

## THE TABERNACLE AS THE PLACE OF GOD'S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE: A Tripartite Approach of Temple

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### Abstract

The Tabernacle is a Biblical institution as a place of God's presence among His people that was not suddenly created, just as the existence of God's people itself has historical traces and did not suddenly form. This paper provides a chronological view of God's presence until the institution accommodates his presence as the place where God dwells, called the Tabernacle. The chronology will be discussed from the point of view of Biblical history by presenting facts that state explicitly or implicitly regarding the presence of God, which are also related to the promise in the "Tabernacle's Tripartite" formula from Genesis to the book of Revelation, which coincides with "evolution." The place of God's presence, from the Tabernacle, which is "non-permanent," to the Temple, which is more impressed "permanent," then it is in the "tent" of the body of Jesus, as well as believers so that the place of God's presence becomes spiritual. Last, the implications for believers as a "Tabernacle or Temple" where God's presence in them through the Holy Spirit.

**Keywords:** Tabernacle, presence, biblical history, tripartite, Temple

### INTRODUCTION

Tabernacle is a tent where the treasure chest of the covenant was stored before the Temple was built in Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> and it seems that this word comes from the Vulgate Bible, "*tabernaculum*"<sup>2</sup> or *tabernaculi*. Alkitab Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia (LAI) New Revised termed the Tabernacle with the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:9). The author uses the term Tabernacle in this writing.

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<sup>1</sup> Nissim Amzallag. "Beyond Prestige and Magnificence: The Theological Significance of Gold in the Israelite Tabernacle." *Harvard Theological Review* Vol.112, No. 3 (2019): 296-318. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816019000130>; James Xianxing Du. "Biblical Etymology of Tabernacle and Altar." *Macrithink Institute: International Journal of Linguistics* Vol.12, No.3 (2020): 9-27. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v12i3.17012>.

<sup>2</sup> *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Tafsiran Alkitab Wycliffe) Volume 1 Perjanjian Lama: Kejadian - Ester*, peny. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Everett F. Harrison, cet. 2. (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2014), 219.

Typing in the internet search field, "tabernacle," many books related to this topic will appear. Foreign writers wrote many books about it, but only a few Indonesian writers in terms of the doctrine of the Tabernacle itself. It was started around 1935 by F.G. van Gessel. One of the writers on the Tabernacle from Indonesia is Wempie Lintuuran (later), the author's promoter and lecturer while pursuing his doctoral education at STT Ecumenical. The author appreciates and thanks him for his guidance in exploring the Tabernacle.

In international and domestic writings about the Tabernacle, the biblical history of God's presence in the Tabernacle is not mentioned chronologically and in detail. Thus, the author of this article writes about an introduction to the Tabernacle in terms of Biblical history.

The Tabernacle that the Israelites built in the wilderness at God's command through Moses is the place of God's presence (v.8). Hasel quotes Terrien as saying that "the reality of God's presence is central to biblical faith,"<sup>3</sup> then this reality does not occur in the history of Israel alone because it aims to restore the relationship that was broken in Genesis 3, concerning all of Adam's descendants, meaning that it occurs throughout the history of salvation. Therefore, the scope of the "Biblical history" of the Tabernacle, according to the author, is not only in the past but also in the present and future because Bible begins with Book of Genesis, a part of history, and ends with Book of Revelation, a prophetic history for the future of all human descendants of Adam.<sup>4</sup>

Walter Kaiser's Tripartite formula is related to the presence of God. Thus, the author relates the "Tripartite" formula from the time of Enosh, not only the time of Abraham as Walter Kaiser understands because the people of the time of Enosh began to call on the name of the GOD, YHWH since that day. Later there was Enoch, who got along with the YHWH, hinting at the encounter of man in those ages with Theophany of the GOD. Then on Shem, according to Noah's prophecy, this is also the novelty aspect of this writing because it reveals a Biblical reason that Kaiser does not state why Kaiser thinks that the Tripartite formula begins with Abram as a descendant of Shem.

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<sup>3</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama (Masalah-masalah Pokok dalam Perdebatan Saat Ini)*, cet. 5 (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2016), 85

<sup>4</sup> Ralph W. Klein "Back to the Future: The Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus." *Interpretation* Vol.50, No.3 (July 1996): 264–276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002096439605000305>.

Hasel cites Vriezen's opinion that after the fall of man, the history of salvation moves from Adam to all humanity through Abraham to Christ, and from Christ moves towards the goal of history, its glorious fulfillment in the end.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in this introduction to the history of the Tabernacle Bible, the author also discusses the "evolution" of the Tabernacle from "non-permanent" to a "more permanent" temple to believers as a temple and an eschatological temple.<sup>6</sup> Hopefully, this writing will get the attention of Indonesian theologians, thus encouraging further research on the historical institution, the Tabernacle, from various theological disciplines.

