THE TABERNACLE PRE-FIGURED

Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus

By


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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University’s Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate’s own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) accounts of Genesis and Exodus in relation to cosmic mountain ideology, demonstrating in each narrative the cosmogonic pattern: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship, and arguing that these narratives function to explain the logic and necessity of the tabernacle cultus, temples being the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain. While cosmic mountain ideology is an acknowledged backdrop to the religions of the ancient Near East, and to the tabernacle/temple cultus of Israel in particular, sufficient attention to its function in these biblical narratives has been wanting. The cosmic mountain will be seen to serve as a symbol for approaching God so that the idea of a “gate liturgy” (in a similar fashion to that of Psalms 15 and 24: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?”) is highlighted in each narrative: Adam and Eve must descend the mount upon their transgression, making the return ascent in worship a key feature in the drama leading up to the tabernacle account (and, perhaps, beyond); Noah, being found just and blameless in his generation, is thus allowed entrance into the ark, something of a “prototype” of the tabernacle; and Moses alone is permitted ascent to the summit of Mount Sinai, a role later mimicked in the instructions for the high priest’s annual entrance into the holy of holies. To dwell in the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus thus presents something of a full-circle, albeit mediated, return to the original intent of creation.
Completing this dissertation has been an intellectual journey trekked amidst that other crossing, through the wilderness of this age. Expectedly, the one who arrives—after the trials and ordeals, along with the manifest grace of God through them all—is not quite the same person who departed. The urgency and exigencies of the latter journey oft (and justly) prohibiting my full devotion to the former, I am keenly aware of its deficiencies, and yet still hopeful that what is profitable is so to such an extent the reader will find the travails of the travel worth embarking upon.

Throughout this labor, the happy providence of having Gordon J. Wenham as my thesis supervisor has been a constant source of thanksgiving and gratitude—it should be obvious, then, the aforementioned deficiencies are merely the result of my not having incorporated his counsel sufficiently.

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Finally, I thank and praise the One who having descended as the Suffering Slave has now ascended on high, leading captivity captive, to give his people the greatest gift; the One who has opened a new and living way into the Holiest through the veil of his rent flesh, the Christ—unto him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all glory.
מהדרונא מפקדות תשובה
איגו דר אגדות צלהות
זוח שם משקוף

מתקהל בשאר גיק
אזכות אגרות
וור משמור לגדת
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# Table of Contents

## Chapter One: Introduction to Cosmic Mountain Ideology
- I. The Cosmic Mountain
  - A. In the Ancient Near East
  - B. In Ancient Israel
- II. The Cosmic Waters
  - A. In the Ancient Near East
  - B. In Ancient Israel
  - C. The Judicial River Ordeal
- III. The Gate Liturgy
- IV. Scholarly Contribution
  - A. Brief Literature Review
  - B. Cosmic Mountain Ideology and Biblical Studies

## Chapter Two: The Creation Account
- I. Through the Waters: Creation as Water Ordeal
  - A. God as Water-Controller
  - B. Creation as Earth’s (and Man’s) Deliverance
- II. To the Mountain: To Dwell in the Divine Presence
  - A. The Cosmic Temple: Genesis 1
  - B. The Holy of Holies: Genesis 2-3
- III. For Worship: The Liturgical Telos of Creation
  - A. Worship as the Telos of Creation
  - B. Humanity as Priesthood/ Adam as Homo Liturgicus
  - C. The Gate Liturgy: Humanity’s Profound Descent
- IV. The Tabernacle Pre-figured (or Creation Re-figured)
  - A. Experiencing Eden
  - B. Re-Figuring Creation

## Chapter Three: The Deluge Account
- I. Through the Waters: The Deluge as Judicial Ordeal
  - A. God as Righteous Judge
  - B. The Deluge as Rebirth
- II. To the Mountain: Sanctuary Symbolism
  - A. Ararat as Cosmic Mountain
  - B. The Ark as Temple
- III. For Worship: Who Shall Ascend?
  - A. Noah as “The Righteous Man”
  - B. The Gate Liturgy
  - C. The Priestly Sacrifice of Cosmic Atonement

## Chapter Four: The Exodus
- I. Through the Waters: Exod 14
  - A. Death to Life-in-Egypt
  - B. The Waters of Creation and the “Rebirth” of Israel
- II. To the Mountain for Worship: Exod 19-24
  - A. Mount Sinai as Cosmic Mountain
  - B. The Gate Liturgy
C. The Altar and the Divine Presence

III. The Cultus of Israel: Exod 25-40
   A. The Centrality of the Tabernacle Cultus
   B. From Creation to the Tabernacle
   C. From the Ark of Noah to the Tabernacle
   D. From Mount Sinai to the Tabernacle
   E. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood
   F. To Dwell in the Divine Presence

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Cosmic Mountain Ideology

I. The Cosmic Mountain
   A. In the Ancient Near East
      1. Cosmic Mountain Characteristics
      2. From Mountain to Temple
      3. Vertical Typology
   B. In Ancient Israel
      1. Eden
      2. Sinai
      3. Zion

II. The Cosmic Waters
   A. In the Ancient Near East
   B. In Ancient Israel
   C. The Judicial River Ordeal

III. The Gate Liturgy

IV. Scholarly Contribution
   A. Brief Literature Review
   B. Cosmic Mountain Ideology and Biblical Studies

Introduction to Cosmic Mountain Ideology

INTRODUCTION

Our thesis seeks to demonstrate how the creation, deluge, and exodus narratives prefigure the tabernacle cultus of Israel by means of cosmic mountain ideology. Simply put, given that the cosmic mountain informed the temple cults of the ancient Near East, including that of Israel, then one might expect mountain narratives to contain temple symbolism. Approached canonically, the mountain narratives of the Hebrew Bible that precede the establishment of the tabernacle/temple cultus may be said to prefigure or anticipate that cultus. While a chapter will be dedicated to an exegesis and literary reading for each particular narrative in light of cosmic mountain ideology,\(^1\) this chapter will serve to introduce the concept itself.

