworks that help us organize and interpret information, guiding our expectations and responses.
- ✧ Activating different schemas involves priming specific frameworks to influence perception, thought, and behavior.
- ✧ Recognizing schema activation can reveal how ancient texts were understood and interpreted by their audiences.

SOURCES TO READ:

- ✧ Steven Pinker, "A Sense of Style: Cognition and Consciousness"
- ✧ George Lakoff, "Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things"
- ✧ E.J. and N. Hasher, "The Role of Context in Language Comprehension: Priming in Language"

Schemas are the mental frameworks we use to make sense of the world, and the problem is we usually don't realize we're using them. When you read scripture, you are reading it through a framework you've already been given, you don't consciously realize it but that lens tells you what things mean before you even start. That is why two people can read the same verse and come away with completely different conclusions. What we are trying to do in this course is become aware of those schemas and, when needed, replace them with the ones that existed at the time the text was written. That shift is the key. Once you start reading the text through the ancient schema instead of the modern one, patterns that were invisible before suddenly become clear, and the text begins to function the way it was originally intended.

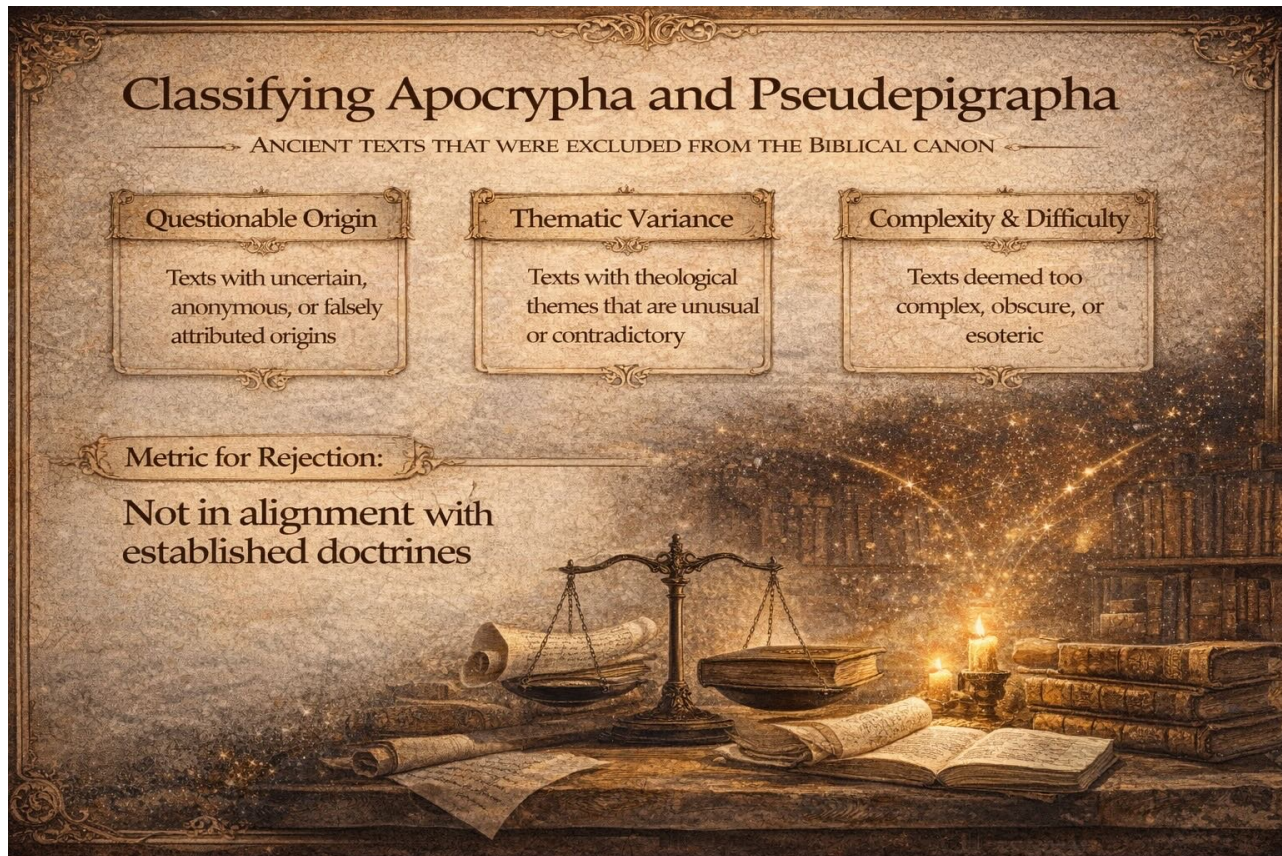
Steven Pinker Sense of Style: understanding the language of writing.

