

Uncertainty Avoidance:

A difference between cultures & personalities

- How comfortable someone is with uncertainty, ambiguity, or lack of control
 - What are some sources of uncertainty or ambiguity?
 - Why do we want to avoid uncertainty?
 - Why be okay with uncertainty?
- 1) okay with uncertainty 10) strong avoidance
- High: Greece, Japan
 - Mid: China, United States, Philippines
 - Low: England, Jamaica, Singapore
 - Where are you?
- How does this affect your walk of faith with God?

Following the Living and Loving God

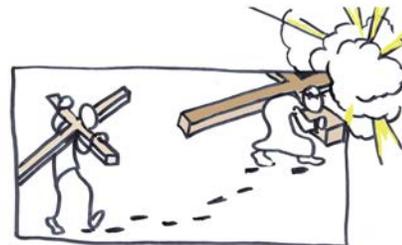
Acts 7:1-53

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Stephen

- Jewish leader in the Christian church
 - Probably: Greek-speaking and foreign born (first and most prominent Greek-speaking Christian leader)
 - Doing miracles, leading, and speaking about Jesus
- Arrested based on exaggeration and misrepresentation by Greek-speaking Jews
- Standing before the Sanhedrin (top Jewish leadership)
- Charges:
 - Rebellion against Temple and the Law of Moses
- Long term thinking cultures root the future in the past

Acts 7:1-53

1: Stephen is invited to explain (defend himself)

2-8:

9-16:

17-29:

30-34:

35-38:

39-43:

44-50:

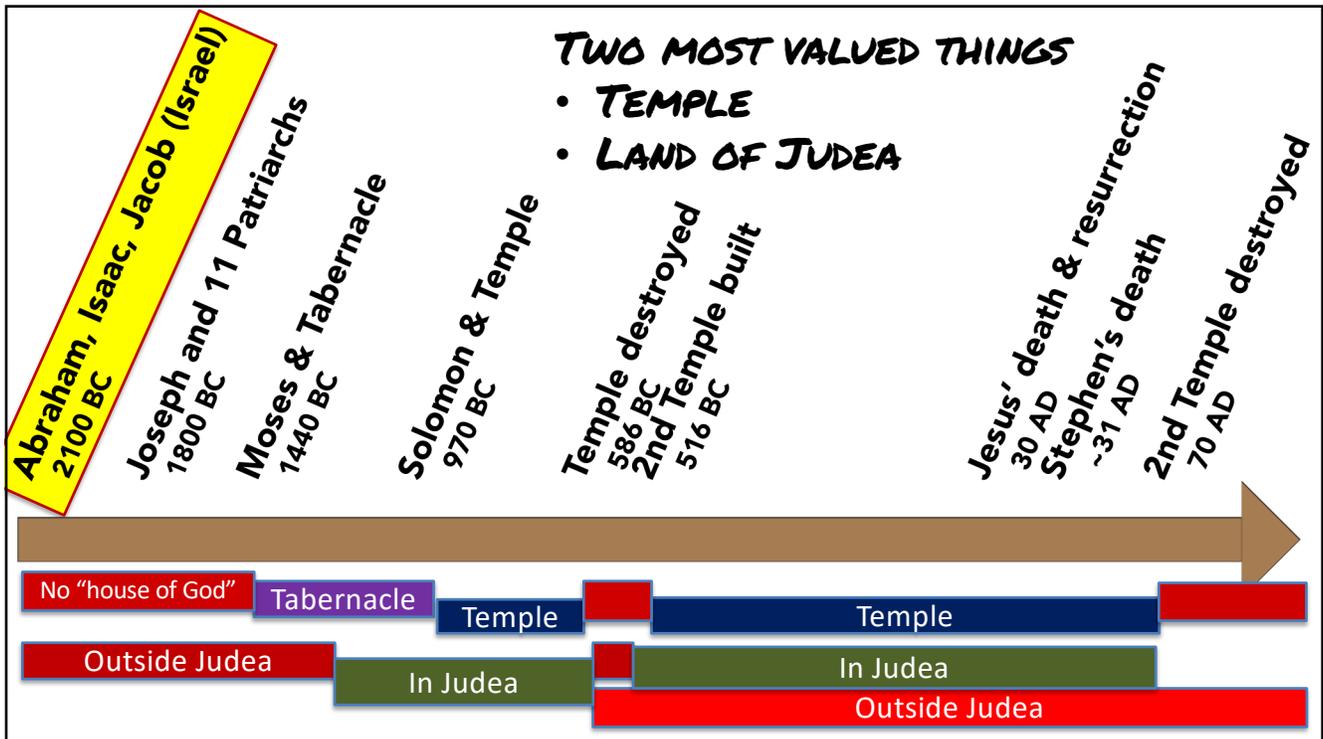
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Acts 7:1-53

