

## Comparing Temples—Ancients and Modern—with the Restoration

(Next week will be my last institute class until September—  
Instead, please watch my weekly videos & others on  
*BookofMormonCentral.org* or *DoctrineandCovenantCentral.org*)

- “All ancient temples rehearsed the story of the creation, and the establishment of mankind and the royal government of God upon this earth. Then they moved into the heavenly sphere and the theology associated with the worlds beyond” (Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton, 149).
- “All temples are marked by boundaries, stations, levels, doors, stairs, passages, gates, veils, etc.-they all denote rites of passage going from one condition or state to another, from lower to higher, from dark to light, a complete transition from one world, teletial or terrestrial, to another, ultimately the celestial. At certain crucial passages one must identify oneself by an exchange of names and tokens and show oneself qualified by an exchange of words. This was characteristic of all ancient temples” (Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, 38–39).
- “From earliest times, temples have been built as scale models of the universe. The first known mention of the Latin word *templum* is by Varro (116-27 B.C.), for whom it designated a building specially designed for interpreting signs in the heavens—a sort of observatory where one gets one’s bearings on the universe. The root tem- in Greek and Latin denotes a “cutting,” or intersection of two lines at right angles and hence the place where the four regions of the world come together, ancient temples being carefully oriented. . . .
- In the universal temple concept, there are usually three identical buildings, “one being built exactly over the other, with the earth temple in the middle of everything, representing” (Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1458)
- John Lundquist devised a consistent pattern that describe a coherent picture of temples that spans several cultures and centuries (see Donald Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, 493-4).

{The rest of third page cites different portions of Richard G. Oman; John P. Snyder, “Exterior Symbolism of the Salt Lake Temple: Reflecting the Faith That Called the Place Into Being,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 36-3; 1996-97}.

### Mesopotamians

Among the ancient Mesopotamians, the ziggurat was a stairway that led between the lower and upper worlds. It represented a mountain because mountains were viewed as places where contact between man and the heavens could take place (Nibley, “What Is a Temple?” 360).

### Ancient Greeks and Romans

Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, temples represented this idea of centering and connecting with the realms of the sacred. The root tem- in Greek and Latin denotes a “cutting,” or intersection of two lines at right angles and hence the place where the four regions of the world come together, ancient temples “being carefully oriented to express ‘the idea of pre-established harmony between a celestial and a terrestrial image’” (Alfred Jeremias, quoted in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 358).

### Moslems in Islamic Faith

The Kacba at Mecca is still thought to mark the exact middle of the earth and hub of the universe; it is surrounded by special shrines marking the cardinal points, and the roads that lead to it are holy, the main one being called the Royal Road. There at a set time the whole human race must assemble in one tremendous concourse, as it shall assemble on the Day of Judgment before the throne of God. It was common in the Middle Ages to represent Jerusalem on maps as the exact center of the earth and to depict the city itself as a quartered circle. (Hugh W. Nibley, *The Ancient State* [SLC, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987], 102-4)

### Native Americans

**Hopi Indians.** Among the Hopi Indians of northern Arizona, the kachinas (who serve as the messengers of the gods) live on the tops of the San Francisco Peaks just north of Flagstaff, Arizona. Several times per year . . . emerge from the kiva, a Hopi version of a temple (See Harold Courlander, *The Fourth World of the Hopis* [NYC: Crown, 1971]; Fark Waters and Oswald White Bear Fredericks, *Book of the Hopi* (NYC: Ballantine Books, 1963); Harold Colton, *Hopi Kachina Dolls with a Key to Their Identification* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959).

**Navajo.** Among the Navajos, hogans function not only as homes, but also as sacred space. Hogans are always oriented to the four cardinal directions with the door facing east. The sacred land of the Navajos is surrounded by the four sacred mountains where the yeis, or holy people, live. Contact with the yeis happens during Navajo religious

rituals called sings. In the sings, the creation stories are told and a large, symmetrical, diagram-like sand painting is created in the hogan that depicts through symbolic forms the story that is being sung. Sacred space, symmetry, cardinal orientation, and creation stories are elements for patterning the Navajo life. Physical and spiritual health is renewed through a sing when one brings one's life back into parallel with the spiritual pattern of spiritual leaders who brought order out of chaos in the beginning of life on this level of existence (see Paul G. Zolbrod, *Dine Bahane: The Navajo Creation Story* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984]; Gladys A. Reichard, *Navaho Religion: A Study of Symbolism, Bollingen Series 18* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977]; James C. Faris, *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990].

### Israelite—Judaic

When the Lord commanded Moses to build His sacred Tabernacle, the Master Builder had more in mind than to construct a long lasting stable beautiful structure for worship. Through the ritual, God sought to teach the children of Israel about Himself, His relationship to them, and the creation. He desired for His children to reenter His presence; “the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:1; also 2 Sam 22:7).

Harkening back to the era when their temple stood in Jerusalem, second century Jewish rabbis delineated ten degrees of holiness. The closer one came to the Holy of Holies, the more sacred the space.<sup>i</sup>

The land of Israel is holier than all lands...

The cities that are surrounded by a wall are more holy than it...

Within the wall [of Jerusalem] is more holy than they...

The Temple Mount is holier than it...

The rampart is more holy than it...

The Court of the Women is more holy than it...

The Court of Israel is more holy than it...

The Court of the Priests is more holy than it...

[The area] between the porch and the altar is more holy than it...

The sanctuary is more holy than it...

The Holy of Holies is more holy than they.<sup>ii</sup>

The rabbis' reverence for their temple—but the most pure and undefiled was Moses' tabernacle.