## METHOD

This writing is the result of biblical theology literature research by investigating biblical passages regarding explicit and implicit facts of God's presence accompanied by the support of relevant views, then analyzed and arranged systematically in order to find a chronological history of the biblical presence of God related to the Tabernacle as its form.

In examining the historical traces of God's presence, God's revelation, the Bible, is the premier source because the Tabernacle was founded on God's initiative. Supporting views and opinions, which are the results of the theologians, are included as secondary sources. The biblical passages concerning the facts of God's presence are examined and arranged in a systematic order to obtain a chronological history of the Bible.

The biblical history of God's presence is also viewed from the theological point of view because the Tripartite agreement is found not only in the chronology of the biblical history of the Old Testament but up to the New Testament. Furthermore, finally, the final form of the discussion of the Bible must remain in the form of implications for believers today.

The topic sentence uses the word *Allah*, but in writing, it will follow the word LAI used in the verse or text, or narrative. If it is written as GOD, the author will write GOD or the initials of the tetragrammaton, YHWH. This writing does not intend to write

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<sup>5</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama (Masalah-masalah Pokok dalam Perdebatan Saat Ini)*, 168.

<sup>6</sup> Michael M. Homan. "The Tabernacle and the Temple in Ancient Israel." *Religion Compas* Vol.1, No.1 (2007): 38-49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2006.00006.x>.

down the mention of "That Name" with a designation that seems to be widely used because until this writing is completed, the mention of "That Name" is still being discussed and has not reached an agreement.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Before God chose a nation, Israel, which was commanded to build the Tabernacle, He first chose specific individuals, the patriarchs, whose traces of their encounter with God will be discussed by the author. Christoph Barth states that God chooses based on His favor and not on that attitude or personal talent, but on His love that is free in His sovereignty, will, and judgment. Moreover, if *Allah* chooses them, He establishes a special relationship with them and begins a chapter of history with them.<sup>7</sup>

This stage of history can technically be referred to as the "reprogramming" process of God's presence among humans, and this emphasizes the necessity that all efforts to "reprogram" His presence are only God's initiative. God is the one who attends the theophany, meets the human he chooses, and not a human endeavor to seek to find God.

### **God's Presence Among the Pre-Flood Patriarchs**

The theology of the book of Genesis states the existence of divine guidance and providence with its consequences, namely faith, and obedience to YHWH, which has been explicitly seen since humans were in the garden in Eden. Nevertheless, without man experiencing YHWH's presence, whether in dreams, visions (cf. Job 33:14-15), or theophany, man cannot be required to have a response of faith and obedience to Him, hence the fact of His presence among the patriarchs. The pre-flood began in the garden of Eden. The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the East and placed the man, Adam, whom he had formed there. This sentence states His leadership and care (Gen. 2:8-9), then verses 15-17 show that His leadership and care need to be responded to by believing in Him and obeying His commands.

When God formed Eve, a helper for Adam, "..... The Lord God made the man sleep soundly..... Lord Allah took one of the ribs.... Then He built him a woman....", confirming

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<sup>7</sup> Christoph Barth, Marie-Claire-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1*, edition 4. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 65-66

His presence and involvement in the garden of Eden. The 'presence' of the serpent, the deceiver, in Genesis 3:1-5, evident from the serpent's sentence in verses 1, 3, and 5, also states the opposite reality, namely the 'presence' of God,... " When they heard the sound of the Lord God's footsteps walking in the garden..." (v. 8), then the Lord God's dialogue with humans and snakes (v. 9-19) continued with His work to make clothing that was made of animal skins (v. 21), then He drove them out of the garden of Eden (v. 23)

The list of descendants in Genesis 5 also implies the faith and obedience of Adam's descendants through Seth in responding to the revelation of God's presence. Humans started it in the lifetime of Enosh, who began to call on the name of the LORD (Gen. 4:26). Bruce K. Waltke points out that human actions in the time of Enosh began to call on the name of GOD, driven by the meaning of the name Enosh, weakness, making human consciousness to increase the totality of their dependence on God, a situation that intuitively evokes prayer.<sup>8</sup> The author argues that God awakens such intuition in humans based on a revelation of God, which also means a revelation of His presence.

Kaiser, Jr., concluded that to His promises, God "added" the oath of allegiance and, on this basis, then proposed a symbolic formula that summarizes God's primary action in one or two short sentences, called the Tripartite formula,<sup>9</sup> however, the term Tripartite is too general, so related to the Tabernacle, the author completes, namely, "The Tabernacle's Tripartite Formula" because God's purpose is to bind a covenant in which HE will be present in the Tabernacle. The first part of which God promised Abraham, "I will be your God and the God of your descendants" (Gen. 17:7-8; 28:21). Based on the above thought, the first part of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula was secretly given by God to Enosh and his descendants, which in the following discussion appears through the lives of Enoch and Noah.