<https://stevenpinker.com/publications/sense-style-thinking-persons-guide-writing-21st-century>

George Lakoff Cognitive Linguistics and the Schema of image based language.

<https://uwm.edu.pl/anglistyka/uploads/files/drogosz/lakoff-the-invariance-hypothesis-is-abstract-reason-based-on-image-schemas.pdf>

Schema Theory influences



Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal texts are generally thought of as apocrypha, meaning hidden away, and pseudepigraphal meaning false writings. The ancient Jewish and Christian writings were categorized this way through a gradual process where early Christian communities evaluated writings on key considerations. Texts were often questioned if their origin was uncertain, anonymous, or attributed to figures after their lifetime. Others were set aside because their teachings did not align with the theological frameworks that were becoming dominant within the emerging church, as leaders sought doctrinal consistency across communities. In addition, some writings were considered too complex or symbolic for widespread use, making them less suitable for public teaching and instruction. Over time, these factors led to certain texts being preserved and circulated more widely, while others were excluded from the developing canon, not necessarily because they contained no value, but because they did not fit within the interpretive and doctrinal boundaries that were being established.

Apocryphal texts:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/apocrypha>

Pseudepigraphal texts:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/pseudepigrapha>

D&C 91 on the Apocrypha

✧ “There are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly” (vs. 1).

✧ “There are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men” (vs. 2).

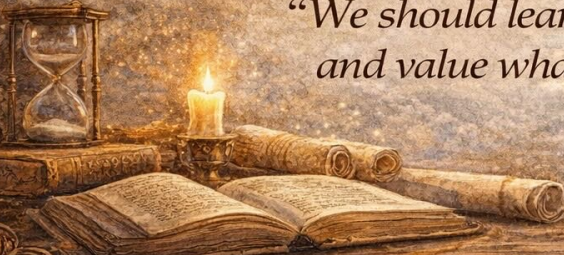
✧ “Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth” (vs. 4).

✧ “It is not needful that the Apocrypha should be translated” (vs. 3).

✧ “Whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom.” (vs. 5)



“We should learn to discern and value what they contain.”
—Joseph Smith



NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

THAT SHOW CHRIST ABOLISHED THE NEED FOR TEMPLES

The New Testament consistently presents Christ as the fulfillment of the temple, rendering physical temples unnecessary.

Matthew 12:6 “But I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.” Christ declares His presence to be greater than the temple itself.	Matthew 27:51 “The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” Symbolizes that access to God is opened through Christ, not through the temple.	Mark 14:58 “I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.” Jesus points to His body as the true temple.	John 2:19-21 “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Refers to His body, indicating He replaces the physical temple.
John 4:21-23 “The hour is coming when... true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people.”	John 8:31-32 “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”	1 Corinthians 3:16-17 “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”	Hebrews 9:11-12 “But when Christ appeared... He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own



Worship is no longer tied to a physical location.

Freedom comes through Christ, not temple rituals or structures.

Believers themselves become the temple through the Holy Spirit.

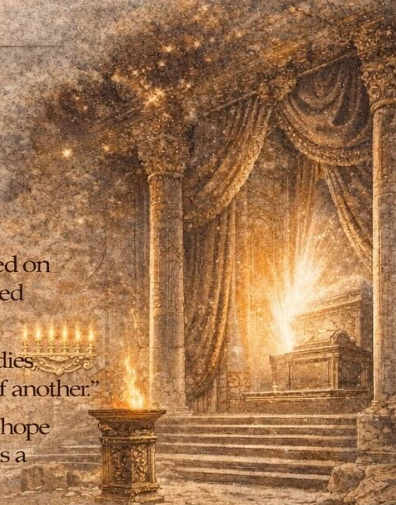
blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. Christ's sacrifice replaces temple-based atonement permanently.

SUMMARY These passages reveal a unified message. Christ fulfills and transcends the temple. Through His body, His sacrifice, and the indwelling Spirit, He establishes a new covenant in which God's presence is no longer confined to a physical structure.