**Tabernacle Assemblage teaches Creation.** The ritual of Israelite priests in their tabernacle and later temples experience became symbolic of the journey back to heaven. Moses began by retelling the story of the creation. The biblical scholar Margaret Barker found that Moses assembled the tabernacle to coincide with the Genesis account of the days of creation (Compare Genesis 1-2 with Exodus 40:17-33).<sup>iii</sup> She summarized:

First the outer structure was set up, Day One, when God separated light from darkness. Then the veil was put in place to separate the holy of holies corresponding to the second day of creation when the heavens were set in place to separate what was above from what was below. On the third day the table for the bread, wine and incense was set in place to represent the third day of creation when plants with seeds and fruits were made.

On the fourth day the seven branched lamp was set in place, to represent the great lights set in heaven on the fourth day.<sup>iv</sup>

Moses' tabernacle set the stage to teach Israel not only about their God and His creation, but also outlined the way back to Him.

**Courtyards for Separation.** We enter through the first partition into a large courtyard, as if leaving one sphere and entering another world. The quad surrounding the tabernacle itself was approximately the size of a quarter of a football field (150' x 80' or 100 x 50 cubits, Exodus 27:9, 12). The later temples had even larger courtyards. Using landfill on the top of Mount Moriah, Herod expanded the second temple's stone courtyard to cover thirty-five acres. He divided the acreage into four concentric courtyards, each one becoming more exclusive. The first allowed everyone, including Gentiles to enter; the second separated out Israelites and was called the court of women, the third permitted only men, the fourth only descendants of Levi.<sup>v</sup> Each of the successive courtyards led to a symbolic pathway that returned the priests to God's presence.

**Washings for Purification.** Walking through the doorways that separated each of the courtyards, we come into the space reserved for priests which surrounded the Sanctuary. A priest entering this courtyard would first go to the “laver of brass” filled with water (Exodus 30:18-19). He would wash his hands and feet as a ritual before his service (Exodus 30:18-20; 1 Kings 7:23-25). The cleansing symbolized the need for fallen humanity to receive additional sacred purification to do the Lord's work, “because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord” (2 Nephi 9:6; also Alma 22:14). The early Christian theologian, Tertullian (160-225 AD), saw imagery from the atonement in ritual washings. He explained that one's washing of the body had spiritual effects: “The flesh, indeed, is washed, in order that the soul may be cleansed; the flesh in anointed, that the soul may be

consecrated; . . . the flesh is shadowed with the imposition [or laying on] of hands that the soul may be illuminated by the Spirit.”<sup>vi</sup> Other Old Testament references to washings, “Wash me thoroughly [*sic*] from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” appear to prefigure Christian baptism (Psalm 51:2, 7; also see Isaiah 1:16; 48:1).

The book of Kings recorded a few details about the laver in Solomon’s Temple. The inside dimensions measured ten cubits or approximately fifteen feet in diameter (1 Kings 7:23). 1 Kings 7:26 reports that it held 2,000 baths—which is at least 11,600 gallons of water, and 2 Chronicles 4:5 claims that it held 3,000 baths—or over 17,400 gallons! For comparison, a large bathtub (72” X 40”) holds 78 gallons. Perhaps because of its size, in both Solomon’s and Herod’s Temple the laver was known as “a molten sea” (1 Kings 7:23; 2 Chronicles 4:2-6).

The “molten sea” stood on the back of twelve carved oxen, grouped into three animals facing one of the cardinal directions (1 Kings 7:25). Ten other brass lavers, each six feet in diameter and ornately designed, lined either side of the sanctuary, holding 40 baths or approximately 220 gallons of water *each* for washing (1 Kings 7:38). As a point of reference an average hot tub holds 475 gallons, and an average swimming pool 18,000 gallons. The basins were large enough that twelve priests could perform their ablutions simultaneously.<sup>vii</sup>

The priests performed washings before ministering in the temple for cleansing and in preparation for further ritual. An ancient temple scholar, Alonzo Gaskill observed, “Symbolically speaking, the washing in the laver mirrors the initiate’s entrance . . . to enthronement, exaltation, and deification. By being washed one was also being offered enthronement—though, admittedly, that blessing was to be delayed.”<sup>viii</sup> The brass laver was something similar to the thrones of ancient kings, whose thrones sat on the back of statues of oxen or lions representing animals of strength.

**Altar for Atonement.** As we look across the court of the priests, another large structure dominates the scene—a square altar (7½’ x 7½’ x 4½’ or 5 x 5 x 3 cubits) made from acacia, or shittim, wood which was overlaid with brass (Exodus 27:1, 6). The word “altar / *mizbeach*” meant to slay or a place to sacrifice. Each corner of the altar had a bronze horn that signified God’s great power to atone for the sins of the world. The priest sprinkled the sacrificial atoning blood on the horns of the altar; “Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns . . . with the blood of the sin offering of atonements” (Exodus 30:10; also see Leviticus 4:7, 18, 25; etc.). The biblical word for “horn / *qeren*” figuratively meant strength. We see this in 1 Samuel 2:10 in Hannah’s prayer, “the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed” (also see 2 Samuel 22:3; Psalms 92:10; 1 Kings 1:50). The Psalmist looked forward to the coming of the Messiah as the “horn of our salvation” (Psalms 18:2, Luke 1:69; also see Psalms 112:9; 132:1).<sup>ix</sup>

Priests sacrificed animals, breads and drinks on the altar daily. For sin offerings, they laid their hands on the sacrifice to vicariously transfer their sins. The book of Numbers explains, “the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering . . . unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites” (Numbers 8:12; also see Leviticus 4:33-35; 16:30).<sup>x</sup> This transfer of sins pointed to the Savior’s vicarious sacrifice for humanity’s sins (Hebrews 7:27; 10:12). The sacrificial animals themselves—a first year male, without blemish or broken bones—represented Jesus who became “the great and last sacrifice” (Alma 34:10-13; Exodus 12:5; 20:24-25; Leviticus 1:3; 4, 8, 9; Numbers 9:12; Abraham 1:11).