\(^1\) While receiving gladly the contributions of source-critical scholars, our approach to the text will be in its final form, canonical and literary, believing with Bauer that our aim should be clarifying "weshalb der Text so dasteht, wie es dasteht" (U.F.W. Bauer, *Alle diese Worte: Impulse zur Schriftauslegung aus Amsterdam. Expliziert an der Schiffmeierzählung in Exodus 13, 17-14, 31* [Europäische Hochschulschriften 23/442; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991] 209). B.S. Childs correctly observes that the "final form of the story has an integrity of its own. It is not simply pieces of fragments put together, but it forms a meaningful composition which is different from the sum of its parts" (*The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster Press, 1974] 227).
Defining Cosmic Mountain Ideology – Beginning with a definition of terms, the cosmic mountain concept involves, broadly, the following interrelated ideas: the mountain is sacred, the dwelling place of the gods, the intersection between heaven and earth, the central and highest place of the world (*axis mundi*), and the foundation and navel of creation (*omphalos*). We use “ideology” to refer to a comprehensive vision or complex of ideas (whether doctrine, myth, etc.) that functions paradigmatically within a culture, informing its political and/or religious institutions. Thus, cosmic mountain ideology particularly refers to the complex of ideas surrounding the cosmic mountain that paradigmatically informs political and/or religious institutions. Because of the interrelated ideas involved with the cosmic mountain (again, its being sacred, the dwelling place of the gods, etc.), mountains often became the sites of temples. Mountains, that is, became the stage for cultic rituals, temples themselves being architectural embodiments of the cosmic mountain, exemplified most obviously by the ziggurat structure.

While the cosmic mountain idea is found throughout the ancient Near East, it would however be a fundamental error to assume a flat homogeneity regarding the cosmic mountain concept across
ANE cultures, and particularly across the divide between ancient Israel and the rest of the ANE kingdoms.5

Cosmology and Cosmogony – Cosmic mountain ideology may be conceived as encompassing a particular cosmology at its core,6 a world-mountain surrounded by the primeval waters. In point of fact, the cosmic mountain, with its paradisiacal summit reaching into the divine abode “so that a mortal can aspire to ascend to heaven,”7 and surrounded by the waters of chaos from which it arose and underneath which lie the depths of Sheol, is more accurately comprehended as based upon a cosmogony. Considered the omphalos, the mountain’s sacral nature is bound up with the lore of its being the first to rise out of the chaos waters during creation. Cosmic mountain ideology, then, is shaped by a cosmogonic paradigm, involving a participation in this primordial event of creation so that it also includes sacred time as well as sacred space (archetypal geography). As such, it is more of a mythopoeic8 concept, speaking “impressionistically about

4 “ANE” will be used in place of the adjectival phrase: “ancient Near Eastern.”
5 There is, to be sure, considerable overlap, but the need for nuance nevertheless remains, with differences between cultural ideas often being more significant than similarities. Cf. R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972) 190-92. See also R.L. Cohn’s caution regarding the imposition of universal archetypes rather than depending upon a culture’s concrete historical experience for understanding its religion (The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies [AAR Studies in Religion 23; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981] 4-5). S. Terrien, e.g., points to the link with/ memory of historical events as distinguishing Israel’s cultus from those of the surrounding cultures (The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978] 20)
8 The term “mythopoeic” is utilized simply to defined Israel’s use of ancient Near Eastern mythological language as a helpful metaphor. Similarly, N. Sarna writes “it is highly significant that the biblical fragments of a cosmogonic myth have survived solely as picturesque metaphors exclusively in the language of poetry, something which strongly indicates a minimal impact upon the religious consciousness of Israel. Never once are these creatures accorded divine attributes, nor is there anywhere a suggestion that their struggle against God in any way challenged God’s sovereign rule in the universe. ...They practically always appear as a literary device expressing the evil deeds and punishment of the human wicked in terms of the mythical conflict of God with the rebellious forces of primeval chaos...God’s decisive overthrow of His mythical primeval enemies is invoked as an assurance of His mighty power for the redemption of Israel through a like victory over the present historical enemies of the nation” (Understanding
such matters rather than empirically,”¹⁰ and less of (what is sometimes construed as) a naïve or pre-scientific cosmological understanding.¹⁰

**Cosmogonic/Cultic Pattern** – Our thesis will develop a particular pattern in Scripture of going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship: the earth is delivered through the primal waters and Adam is brought to the Eden mount (Gen 1-3); Noah is delivered through the deluge waters and brought to the Ararat mount (Gen 6-9); Israel is delivered through the sea waters and brought to Sinai’s mount (Exod 14-24, etc.). Though not developed here, this significant pattern¹¹ may also be traced in Exod 2-3, where Moses, foreshadowing the exodus of Israel, is

