

The Temple in Luke and Acts

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The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts weave a varicolored tapestry illustrating the temple's influences in the daily lives of people in the era of Jesus and his apostles. In fact, to demonstrate that the temple gave meaning to life and faith, Luke begins his two-volume story¹ inside the temple, taking his readers within the sanctuary, one of the most sacred spots on earth.² Moreover, as Luke's narrative demonstrates, the temple was a place of worship and sacrifice, of healing and teaching, of beauty and begging. All life and living came together at the temple. The pervasiveness of the temple in the spiritual lives of early Christians makes their history all the more poignant when the temple door slammed shut on them.

In the First Place

The first place that Luke mentions in his Gospel is the sanctuary of the temple, which is the holy space separated from the holy of holies by the veil of the temple. It appears in the following line: “[Zacharias’s] lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord” (Luke 1:9). The term translated as “temple” here is the Greek word *naos*, which means a sanctuary (also in Luke 1:21, 22).³ Hence, Luke's Gospel account of divine promises and resulting miracles opens in God's house. The first promise, of course, comes from an angel to Zacharias the priest and features the birth of an unusual child, the firstborn of Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth (see Luke 1:13–17). Thus a sacred promise of birth is associated with the sanctuary. In this connection, the line “Elisabeth conceived” (Luke 1:24)—another reference to birth—records the first in a series of miracles that follow the divine promise to Zacharias. Naturally, this series of miracles includes those tied to Jesus' birth and those growing out of his ministry.

The broader story of Luke chapter 1 concerns a family, the family of Zacharias and Elisabeth. God makes this family whole by aiding in the miraculous birth of John, later known as the Baptist. Moreover, one can see the importance that God places on this family within the progression of unusual spiritual manifestations that occur in their home, including the testimony about the coming Messiah that rests upon Elisabeth when Mary first visits her (see Luke 1:41–45) and the miraculous healing of Zacharias from his deaf and dumb condition (see Luke 1:64), to say nothing of the prophecies spoken by Mary and Zacharias (see Luke 1:46–55, 67–79).

That Luke (or his source)⁴ was sensitive to sacred and less sacred space—these matters attach themselves to holy temples—becomes visible in a sequence of comments about places connected and disconnected to the temple. These comments follow his initial reference to the sanctuary in Luke 1:9. First, he writes of “the people [who] were praying without [the sanctuary] at the time of incense” (Luke 1:10). These people are standing, sitting, or kneeling in an adjoining courtyard outside the temple building itself (see Luke 1:21). Hence, in spatial terms they are several steps removed from the sanctuary—on less holy ground, as it were. Second, Luke notes that “as soon as the days of [Zacharias’s] ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house” (Luke 1:23). Though we do not know where Zacharias and Elisabeth resided—Luke writes only that they lived in “the hill country” (Luke 1:39)—at such a distance they were well away from the sanctuary.

In sum, Luke opens his story in the sanctuary, one of the most holy places on earth, and shows a sensitivity to sacred space. Additionally, the story ties the concepts of birth and family firmly to the temple experience of Zacharias.

Offerings

Luke's narrative next mentions the temple as the site of offerings. This is significant in terms of both what was offered and, perhaps, what was not offered. Mary's mandatory offering for purification, which, according

to the law of Moses, was to follow the birth of a child, occurred at the proper place in the temple. According to the law of Moses, a woman was obliged to offer sacrifice forty days after the birth of a male child and eighty days after that of a female in order to regain her ritual purity. Before offering such a sacrifice, a woman was not to put her hand upon any sacred thing nor enter any hallowed place. Poor people were to offer either two turtledoves or two pigeons (see Leviticus 12:2–8). It is this sacrifice that Luke specifically notes and that Joseph and Mary perform (see Luke 2:24). What is apparently missing, however, is the payment of ve shekels that redeems a family's firstborn child, even though Luke mentions this required redemption offering (see Luke 2:22–24, 39; see also Numbers 3:44–51; 18:15–16). Why?

