

THE ARK of COVENANT
R.C.I.A. Church Tour
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Mount Horeb — — Tent — — Temple — — Synagogue — — Church

"Remove thy shoes for the place you stand is holy ground" [Ex. 3 :5] Yahweh instructed Moses to build a container to save specific items by which he saved His people as a reminder of His covenant with them. This became the Holy of Holy memorial of their salvation from slavery. By this means God could live among His people. It was placed under a tent called the Tent of the Meeting. It was a portable device because the people were still wandering. The sacred items placed in the Ark were Moses' staff, the original fragments of the ten commandments, the replacement ten commandments, a jar of manna. The Ark is the first tabernacle, and the tent the first house of worship.

When the Jews finally settled in the Holy Land, they made Jerusalem their capital. King David was moved to design a permanent structure to house the Ark. It was called a temple which also became the location of all burnt offerings to Yahweh. However the providence of Yahweh called David to be the foundation of a different most holy temple; the house of David into which the Holy Temple of Jesus was to be born.

It was left to King Solomon to actually build the first temple for burnt offerings to Yahweh and as a focal point for community life. It contained libraries, a treasury and an industrial area. It also housed the archives and records of the Jewish nation. The temple had two large wooden doors as entrance to the Holy inner sanctum. In the court yard there were two main features: the altar of sacrifice which was elevated by three steps, and a large pool of water for purification. The great pool of water symbolized the primeval sea which Yahweh conquered at creation. The pool of water flowed east. There were over 1000 priests [only from the tribe of Levi] each taking a turn in the service at the altar. People made their offerings to

Yahweh bringing vegetables, fruits, live stock, etc. This was dirty work so the priests had to wash and purify.

However, areas of study and learning developed called Synagogues. After the final destruction of the Temple and the disbursement of the population, Synagogues took over as the center of Jewish life; but there were no more sacrifices. Sacrifices came to an end with the Temples' destruction. There was no further need for priests, for only priests could offer a sacrifice. Today, Catholics have priests to offer the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. Early Christians were Jews. Christianity became a high bred form of Judaism. Jews celebrated Judaism on Saturday and Christian Jews celebrated as both, each keeping separate from the other. Differences occurred which pushed the Christians out of the Synagogue. However the traditions and format remained similar. The early Churches followed the format of the synagogue. During the time of the second Temple the worship of One God held absolute sway. The Greek and Roman religions worshiped many gods including the Emperor. This helped to bring about the Jewish rebellion against Greece and then Rome. The Jewish worship during this time became more refined and more Catholic [Universal/undivided]. Ancient hymns were gathered in one collection. The Book of Psalms became used as prayer. Prayer was gradually formulated into an independent liturgy. Prayer was now fixed for time and became obligatory worship. It was during this time that the Torah became national literature.

As I had mentioned Jesus Himself became the new Temple. "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will rebuild it." The new Temple is the Body of Christ. Where Christ lives, there is His Temple. His Body in turn is identified with the Church, the new Temple; the Temple of the heart. The Church is now the place of Gods' presence in the Tabernacle, the new Ark. The Church is Holy, like the Temple and can never be in friendship with idolatry. Christians then are the living stones which build the Temple where the Holy Spirit lives. Emanuel; "God dwells among us." He is the corner stone rejected by the builders.

The Church is compared to a building erected on a foundation of Apostles and Prophets with Jesus Himself as the corner stone upon which the entire building reposes. It derives its life and its virtue from His enduring presence. "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church". And the Church continues to be built upon Peter's successors with the help of the eternal Holy Spirit.

TEMPLE TIME FRAME

Portable tent [Moses & Joshua]	1400bc
King Solomon builds the Temple	950bc
Destruction of Temple by Babylon	600bc
Temple rebuilt	450bc
Temple desecrated by Greeks	300bc
Renovated by King Herod.....	16ad to 64ad
Destroyed by Rome	70ad
Jesus Himself becomes the final Temple.....	[Mat. 26:61]

There was only one Temple; people made pilgrimage to it.