1: Stephen is invited to explain (defend himself)

2-8: Abraham: promises (not fulfillment) in a foreign land

9-16: • "Leave ... and go where I lead"

17-29: • God spoke in foreign lands, without a temple

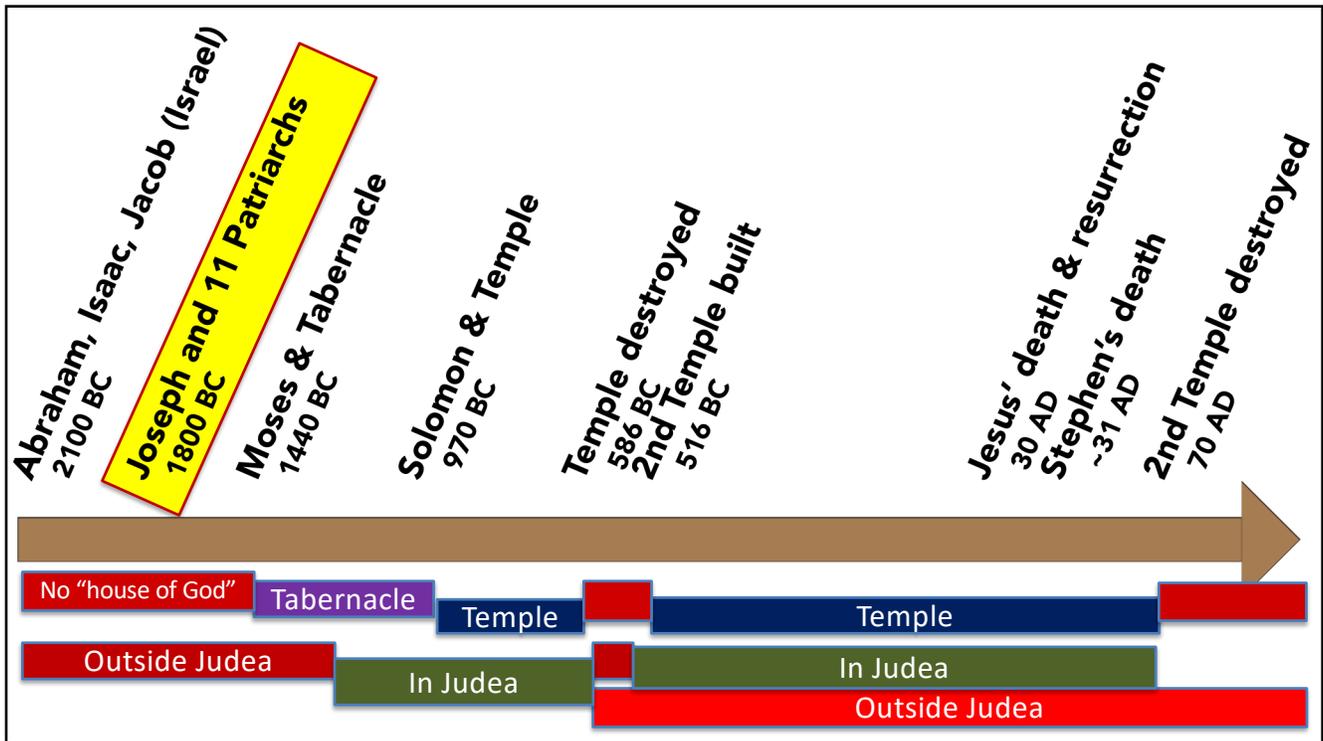
30-34: • Promise of land, yet nothing given yet