The priest also salted each offering, “the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD” (Ezekiel 43:24). Salt, like fire, acted as a preservative but more importantly in this setting, salt also became a sign of preserving the covenant. In the Lord’s instructed Moses He connected salt as a sign of the covenant, “neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt” (Leviticus 2:13; also Numbers 18:19). The “salt covenant” became a ritual that was carried by the priest.<sup>xi</sup> Later the Lord used salt as a symbol for his covenant-keeping disciples, “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). The disciples encouraged the covenant of baptism as recorded in Acts 2:38, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (also see John 3:22; 4:1-2).

**Sanctuary-Holy Place.** Continuing through the courtyard, the next level of holiness to discover is the “sanctuary / *naos*.” The sanctuary was a long tall rectangular building divided into two rooms: the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. They represented God’s House and throne room. The Lord commanded Moses, “Make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). Solomon designed the outside of the sanctuary in stone—approximately 30 feet wide, 90 feet long, and 45 feet tall (or 20 x 60 x 30 cubits—1 Kings 6:2). He added slits in the sanctuary walls for sunlight to penetrate the room. He built small “chambers” along the walls (1 Kings 6:5-10). One entered the sanctuary via a porch that extended about thirty feet in front of the sanctuary (1 Kings 6:3). Solomon erected two enormous pillars on either side of the front opening and gave them names with messianic and covenantal overtones. In hopes that their symbolism would not be lost, 1 Kings 7:21 records the names of the pillars, Boaz and Jachin. Boaz probably meant “strength or fleetness,” and Jachin, “He/Jehovah will establish.” They symbolized the strength of the Lord God as sentinels before His House. These twin brass pillars were twenty-seven feet tall (or eighteen cubits), topped with beautifully carved matching seven and a half foot capitals of pomegranates and lilies.<sup>xiii</sup> The porch between these pillars became a place of covenant making during King Josiah reign where the southern tribes promised “to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his

statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant” (2 Kings 23:3). The impressive columns and massive structure must have had an awesome appearance, but the inside was even more striking.

The first thing a priest noticed when he entered the sanctuary was that everything was gold. Every wall, floor and ceiling was built with cedar and covered with gold (1 Kings 6:15, 21). Solomon's craftsmen carved images associated with the Garden of Eden, such as stars, cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers into the golden walls. Ancient biblical art used palm trees as a symbol of the Tree of Life from Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24.<sup>xiii</sup> The high ceiling was covered in white linen with purple, blue, and scarlet embroidered cherubim. Only priestly descendants of Aaron would ever have the opportunity to see the art work. And most priests saw it only once in their life” (Numbers 16:40; 2 Samuel 2:28; Luke 1:8-9).<sup>xiv</sup>

Walking into the spacious chamber a priest saw three pieces of furniture. Each had a purpose that evoked the theme of the creation and an Edenic life with God. The first, a golden incense altar. It was a square wooden table about 19” x 19” x 36 inches, made from wood and laminated with gold. Priests burned incense there to fulfill the commandment for “a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations” (Exodus 30:7-8). The smoke from the burning incense symbolized prayers constantly ascending to heaven (Exodus 30:7-8; Psalms 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4).<sup>xv</sup> It transformed the Holy Place into the house of prayer.<sup>xvi</sup>

The lighting of the incense became the most solemn part of the daily service. Twice a day, a chosen priest and his two assistants entered the Holy Place to prepare and light the incense—before sunrise and at 3:00 p.m. (known as “the time of the evening oblation” in Daniel 9:21, and the “hour of prayer” in Acts 3:1).<sup>xvii</sup> The first assistant “reverently spread the coals on the golden altar” while the other assistant “arranged the incense.”<sup>xviii</sup> The assistants then left the Holy Place for the selected priest to light the incense alone. Offering incense became the most solemn part of the priest’s service.

The second piece of furniture, on the north side, was a rectangular gold-plated table (36 X 18 X 26). It held twelve unleaven loaves of bread—one for each tribe of Israel. The King James Version (KJV) translates the loaves as “shewbread” and the New International Version (NIV), “Bread of the Presence” (Exodus 25:30; Numbers 4:7). Literally it means “the bread of faces,” or “the bread of the presence.”<sup>xix</sup> The loaves were adjacent to the veil and placed in the presence of the Lord.<sup>xx</sup> Every Sabbath the priests ate the holy bread. Later, Jesus identified Himself with the image of the shewbread or *bread of the presence*, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 48).<sup>xxi</sup> Jesus became “the presence of God,” as Matthew accurately described, “Emmanuel . . . God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Later, at His Last Supper, He used a similar unleaven bread as a symbol to remember Him: “Take, eat; this is my body” (Matthew 26:26; also see D&C 20:75; Moroni 4:3; 6:6).<sup>xxii</sup> The “bread of the Presence” prefigured, or at least shared symbols, with sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The last piece of furniture was a giant golden lamp stand, the *Menorah*, weighing around 150 pounds. It stood about five feet tall, with a central post and six branches radiating three on each side. The central post and each branch curved upward to hold seven bowls of oil to burn (Exodus 25:31-40). The candlestick burned “pure oil olive beaten for the light” (Exodus 27:20). In that setting, the constant burning light implied the brilliance of God’s Spirit, and the faithful light emanating from God. Its placement was significant as it lit the way to the symbolic throne of God. Exodus describes the menorah as an artistic tree with carvings “like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers” adorning each branch (Exodus 25:33-34).