Since the days of the exodus, Israelites were under obligation to redeem the oldest child in a family. We read that “the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine” (Exodus 13:1–2). The only exception to this rule that is recorded in scripture concerns Hannah and her child Samuel. According to the story, Hannah promised the Lord in prayer that if he would bless her with a son she would give up that son to him (see 1 Samuel 1:11). When a male child was born to Hannah, she nurtured him at home until he was weaned and then brought him to the sanctuary at Shiloh and left him with the high priest, Eli (see 1 Samuel 1:20–28). With all her offerings to the Lord on this occasion, she did not bring the required five-shekel payment (see Leviticus 18:15–16). Why? Because she had already dedicated him to the Lord and his service. For all intents and purposes, the child Samuel belonged to the Lord, not to his parents. Likewise, the angel who appeared to Mary had effectively dedicated Jesus to his Father's work. First, his name came from heaven (see Luke 1:31). Then, as the angel intoned, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32–33). Hence, there seems to be no reason for Mary and Joseph to offer the five-shekel payment to redeem Jesus because he already belonged to God. We do not know whether they did so, but there is sufficient—and significant—reason for their inaction if they did not.

This set of scenes underscores the importance of the temple as a place of sacred offerings and commitments. More than that, Luke shows that those in his story who come to the temple for such purposes are faithful to God's law—in this case, the law of Moses—a point worth emphasizing. Demonstrating such faithfulness seems to be one of Luke's intents when he narrates the events that occurred at the temple (see Luke 2:22, 24, 27, 39). In addition, there is an underlying sense that those who are truly respectful of Moses' law are in a position to receive the new law that is to be brought forward by Jesus. Thus the temple becomes more than a place of offerings. It becomes a testing ground, as it were. In this light, participation in temple services is one of the measures of righteousness. But participation alone does not confer righteousness. A quick examination of the offices of those who were involved not only in Jesus' arrest but also in the later attempts to restrain his apostles exposes temple officials as leaders of the relentless opposition against him and his followers.⁵ But in the earliest passages of Luke, those events surrounding Jesus' first presentation at the temple portray the temple itself in a positive light.

Spiritual Manifestations

Into the midst of the set of circumstances surrounding the presentation of Jesus came the aged Simeon and Anna, who prophesied about and praised the infant (see Luke 2:22–38). In Luke's narrative, the events that involve this elderly pair establish that the temple is a place of inspiration and prophecy. But these are not the only such incidents in Luke and Acts. The healing of the cripple at the Beautiful gate of the temple and Paul's vision within the temple grounds substantiate the same point (see Acts 3:1–11; 22:17–21).

Luke offers little information about the lives and temple activities of Simeon and Anna except to say, in the case of Anna, that she “served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2:37). Rather, Luke's focus rests on their inspired interaction with Jesus' parents and the infant himself. In the case of Simeon, Luke first notes the revelation that had come to him through the Holy Ghost “that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ” (Luke 2:26). Then appears one of the most important details in the story. Luke writes that, when

Jesus' parents were in the temple to offer the sacrifice for Mary's purification, Simeon "came by the Spirit into the temple" (Luke 2:27). Not only did the Spirit guide him into the temple and, evidently, to the very spot in that huge edifice where Mary and Joseph were, but when Simeon took the child "in his arms" (2:28), the Spirit loosed a flood of wide-ranging prophecy about Jesus' future. According to Simeon's inspired words, the child would brighten into "a light to lighten the Gentiles" and, in a similar vein, would radiate "the glory of [God's] people Israel." Thus Jesus' work would bring blessings both to Gentiles and to Israelites. Moreover, he would become "a sign which shall be spoken against," probably pointing to the opposition that Jesus would face during his ministry. That is not all. Mary's suffering—caused by witnessing the ill treatment given her son—would be as "a sword" that would "pierce through [her] own soul" (Luke 2:32, 34–35).

Even though Luke records that Anna came "in that instant" when Simeon was prophesying (Luke 2:38), almost as if her arrival were coincidental, the context points to another, richer reality. Luke's description, placing Anna next to Simeon in a tight sequence, plainly implies that she too came at the behest of the Spirit. In the words of Leon Morris, "Anna came up at the critical moment."⁶ But there is more. As Joel Green observes, "Herod's temple was a massive structure; how could it be that [Anna] arrived in the right place at just the right moment apart from divine direction?"⁷ Thus her "thanks ... unto the Lord" was more than a simple expression of gratitude. She had come to the right place at the right time because of divine promptings. Her thanksgiving, therefore, grew out of the miracle of seeing this child of promise through eyes illumined by heaven. Further, she carried away a testimony about this child and "spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38).