Enoch, the seventh descendant of Adam, became the type of behavior associated with YHWH (Gen. 5:21-24). Enoch expressed his intimacy with God, in response to the God whose presence Enoch understood. Enoch's relatively short life compared to other descendants of Seth - Enosh, by Waltke, is precisely stated as a blessing which shows that being in the presence of God is a more incredible privilege, even than long life,

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<sup>8</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Cathy J. Fredricks, *Genesis – A Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 101.

<sup>9</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Teologi Perjanjian Lama*, cet. 2 (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2004), 51-52

which is often considered a sign of divine favors.<sup>10</sup> Enoch, the pre-flood Patriarch, experienced the promise of the first part of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula to his ancestor, Enosh, "... I will be your God and the God of your descendants."

Next relates to the mention that Noah lived in association with God (Gen. 6:9), and then the fact of God's conversation with Noah proves that the descendants of Enosh enjoyed the first part of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula to Enosh until Noah. When Noah entered the ark, "...then the LORD closed the door of the ark behind Noah" (Gen. 7:16b). The fact of His presence in saving Noah and his family from God's punishment drowned all humans made God "regret" for having created them.

When discussing Pentateuch Theology, Merrill argues that soteriology (the notion of salvation) is the central theme of Biblical theology. Although it is not the central theme,<sup>11</sup> Brueggemann argues that the forms of punishment and salvation narrated in the Torah material are the focal point of God's presence and activity. That was the experience of the pre-flood Patriarchs.

### **God's Presence Among Post-Flood Patriarchs**

Brueggemann also states that Noah and his family were the first post-flood humans who, according to Genesis 9:6, were still "in the image of God."<sup>12</sup> According to the author, the existence of this 'image of God' is the reason humans are saved, thus proving also that YHWH's presence is always consistent in His relationship with His human creations, as well as an attempt to reprogram His presence among humans that He pleases by saving them. .

Genesis 9:25-27 focuses more and more on the descendants of humans who are pleasing to YHWH, namely from Shem, as it is written, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, but let Canaan be his servant. May God expand Japheth's dwelling place, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem..." Noah prophesied the Semites to have the LORD as

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Cathy J. Fredricks, *Genesis – A Commentary*, 115.

<sup>11</sup> Roy B. Zuck, Eugene H. Merrill, and Darrell L. Bock, (ed). *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament (Teologi Alkitabiah Perjanjian Lama)*, cet. 1. (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2015), 48.

<sup>12</sup> Roy B. Zuck, Eugene H. Merrill, and Darrell L. Bock, (ed). *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament (Teologi Alkitabiah Perjanjian Lama)*, 52.

their God, and his brethren would know the Semitic God if they served and united into a family. Semitic.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, "... Praise be to Allah Sem....", according to Walke, is a different sentence from Noah compared to Ham. Shem is identified as a person who has a relationship with God, and is identified as God's position of being for Shem. The mention of God's name, "LORD," for Shem, distinguishes him in terms of God's presence for Japheth, as God who is still transcendent.<sup>14</sup>

The author understands this difference as the beginning of an immanent revelation about God to Shem's descendants, the Semites. It is the beginning of the reprogramming of God's presence so that, like humans in the time of Enos, Semitic families experience God's immanence by calling on His name, LORD. However, post-flood humans again lost their intuition in realizing the presence of God, so humans struggled with their "typed" power through Nimrod.

Nimrod, son of Cush, descended from Ham, became a very influential ruler, as seen in the kingdoms in the cities he founded (Gen. 10:6-12). As a descendant of Ham, perhaps at first, Nimrod has oriented to Noah's prophecy that the LORD became the God of Shem, implied by the title, "a mighty hunter before the LORD" (Gen. 10:8-9).

In the subsequent development of power and influence, it can be assumed that Nimrod drifted away from God, because, according to Hwang, Nimrod was a deified person and from him developed Babylonian religion with its gods.<sup>15</sup> This is the reason behind the people of that time, who were under the rulers of the descendants of Nimrod, lost their theocentric intuition and became anthropocentric, looking for names so that they would not be scattered all over the earth (Gen. 11:4). But God still fulfilled Noah's prophecy about Shem that the LORD is the God of Shem.

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<sup>13</sup> "Tent" does not always mean literally, but also figuratively, which in ordinary conversation is used to express any way of 'staying' or 'remaining' (cf. J.D. Douglas. *Ensiklopedi Alkitab Masa Kini – Jilid I A-L*, cet. 5. [Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih/OMF, 2007], 543; *Øhel*, no. Lema 168 dalam, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament – Bringing the Original Text to Life*, ed. Warren Baker. [Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2015], 2298, also meaning "a family").

<sup>14</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Cathy J. Fredricks, *Genesis – A Commentary*, 150-151.

<sup>15</sup> See Thomas Hwang, *Asal Usul Agama-agama – Benih Perempuan*, Volume 1, trans. Maju Manurung, ed. Yusak Umar Santoso and Dewi Magdalena Rotua. edition. 1 (Gyeonggi-do, Korea: AMI Publikasi, 2013), 28-31, 33-36.