The sacred Edenic setting also lent itself to interpreting the menorah as the tree of life.<sup>xxiv</sup> Figuratively, “this Tree of Light was the Tree of Life.”<sup>xxv</sup> The priests symbolically returned to a paradisiacal place to commune with the Lord having their way lit by the menorah, or symbolic tree of life. Genesis describes guards around the tree of life in Eden, “Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep *the way* of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24). With cherubim carved into the walls, the Holy Place symbolically represented the way back to the tree of life (Ezekiel 41:20). Palm trees were also part of the Edenic carvings which became another symbol for the tree of life.<sup>xxvi</sup> The early church fathers saw the tree of life as a symbol of Christ, “The tree of life which was planted by God in Paradise pre-figured this precious Cross. For since death was by a tree, it was fitting that life and resurrection should be bestowed by a tree.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

I find significance in the structure of the tabernacle and temple that led “*the way*” back to the tree of life and the presence of God. Jesus referred to Himself as that path, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The first name used to identify early Christianity was the “way” (Acts 9:2; 22:4; 24:14). Furthermore, I wonder if the Lord identified Himself symbolically as the menorah or tree of life when he stated, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). Moses taught that the tree of life provided the way for Adam and Eve to live forever (Moses 4:28; and Alma 12:21, 42:3). Jesus took that role as He became the only means for humanity to have immortal life; “[It] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10).

**The Veil.** Continuing our walk through sacred space, the architecture successively led towards entering the presence of the Lord, making the veil the gateway to heaven or the presence of the Lord.<sup>xxviii</sup> It would have been a precious and rare sight that even the priests of Aaron rarely beheld. The Lord commanded Moses, “Thou shalt make

a veil [*sic*] of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches. . . the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy” (Exodus 26:31-33). The tabernacle’s veil was made from elegant linen, yet in Solomon’s Temple, he separated the two rooms with two olive wood doors. The gold covered wood incorporated “carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees” (1 Kings 6:32). If we had walked through the second temple, we would have seen a veil made from Babylonian fabric with beautiful embroidered stars and “*image[s] of the universe*.”<sup>xxxix</sup> The veil from both the tabernacle and the Israelite temples included an emblematic depiction of the creation or paradise.

Ancient temples also represented the order of the universe and the veil became another place to illustrate the cosmos.<sup>xxx</sup> The second temple had the heavenly constellations creatively embroidered into the veil. Josephus, who was from priestly descent (and may have seen the veil himself), remembered that the second temple veil was a fabric “curtain, embroidered with blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful . . . Nor was this mixture of colours without its mystical interpretation, but was a kind of *image of the universe*; for by the scarlet seemed to be enigmatically signified *fire*, by the fine linen the earth, by the blue the air, and by the purple the sea.”<sup>xxxi</sup> Josephus thought the veil conjured the constellations as it “also had embroidered on it all that was mystical in the heavens.”<sup>xxxii</sup> The heavenly veil provided a cosmic perspective in keeping with Hugh Nibley’s description of a temple as an observatory: “That is what a *templum* is—a place where you take your bearings on things.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> Israel then goes to their temple because, “beyond the veil are the heavens.”<sup>xxxiv</sup>

The symbolism surrounding the veil as an entrance to the presence of the Lord played an important theme in covenant theology.<sup>xxxv</sup> For those who believe in a life before and after mortality, the veil imagery extended to the first and third estates of life. They see the veil representing the passage between the premortal, mortal and post-mortal existence. In this way, the physical veil in the Holy Place represented the spiritual veil that separates mortals from God. Yet the *most* sacred space was on the other side of the veil, God’s presence filled the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:22). Ancient Israelites believed that if they prepared and made covenants and offered vicarious sacrifices for purification, when they died, they could pass through the mortal veil into the presence of God and immortality (Enos 1:27; Mosiah 16:10; Alma 5:15; 3 Ne 28:8; Moses 1:39).

The New Testament synoptic Gospels illustrate another powerful symbol of the veil. At Jesus’ death, the synoptic Gospels each record: “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; with minor changes, Luke 23:45).<sup>xxxvi</sup> The image of the rent veil has many symbols including Christ’s triumph over death. The rent veil physically opened the way to the Holy of Holies and represented the opportunity to enter into God’s presence. Similarly, Christ’s victory over death opened the path to the presence of God. This announces beautiful symbolism of the Lord’s availability, death, and resurrection. When the veil was rent, it unlocked the way to the presence of the Lord. Righteous Israel could thereafter enter into God’s presence and receive exaltation.

The book of Hebrews adds an important facet to temple veil imagery, connecting it with the imagery of Jesus’ body. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Hebrews 10:19–20). Through His atonement, the Redeemer provided a way for the descendants of Adam and Eve to repent, partake of the tree of life, and pass through the veil to live forever *without* their sins (see Genesis 3:22–24; Alma 12:21–29). As the Anointed One, Jesus alone had the authority to open this veil. Now, not only the reigning high priest, but all humanity may return through the veil into the presence of God, through the Atonement of Christ.

***The Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies.*** The most sacred space on earth was left undisturbed except once a year on *Yom Kippur*, when the one reigning high priest walked through the veil as a mediator for Israel, bringing a blood offering before God. The most holy place represented the throne room of God. Exodus 25:22 describes, “there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims.” The Bible offers similar descriptions of God’s throne in heaven, as the Psalmist described, “The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men” (Psalms 11:4; also see Zechariah 6:13; Jeremiah 17:12). Other places include God’s throne flanked by angels (Isaiah 6:1-2). God’s presence sanctified and hallowed the Holy of Holies.