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¹¹ While M.S. Smith has suggested a “pilgrimage pattern” is determinative for the literary structure of Exodus (*The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* [JSOTSup 239; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997]) G. Davies, for a number of reasons (e.g., the journey account is portrayed more as a military campaign than a pilgrimage), calls Smith’s argument into question (“The Theology of Exodus,” *pp 137-52 in In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements,* E. Ball, ed. [JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 149-51). Davies, conceding that pilgrimage is a *motif* in the narrative, denies that it comprises a pattern (see his fn 28). *If* justified, *going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship would*
delivered through the waters of the Nile and brought to Mount Horeb; in the cosmic journey portrayed in the Song of the Sea (Exod 15); and, more broadly, in the general ensuing history of Israel: brought through the waters of the Jordan River to Mount Zion/Jerusalem for worship (Solomon’s temple). Furthermore, the todah psalms, often describing the individual’s deliverance via the archetypal geography of being rescued from the death of Sheol and brought to the heights of the divine Presence at the temple, may also be said to conform to this pattern.

Because this pattern constitutes cosmogonic mimesis (with, for example, the waters of the sea crossing in Exod 14 being poetically—and theologically—related to the cosmic waters of creation), this pattern will be seen to signify, among other things, a new creation.

Fundamentally, this cosmic mountain pattern functions symbolically, or in a cultic manner, as an approach to the divine Presence, and should be understood, again, not as mere pre-scientific

prove such an organizing principle to constitute a pattern. A weakness in Smith’s pattern, according to Davies, is that it terminates at Sinai, and our pattern may be said to do the same. However, this pattern in effect starts over with the trek to the Promise Land: through the waters of the Jordan River → Mount Zion → for worship (Solomon’s temple).

While many years go by between the Nile deliverance and the removal of Moses’ sandals before the burning bush, the actual narrative time is rather brief. For the distinction between narrative or discourse time and narrated time, cf. J.P. Fokkelman, Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 35-37.

L. Thompson, Introducing Biblical Literature: A More Fantastic Country (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978) 102, suggests the Sea and Jordan River crossings may literally collapse the wilderness period so that, in a sense, Israel exits Egypt through the waters and enters Canaan.


Because Scripture presents this pattern as a historical event, whose meaning is bound up with its providential mimesis of the primordial event, any canonically sensitive approach will interpret the exodus in light of creation rather than, or at least prior to, vice versa.

cosmology, but rather via a vertical typology whereby an earthly mountain symbolizes the
heavenly abode of the deity (cf. the נַחַל tabnit of Exod 25:9).17

The Tabernacle/Temple Cultus of Israel — Because temples are the architectural embodiment of
the cosmic mountain, then it stands to reason that mountain narratives canonically preceding the
tabernacle/temple may serve to foreshadow the cultus of Israel—if, indeed, it may be
demonstrated the mountain in question is to be understood as “cosmic,” entailing an approach to
the divine Presence. Now the relation of cultus to cosmic mountain may be seen in one of the
great questions of Israel’s cult: “Who may ascend the mountain of YHwh?” (cf. Pss 15, 24).
From one perspective, our thesis amounts to a biblical-theological reading of the creation,
deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) narratives via the hermeneutical grid of this question.
The expulsion and descent from (what we will argue is the cosmic mountain of) Eden in Gen 3
initiates the cultic question of who may now ascend into the divine Presence. The narrative arc
from the beginning of Genesis comes, then, to a denouement with the close of Exodus: to dwell
in the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus presents something of a full-circle, albeit

17 R.E. Clements, e.g., writes: “the abode of a god could not be precisely defined and isolated, but it could be
symbolized, and, as a result, the god could be effectively approached by men. The great attachment in the ancient
world to sacred mountains, regarded as divine abodes, is probably to be explained in this way. The universe itself
was thought of as a gigantic world-mountain, stretching from the entrance of the subterranean abyss to the highest
point of heaven, and embracing all the inhabited world” (God and Temple: The Presence of God in Israel’s Worship
[Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965] 2). However, and at least for ancient Israel, one need not presume that Mt. Sinai, e.g.,
was literally thought to be a world-mountain. Rather, and via vertical typology, “in the world of the cult, when the
deity was revealed to men and women, ordinary space became sacred space, the meager water source of the city
became a cosmic river, the little knoll of Jerusalem became Mount Zion, the highest mountain on earth, and the
peripheral city of Jerusalem, the center of the world” (G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 193). For vertical
typology, see R.M. Davidson, Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures (AUSDDS 2;
heavenly throne of God, see M. Barker, Temple Theology, 16-21. See also Barker’s “The Veil as the Boundary,” pp
202-28 in The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark, 2003); idem., The
Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem (1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press,
2008) 16f; G.K. Beale, The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism (Wheaton; Crossway, 2008) 167-69. See also C.
Fletcher-Louis who relates Dan 7.13’s (highly priestly) coming “with the clouds” to the Day of Atonement when the
high priest enters God’s presence surrounded by clouds of incense: “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,”
High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case,” pp161-93 in SBL 1997 Seminar
Papers (SBLSP 36; Atlanta: SBL, 1997).
mediated, return to the original intent of Creation. Our main consideration in the prefiguring of the tabernacle cultus is thus in relation to its function as mediating the divine Presence.