### **God's Presence Among the Semitic Patriarchs**

YHWH fulfilled Noah's prophecy by calling Abram, a descendant of Terah, a Semitic, in the passage after the Tower of Babel story (Gen. 11:27-31). His presence was again declared, "At that time the LORD appeared to Abram and said....." (Gen. 12:7). Abram responded by building an altar to the LORD, then when he built the altar the second time, what the people did in the time of Enos, Abram did, namely call on the name of the LORD (v. 8 ).

Patriarch Abram's response was contrary to the conditions of Ur-Chaldeans at that time, showing that God's initiative to reprogram His presence among humans occurred according to His choice, which proved to be responding to the call in the plan to manifest His presence. According to the "Table of time," Thomas Hwang Patriarch Abram is estimated to have lived around the year 2166 (B.C.),<sup>16</sup> the period in which the influence of Mesopotamian religions after the spread of Noah's descendants had an impact on the Semitic descendants,<sup>17</sup> including Terah, his son Abram, and his other sons.

When Joshua renewed Israel's covenant with God at Shechem, the patriarch Abraham's background was emphasized (Jos. 24:1-2), but God "took him" (v. 3). Seven hundred years later, upon the return of Israel from the Babylonian exile, when Israel made a renewal of the covenant by separating themselves from all foreigners, the narrative of God's call to the patriarch Abraham was uttered by them again (Neh. 9:7). So God intended to establish Himself as the only God through Abram, a Semitic.

If Abraham's lifetime in Ur-Chaldeans is as Hwang predicts (2166 BC), then it is thought to have experienced a period between the Sargonist Empire (2334-2197 BC) and the period of Ur III (2112-2004 B.C.), a period influenced by the worship of the moon god, the god of love and the god of war in Uruk.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, Snell describes the trade life of the Ur people, which was quite advanced, the existence of private land ownership to cultivate because of the success of irrigation, which made the land very productive, as well as livestock, especially the flocks that supplied raw

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Hwang, *Asal Usul Agama-agama – Benih Perempuan*, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Hwang, *Asal Usul Agama-agama – Benih Perempuan*, 38-39. Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, was also deified, and after Nimrod died, his son named Tamus was considered his reincarnation and was also deified along with Semiramis, Tamus' mother

<sup>18</sup> Daniel C. Snell, *Kehidupan di Timur Tengah Kuno 3100 – 332 SM*, trans. Bambang Subandrijo. edition 4 (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017), 59-60.



materials for the textile and leather industry.<sup>19</sup> This means that Ur-Chaldean, the homeland of Abram and his father, Terah, was a productive region. However, regarding Noah's prophecy to Shem, God's "removing" Abram from Ur-Chaldeans was primarily to experience God's presence which was different from the presence of the idols of his native land. The call of God to which Abram responded positively in the following was followed by specific "divine" events that led to the stage of realizing the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula.

The occurrence of a "divine" personal presence that met Abram, Melchizedek, in his position as a priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:17-20; Heb. 7:2b-3), by his act of bringing bread and wine, blessing Abram, then receiving one-tenth of Abram's, draws the author's attention to the context of the priesthood because the writer to the Hebrews interprets the Melchizedek priesthood to be a type of the eternal priesthood of Christ Jesus as High Priest (Heb. 7:14-17).

YHWH who is present and the priesthood for Him bind each other; as Vriezen argues, a priest is an official who performs sacred ceremonies in a holy place, using sacred objects, and the ephod becomes a symbol of God's presence.<sup>20</sup> In the time of the Levitical priesthood, the attribute of the ephod was the holy garment of the High Priest. Melchizedek's priestly attributes are not stated, but in the theological context, the author surmises that Melchizedek wore attributes that mediate God's presence because he blessed on God's behalf (Gen. 14:18-19), and Abram recognized him.

In this "divine" event, it is not implied that there is a temple of God that will later be closely related to priestly activities. According to Rowley, it is also inappropriate to suspect that there is a temple where Abram worshiped.<sup>21</sup> However, the personal presence of the "divine" Melchizedek began to imply God's intermediary function with humans and predicted the Levitical priesthood later in the Tabernacle because of Abram's tithe offering (Heb. 7:4-10).

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel C. Snell, *Kehidupan di Timur Tengah Kuno 3100 – 332 SM*, 63-64; Craig Keener. "The Tabernacle and Contextual Worship," *The Asbury Journal* Vol.67, No.1 (2012): 127-138. <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/asburyjournal/vol67/iss1/8>.

<sup>20</sup> Th.C. Vriezen, *Agama Israel Kuno*, edition 9. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 85; Victor Hurowitz. "The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol.105, No.1 (1985): 21-30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/601537>.

<sup>21</sup> See. H.H. Rowley, *Ibadat Israel Kuno*, translated by. I.J. Cairns, edition 5. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019), 12; Craig Keener. "The Tabernacle and Contextual Worship": 127-138; Victor Hurowitz. "The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle": 21-30.