These spiritual manifestations in the temple do not stand alone. In a much later scene, Peter and John healed a crippled man at the Beautiful gate, which allows entry from the Court of the Gentiles into one of the inner courts (see Acts 3:1–11).⁸ The unusual force of the miracle emerges from the fact that the "man [was] lame from his mother's womb" (Acts 3:2). The miracle reversed a situation that had occurred before his birth—that is, as a natural process. The intensity of the man's joyful response appears not only in his "walking, and leaping, and praising God" but also in the fact that he "held Peter and John" fast, not letting go, perhaps putting his arms firmly around their necks or waists (Acts 3:8, 11).

One can say the same for the apostle Paul. When he stood as a prisoner of Roman soldiers in the temple and bore witness of Christ to a hostile Jewish audience, he spoke of having returned to Jerusalem after seeing the vision of Christ on the road to Damascus and then having received a vision in the temple (see Acts 22:17–21). Paul testified that "while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;⁹ And saw [Christ] saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: ... for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:17–18, 21). The subtle but vital connection between the mention of Gentiles both in this vision and in the prophetic words of Simeon (see Luke 2:32) is suggestive. In a sense, it is as if Simeon's prophecy looked forward to the vision that Paul received: both took place at the temple and had to do with Gentiles. In addition, Paul's need to flee the temple and the city anticipated the closing of the temple doors against Jesus' followers (see Acts 21:30; on this subject, see below, "Deliverance and Closing"). In sum, the experiences of Simeon and Anna, the miraculous healing of the cripple, and the vision of Paul underscore the notion that the temple was a place for receiving the highest of spiritual blessings.

Teaching and Learning

An early incident in Luke's Gospel features Jesus' visit to the temple when he was twelve years old (see Luke 2:41–51). One of the dimensions of the temple that Luke underscores in this story—and others, too—is that it was a center of teaching and learning. During the youthful Jesus' extended stay in Jerusalem, while his parents were looking for him, he was "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). In another passage it becomes clear that, in this scene, Jesus was a teacher of "the doctors." Luke records that "all that heard [Jesus] were astonished at his understanding and answers,"

plainly hinting that Jesus was more than a student in this exchange with others (Luke 2:47). The Joseph Smith Translation of this section sharpens the notion of the temple as a place of teaching and learning, specifically touching on Jesus as teacher. In describing the conversation between Jesus and “the doctors” in the temple, the JST reads that “they were hearing [Jesus], and *asking him questions*” (Luke 2:46 JST, emphasis added).

This pattern of Jesus and his disciples teaching in the temple repeats itself many times in Luke and Acts. Certainly, one of the more important experiences of this sort occurs during the last days of Jesus’ life.¹⁰ More to the point, all of Jesus’ teaching recorded in Luke chapter 20 was “on one of those days” when he was in Jerusalem “as he taught the people in the temple” (Luke 20:1). Out of this occasion emerge some of the most important of Jesus’ teachings about his authority and about inheritance. Such teachings include his parable of the wicked husbandmen (see Luke 20:9–16), his statement about the cornerstone that “the builders rejected” (Luke 20:17–18), his declaration on paying taxes to Caesar (see Luke 20:22–25), and his response to the Sadducees’ question about marriage and the resurrection (see Luke 20:27–38).

It is also important to note that the temple continued as a place of teaching and learning even after Jesus’ death and resurrection.¹¹ In fact, the temple seems to have become the center of the apostles’ regular teaching activity, as Luke’s notation about the customary place of meeting indicates: Solomon’s porch that runs along the east side of the temple area (see Acts 3:11; 5:12).¹²

Were the apostles authorized to teach in the temple? According to Luke, it was an angel who, after miraculously freeing Peter and “other apostles”¹³ from prison, instructed them, “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this [i.e., Jesus’] life” (Acts 5:20). Those who obeyed the angel did not seem surprised at the angel’s command that they teach in the temple. It seems to have been a normal expectation. Additionally, the apostles’ teaching activity drew crowds on a regular basis, indicating that such was commonplace (see Acts 3:12; 4:1–2; 5:26). Of course, teaching in the temple also drew the unwanted attention of authorities who opposed the message about Jesus. In no case, however, did the authorities say that there was a rule or policy against teaching in the temple. Their objections arose because of the content of the apostles’ teaching, not the place (see Acts 4:2; 5:28). Likewise, we note that the circumstances of Jesus’ visit as a twelve-year-old indicate that informal teaching sessions were regular occurrences.