Chapter Outline – In the following sections, we will consider (1) the cosmic mountain concept as found in ANE literature and in the Hebrew Bible; (2) the cosmic waters, again in ANE and biblical literature, with particular reference to the judicial river ordeal, and their function within the cosmology of the cosmic mountain; (3) the gate liturgy as a cultic ritual and its function within cosmic mountain ideology; (4) and the proposed scholarly contribution of our thesis topic.

I. THE COSMIC MOUNTAIN

The idea of the cosmic mountain,18 common within Semitic thought,19 is (according to Anderson) fundamental to “the ancient Israelite reading”20 of biblical narrative. Cosmic mountain ideology was integral to the temple cults in the ancient Near East, including that of Israel.21 Indeed, cosmic mountain ideology “far from being an incidental aspect of worship at the temple of Jerusalem, constitutes in effect the determining factor which links together a number of its cultic practices and beliefs that otherwise appear to be unrelated.”22 Within this

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22 S. Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion,” 317. He uses “navel of the earth” which for all intents and purposes is equivalent to “cosmic mountain.” Terrien further states, 338: “The importance of the omphalos myth for Hebrew religion cannot [i.e., “should not”] be underestimated.”
Thus,

in the world of the cult, when the deity was revealed to men and women, ordinary space became sacred space, the meager water source of the city became a cosmic river, the little knoll of Jerusalem became Mount Zion, the highest mountain on earth, and the peripheral city of Jerusalem, the center of the world.  

After considering the idea of the cosmic mountain within its general ANE context, we will review cosmic mountain ideology within the biblical literature of ancient Israel.

A. Cosmic Mountain in the Ancient Near East

1. COSMIC MOUNTAIN CHARACTERISTICS

In his *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and in the Old Testament*, R.J. Clifford explains how in the ancient Near East the union of heaven and earth was “conceived as a mountain whose base was the bottom of the earth and whose peak was the top of heaven,” making it the *axis mundi* and the *omphalos* or center of the world.  

He summarizes the characteristics of the cosmic mountain as being “the meeting place of the gods, the source of water and fertility, the battleground of conflicting natural forces, the meeting place of heaven and earth, the place where effective decrees are issued.” One might also add that the *Urhügel* or “primal hill” was often

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24 Ibid.


thought of as the place where creation occurred, a notion that will resonate with the narrative of Genesis 2. Clifford’s work surveys the cosmic mountain in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Hurrians and Hittites, before focusing in on the literature of Canaan and Israel. Widespread throughout the ancient Near East, relevant parallels to the biblical cosmic mount are found, for instance, in the literature of Ugarit:

The Canaanite god, Baal, for example appears in the Ugaritic texts as the inhabitant of the mountain sipn, the same word as “Zaphon” in the Bible, which came to be an epithet of Mount Zion. In one Ugaritic text that Clifford translates, we hear some other characteristic epithets of Baal’s mountain:

Come, and I will seek it,
In the midst of my mountain, divine Zaphon,
In the holy place, the mountain of my heritage,
In the chosen spot, on the hill of my victory.

...This mountain is apparently the source of a river whose significance, at least to judge by biblical parallels, is also cosmic and supernatural:

Then they set face
Toward El at the sources of the Two Rivers,
In the midst of the pools of the Double Deep.

2. FROM MOUNTAIN TO TEMPLE

Ultimately, the association between the cosmic mountain and the temple is found in their being divine dwelling-places. The attraction in the ancient world to sacred mountains, R.E. Clements suggests, was likely due to their being regarded as divine abodes:

The universe itself was thought of as a gigantic world-mountain, stretching from the entrance of the subterranean abyss to the highest point of heaven, and embracing all the inhabited world....The local sacred mountain was therefore the symbol, or representation, of the cosmos which formed the true abode of the deity whom men worshipped. It was thus the part which represented the whole.
One may posit, then, and as Clements goes on to explain, a natural transition from sacred
mountains to ziggurats:

If this interpretation of the attachment to sacred mountains may be regarded as valid, it must certainly also be
applied to the great Ziggurats, or stage-towers, of Sumeria. These were an attempt on the part of men to build
artificial mountains which could then serve as divine dwelling-places. They formed a transition stage
between the veneration of real mountains as divine abodes, and the building of man-made temples. The great
temple of Marduk in Babylon was an example of this kind of stage-tower construction, and shows how the
Babylonian culture had inherited much from the earlier Sumerians.\(^{31}\)

Jastrow Jr. similarly suggested ziggurats were introduced into the Euphrates Valley by people
coming from a mountainous region who, led by natural impulse, reproduced a mountain in
miniature to symbolize their old manner of worship.\(^{32}\) Whatever the genetic process may have
been (mountain \(\rightarrow\) ziggurat \(\rightarrow\) isolated temple?), the association of temple and mountain was
common in the ancient Near East and around the world.\(^{33}\) This is to be expected in as much as
one “might almost formulate a law that in the ancient East contemporary cosmological doctrine
is registered in the structure and theory of the temples.”\(^{34}\) Fundamentally, according to
Lundquist’s first proposition regarding the comparative study of temples, the “temple is the

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Sanctuary in the Old Testament,” pp 63-79 in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, F. B. Holbrook, ed. (Silver Spring,
MD: BSI, 1989) 64. As an example of the ubiquitous nature of the cosmic mountain idea, not only across cultures
but ages, the Aztec ziggurat, Pyramid of the Sun, considered the heart of Teotihuacan (“city of the gods”), possesses
a grand staircase signifying this man-made mountain was meant to be ascended so that sacrifices might be offered
upon its apex, the counterpart to the mountain-summit abode of the gods (Dr. John R. Hale of University of
Louisville, based on his study of sacred architecture worldwide, affirmed this interpretation in personal
communication dated 21 January 2011).

Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religions,” pp 43-70 in *The Labyrinth*, S. H. Hooke, ed. (London: SPCK,
1935) 45-46.

Study of the Bible and Literature* (San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1990) 144-87. Frye (51) rightly identifies Dante’s
*Commedia* as the great exemplar of the cosmic mountain in Christian literature, with its seven-spiraled mount of
purgation serving as a link between heaven and earth. He does not mention, however, the salient feature that at the
top of the mount, Dante portrays the Garden of Eden. Cf. also B. Margulis ("Weltbaum and Weltberg," 17) who
notes that in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* a garden of paradise is located on a Weltberg.

\(^{34}\) E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 45.
architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.”35 Wiercinski’s study also affirms that pyramids and ziggurats were architectonic representations of the archetype of the cosmic mountain, often decorated with portrayals of the cosmic waters and fertile trees, etc.36 The assimilation of temples to cosmic mountains is related to their function as links between earth and heaven (i.e., the axis mundi), as attested by the names of Babylonian sanctuaries (“Mountain of the House,” “House of the Mountain of all Lands,” “Link between Heaven and Earth,” etc.) so that the ziggurat was literally a cosmic mountain.37 Keel, who notes that ziggurat, like “steptower,” can mean “mountain top,” also writes:

Almost all the great Egyptian sanctuaries claimed to house within their courts the primeval hill, the ‘glorious hill of the primordial beginning,’ which had first emerged from the floods of Chaos... The pyramids represent huge primeval hills... In Mesopotamia, as in Egypt, every temple has its du-ku, its “pure hill.” ...In the Ugaritic sphere, the conquest of Chaos is also closely related to mountain (hill) and temple. ...The hill Zion is identified with the primeval hill, paradise, the cosmic mountain and mountain of the gods.38

Because of their assimilation, the terminology of the cosmic mountain could be applied to the temple, and vice versa. In Israelite and Canaanite thought, for example, the temple “was a spot of rest (menuhāh), an inheritance (nahalāh), and a spot where life was truly available.”39 This

35 J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology,” pp 205-219 in The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall, H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, A.R.W. Green, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 207. “This perception,” Lundquist further notes, “is very common in the OT, as is well known and is seen in such passages as Isa 2.2 and Ps 48.2” (207).
37 M. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 40. Cf. Idem., Patterns in Comparative Religion, trans. R. Sheed (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1958) 374-385; R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 21ff; O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 113; J.H. Walton, “The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel Account and Its Implications,” BBR 5 (1995) 155-75; J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” 28; A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 9-113 (esp. 83). N. Frye (Words with Power, 152-53) similarly notes: “In Mesopotamian cities the temple to the god of the city would normally be in the center and would be the highest building: it would therefore be, symbolically, the connecting link between the earth we live on and the world of the gods, which is usually assumed to be in the sky, or above the sky. In Mesopotamia such temples usually took the form of what is known as the ziggurat, a building of several stories, with each story recessed from the one below it.”
39 G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 206-07. He also states that the “idea that Eden is a place of rest and an inheritance of life is grounded in the biblical identification of Eden as a cosmic mountain” (206).
shared terminology, however, reveals a more profound correspondence: the temple cultus, as explained by its literature and experienced through its rituals, was the way to enter into the reality signified by the cosmic mountain.\textsuperscript{40} Temples were cosmology, the bonds of heaven, earth, and the netherworld, and the gateways to them; thus temple rituals, to a large extent, were cosmogony.\textsuperscript{41}

3. VERTICAL TYPOLOGY

Understanding the correspondence between the temple cultus and the reality signified, furthermore, requires a grasp of what has been termed “vertical typology.”\textsuperscript{42} Vertical typology refers to the notion that a temple was an earthly replica of the heavenly divine abode. This understanding was a common feature of ANE sanctuary ideology.\textsuperscript{43} Among the Canaanites, for example, the high god was thought to dwell in a temple (or tent) on the sacred mountain, the earthly temple of the deity being considered a copy of the heavenly temple on the mountain.\textsuperscript{44} The temple of Baal at Ras Shamra, replicating the mythical abode of Mount Zaphon, even paralleled the latter with a window in the roof.\textsuperscript{45} Similar traces of such a typology have been detected in Egyptian and Sumerian temples as well,\textsuperscript{46} Egyptian shrines utilizing expressions such

\[\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}, 192: “Every temple was a cosmic mountain, even those located in the most unrealistic settings, the Phoenician littoral. For our purposes, it is important to note that cosmic mountain imagery was not a purely literary phenomenon. This mythic \textit{topos} was actualized all over the ancient Canaanite world in the cultus of the local temple.”}\]

\[\textsuperscript{41} \text{See the examples, including biblical, by E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 46-59.}\]


\[\textsuperscript{46} \text{Cf. H.H. Nelson, L. Oppenheim, G.E. Wright, “The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East,” \textit{BA} 7 (1944) 41-77. J.L. McKenzie notes: “Both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt the temple was a symbol of celestial reality; in Egypt the temple symbolized the world in which the god reigned, and in Mesopotamia the temple was the earthly counterpart of the heavenly temple” (\textit{A Theology of the Old Testament} [Garden City: Doubleday, 1974] 51).}\]
as ‘doors of heaven’). As with the cosmic mountain itself, temples replicated the world in its tripartite form (heaven, earth, and sea), so that gaining access to the inner sanctum where the god’s statue was located was like gaining access to heaven itself.