35-38:

39-43:

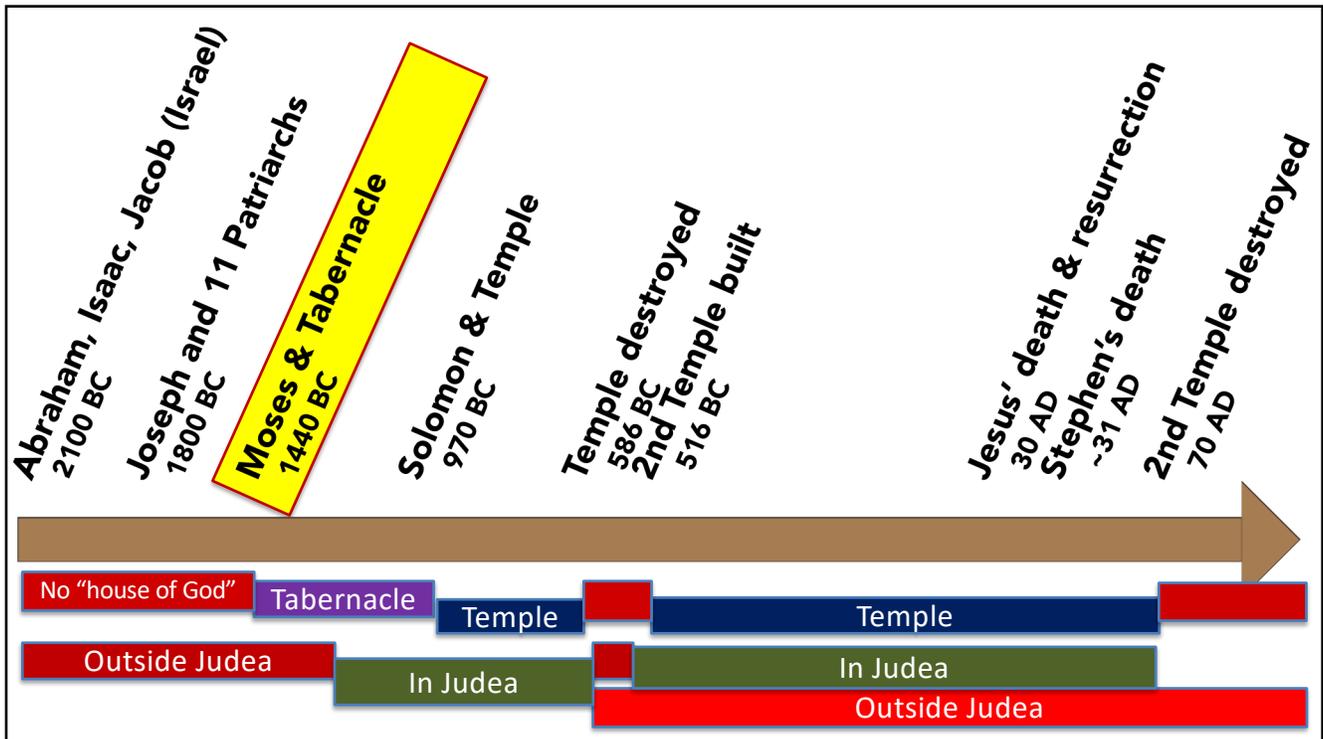
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Acts 7:1-53

- 1: Stephen is invited to explain (defend himself)
- 2-8: Abraham: promises (not fulfillment) in a foreign land
- 9-16: Patriarchs: rebellion and provision, yet no land
- 17-29: • Jealousy and malice against God's chosen brother
- 30-34: • Still God provides, in a foreign land
- 35-38:
- 39-43:
- 44-50:
- 51-53:



Acts 7:1-53

- 1: Stephen is invited to explain (defend himself)
- 2-8: Abraham: promises (not fulfillment) in a foreign land
- 9-16: Patriarchs: rebellion and provision, yet no land
- 17-29: Moses part 1: trouble and rebellion
- 30-34: • In a crisis, God delivers Moses, preparing him
- 35-38: • Yet Moses' own people reject him (both sides)
- 39-43:
- 44-50:
- 51-53:

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- 9-16: Patriarchs: rebellion and provision, yet no land
- 17-29: Moses part 1: trouble and rebellion
- 30-34: Moses part 2: God appears in holy, foreign land
- 35-38: • Any ground is holy ground when God is there
- 39-43: • God says: “I have come down. ...I will send you.”
- 44-50:
- 51-53:

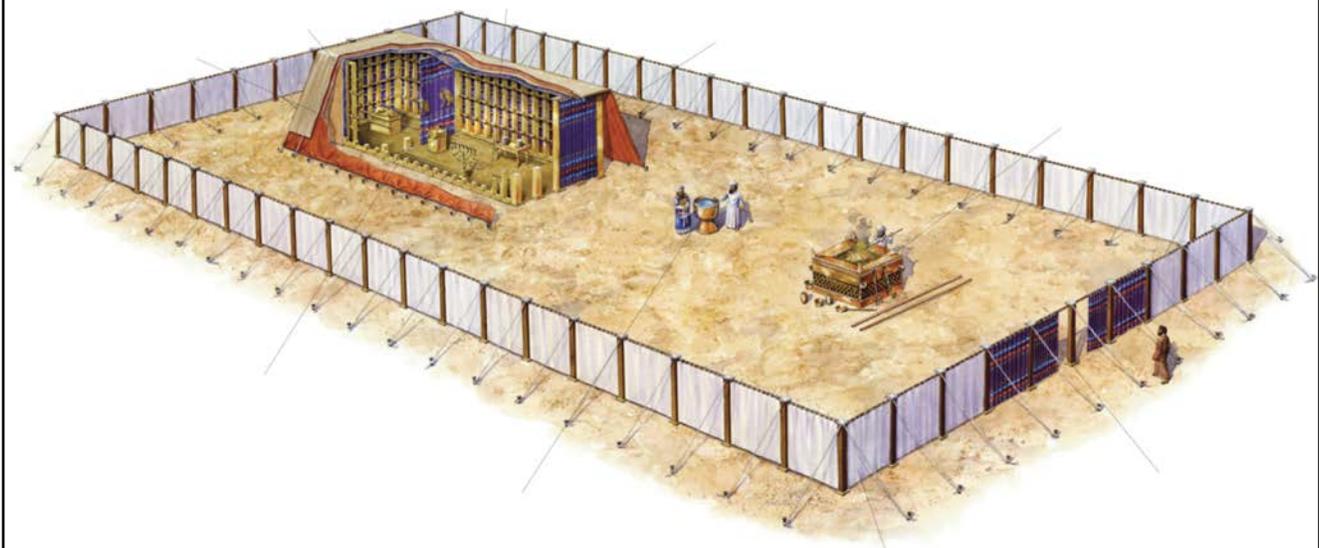
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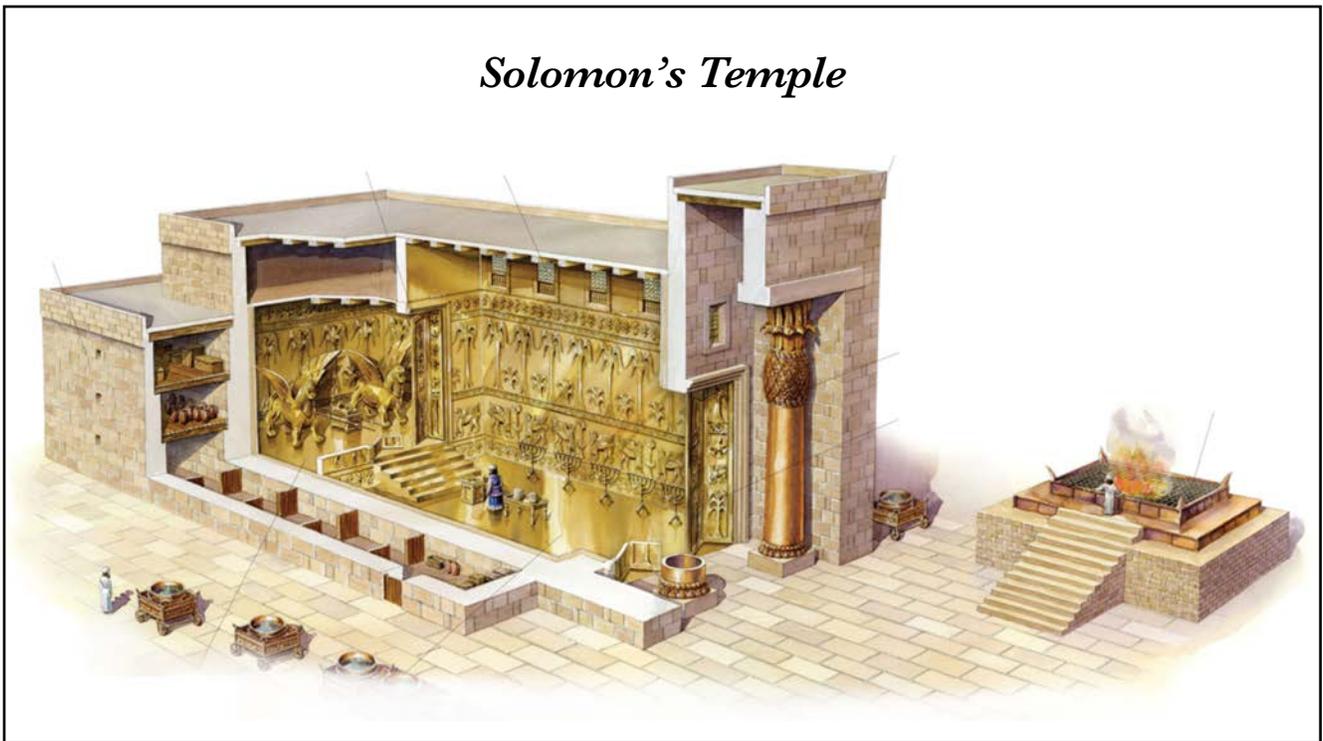
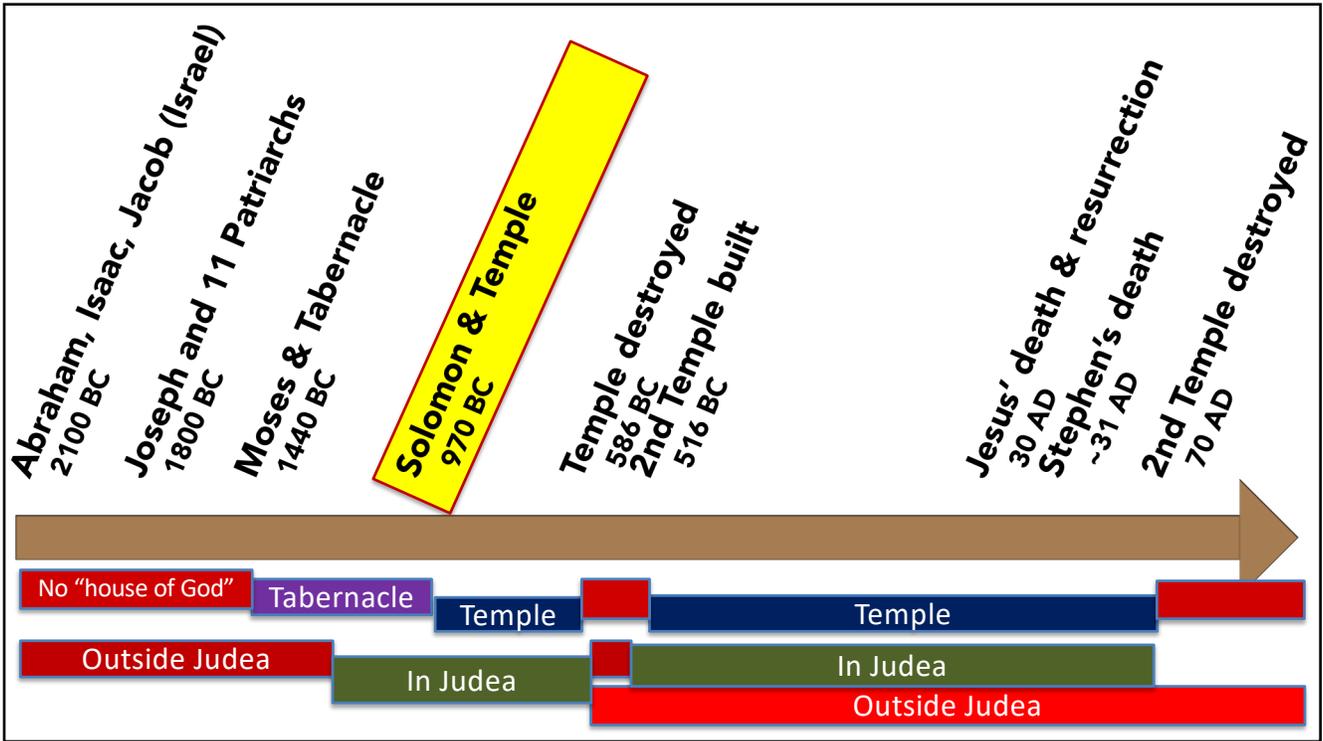
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- 35-38: Rejected Moses becomes ruler & deliverer. Jesus too
- 39-43: • The man they rejected, God appointed as deliverer
- 44-50: • Moses predicted another like him → Jesus
- 51-53:

Acts 7:1-53

- 1: Stephen is invited to explain (defend himself)
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- 35-38: Rejected Moses becomes ruler & deliverer. Jesus too
- 39-43: People turn against Moses; God turns away from them
- 44-50: • When Moses was gone, they turned back to Egypt
- 51-53: • God gave them over to their bad choices
- Yet God still gave the Tabernacle (tent)

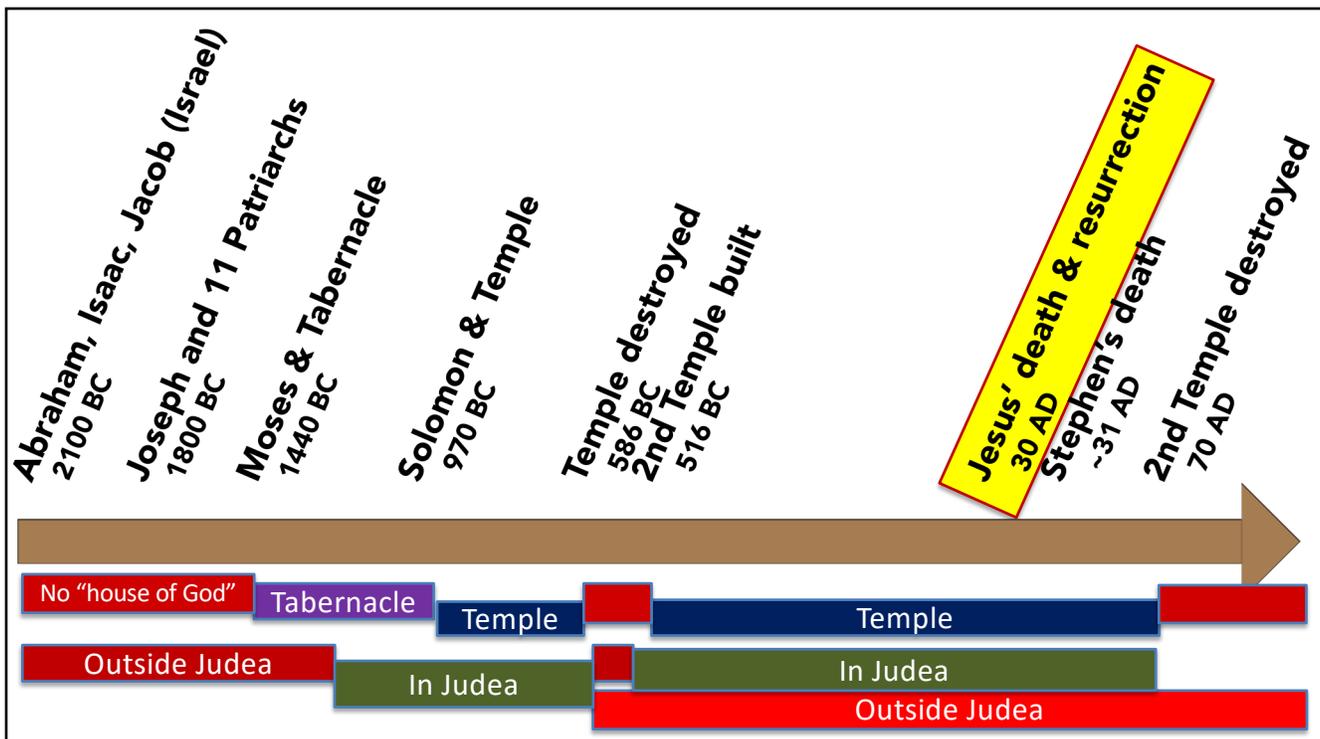
The Tabernacle (tent)