Worship and Prayer

Luke’s story about Anna sets an approving tone for temple worship.¹⁴ He records that she “departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2:37).¹⁵ Luke’s positive note, if anything, holds up such temple worship habits as exemplary. So does Jesus himself.

An early clue comes in a parable that Jesus spoke “unto certain [individuals] which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.” Jesus responded, “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican” (Luke 18:9–10). It seems clear from the way that Jesus introduced this parable and then concluded it that he saw praying as a normal, even expected activity in the temple. For he finally observed about the one man who had prayed sincerely that “this man went down to his house justified.” Jesus even drew a further lesson from the story, indicating his positive assessment of worshiping in the temple by remarking that “every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

A second indicator arises in Jesus’ response to those who bought and sold in the temple. These he “cast out.” Recalling passages from both Isaiah and Jeremiah and repeating the Hebrew term for the temple, which also

translates as “house,” Jesus says, “My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Luke 19:45–46).¹⁶ Jesus’ actions and words make the case that, in his view, the temple was properly a place of prayer.

His apostles shared a similar view, doubtless mirroring Jesus’ attitudes. Luke’s last note in his Gospel affirms that the apostles acted in concert with Jesus’ outlook. One can explain their actions in no other way. For, after the ascension, they “returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:52–53; compare Acts 2:46). The same can be said for their activities following the events of Pentecost, when they and their hearers enjoyed an abundant outpouring of the Spirit (see Acts 2:1–41).

In the first passage that speaks of activities of the Twelve after the experiences at Pentecost, Luke writes: “Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1). From this passage it becomes clear that the leaders of the nascent Christian church faithfully went to the temple during at least one of the two times of daily prayer.¹⁷ To be sure, because that day Peter and John healed the man born as a cripple, the experience at the temple became one of teaching (see Acts 3:2–4:2). But the intent of the two apostles was to pray and worship by attending “the temple at the hour of prayer.”

In sum, the aggregate of passages in Luke and Acts that deal with worship at the temple all paint such experiences in very positive hues. Whether it is Anna’s worship habits, Jesus’ parable of the two men praying, Jesus’ actions and words against temple merchants, or the activities of Jesus’ apostles, the resulting picture is the same. They all regarded the temple as the chief center of worship.

Ceremonies

Closely related to the concept of worship or public prayer is that of rituals or ceremonies. As Edersheim reminds readers, the morning and evening public prayers were closely tied to the sacrifices of the two daily burnt offerings and the two ceremonies of lighting incense.¹⁸ Such an observation recalls Luke’s remark that a crowd of people who “were praying” outside the temple awaited Zacharias’s appearance after his ceremonial lighting of the incense (see Luke 1:10, 21).¹⁹ Moreover, Anna’s presence in the temple “night and day” (Luke 2:37) may point to the two times that people came together daily for public prayers and for the ceremonies of lighting incense and sacrificing burnt offerings. As noted above, Luke holds Anna’s activities in a positive light.

Nowhere does Luke record that Jesus himself participated directly in temple rituals. But he does recount that Jesus was present when a widow brought her offering of two small coins to the temple treasury (see Luke 21:1–4). Jesus’ response was highly complimentary of this woman’s gift. While Jesus was critical of “the rich men” who had also brought gifts, there is no hint that he was judgmental against ceremonies conducted in the temple.

In a later scene, Paul responded to the request of James the brother of the Lord and “the elders” that he assist other church members in the temple rituals that would bring their vows to a proper end (see Acts 21:18–26). In this passage it becomes evident that church members not only participated in ceremonies linked to the temple but also continued to see them as important, even after the sacrificial death of Jesus, which, in one sense, brought many such ordinances to an end for believers, especially those tied to the law of Moses.²⁰ It may be that Jesus’ followers saw such ceremonies as ways to memorialize the sacrifice of Jesus and therefore continued to join in temple rituals until some time before the fall of the city in A.D. 70.