Vertical typology, the idea that temples on earth had their counterparts in heaven, thus corresponding to heavenly archetypes, was common in the ancient Near East, and, as we will have occasion to observe below, is supported in the biblical literature as well. In the Wisdom of Solomon (first century B.C.), the vertical typology is manifest as the king declares (9.8):

You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain, and an altar in the city of your habitation, a copy of the holy tent which you did prepare from the beginning.

B. Cosmic Mountain in Ancient Israel

For Israel as well, from “her earliest period as a people, around Sinai, through the time of her settled life, around Zion, sacred mountains played a significant role in Israel’s religious life,”

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48. Ibid., 143.


50. R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 98. R.L. Cohn similarly writes: “The movement from Sinai to Zion neatly encapsulates geographically the flow of biblical sacred history from the Pentateuch through the Prophets” (The Shape of Sacred Space, 3). NOTE: For the religion of the patriarchs within the context of sanctuary/mountain, cf. G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” who notes that “the restatement of [Adam’s] commission to Israel’s patriarchs results in the following: (i) God appearing to them (except in Gen 12.8; 13.3-4); (ii) they ‘pitch a tent’ (literally a ‘tabernacle’ in LXX); (iii) on a mountain; (iv) they build ‘altars’ and worship God (i.e. ‘calling on the name of the LORD,’ which probably included sacrificial offerings and prayer) at the place of resettlement; (v) the place where these activities occur is often located at ‘Bethel’—the ‘House of God’ (the only case of altar building not containing these elements nor linked to the Genesis 1 commission is Gen 33.20). ...The building of these worship sites on a mountain may represent part of a pattern finding its climax in Israel’s later Temple that was built on Mount Zion (the traditional site of Mount Moriah), which itself becomes a synecdoche of the whole for the part in referring to the Temple” (202, 203 fn 50). Cf. also ch 3 of Beal’s Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God (NSBT; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004); J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna”; S. Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion”; and S. Paas’s article, “He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven,” for the relation of the primeval mound to both the temple and the throne/enthronement.
most theophanies taking place upon mountains (Horeb, Sinai, Gen 22, etc.).\textsuperscript{51} Indeed, arguably the oldest appellation for Israel’s God is \textit{El Shaddai} (ניִבְּיוֹן יְהֹוָה יְשַׁדַּי‎), widely held to mean “El, the One of the mountain,” “God of the mountain,”\textsuperscript{52} or “Mountain-dweller”\textsuperscript{53}—with \textit{YHWH} himself declaring (1 Kgs 20.28): “It is \textit{YHWH} who is God of the mountains” (יָהָהוֹ הַנַּעַרְכֶּם יִשְׁתָּדַדְוִי), and (Isaiah 2.2): “the mountain of \textit{YHWH}’s house (יִשְׁתָּדַדְיוֹ שלֹאָדֶם) will be established as the head of the mountains, exalted above the hills.” The word “rock” (מִתָּר sūr), sometimes a synonym for mountain, is also an epithet for \textit{YHWH} (2 Sam 22.47; Ps 18.3).\textsuperscript{54} The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be sure, is \textit{El Shaddai} (cf. the parallelism in Gen 49.24-25; Ex 3.6).\textsuperscript{55}

Regarding now the sacred mount(s) with which Israel’s God is associated, G.A. Anderson lists two particularly Semitic characteristics: (1) the mountain was a refuge and place of protection from the powers of chaos, and (2) the mountain was the source of the world’s


\textsuperscript{55} L.R. Bailey, “Israelite 'El Sadday and Amorite Bel Sade,” 434. Mettinger shows the prominence of El Shaddai in the patriarchal period, occurring 9 times in the Pentateuch and 31 times in Job (of the total 44 times in the OT) (\textit{In Search of God}, 69).
fertilizing rivers. Certainly evident in the biblical literature, the uniqueness of these characteristics as such is questionable. While the Canaanite El’s abode is also the source of two rivers, the former feature finds correspondence with the primal hill of Egyptian mythology, having arisen out of the chaos waters. Rather, the uniqueness of ancient Israel’s cosmic mountain ideology is bound up with the uniqueness of Israel’s God—his nature and attributes, his torah, and the cultus he establishes in order to be approached by his people. We now turn to consider briefly the three most important cosmic mountains in the Hebrew Bible: Eden, Sinai, and Zion.

1. EDEN AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

Beyond both the ANE context and the prominence of mountains in biblical literature (oft with creation symbolism), that the paradise of Eden was located atop a mountain may be inferred from the text itself, in the depiction of the river in Genesis 2.10-14 flowing out from Eden’s garden and branching out into four headwaters to fructify the entire earth. This interpretation is explicit in Ezekiel 28.13-14 where the phrase “You were in Eden, the garden of God”

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56 G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 190-91. He also mentions the cosmic mountain’s “role in cultic feasting. The cosmic mountain and its temple were the most important sites in Canaanite mythology for divine feasting. In Israelite religion, the temple in Jerusalem was the site of Israel’s great festal meals. It was in the context of these festivals that individual Israelites were able to experience the nearness and availability of God. To be sure, the temple of Jerusalem was thought to be the Axis Mundi, that is the location wherein heaven and earth (and even the underworld) met. But the nearness of the divine realm could not be experienced simply by standing in the temple confines. This nearness or availability of God was concretized within the context of the sacred meal. It was during the feasts at the temple that one could truly ‘live’” (193-94).