God then appeared to Abram for the umpteenth time with a more specific covenant proposal, again showing that Noah's prophecy was fulfilled. Abram then got a new name, Abra-h-am, from God (Gen. 17:1-6), then God made a covenant with him, as mentioned above, as the first part of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula, "...I will be your God and the God of your offspring..." (v. 7-8). From Abraham, a Semitic, God wanted to form His people among them. He would build a place for the vessel of His presence.

These people of God will be descended from Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. The author follows Bowker's opinion on the big theme of the Pentateuch, which is God's promise to the Patriarchs Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, a promise in the form of a covenant, and climaxes in the Sinai covenant mediated through Moses.<sup>22</sup> However, Genesis 26:24-25 states that Isaac also built an altar and called on the Name of the LORD, only that the Semitic patriarch Jacob sent down the twelve tribes of Israel. Milton Eng cites the approach of C.J. Labuschagne on the ages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose sum is 17 each, probably the Gematria principle, with Par'des' interpretation of Sod,<sup>23</sup>

- Abraham       $175 = 7 \times 5 \times 5 \rightarrow 7 + 5 + 5 = 17$
- Isaac          $180 = 5 \times 6 \times 6 \rightarrow 5 + 6 + 6 = 17$
- Jacob          $147 = 3 \times 7 \times 7 \rightarrow 3 + 7 + 7 = 17$

The number 17 is symbolic because it represents the value of YHWH's number based on the mispār qātān method, where the value of Y (Heb: "י"), which is usually 10, becomes 1, so the sum of the values of Y+H+W+H (Heb: יהוה) =  $1 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 17$ , then Labuschagne concludes that the symbolic meaning of the value 17 most likely signifies the presence of GOD.<sup>24</sup>

Patriarch Jacob experienced YHWH's theophany at Bethel, whereby Rowley alluded to the writing of the Pentateuch from YEDP sources. This story is said to have

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<sup>22</sup> John Bowker, *The Complete Bible Handbook*, ed. Peter Jones, Susannah Steel. (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2004), 21; Cristoph Barth also states that sometimes patriarchs are represented only by Abraham and Jacob; see also Christoph Barth, Marie-Claire-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Rita Wahyu, *Eksegesis Peshat Kitab Kejadian – Kitab Geneologi (Parashat Bereshit Kejadian 1:1 – 6:8)*, edition 2 (Jakarta: Ekumene Literatur, 2020), 5-8; explanation of "Sod" can be read Philip Suciadi Chia, *Memahami Kitab-kitab Perjanjian Lama Di dalam Perjanjian Baru*, edition 1, (Yogyakarta: Stiletto Indie Book, 2020), 194.

<sup>24</sup> Milton Eng, *The Days Of Our Years – A Lexical Semantic Study Of The Life Cycle In Biblical Israel*, ed. Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 41.

come from Priest sources.<sup>25</sup> So if it is connected with Jacob's statement that the place where he is is the Temple of God (Gen. 28:16-17), and he built the stone that will become a temple for God (v. 22), it strengthens the view that YHWH's theophany finally needed a temple with his priesthood,<sup>26</sup> God concretizes this in the descendants of Jacob, Israel.<sup>27</sup>

According to the author, Abram's call to leave the influence of Ur-Chaldeans and their idol environment is identical to the "call" for Jacob to leave the influence of Laban, his father-in-law (Gen. 31:3) and from idols because his father-in-law has teraphim that later was stolen by Jacob's wife, Rachel (Gen. 31:19). Likewise, the "call" to Israel, the descendants of Abraham - (Isaac) - Jacob to leave the influence of Egypt (Ex. 2:23-25; 3:8) which made Israel unable to worship because of the pressure of Egyptian slavery under Pharaoh.

### God's Presence Among His People in Israel

The mediation system began to be established by YHWH by calling on Moses. Israel's leadership and mediation with God through Moses begins with Moses' encounter with YHWH's theophany in a "divine" event that asks Moses to take off his sandals (Ex. 3:1-6). God personally declares His Name in that sacred area, *'eh'yeh 'asher 'eh'yeh*, which means "I AM WHO I AM" (v. 13-14).

With the revelation of this Name Christoph Barth argues that He Himself is present, even in the midst of an atmosphere of oppression and slavery, that God Himself, by His Name, liberates His people, and in full narration, this deliverance has perfect form, following its role as the subject of Israel's praise and trust as His people.<sup>28</sup>

Towards the exodus of Israel from Egypt, God's revelation also came out, adding the second part to complete the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula, "...I will make you my people..." (Ex. 6:6). YHWH then commanded these people to make the Tabernacle a holy place (Heb: *miqdāsh*) for Him so that He would dwell among them (Ex. 25:8), YHWH who proved to be more powerful than the gods of Egypt, who through the ten plagues of

<sup>25</sup> H.H. Rowley, *Ibadat Israel Kuno*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Th.C. Vriezen, *Agama Israel Kuno*, 85. Vriezen termed the abode as a temple, stating the close relationship of the Temple to the priesthood (priestly system).