Beauty and Begging

We know from other ancient sources, particularly the works of Josephus, that the temple structure of Jesus’ day was an edifice of almost unparalleled beauty.²¹ The refurbished temple that was standing then was the work of King Herod. In fact, construction was still going on during Jesus’ ministry and would do so for more

than three decades after his ascension.²² The subject of the temple's beauty arises in Luke's Gospel in a rather unusual but memorable way. In the account, unnamed disciples spoke "of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly²³ stones and gifts" (Luke 21:5). Jesus' stunning response about the future destruction of the temple followed immediately (see Luke 21:6, 20–24), effectively searing the rather casual remark about the temple's loveliness into the memory of those who were present. As we know, Jesus' prophecy about the fall of the temple and the city was fulfilled to the last detail. Even so, the temple was an edifice whose splendor drew the admiration of all who beheld it.

That the temple was the center of all life and living is perhaps best illustrated not only by the daily presence of a crippled beggar at one of the interior gates, the gate "which is called Beautiful," but also by his healing (see Acts 3:2–8). We have already explored the meaning of the temple in light of both the healing of this man and the ceremonial purpose for which Peter and John had come to the temple that day. It should also be added that the name of the gate ties to the general sense of the beauty and spiritually seasoning influence of the temple itself. Why does this matter? The answer rests partly in two contrasts.

The Greek term translated "beautiful" in the expression *Beautiful gate* (see Acts 3:2, 10) means basically "produced at the right season." That is, it has to do with full development or maturity, ripeness or prime of life.²⁴ This idea of developed or matured beauty points to a touch of irony that pushes itself between the circumstance of the invalid and the name of the gate. As we know, Luke does not record the beggar's age. Hence, we do not know how old the man was. But, even if he were as young as his late teens or his twenties, we cannot think of this crippled man as "in the prime of life" or "in the high season" of his life. Thus the term translated "beautiful" in the name *Beautiful gate* (see Acts 3:2, 10), which carries this meaning, stands in marked contrast to the circumstance of the crippled beggar. It is between these points of contrast that the miracle intrudes, healing the man and making him "beautiful" in the sense of making him whole, as if he had developed naturally and completely over the course of his life.

The second contrast concerns speed. It appears between the basic meaning of the term translated "beautiful" in Acts 3:2—developed beauty—and the raw speed with which the invalid became whole. Concerning the gate, skilled artisans would have taken considerable time to plan and shape the gate and to carve precisely the stones that went into it. By the high standards of Herod's temple, the gate was a work of art whose beauty took time to create. In contrast, the lame man became whole in an instant. Indeed, he had lain helpless all of his life—"from his mother's womb," as Luke reminds his readers (see Acts 3:2). But when Peter uttered words of command and authority—"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"—and "took him by the right hand, and lifted him up ... *immediately* his feet and ankle bones received strength" (Acts 3:6–7, emphasis added). There was no ripening and careful planning; there was no maturation process. The healing happened immediately and so completely that the cripple began "walking, and leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:8).

In the end, of course, the fact that worshipers had accepted the presence of the crippled beggar at an important place in the temple grounds forms a notable statement about the people who came regularly to the temple and about their concept of what the temple represented. For them, the temple was somehow incomplete without his presence. In the minds of worshipers, he had a right to be there. Whether any of them gave alms habitually to the lame man Luke does not tell us. But we conclude with confidence that the temple was a place not only for the prosperous but also for the poor and unfortunate.²⁵

Deliverance and Closing

In the last scene that Luke describes at the temple, we follow Paul inside with a group of church members who are under a vow, evidently the Nazarite vow (see Numbers 6:1–21). In light of our discussion above, it should not surprise us that early Christians still kept ceremonies required by the law of Moses, even a generation after Jesus' atonement. On this occasion, Paul had agreed to a request by James the brother of the Lord to accompany devoted church members into the temple as they completed their vows (see Acts

21:18–26). The experience started innocently enough, but Paul had already received a number of warnings that this trip to Jerusalem would lead to his imprisonment (see Acts 20:22; 21:4, 10–11, 13). Oddly, his imprisonment turned out to be a rescue from the hands of an angry mob within the temple grounds.

