Week Two-Three

##### Symbols, Spaces and Places of Worship in the Bible

Another way of understanding the Bible is recognizing the use of symbols and understanding the spaces and places the first church used for worship. Popular symbols include references to nature and earth (water, fire, mountains). Terms such as body, temple, and house are other examples used metaphorically to express a message.

From the gathering at the temple to the fellowship in private homes, places of worship represent an important segment in the Holy Bible. The first temple appears around the 10th century as a place of worship for the Israelites. As it is today with the Black Church, temples were not only places of worship, but also community centers and political institutions. During the years AD, the custom transitioned into Christian worship among followers outside of the temple. Paul, Peter and others depict these settings often in their letters, where it is evident that people were forced into worshiping privately because of persecution, a lack of resources and the need for a more intimate setting.

Examples of temples in the OT and NT, which served as:

Place of worship:

A community or cultural center:

A political or judicial institution:

Symbols and Metaphorical Terms:

Houses, tents, water/wells, the sea and boats, courtyards/ palaces, mountain and hills, deserts, valleys, and vineyards:

Study Question

How are these symbols and places significant in our understanding of how God communicates with us in Scripture? What examples can you give?

Notes:

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