<sup>27</sup> Michael M. Homan. "The Tabernacle and the Temple in Ancient Israel: 38-49.

<sup>28</sup> Christoph Barth and Marie-Claire-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1*, 147; Ralph W. Klein "Back to the Future: The Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus": 264-276.

His sovereignty surpassed the human Pharaoh who was divined by slaying his heir to the throne, and over the Red Sea. Then all of Egypt's military power was drowned in the Red Sea. To show him, YHWH must be respected because of his high stature (Ex. 15:1,21).

The lyrics of Moses' song declare YHWH the war hero who destroys the enemy (v. 3,6), namely YHWH who is above all gods (v. 11), YHWH who has a mountain as a dwelling place which His hands have built (v. 17) and YHWH who reigns forever and ever (v. 18). So according to Brueggemann's thought at the beginning of this writing, punishment, and salvation are the focal points of God's presence and activity. Therefore Torah, the five first books of the Jews and Christians, is called Brueggemann as the product of an equally complex process of tradition and serves as the attestation of the character, purpose, and presence of the LORD, the God of Israel who is the creator of heaven and earth and who is the liberator and commander Israel.<sup>29</sup>

The lyrics emphasizing YHWH's attributes in the song of Moses and Miriam imply that YHWH began to present himself as a reigning, eternal reigning YHWH. Not surprisingly, later at Sinai, YHWH put forward a proposal regarding Israel's position as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in Exodus 19:3-6. So for the sake of His proposal, the theophanic immanence of His presence He began to carry out, He came down from His royal throne in heaven to be above Sinai, met Moses as the mediator of Israel (v. 17-20, cf. 24:1-2).

In the next stage, on Sinai, YHWH gave Moses the blueprint of the Tabernacle to realize His priestly kingdom on the plains on the same level as His people. Among them (Ex. 24:15 – 25:9). Wolf said that the LORD who lives above is willing to come down and fill the Tabernacle with the same cloud of glory so that Israel can miraculously approach God Almighty, the God who has promised to be with this nation as reflected in His name, YHWH, and now he dwells with them in the camp.<sup>30</sup> O'Collins S.J. argues that God's desire to be always present among His chosen people is concretely manifested in the Tabernacle of Meeting (Tabernacle – chapters of Exodus 26; 36; 40).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Walter Brueggemann and Tod Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament – The Cannon and Christian Imagination*, edition 2. (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 37

<sup>30</sup> Herbert Wolf, *Pengenalan Pentateukh*, edition 2 (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2017), 212.

<sup>31</sup> Ralph W. Klein "Back to the Future: The Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus": 264–276; Gerald O'Collins S.J., *Christology, Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, cet. 10 (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1995), 318.

The dimensions of the areas, furnishings, screens, curtains, and tents were set in cubits (Ex. 25:10,23; 26:2,8,15-16; 27:1,9,11- 18; 30:1-2), a measure based on the length of the human arm, as well as the "palm" (Ex. 25:25),<sup>32</sup> generally used to express the general size of a human being.<sup>33</sup> Then the offering of goat hair was woven into a second tent (Ex. 25:4; 26:7).<sup>34</sup> All proclaim YHWH's immanence when he reigns among His people because they use the same material as His people's tent. At this stage, in connection with the design of the Tabernacle (Holy Tabernacle) institution and its priesthood, the third part of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula was added by God, "...I dwelt in their midst..." (Ex. 29:45-46).

The presence of God must be the center of His people's attention, movement, and life. Unger calls the Tabernacle a sacred structure that Jehovah fulfills in the manifestation of His presence in the pillar of cloud and fire above this structure.<sup>35</sup> Here lies the sacred immanence of God's presence (Ex. 40:34-38), as the "Holy Place" (Ex. 25:8). Therefore, it is ordered that the tents of each tribe are oriented to the Tabernacle (Num. 2 - 3), also death threats for anyone who violates the protocol regarding the Tabernacle areas and their priestly ordinances (Ex. 30:19-21; Num. 4:15-20).

After the appointed priesthood is ordained and becomes an actual practice of worship service at the Tabernacle, then the three parts of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula are complete, "I will place my tabernacle in the midst of you, and my heart will not be sick of seeing you. But I will be in your midst, and I will be your God, and you will be my people" (Lev. 26:11-12). Kaiser states that this Tripartite formula emphasizes continuity between past, present, and future, all part of an ongoing plan of God.<sup>36</sup> That was the evolution of the Tabernacle that later became the Temple, even the spiritual Temple.

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<sup>32</sup> John Bowker, *The Complete Bible Handbook*, 79.

<sup>33</sup> J.D. Douglas. *Ensiklopedi Alkitab Masa Kini – Jilid II M-Z*, cet. 5. (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih/OMF, 2007), 475.

<sup>34</sup> Goat's hair is a tent material that is also a traveler's tent material, see Mike Beaumont, *Ensiklopedia Alkitab Tematik*, penerj. Niken Puspita dan Satrya Handarto, edition 1 (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih/OMF, 2018), 92.