Decades before, when the Antonia Fortress was under construction just outside the northwest corner of the temple grounds, King Herod commissioned a double stairway to be cut into the northern wall of the temple area, a stairway that rose from the Court of the Gentiles into the Antonia Fortress. This fortress soared menacingly over the temple area. From its tallest tower, which rose to a height of 105 feet, Roman soldiers kept watch over the temple grounds. By means of the staircase, the Roman garrison in the fortress had direct access to the Court of the Gentiles.²⁶

It was actually this stairway that saved Paul's life. Luke writes that "when the seven days" of the Passover festival "were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia ... stirred up all the people [against Paul], and laid hands on him" (Acts 21:27). Having recognized Paul, these people of Asia felt that they would finally gain revenge against him for his despised missionary efforts among them. Evidently, Paul and his Christian friends were inside either the Court of Women or the so-called inner courtyard where only Israelites were allowed. One entry to these courtyards was through the "gate of the temple which is called Beautiful" (Acts 3:2, 10). On the balustrade that ran around both the inner courtyard and the Court of Women hung signs written in Greek and Latin that warned foreigners not to enter.²⁷

These Asian Jews cried out, "This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against ... the law, and this place." Moreover, they shouted, Paul had "brought Greeks also into the temple, and ... polluted this holy place" (Acts 21:28). The crowd erupted. In anger, "the people ... took Paul, and drew him out of the temple." They intended to kill him for his sacrilege but to do it outside the holy place (see Acts 21:30–31). The need to drag Paul away from the temple grounds allowed the soldiers of the Roman garrison in the fortress enough time to react. Their timely response saved his life (see Acts 21:31–33). It is one of the ironies of this story that Romans saved Paul from certain death by taking him out of the temple area and into gentile territory, the fortress.

Another irony arises at the end of Luke's narration about the tumult that occurred in the temple that day. He writes that, after the worshipers had dragged Paul "out of the temple ... forthwith the doors were shut" (Acts 21:30). In the words of Fitzmyer, "Jerusalem's holiest place is closed to Paul and his message."²⁸ Among Roman soldiers, Paul began his long journey to Rome. No longer was the temple a welcoming destination for worshipping Christians. In effect, it stood thereafter as an empty shell awaiting its destruction, as Jesus plainly hinted: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Luke 13:35).²⁹

From Sanctuary to Destruction

The temple is the starting place for Luke's entire two-volume story that began with the angel's appearance to Zacharias and ended with Paul safely in Rome preaching the gospel message. The angel's words to Zacharias in the sanctuary spoke of birth and, by extension, of family. In the events that rolled out of this beginning, we sense the importance of the temple for teaching and healing, for ceremonies and worship, for beauty, and for accepting and blessing the unfortunate among us. In the end, however, Luke presents an unusual twist. The temple became a place hostile to Jesus' followers. Its "doors were shut" against them (Acts 21:30). Now it stood bereft of the people who came and went under the influence of God's Spirit. Now it stood awaiting its destruction at the hands of Roman legionnaires. Even so, for as long as the temple stood, it served as a spiritual beacon and haven for those who came within its walls.

Notes

1. Virtually all studies on the New Testament Gospels conclude that the Gospel accounts were written anonymously and that the names of authors were attached only later. Moreover, most scholars now

conclude that each of the Gospels was produced by the efforts of more than one person—in effect, by schools. As for myself, I accept the traditional ascription of Luke’s Gospel and the book of Acts to Paul’s companion, Luke the Physician.

2. The Book of Mormon notes contemporaneous temples in the New World that framed sacred space: one in Zarahemla (see Mosiah 1:18; 2:1, 5–7) and one in Bountiful (see 3 Nephi 11:1). Second Nephi 5:16 mentions the temple at Nephi, which might still have been standing; Alma 10:2 talks of an unidentified temple where Aminadi saw the writing on the wall.

3. The word that refers to the temple and its grounds is the Greek *hieron*. This term occurs thirty-nine times in Luke and Acts, with occasional reference to the Court of Women or the so-called inner court (see, for example, Acts 21:26–27, 29–30) rather than to the larger Court of the Gentiles. The word *naos* (“sanctuary”) appears only at the beginning and end of the Gospel (Luke 1:9, 21, 22; 23:45), and in Acts 7:48 (Stephen’s speech) and 17:24 (Paul’s speech). Occasionally, one sees the influence of the Hebrew term for temple, which also translates as “house” (in Luke 13:35 [?]; 19:46 [citing Isaiah 56:7]; Acts 2:2 [?]; 7:47, 49).