57 Indeed, one of the general characteristics of the cosmic mountain in the ancient Near East listed by Clifford is its being “the source of water and fertility” (The Cosmic Mountain, 3).

58 While it is proper to contextualize Israel’s cultus within the overall ANE background, M. Barker rightly cautions that this may “lead to foreign ideas being used as the basis for studying the [Israelite] temple, rather than as an interesting sidelight upon it” (The Gate of Heaven, 3; emphasis original).

59 So G.A. Anderson delineates them (“The Cosmic Mountain,” 192). NOTE: While not as prominent as Eden, Sinai, and Zion, the Ararat mount is depicted in the biblical literature, and understood in extra-biblical literature, as a cosmic mountain—a point also affirmed, as will be noted in our chapter on the deluge, by G.A. Anderson.

60 B.K. Waltke, with C.J. Fredericks, Genesis: A Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 86. Waltke elsewhere (An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007] 256) states: “Inferentially Eden is a mountain, and its garden is set atop this mountain...This heavenly water fructifies the temple-garden; after the garden is fed and nourished by the river of life, it serves as the
is paralleled with “You were on the holy mountain of God” (טֵבֵץ), 61 associating the concepts of the mount of God with Eden. 62 Yet, because the paradisiacal images of Gen 2 are believed to derive from Mesopotamia, where the cosmic mountain motif does not appear to have been influential, Clifford argued the narrative does not fit the cosmic mountain model, claiming that Eden only becomes a cosmic mountain in the exilic period (expressed in Ezekiel). 63 This position, however, has been contested, first by Margulis who pointed out some of the inconsistencies in Clifford’s work regarding his opinion that there is no evidence for a cosmic mountain in Mesopotamia. 64 But even conceding both a Mesopotamian background to Gen 2 and insubstantial evidence for the cosmic mountain in this region, Levenson, followed by Anderson, rightly manifests the genetic fallacy of Clifford’s conduit from which life-giving water pours to the ends of the earth.” Cf. also H. Gunkel, Genesis, trans. M.E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997) 36; E. Eisenberg, The Ecology of Eden, 90-1; J.D. Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 129. While E.A. Speiser (“The Rivers of Paradise,” pp 175-82 in I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994]) argues for viewing the rivers as flowing upstream, cf. G. Wenham’s critique, Genesis 1-15, 66.


62 J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” 27-28; G. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,” HTR 82.2 (1989) 143; M.G. Kline, God, Heaven and Har Magedon, 43. J.D. Levenson (Sinai and Zion, 128-29. Cf. also, idem., Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48 [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976] 5-36) writes: “What is most revealing about Ezekiel’s oracle is that is makes an identification of “Eden, the garden of God” (Ezek 28.13) with “God’s holy mountain” (v 14). In Ezekiel (or his school), the vocabulary of the Temple mount, Zion, is common to the old story of the Garden of Eden. This becomes clear in the companion piece to the oracle against Tyre in 28.2-5. Here the riches of vv 4-5 are in parallel with the wondrous gems of vv 13-14. The prophet is in both instances making an analogy between the opulence of the port city, Tyre, and the fabulous wealth which is characteristic of both Eden and the mountain of the gods. In fact, the description of the solitary resident of Eden in 28.12, the king of Tyre, is taken from the description of Zion in older literature. He is the “seal of perfection” (חֹּטֶם תְּקֵנֵי), and Zion is “perfect in beauty” (מִקְלַל-יְוָף, Ps 50.2). The king is “flawless in beauty” (קִלְלַל יְוָף), as is the Temple city (קִלְלַל יְוָף, Lam 2.15), and is the fame of Jerusalem, which, according to another oracle of Ezekiel’s, became widespread “because of your beauty, which was perfect” (בֶּצֶר יִבְיִ פָּקֹת, Ezek 16.14). The same language describes life in Eden, the Garden of Delight, and Zion, the Temple mount, in which the primal perfection of Eden is wonderfully preserved. The similarity between Zion as the garden of God and Eden in the same role appears very clearly in the description of the Garden of Eden in what is known as the “J” account of creation (see Gen 2.4b-14). V 12 speaks of precious stones in the vicinity of Eden, just as do Ezek 28.4-5 and 13-14 in connection with Eden or the mountain of God.” E.T. Mullen Jr (The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature [HSN 24; Chico, Cal: Scholar’s Press, 1980] 151-54), as well, claims that “garden” and “mountain” are associated in both Gen 2-3 and in Ezekiel 28, as is the case in other Mesopotamian literature (Enki and Ninhursag and Gilgamesh).