New Testament Verses Showing Temples Are Still Needed

- ✧ John 2:17: "Zeal for your house will *consume me*."
- ✧ Acts 3:1: "Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the *ninth hour*..."
- ✧ Acts 5:42: "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus."
- ✧ 1 Corinthians 15:29: "Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?"
- ✧ 1 Corinthians 15:40: "There are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another."
- ✧ Hebrews 6:19-20: "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf..."
- ✧ Hebrews 9:23: "Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."
- ✧ 1 Peter 2:5: "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."
- ✧ Revelation 1:6: "[He] made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father."



Revelations Foretelling of Temples in the Last Days

- ✧ Isaiah 2:2-3: "In the last days... the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills, and all the nations shall flow to it... Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob..."
- ✧ Malachi 3:1: "And the Lord you seek will suddenly come to his temple."
- ✧ Revelation 7:15-17: "[A chosen multitude] are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple..."
- ✧ Revelation 11:1: "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there."
- ✧ Doctrine and Covenants 124:39: "Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi... are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name."



- ✧ Doctrine and Covenants 133:13: “He shall come up unto Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the place of the temple...”
- ✧ Doctrine and Covenants 133:13: “He shall come up unto Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the place of the temple...”

ἐκκλησία ≠ ναός

(ekklesia ~ church) (naos ~ temple)

✧ ἐκκλησία / Ekklesia / “church” ≠ ναός / Naos ~ “temple”

✧ Isaiah 2:2:18: “On this rock I will build my church (ἐκκλησίαν);

✧ Acts 20:28: “to care for the church (ἐκκλησίαν) of God.

✧ 1 Corinthians 12:28: “And God has placed in the church (ἐκκλησία)...”

Revelation 11:1:

“Rise and measure the temple (ναόν) of God and the altar and those who worship there.

1 Corinthians 3:16: “Do you not know that ναός “God’s temple?”

What happens when ναός gets translated as “church”?

Acts 7:48: “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

“Note: The Greek word here is ναός (naos) but modern English Bibles translate the word as “church”.

✧ Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 313 AD)
“The Church ... is the true temple of God,”

✧ Augustine of Hippo:
“The temple of God is holy, which temple you are ... this is the Church.”

One of the most influential interpretive frameworks that developed in early Christianity was the idea that Christ fulfilled and therefore replaced the need for the temple. This reading includes New Testament passages, referring to the tearing of the veil, Christ referring to His body as the temple, and teachings that emphasize worship “in spirit and in truth.” Over time, these ideas were brought together into a simplified schema in which Christ’s mission was understood primarily as ending the need for sacred space and replacing it with a more personal, internal form of religion.

However, when we examine the broader textual and historical context, this interpretation appears to be a narrowing rather than a complete picture. The New Testament itself preserves evidence that temple practices and temple

language continued after Christ's ministry. The apostles still gathered, taught, and prayed in the temple, and later writings continue to describe heavenly temples, priesthood roles, and structured sacred space. Rather than eliminating the temple, these texts suggest a transformation and expansion of its meaning.

This creates an important tension. A later interpretive framework emphasizes internalization and simplicity, while the text itself retains complexity, structure, and continuity with earlier temple traditions. Recognizing this shift allows us to see that what has often been presented as a complete replacement may instead be a reinterpretation shaped by the needs and assumptions of later communities.

The goal of this lesson is to clarify the idea that Christ brought a more personal relationship with God, but also to recognize that this is only part of the picture. When read within its original symbolic and historical framework, the New Testament does not identify the removal of temple theology, but it shows clarification and its continuation in a more improved form.

<https://ntwrightpage.com/2016/03/29/glory-word-and-unity/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/emergence.html>?

THE SCHEMA EXISTS
SUN, MOON, AND STARS AS A DEFINED SYMBOLIC SYSTEM

The Hebrew Scriptures present a consistent symbolic pattern in which the sun, moon, and stars represent relationships, identity, and divine order.

SUN
Represents the Father, Ruler, or Source of Authority

MOON
Represents the Mother, Queen, or Reflective Partner

STARS
Represent Children, Heirs, Angels, or Covenant Communities

GENESIS 37:9–10
“Then he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, ‘Look, I have dreamed yet another dream: behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’”
Jacob (sun), Rachel (moon), and the eleven sons (stars)

NUMBERS 24:17
“I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.”
A star as a symbol of a royal or messianic figure.