4. For a number of reasons, most New Testament scholars believe that Luke drew on a source for chapters 1 and 2 of his Gospel. One of the reasons has to do with the high number of Aramaic expressions that differ markedly from how Luke expresses himself elsewhere in his two-volume work. But not all agree with this assessment. For brief reviews, see, for example, Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 245–46; Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 29–30; and Richard L. Anderson, “The Testimony of Luke,” in *Studies in Scripture: Volume Five, the Gospels*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 92–96.

5. See references to temple officials in Luke 22:4, 52 (“the chief priests, and captains of the temple”); Acts 4:1 (“the priests, and the captain of the temple”); also 5:24, 26. On the captain of the temple as the person who had “supreme charge of order in and around the temple,” see Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. ed. by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black (Edinburgh: Clark, 1973–87), 2:277–78.

6. Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, 99.

7. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 151.

8. The identity of this gate has been a matter of debate. See the summary of the various suggestions in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 277–78. Each of the suggested alternatives stood on the east of the sanctuary itself.

9. The Greek term *ekstasis* appears here as *trance*. It means, literally, a “change of place.” On the meanings of this term in ancient written contexts, see Gerhard Kittel et al., eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–74), 2:449–50, 456–58.

10. For references to teaching incidents connected with the last days of Jesus’ life, see Luke 19:47; 21:37, 38; 22:53.

11. For accounts of Jesus’ followers teaching in the temple after his resurrection, see Acts 3:11–4:2; 5:20–21, 25, 42; 24:12.

12. Helpful descriptions and illustrations of the temple grounds in the era of Jesus and his contemporaries appear both in Dan Bahat, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), and in Chaim Richman, *The Holy Temple of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Temple Institute, 1997).

13. Luke does not specify which apostles, besides Peter, went to prison and then were freed miraculously. The phrase *other apostles* appears in Acts 5:29 KJV; see the plural word *apostles* in Acts 5:12, 18, 40.

14. In fact, only one passage in Luke and Acts takes a disapproving tone in connection with the temple, and that is the parable of the good Samaritan, where the temple officials—the priest and the Levite—come in for implied criticism (see Luke 10:25–37). However, it is not the temple but the inaction of persons who officiate there that Jesus impugns.

15. While some scholars believe that Anna may have lived within the temple area, it is possible to understand “night and day” as a reference to the ceremonies that priests performed twice a day, in the morning and in the late afternoon. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 1:431.

16. See Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11.

17. Acts 3:1 says that Peter and John came at “the ninth hour,” that is, about 3:00 p.m. According to Mishnah *Pesahim* 5:1, the second daily whole offering was “offered up at a half after the ninth hour,” thus following the time of prayer. For a description of the two daily times set for worship, morning and evening, see Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (1874; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), 143–46, 152–73; see also the notes in Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 3.10.1, §237; 14.4.3, §65.

18. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 152–73.

19. Priests burned incense twice a day, each time in connection with burnt offerings. See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 2:299–302.

20. See especially Hebrews 10:8–18; Alma 34:10–14; 3 Nephi 9:19–20; 15:2–8; 4 Nephi 1:12.

21. Generally on the temple, see Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 15.11.1–7, §§380–425; *Jewish War* 5.5.1–8, §§184–247; also compare the remarks of Schürer and others, including discussion of Greek architectural features, in *History of the Jewish People*, 1:308–9, 2:57–58.

22. Herod’s reconstruction began in his eighteenth year as king—that is, in 20–19 B.C. The work did not end until the time of the Roman prefect Albinus (A.D. 62–64), less than a decade before Roman legionnaires destroyed it. See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:292, 308.

23. The Greek term *kalos*, which is translated “goodly,” means “lovely” or “beautiful” when describing objects.

24. See Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 2036, s.v. “hraiōs.”

25. See Luke 21:1–2, where both “the rich men” and “a certain poor widow” were visitors to the temple treasury.

26. See Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.5.8, §§238–46.

27. See Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.5.2, §194; 6.2.4, §125.

28. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 698.

29. It is possible to understand *house* in this passage as a reference either to the temple or to a household, including children or offspring, as in Doctrine and Covenants 84:115. Either sense points to the destruction that Jesus prophesied (see Luke 21:6, 20–24). For various interpretations about the meanings of *house* in Luke 13:35, see Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 2:1036–37.