The room was a perfect gold cube. Moses’ tabernacle had only one furnishing, “the ark of the testimony” (also called, “the ark of the covenant”). During the time of Solomon’s Temple the Bible referred to the Holy of Holies as, “the oracle” (1 Kings 6:31). But in Solomon’s temple included two large olive wood angels covered in gold. They stood fifteen feet high, with seven-and-a-half foot wing span spreading open to touch the outer walls of the sanctuary, and joining to touch each other in the middle (1 Kings 6:24-27). Under this angelic protection, “the priests brought in the ark of the testimony of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims” (1 Kings 8:6). In Herod’s Temple the room was empty. After the destruction of the second temple devout Jews prayed facing where the Holy of Holies once stood.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

**The Ark of the Covenant.** If the Holy of Holies was the throne room, then the Ark of the Covenant represented God's throne itself. It was a golden box filled with symbols of God's power as witnessed in Israel's past. The Lord commanded Moses to place "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" inside the sacred ark (Hebrews 9:4). Each of the three relics hearkened to the Lord's miraculous power to save and direct his people. The manna or "the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat" was the miraculous source of nourishment for the children of Israel during their forty years in the wilderness (Exodus 16:15). Aaron's rod was a symbol of God's priesthood authority. During their wanderings, questions arose within the tribe of Levi about Aaron's leadership capabilities. God gave a visible answer when all those contesting brought forth their staffs and "the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds" (Numbers 17:8). The tables of the covenant represented God's law. After rejecting the higher law, the Lord instructed Moses to make a second set of stone tablets: "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables" (Exodus 34:1).

These three items coincide with the three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place. The shewbread corresponds to the manna, Aaron's budding rod that produced almonds compared with the almond branched menorah, and the incense or prayer that reached up to God in the Holy Place is answered with God's commandments in the Holy of Holies. In the Holy Place each of the three was manmade, but in the Holy of Holies, divinity intervened with the creation of the three sacred relics.

In light of the early Christian writings and Nephi's counsel to "liken all scriptures unto us, . . . for our profit and learning," it is also possible to see the articles inside the ark symbolizing God's gifts to His chosen people (1 Nephi 19:23). The tablets spoke of God's commandments that made up the requirements for that covenant. Aaron's budding rod represented the miraculous sign of authority. The manna spoke to God's gracious blessings given to those who kept his commandments. These items can also represent how one comes to the throne of God—by partaking of the bread of life, honoring priesthood covenants and authority, and living God's commandments. Perhaps the most significant symbol of the ark and the covenant was the promised Messiah. As the source of the covenant, he told the Nephites, "I am the law" (3 Nephi 15:9).

The early Christian father, Irenaeus (c. 180) connected the ark with the Lord's body; "The ark is declared to be a type of the body of Christ which is both pure and immaculate. . . Just as the ark was gilded both inside and out with pure gold, so likewise was the body of Christ pure and resplendent."<sup>xxxviii</sup> Irenaeus' earlier writings also highlighted the role of the ark and the covenant in the temple; "The entire tabernacle of witness was made for the sake of the ark of the covenant. Finally Tertullian (c. 207) appeared concerned with the angelic carvings on the ark, "The golden cherubim and seraphim were purely an ornament in the figured fashion of the ark. It was adapted to ornamentation for reasons totally remote from all condition of idolatry."<sup>xxxix</sup> He stops short of seeing those angels as shadows of other angels at a place of mercy that we next examine.

**Mercy Seat.** If the Ark and the Covenant was the throne, then the mercy seat was place for God to sit. Margaret Barker translates the Mercy Seat as "place of atonement."<sup>xli</sup> The Lord told Moses to build the golden mercy seat with an angel on each end: "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof" (Exodus 25:17-19).

They carved the angels with wings: "the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat" (Exodus 25:20). These wings seem to fit into the scriptural symbolism of "power, to move, to act" (D&C 77:4). Some have interpreted these golden angels in the Holy of Holies to represent heavenly guardians or symbolize the angels described around the throne of God (Isaiah 6:2; Revelation 5:11; 7:11). Another commentary saw this as God revealing His traits of mercy and the justice of the law.<sup>xlii</sup> And yet another scriptural interpretation looks at the two angels as two witnesses or messengers of the covenant.<sup>xliii</sup>

The special golden lid or "mercy seat," represented Christ's precious divine gift of mercy. The Hebrew word for "mercy seat / *kapporeth*" shares roots the Hebrew word for "atonement / *kaphar*: to cover, purge, make an atonement, or reconciliation." Interestingly, the Latin roots of reconciliation speak of the mercy seat. "*Re*" means "again;" "*con*" means "with"; and "*cilia / sella*," means "seat." Thus, reconciliation is literally "to sit again with."<sup>xliiii</sup> With the mercy seat in place, the ark and the testimony became a symbol of God's divine attributes. Some prefer to translate "mercy seat / *kapporeth*," as "propitiatory, covering, or seat of atonement."<sup>xliiii</sup> The mercy seat became a meeting place for the God of the Old Testament and his high priest. The "mercy seat" spoke of God's throne as a place of mercy. On the day of atonement, the high priest sprinkled blood seven times on the mercy seat for an atonement for himself and his people (Leviticus 16:14-15).

The mercy seat has special significance as we look at its symbolic fulfillment in the New Testament. Both the empty tomb and the mercy seat (which were both places of at-one-ment) speak of the Lord Omnipotent's role as our Savior and Redeemer. At the seat of atonement God promised to meet humanity, "There I will meet with thee, and I

will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children” (Exodus 25:22). Through the death of the Lord Jesus, a means for perfect atonement and reconciliation occurred. The tomb and place of the resurrection becomes the means by which God can meet with humanity again. From this perspective, the overriding focus of God’s covenant is found in the mercy of His atonement and in the gift of resurrection.