<sup>35</sup> Merril F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 29th edition (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 1065.

<sup>36</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Teologi Perjanjian Lama*, 52; Craig Keener. "The Tabernacle and Contextual Worship": 127-138.

### **God's Presence in the Tabernacle "Evolves" into a Spiritual Temple**

David planned to build a permanent house (Hebrews: *bayit*) for the Ark of the LORD (2 Sam. 7:1-3), and the LORD said to remind him that He was present in the tent while leading Israel to wander in the desert and never commanded to build a house for Him (v. 4-7), but then the LORD promised that David's son would build a *bayit* for His name (v. 12-13). Solomon then built the Temple in Jerusalem as a substitute for the "non-permanent" Tabernacle in the form of a tent, realizing his father's wishes, David.

The Tabernacle and the Temple have some similarities. First, the design are both inspired by God (Ex. 25:9; 1Ch. 28:19); the KJV and NIV translate, "an understanding that David received because of the hand of the LORD on him." The second, facing the East, is the direction facing the Lord's provision (Ex. 27:13). There is no verse stating the direction towards the Temple. However, Ezekiel got a vision that implies the direction facing (Ezek. 8:16), thus also the direction facing the apocalyptic Temple that the LORD showed Ezekiel, facing the East, the direction of the coming of the glory of the God of Israel (Ezek. 43:1-4, cf. 47:1).

Third, the division of area and space does not change, consisting of a court (Ex. 27:9; 1Ki. 7:12; 8:64; 1Ch. 28:6,12), the holy place, and the holiest place (Ex. 26:33). ), were in the Temple, both were in the "house or infant" (1Ch. 28:6; 1 Ki. 6:16; 7:50). Fourth, both are places of God's presence among His people (Ex. 40:34-35; 1Ki. 8:10-11; 2Ch. 5:13-14). Another similarity is that the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, which is in the holy of the holies of the Tabernacle, is placed in the Most Holy Place of the Temple (Ex. 26:34; 1Ki. 8:2-6; 2Ch. 5:3-7), and concerning the type of furniture. Others to hold worship did not change, except for the number of dimensions, because the number of Israelites and priests who served worship also increased.

Due to the Davidic kings' wickedness, the Babylonians destroyed the physical Temple. Historically, have occurred in 587 BC. Here God begins to program the "evolution" from the physical Temple to the Spiritual Temple. The Ark of the Covenant is no longer found as the seat of God's presence (cf. Jer. 3:16-17). The main thing is the restoration of the hearts of God's people. Nevertheless, the LORD still remembers His promise, the completeness of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula, "...I will be present or dwell in your midst, and I will be your God, and you will be My people....", again stated God when Israel was in exile when Ezekiel had a vision of the apocalyptic Temple (Ezek. 37:26b-27).

Daniel Block emphasizes these verses, mainly highlighting the sacredness of the dwelling place and reflecting the transcendent nature that dwells in it as well as the humbling humanity of God. As the promise regarding the land, so the promise of the divine presence among His people is always connected with the formula of the promise He spoke in ancient times.<sup>37</sup>

The Tabernacle's Tripartite formula is projected further and further into the New Testament. Christoph Barth states that Jesus Christ stands in the middle of the two Covenants (O.T. and N.T.) and is with His people,<sup>38</sup> also put forward several opinions about the core of the O.T., one of them from Vriezen, namely the fellowship between God and His people, and von Rad's opinion, namely the subject of God's actions in the historical field.<sup>39</sup> According to the author, everything refers to the fact that YHWH is present in the history of His people from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Therefore Christoph Barth next raises the idea of Terrien, which starts from God's presence, who animates and binds all parts of the Bible.<sup>40</sup>

Jesus was the Word who incarnated in the tent of His human body, as the Temple of God, is the "bind" of the entire chronological presence of God from the Tabernacle and the physical Temple to the Temple in the Spirit, in line with the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula which also "moves" from the place of God's presence in the form of the "physical" institution throughout the Old Testament to the place of God's presence in the form of the human "body" institution throughout the New Testament (John 1:14). Hahn quotes St. Irenaeus, that the Tabernacle is a mystery type of incarnation where God and His glory dwell among the people in the humanity of Jesus Christ according to the revelation in John 1:14.<sup>41</sup>

Anderson also emphasized Raymond Edward Brown's belief that the flesh of Jesus Christ is the new "location" of God's presence among His people on earth, replacing the ancient Tabernacle. The Apostle John further confirms the transition from the physical Temple to the spiritual, that the body of Jesus is the Temple of God (John

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<sup>37</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Book Of Ezekiel Chapters 25 - 48*, ed. R.K. Harrison, Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., 7th edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 421.

<sup>38</sup> Christoph Barth and Marie-Claire-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Christoph Barth and Marie-Claire-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1*, 7-8.