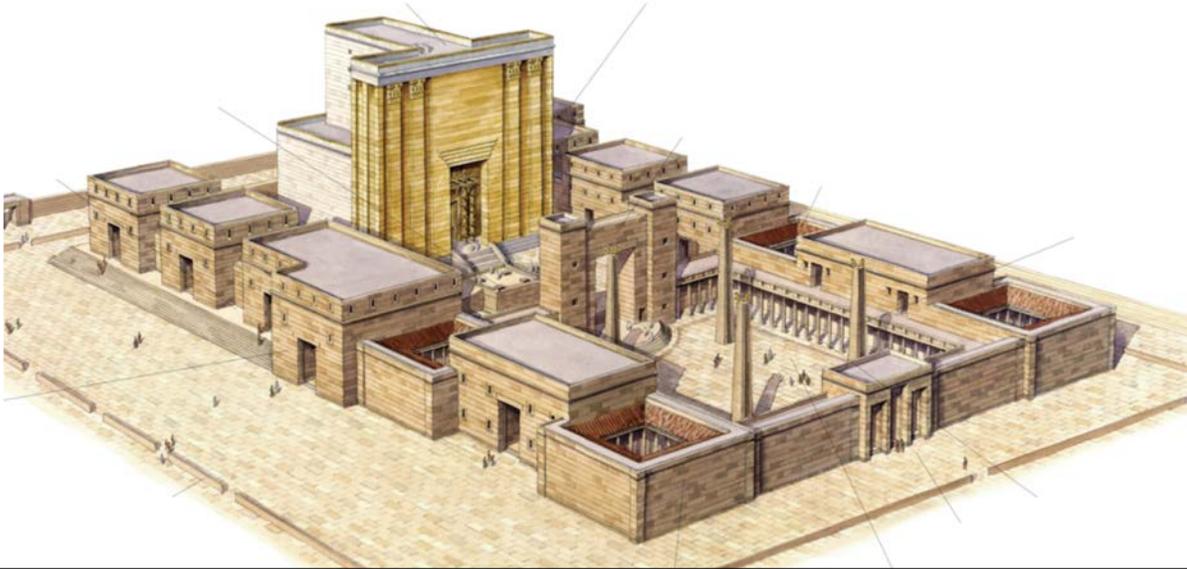


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 39-43: People turn against Moses; God turns away from them
 44-50: Building a temple, yet God doesn't live in temples
 51-53: • Even when the temple was built, they recognized its limitations: God isn't there more than elsewhere