Furthermore, we can find expanded meaning by looking at the mercy seat from the perspective of the Lord’s passion. The Exodus description of the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat can prefigure Jesus’ empty tomb. The Gospel of John described the scene, “Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain” (John 20:12). The empty tomb with angels on either end takes on a whole new appreciation of the symbolism of the mercy seat. The mercy seat foreshadowed the place of Jesus’ resurrection. With the two angels seated on either end, both sacred places focus on the empty place between the angels. That space where the Lord’s body lay, and rose again, is certainly the most merciful seat on earth.

Yet, by the time of Solomon’s Temple “there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb” (1 Kings 8:9). Unfortunately, by the time of the second temple, the Holy of Holies was a mere shell—no ark, nor manna, no budding rod, no tables of the law, no book of the covenant was stored therein. Worse still, there was no evidence of God’s presence through the glorious *shekhinah*, or Spirit, that shone as a cloud by day and a pillar by night over the tabernacle and at Solomon’s dedication (1 Kings 8:10-11).<sup>xlv</sup> The priests went through the ritual actions according to the Law of Moses, but as evidenced by the loss of the *shekhinah*, some of the glory had been lost.

### Christians:

**Catholic:** The Roman Church refers to a *temple* as a, “*templum*,” or template used to marked off by boundaries; a space to separate profane. On rare occasions, Catholics refer their places of worship as a temple, but usually temples are Christian bodies as Paul taught: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you” (1 Corin 6:19-20). Catholics’ most holy buildings are Basilicas—designated such after a Pope performs a Mass there.

**Protestants** hold tightly to the biblical promise that members are unequivocally temples of the Holy Spirit. Temples belong in the Bible, but rarely do they refer to a church building to worship in as a temple. At the time of Joseph Smith, the most popular religion in the 1830s (the Reformed Tradition- Presbyterian, Congregational, etc.) emphasized the Spirit’s work of sanctification to transform the body into a temple (Charles Hodge).

### Restoration

Seventeen-year-old Joseph Smith began hearing about temples as early as Moroni’s visit on September 21, 1823. Next while translating the Book of Mormon temples were referenced often (2 Nephi, Jacob, Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi). In 1831 the Lord commanded him to build a temple in Jackson Co., Missouri. The second temple he was commanded to oversee was in Kirtland, Ohio (D&C 88).

The Lord commanded Joseph in D&C 88 to include: “incomings and outgoings in the name of the Lord and salutations with holy hands uplifted, we find ourselves in a very special society; here we are really entering into things.” He also saw the temple in vision and was told that the Saints would be endowed with power in that building. We see that first when the washings and anointings were received and again with all the spiritual outpouring at the Dedication March 27-April 3, 1836 (D&C 109-110). For more see my “Come Follow Me” handouts on D&C 88, and 109-110 for “Hard Questions in Church History” on [BookofMormonCentral.org](http://BookofMormonCentral.org).

**MORE SOURCES:** Hugh W. Nibley, "Christian Envy of the Temple," in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 391-434; Nibley, "What Is a Temple?" in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 355-90; Hugh W. Nibley, "The Hierocentric State" *Western Political Quarterly* 4 (June 1951): 226-53; Packer, *Holy Temple*; and Talmage, *House of the Lord*. Donald W. Parry, Stephen D. Ricks, John W. Welch, *A Bibliography on Temples of the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1991). Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*. Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (NYC: Macmillan, 1992), vol 4.

### Stephanie Glaser

#### Terminology

To appear “before the Lord” indicates a temple experience.

The word “temple” comes from Latin “*templum*”, meaning “space cut off, sacred space”; “a space in the sky or on the earth marked out by the augur for observing birds in flight”. (*Langenscheidt Shorter Latin Dictionary*, 1966)

Augurs divined the future or interpreted the gods’ will in the flight patterns of birds.

A *templum* was a kind of observatory, a place where one got one’s bearings (Nibley, *Meaning*, 15).



### The Mountain of the Lord's House

The cosmic mountain is a prominent theme in the Ancient Near East.

Mountains are associated with the primordial creation: the primal hill that emerged from the waters of creation.

Garden of Eden: there was a mountain in Eden, from which the 4 rivers flowed.

Mountains are a physical reality in Israel. Its landscape is hilly and fertile: "the land of milk and honey". Milk comes from the livestock that lives in the valleys, honey from the bees that live in the mountains.

Mountains provide a refuge and a defense from enemies.

Mountain heights are associated with divinity and authority.

The Brother of Jared, Moses, Elijah, and Nephi ascended mountains to talk with the Lord.

### Temples in the Ancient World

In the ancient world sacred space was clearly demarcated from secular space.

The temple was the literal center of a civilization: it was the hierocentric point (the sacred center) around which everything was organized. It was also considered the navel (omphalos) of the earth.

The temple was the center of learning: art, science, astronomy, math, geometry, sculpture, poetry, drama, music, were all associated with ancient temples.

Temples were also a place of writing and records, including genealogical, were kept there.

According to Hugh Nibley, "There is no part of our civilization which doesn't have its rise in the temple" (*Meaning*, 25).

Temples were observatories, followed astronomical data, and were scale models of the universe.

---

<sup>i</sup> Sara E. Karesh, Mitchell M. Hurvitz *Encyclopedia of Judaism* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2006), xiv. By In the third century, Jewish rabbis collected older documents and compiled them into a holy book called, *The Mishnah*. It focused on ideas spanning the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. The Jewish scholars completed their redaction of the oral traditions or the "oral torah" in 220 AD.