JOB 38:7
“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”
Stars depicted as divine beings in God’s heavenly assembly.

KEY TAKEAWAY



The sun, moon, and stars are not random imagery. They form a structured language of divine family, covenant, and cosmic order within the biblical text.

DANIEL 12:3



"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."
Stars as a symbol of exalted, righteous beings.

The Schema Continues *Into the New Testament*

Goal: Show continuity, not innovation.

✧ Matthew 2:2:

"We saw *his star* when it rose and have come to worship him."
– Sign of the Messiah

✧ Revelation 12:1:

"A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars"

✧ Revelation 1:20:

"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches."
– Stars as divine messengers

✧ Revelation 22:16:

"I am... the bright morning star." Christ as the star

Consistent imagery shows the sun, moon, and stars as a known system of meaning.



Temple Restoration Within *the Schema*

Goal: Show that Christ is operating within this symbolic system in a temple context.

✧ John 1:51:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
– Heaven and earth connected in Christ

✧ John 2:19-21:

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
– But he was speaking about the *temple* of his body

✧ Revelation:

"Temple imagery filled with cosmic and celestial symbolism
– The temple as a *model* of the cosmos

✧ 1 Enoch 24-25:

"Tree of life restored, joining cosmic order and temple



The temple is a model of the cosmos, and the cosmos is structured like the temple.

Suppression, Reduction, or Narrowing

Goal: Acknowledge that symbolic fullness was narrowed, reinterpreted, or partially preserved.

✧ Narrowed

✧ Reinterpreted

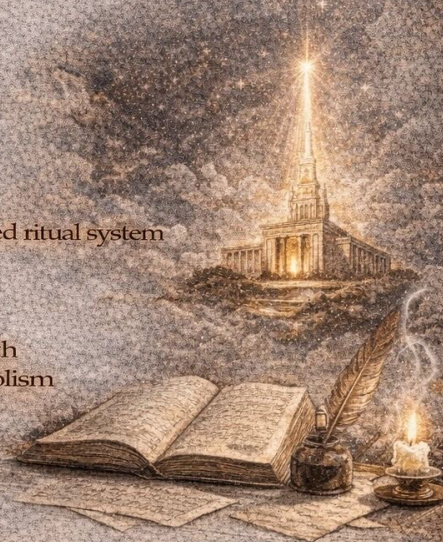
✧ Partially Preserved

✧ Gospel of Philip:
“Bridal Chamber”

✧ Hebrews:
– Heavenly temple but reduced ritual system

✧ Revelation:
– Temple imagery filled with
cosmic and celestial symbolism

Later tradition retained only fragments
of the original symbolic context.



Bridal
Chamber

Chrism

Eucharist

Baptism

Redemption

Baptism

The Lord did everything in a
mystery: a baptism and a chrism
and a eucharist and a redemption
and a bridal chamber.”

– Gospel of Philip

Union as *the highest sacrament*.



The Feminine in Sacred Context

Galatians 4:26

"But the Jerusalem above
is free, and she is our mother."



Ephesians 5:32

"...the mystery of marriage is profound,
and I am saying that it refers to Christ
and the church..."



Gospel of Mary

"Peter said to Mary, 'Sister,
we know the Savior loved you
more than any other woman.
Tell us the words of the Savior
that you remember...'"

Pistis Sophia

"Mary Magdalene is portrayed as the disciple
who has seen all mysteries and learns at
the feet of the risen Christ, asking 'At
your desire...I am ready to ask you a question?'"

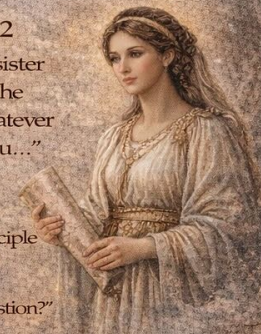
Gospel of Philip

"The Lord did everything in
a mystery; a baptism and a
chrism and a eucharist and a
redemption and a bridal chamber."

— Gospel of Philip

Romans 16:1–2

"I commend to you our sister
Phoebe, a deaconess of the
church...help her in whatever
she may require from you..."



Christ, the New Testament, and early Christian texts draw a rich connection between
motherhood, the bride, and priestly women.

Talmud Taanit direct link:

https://www.sefaria.org/Jerusalem_Talmud_Taanit?tab=contents

The Big reading of the week. Be sure to read this:

www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/RestoringSolomon.pdf