<sup>40</sup> Christoph Barth and Marie-Claire-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Scott Hahn, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, edition 2 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 15.

2:19-21).<sup>42</sup> Brown interprets the words "...in three days this Temple will be built...." as the body of Christ who rose as the Tabernacle. His resurrection made Him spiritual, a heavenly body.<sup>43</sup> However, the author argues that the Tabernacle of the spiritual body of Christ refers to its eschatological dimension in Revelation 21:22, that God, Almighty God is the Temple, as well as the Lamb, while on earth in His incarnation, Jesus' body is like "spiritual temples in place of the "defiled" physical temples of the time, with buying - selling, and the hypocrisy of the chief priests, and other leaders of the people as stated in the Synoptic Gospels.

Based on the statement that Jesus' body is a temple, Paul then asserts that every believer's body is a temple of God because the Spirit of God indwells it (1 Cor. 3:16) or the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). The indwelling of the Spirit which is also termed the sealing of the Spirit occurs when a person hears the Gospel of Salvation and believes (Eph. 15-17).

When Paul again reminded the Corinthian church to "come out" from the association of ungodly people, idol worshippers, or unclean practitioners, Paul reaffirmed that believers are temples of the living God and reminded of the integrity of the promise of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula (2 Cor. 17). It is a fact that the reach of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula reaches as far as the Gentile or Israeli congregation, which also has a pagan background, in order for them to "get out" of it. Theologically the Corinthian church represented the entire New Testament gentile church while on this earth (interfaith).<sup>44</sup>

In one Spirit, the church is baptized into one body of Christ, both Jew and Gentile (1 Cor. 12:12-13), towards its eschatological goal, in spiritual form, the New Jerusalem in the new heavens and the new earth, like the bride, the bride of the Lamb (v. 9-10). In this eternity, the integrity of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula is again declared by God, "...He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and He will be their God..."

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<sup>42</sup> Gary A. Anderson, *Letter & Spirit Volume 4: Temple and Contemplation, God's Presence in the Cosmos, Church, and Human Heart. A Journal of Catholic Biblical Theology*, (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland Edmund Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Ed. Raymond Edward Brown, edition 3 (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 936.

<sup>44</sup> Kim Abunuwara. "The Provo Tabernacle And Interfaith Collaboration." *Dialogue Journal* Vol.51, No.2 (Summer 2018): 41-59. <https://www.dialoguejournal.com/articles/the-provo-tabernacle-and-interfaith-collaboration>.



(Rev. 21:3), and it is stated that God Almighty is the Temple, as well as the Lamb (Rev. 21:22).

Currently, with the fact that God's presence through His Spirit inhabits the Tabernacle or Temple of believers' bodies, while the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula is heading for eschatological fulfillment, Dyrness argues that the Old Testament is full of the future. The Temple made the Hebrews yearn for that day when at last, God's dwelling place was with men (Rev. 21:3). But Christians, who know the meaning of John's vision, cannot help but have a deeper appreciation for worship in the Temple. He understood the joyful impulse, "I rejoice when people say to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (Ps. 122:1). The reality of worship in the Temple is not discarded but raised to a higher order and seen in a new light.<sup>45</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Believers who believe in the integrity of the Tabernacle's Tripartite formula need to study the Tabernacle or Temple further by researching hermeneutics to obtain standard operating procedures for worship and Biblical priesthood, as a lesson nowadays that will be useful in building themselves as God's people, being temples of the Spirit and royal priests to God (1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:5b-6). The author suggests continuing to read and meditate on the Bible in sequence from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation because that is the "history" of salvation and the presence of God that ultimately makes the body of the believer as His Temple.

Living as a house or Temple of the Spirit, every believer must not go a day without realizing and remembering the "history" of God's presence experienced by each, the experience of being saved from sin through faith and repentance (v.9-10), so that by the grace of God, His Spirit indwells the body of this Temple, so by the power of the Spirit every believer can always "build an altar of thanksgiving," and an "altar of appreciation" to Christ's sacrifice. While not forgetting the role of "spiritual patriarchs," every believer must respect and honor them to imitate their faith so that they have a clear spiritual progress (cf. Heb. 13:7,17; 2 Tim. 3:10).

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<sup>45</sup> William Dyrness, *Tema-tema Dalam Teologi Perjanjian Lama*, trans. Johanna Hannie Sidarta, ed. Bertha Gaspersz, edition 8 (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2014), 127.

As the Temple of the Spirit is progressing towards the eschatological fulfillment of the promise of the Tripartite formula, every believer must live in the eschatological vision of being the bride of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem so that he/she continues to progress in sanctification by obeying the word of Christ, avoiding associations that pollute his holiness as the Temple of the Spirit by prioritizing close association with fellow believers. Furthermore, the mission that motivates association with fellow believers is the mission of building the body of Christ so that they are not selfish, sectarian, and denominative, but respect each other as fellow temples of the Spirit, build each other up, strengthen each other, and serve one another.

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