<sup>ii</sup> *Mishnah, Kelim*, 1:6-1:9. The Mishnah also includes *why* each place is more or less holy. For example, "The land of Israel is holier than all other lands. And what of **its** holiness? For they bring from it the omer, and the first fruits and the two loaves which they do not bring from all lands."

<sup>iii</sup> Margaret Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: Holy Trinity Church, 2004), 17.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, the quote continues, "After this there are problems, because the Hebrew and Greek text of Exodus diverge at this point, but the pattern is clear enough for the first four days, and this pattern was long remembered."

<sup>v</sup> David B. Galbraith, D. Kelly Ogden, and Andrew C. Skinner, *Jerusalem: The Eternal City* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1996), 190. Between the court of the gentiles and the court of women the Jews built a stone partition, called the *soreg*. It stood six-cubits high (or between nine and eleven feet) with a warning in Greek, Latin and Aramaic: "No Gentile shall enter inward of the partition and barrier surrounding the Temple and whosoever is caught shall be responsible to himself for his subsequent death."

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, 39

<sup>vii</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple and its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ* (London, England: Religious Tract Society, 1874), 159.

<sup>viii</sup> Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols*, 34

<sup>ix</sup> Just as a horn represented strength in the Bible, we can also find the opposite. When a people's horn was broken, they were in a weakened state, as described in Jeremiah 48:25, "The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD;" and Lamentations 2:3, "He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy." Also see Amos 3:14, "I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground."

<sup>x</sup> William P. Beck, *Discovering Jesus in the Old Testament* (USA: Xulon Press, 2007), 152. "The acacia is one of two trees common in the desert. (The other is the terebinth.) Thus, the ark of acacia and pure gold foreshadowed Jesus' humanity and deity."

<sup>xi</sup> Daniel H. Ludlow, ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), .332; "In covenant making, God takes the initiative with a conditional promise, specifying attainable blessings and setting the terms for people to receive them. Sometimes a sign is given to commemorate the pact, like the tables of the covenant (Deut. 9:9-11). Revelations (Jeremiah 11:1-5) and miracles (Deuteronomy 5:1-6) sometimes accompany covenants. One enters the covenant, usually through a ritual, a visible sign. Blood sacrifices ("the blood of the covenant," Exodus 24:8), the "salt covenant" (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5), the circumcision of boys (Acts 7:8), baptism (D&C 22:1; Mosiah 18:7-11), the Sacrament (Heb. 8:6; 3 Ne. 18:1-14), the conferral of the priesthood with its "oath and covenant" (D&C 84:33-42), marriage (D&C 132) and other temple rites, all these revealed rituals are called sacraments or ordinances, which have been given as covenants."



---

<sup>xii</sup> A capital fits on top of the column and is often a decorated stone. Hiram of Tyre became a chief contractor and brought the needed wood from his country to build the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:7-11).

<sup>xiii</sup> [Rachel Hachlili](#), *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Diaspora (Netherlands: Brill, 1998)*, 208. Synagogue mosaics include “. . . symbols of immortality, the palm trees as the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge . . .”

<sup>xiv</sup> Edersheim, *The Temple*, 156. In addition to the one time in a priest’s life when he was chosen to light the incense, a priest may also serve as an assistant of the one chosen and enter the Holy Place to clear the ashes from the altar.

<sup>xv</sup> *Mishnah, Tamid*, 5-7. Josephus, in *Contra Apion*, Ap II. 8, 108, speaks of four families of priests returning to Jerusalem from Babylon each containing over 5,000 men, for a total of approximately 20,000 priests available to serve in the second temple (a mere fraction of those priests who remained in Babylon or the Diaspora). In order to keep the temple sacrifices running smoothly, every priest was summoned to serve in the temple for a week every six months. Additionally, during the three major Israelite pilgrimage feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of the Tabernacles or Booths), every priest returned to serve at the temple to manage the enormity of sacrifices and other temple needs. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1969), 198-206.

<sup>xvi</sup> The Old and New Testament refers to the entire Temple as the house of prayer, not exclusively the Holy Place. See Isaiah 56:7; Matt 21:11; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46; and in modern day revelation, D&C 109: 8, 16.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Mishnah, Tamid* 5:2-6:3 describes the assignments that correlated to each “lot.” The priests met times in the “Hall of Polished Stones” to choose “lots” in the morning temple service. The lots were used in order to select which priests would perform the special daily temple duties.

MORNING LOTS (to be started before dawn)

1) Cleanse the altar and to prepare its fires for the burnt animal offering.

2) Sacrifice the lamb, toss the blood, cleanse the candlestick and altar incense, and carry the animal’s limbs to the ramp.

3) Burn incense and priestly prayer

4) Places the meat offering on the altar

EVENING LOTS (at the 9<sup>th</sup> hour or 3:00 p.m.)

Each priest had their own “lot,” stick, or token, that they placed in a dish. When the dish was shaken, whichever lot fell out, was assumed God’s choice and became the chosen lot (Edersheim, *The Temple*, 165).

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>xix</sup> Robert L. Millet, ed., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book), 203. In this volume, Joseph McConkie contributed, “That there is a common symbolism between the Sabbath ritual in which the priests were to eat the shewbread and the ordinance of the sacrament, as introduced by Christ, seems apparent.”

<sup>xx</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 323;

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Co., 1962), 201.

<sup>xxi</sup> The Gospel of John does not mention the introduction of the Lord’s sacrament of bread and wine during the Last Supper. However, it includes the bread of life sermon which provides meaning to the same sacrament theology and similar application to the disciples.