Herod's Temple



Acts 7:1-53

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- 39-43: People turn against Moses; God turns away from them
- 44-50: Building a temple, yet God doesn't live in temples
- 51-53: Accusation: pattern of resisting God & His prophets
 - “Stiff-necked” and “uncircumcised”: rejecting God
 - They have rejected God's prophets and Jesus

The Big Idea

**Being God's people is
a relationship
with a living, dynamic Being
who is committed to
the long-term joy and good of
His people in Christ**

**NOT A SET OF RULES AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES
AND BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES AND LOCATIONS...**

Avoiding Uncertainty with God

- Stay where we are
 - Not wanting to change
 - Can lead to xenophobia (fear of foreigners) and no faith and no growth or learning
- Take control of the journey
 - Security in rules, structures, theology, traditions, people, a church, ...
 - Can look like faith, but may not be
- **Trust God and follow Christ**
 - Jesus: “Follow me and I will make you...”



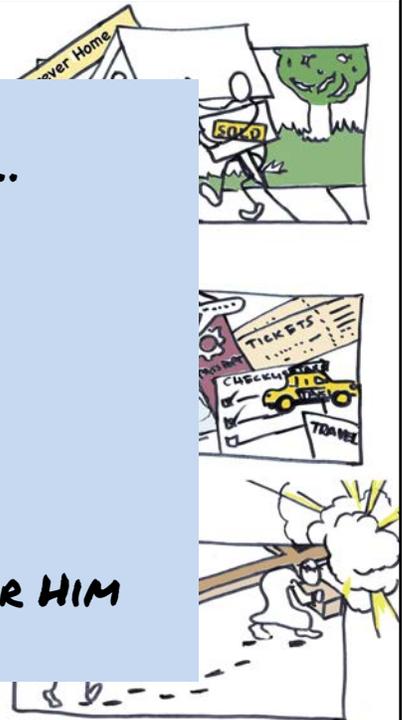
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TO RESCUE US, GOD DIDN'T GIVE US...
A THEOLOGICAL TEXTBOOK
A SET OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES
A CODE OF ETHICS AND ACTIONS

HE SENT HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST

- **TO LOVE US AND DIE FOR US**
- **SO WE WOULD LOVE AND LIVE FOR HIM**



Living as a Christian requires leaving and following

- God said to Abram, “**Leave** your country and your people, **and go** to the land **I will show you.**” *Acts 7:3*
- **Leave, and...**
- **Follow God**

Living as a Christian requires leaving and following

• **Leave**

- God is a living being, not a church structure or a denomination or a theological statement or special practices
- God works through forms/structures and people, yet He can change what He uses (though He never changes)
- So sometimes we may have to leave...
 - Church traditions and teachings, or theological “certainties”
 - Hurts, griefs, guilt, or shame
 - People and their approval, protection, or love
 - Money, possessions, house, job, homeland, ...
- Sometimes we must keep these, yet trust God more
- Where does your security & hope come from?

Living as a Christian requires leaving and following

• **Leave, and**

• **Follow God**

- Through mystery: trouble and dark days
- During days of no fulfillment
- Fixing the eyes of our hearts on Jesus and His return
- Trust God for His presence, provision, and protection
- Believing Jesus: “I will come again to take you with me”

“Then Jesus said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and **follow me.**’” *Luke 9:23*

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.” *Luke 18:29-30*

Living as a Christian requires leaving and following

- What if you are an uncertainty avoider?
 - Focus on what is faithful and trustworthy
 - “I will be with you always. I will never leave you or forsake you”
 - Nothing can separate us from the love of God
 - Live by faith: confidence in the unseen God of Love
- What if you are an uncertainty embracer?
 - Be anchored in God and His revelation
 - Be aware of holy ground, not just adventure

The Big Idea

**Being God's people is
a relationship
with a living, dynamic Being
who is committed to
the long-term joy and good of
His people in Christ**

**WE MUST "LEAVE" OTHER SOURCES OF SECURITY
AND FOLLOW HIM
AND EXPERIENCE THE PRESENCE OF THE LIVING
AND LOVING GOD NOW AND FOREVER**