#### BIBLICAL SYMBOLISM IN NEW BUILDING

# The Building: Noah's Ark

God told Noah to make a three-story ark that was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. The new building for the Rock Church is also three stories high and almost exactly the same size as the ark.

#### The Entrance: The First and the Last

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The entrance to the Rock Church is in the shape of the Hebrew letter *tav*. Tav is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and it refers to one of the names of God: "The First and the Last" in English or "Alpha and Omega" in Greek.

#### The Mosaic: The Altar

Inside the entrance, there is a square mosaic of a bronze altar built into the floor.

# The Cross: The Testing

The skylight in the roof of the lobby is filled with 40 feet of wood in the shape of a cross. Forty is the number of testing in the Bible, and the cross was Christ's ultimate test. There are 365 spikes in the wood because we are tested every day.

## The Passageways: The Old and New Covenants

There are two passageways from the lobby into the sanctuary, just like there were two covenants, or connections between God and man in the Bible.

# The Prayer Wall

The low wall at the back of the floor seating was part of a dedication event before the building was finished. Members of the Rock body met to praise God and pray for the church, the project, and YOU! Before you ever walked through the doors of the Rock Church, people had prayed for you to learn and grow in Christ in this space. Some of those prayers were written on the blocks in this wall.

# A Seat: A Scripture

Each seat in the sanctuary is labeled with a different scripture reference. The first floor is numbered with the books and verses of the first part of the Old Testament because that is the basis of the rest of the Bible. The stadium seats are numbered with the books of the Old Testament prophets, and the balcony seats are the books of the New Testament.

### Walk by the Fish (ϊχθϋσ)

A few seats in the middle of the sanctuary are different from the rest. From above, those seats form the sign of the icythus  $(i\chi\theta i\sigma)$ , the fish symbol that secretly identified Christians during the centuries of Roman persecution. The fish is pointed towards the altar call room because that is where people go to make their public statements of faith to other Christians who can pray with them as they continue to learn about Christ.

## **Worship Focus: Holy of Holies**

At the front of the sanctuary there are four squares of uncut stone which mark the corners of a 20 cubit square. This represents the Holy of Holies, the place in the Tabernacle where the glory and presence of God appeared. The distance from the altar inside the fence of the Tabernacle to the Holy of Holies at the center is also almost exactly the distance from the altar mosaic in our lobby to the uncut stones in front of the stage.

### **Prayer Niches**

There are 24 prayer niches around the edges of the sanctuary. The niches are the New School version of stained glass chapels where people can go to pray and meditate about one particular truth or challenge of God in each niche. The first twelve niches are each about one of the tribes of Israel. The second twelve niches are each about one of the stories of faithful people from Hebrews. They are especially designed to help people worship and pray in the sanctuary even when there is no worship service.

#### The Rock Academy

The Rock Academy is a Christian school in the Rock Church building. It is not a separate structure. This is practical and convenient for us, but it is also symbolic of how God views children and families. Christian education and Christian life cannot be separated.

#### Walk the Garden

The Bible garden outside the building was designed to encourage people to connect with God and the Bible by using plants as symbols of Bible stories and also by incorporating many plants which are named in the Bible.

The Rock's Garden guides people through a meditation on key stories in the Bible, starting at the Creation and ending at the Crucifixion. As you move around the garden, focus on God's agenda in each of the stories, rather than your agenda. This space is about the spiritual discipline of memory.