<sup>xxii</sup> During the Last Supper, the synoptic Gospels describe the bread used for the first sacrament as the Passover unleavened bread or *afikomen*. The *afikomen* reminded the Jews of the unleavened dough that the Israelites carried in knapsacks when they left Egypt. During the Passover Seder, three pieces of unleavened bread are wrapped in a linen sack. The ritual *yachatz* or “to break” became a ceremony where the middle piece of the three unleavened portions were broken and then hidden. Chiam Miller, compiled, *Haggadah* (Brooklyn, NY: Kol Menchem, 2008), 27. Some families saw the hidden piece representing the hidden Messiah. When someone found the hidden piece it restored the hope that their Promised Messiah would come out of hiding. Janet and Joe Hales, *A Christ-centered Easter* (Salt Lake City, UT: Eagle Gate, 2002). Following the finding of the hidden *afikomen*, the child or person who found it received a ransom, usually when the father redeemed it by paying the with a gift or money. After the meal, the “cup of Redemption” was drunk. But when Jesus broke the bread, He did not hide it. At the Lord’s last Supper, He also broke the bread, but He did not hide it. Instead, “He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). And he repeated a similar statement with the last cup of wine (Luke 22:20).

<sup>xxiii</sup> John W. Welch, ed., *ReExploring the Book of Mormon*, (Provo, UT: FARMS and Deseret Book, 1992), 288, “To the Nephites, the sacrament possibly also seemed related to several ancient Israelite antecedents. For example, their bread was eaten in remembrance of the body that Jesus had ‘shown unto’ them (3 Nephi 18:7), thus recording a further dimension beyond the ‘giving’ and ‘breaking’ symbolism in the New Testament. Since the shewbread of the Israelite temple was known as *lechem happanim*, the ‘bread of the face [or presence] of [God],’ the Nephites may have connected the bread of the body ‘shewn unto’ them (1st ed., Book of Mormon) and the shewbread of their temple. The shewbread and the manna kept in a gold bowl in the ancient Israelite temple have been recognized as early Jewish antecedents to the Christian sacrament.”

- <sup>xxiv</sup> Adele Berlin, [\*The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion\* \(England, Oxford University Press, 2011\), 486.](#)
- <sup>xxv</sup> Jo Milgr0m, “The Dura Synagogue and Visual Midrash” in Paul R. Cheesman and C. Wilfred Griggs, eds., *Scriptures for the Modern World* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984), 38. “A ubiquitous symbol of the need for spiritual light after the destruction, it turned up on sarcophagi, coins, lamps, gold, glass, mosaics, paintings, and later on manuscripts. This Tree of Light was the Tree of Life; it became a metaphor for Torah. . . . In the Semitic world, for example, sanctity of place is frequently marked by the presence of a living tree, the archetypal expression of which is the tree of life and the tree of knowledge in the garden at the world’s center. Since the tree was associated with such life power, the tree is the place where the worshiper would likely seek the presence of God” (38, 43). Also see Exodus 25:31-40 for the symbolism described by Moses.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 472; Many trees became associated with the tree of life, including the fig, olive and date palm.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> John of Damascus, “Exposition of the Orthodox Faith,” book IV, chapter XI, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers—Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), volume 9, part 2, 80.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> John M. Lundquist, “The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of the State,” in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald Parry (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1994), 185.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, V, 5:4.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1975), 153. Nibley described Egyptian temples that provided an “exact prediction was all-important to vindicate not only the knowledge of the priesthood, but also the order of the universe and man’s proper adjustment to it.”
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, V, 5:4.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, edited by Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: F.A.R.M.S., 1992), 19.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Hugh Nibley, *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, 2nd ed. (2004; reprint, Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 65.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> The apostle Paul discussed the importance of other veils in ordinances and explains why female worshipers veil their heads during special prayers (1 Corinthians 11:1-16). See my article in *Interpreter* on Christian women’s veils. <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/unveiling-womens-veils-of-authority/>
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> The RSV used the translation “curtain” in Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, and Luke 23:45, although in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint, LXX), the same Greek word is used for “veil.”
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Judith Hauptman, *Rereading the Mishnah: A New Approach to Ancient Jewish Texts* (Germany: Gulde Druck, 2005), 4.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> David W. Bercot, ed., *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publ; 1998), 36.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xl</sup> Margaret Barker, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants* (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2000), 13.
- <sup>xli</sup> Johann Peter Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Exodus, Leviticus* (New York: Schribner, Armstrong and Co, 1876 ), 115; “The two cherubim [are] symbols of God’s righteous dominion in the world, proceeding out of God’s gracious will and the law, in order to maintenance of the justice which is represented by the union of the ark and the cover. The whole is accordingly the place where God reveals Himself in His glory under the conditions accordingly the place place where God reveals Himself in His glory under the conditions according to which the high priest is to appear before Him.” (115).
- <sup>xlii</sup> Sarah Elizabeth Peck, [\*The Path to the Throne of God: The Sanctuary Or the Gospel according to Moses\* \(Brushton, NY: TeachServices, 2011\), 198.](#)
- <sup>xliiii</sup> Russell M. Nelson, *Perfection Pending, and Other Favorite Discourses* (SLC, UT: Deseret Bk, 1998), 165-166.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Joseph Fielding McConkie, Donald Parry, *A Guide to Scriptural Symbols* (SLC, UT: Bookcraft, 1990), 83.
- <sup>xlv</sup> Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4: 1 Kings to Malachi* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1987), 480–481, “Shekhinah is a rabbinic term that looks back on Old Testament times and refers to the presence of God’s glory at such historic manifestations as Exodus 33:18, 22; Deuteronomy 5:22, 24; and 1 Kings 8:10-13. This majestic presence of God descended to ‘dwell’ among men. Israel constructed the tabernacle in order that this divine presence might dwell on earth and enter the Holy of Holies. The Shekhinah was often identified in rabbinic literature with the Holy Spirit and was frequently depicted in the form of a dove.”