63 R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 93-103.

position and utilizes the presence of the Gihon in Gen 2 as evidence of an early link to the Jerusalem/Zion tradition. Though the indications are subtle, Gen 2-3 does indeed appear to portray Eden as a cosmic mountain. Fishbane provides a useful summary of our position, elements of which will be developed further below:

A geography of primordial space is thus mapped out which serves to supplement Genesis 1.1-2.4a. The natural harmony and bounty of the created earth are symbolized by a garden in the center of creation, where two semimagical trees embody and preserve the deepest mysteries of creation: the mysteries of life and knowledge. The perfection of this primordial space is further symbolized by four streams which enrich the four quadrants of the earth. The prototype of this symbolic image is often found in ancient religious iconography: a navel releasing life-giving water to the four corners of creation, together with a world mountain is only indirectly suggested in Genesis 2.10-14, by its reference to the streams' downward flow. A later reflex of the Eden motif (Ezekiel 28.11-19) preserves this component more explicitly: The Garden is found on a "mountain of God" (v 14). It is undoubtedly on such a primal landscape, sustained by providential fertility, that man is placed in Genesis 2.15.

The temple symbolism pervading the Eden narrative is thus consistent with the garden's cosmic mountain locale. Clifford notes, for example, that "Ezekiel 47.1-12, Zechariah 14.8, and Joel 4.18 (E. VV. 3.18) speak of fertilizing waters flowing (yv') from the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple is Mount Zion. Ezekiel 28 assumes the garden in Eden (v 13) is the holy mountain (vv 14, 16)." Eden’s flowing river itself (Gen 2.10-14), then, constitutes temple imagery, portraying paradise as a temple and vice versa, for the "identification of the temple in Jerusalem with Eden is as old as the Bible itself." The imagery of Eden’s cosmic mount is woven

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66 M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts (Oxford: One World, 1998) 17. Most contemporary scholars, then, utilize Gen 2.10-14 and Ezek 28.13-14 to make this point. O. Keel (The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 118) writes: “Paradise was thought to be located on a high mountain (cf. Ezek 28.13-16); it was densely forested (Gen 2.8-9) and the source of mighty rivers (Gen 2.10-14). The temple site, as locus of God’s presence, was very closely related to paradise. In Mesopotamian creation myths, the foundation of the temple replaces the creation of paradise.” Cf. J.V. Fesko, Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis with the Christ of Eschatology (Fearn, Ross-shire, GB: Mentor, 2007) 59.
68 R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 100.
throughout the history of ancient Israel and can be traced within the Hebrew Bible. Jacques Ellul, for example, notes that Israel's prophetic literature anchors eschatological hope in God's establishing anew the Edenic temple upon a great mountain.

Early Jewish and Christian interpretations confirm a like understanding of Gen 2-3. In Jubilees "Eden is conceived of as a holy site...as a cosmic mountain which the flood waters were not able to overcome." So, too, for the writers of the early Syriac Christian documents, the Cave of Treasures and Ephraim's Hymns on Paradise, "Eden was the cosmic mountain par excellence." Anderson also notes the "influences of Enoch and other post-biblical Jewish sources" toward interpreting the Garden of Eden narrative in terms of the cosmic mountain are unremarkable in as much as they were dependent on biblical precedents: "What was implicit in Gen 2-3 has become explicit in these texts."

Eden, then, may be considered an archetype for the cosmic mountain itself, the foremost World Mountain for Israel. Further, the Israelite cultus of the tabernacle/temple—and

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72 G.A. Anderson, "Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden?" 129.
74 G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 189, 211.
75 Ibid., 211 (emphasis added). Anderson further states that Eden "is both a luxuriant and festive location. It is this aspect of Eden that is picked up by the earliest biblical exegetes and is carried forth in Rabbinic and Christian literary works" (211).
76 E. Eisenberg, "The Mountain of the Gods," NENA 8.1 (2001) 109-120 (116). M.G. Kline (God, Heaven and Har Magedon, 47-48) writes: "Like its redemptive counterpart, Mount Zion, the mountain of Eden was to be the spiritual capital, the place to which from afar prayer would be directed, to whose summit the holy throng would ascend with their tribute of worship and praise (cf., e.g., Ps 43.3, 4; Isa 27.13; 30.29; 56.7). ...Viewed as a whole from top to bottom the mount of God in Eden was a representation of the cosmos—the foot of the mount, the earth; its summit, heaven. In terms of cosmographic symbolism the mountain was thus the heaven-earth axis, located at the center of the earth, just as Zion, its redemptive restoration, was regarded as the navel or center of the earth (Ezek 5.5; 38.12). ...As an ascending passageway the slopes of the mountain were a staircase. Architecturally this image was
specifically Sabbath day worship—opened the way to that Edenic reality: “...everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast my covenant—even them I will bring to my holy mountain...” (Isa 56.6-7). Indeed, the tabernacle cultus as the ordained means of experiencing the divine Presence—the means of reversing humanity’s exile from paradise—seems to be the logic informing the various parallels between the creation/Eden and tabernacle narratives, a point to be developed throughout this thesis.

2. MOUNT SINAI AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

Mount Sinai, the mountain of torah, also stands in the Canaanite tradition of the cosmic mountain. Most notably, the fiery Presence upon its summit (Exod 19.16-20; 20.18-21; 24.9-18), perhaps Israel’s ultimate experience of theophany, establishes Sinai as a cosmic mountain. Even the conceptions of Zion as a holy mountain, it has been suggested, may be traced “ultimately to the inner-Israelite experience at what is probably the holy, cosmic mountain of religious literature, Sinai.” As was the case with the Eden account, so too with the Sinai narrative, the literary goal appears to be rooted in the cultus. Indeed, the correlation between cosmic mountain and tabernacle/temple becomes especially manifest as the narrative in Exodus moves, like the theophanic cloud itself, from Sinai to the tabernacle. In our fourth chapter on the

embodied in the ziggurat, the symbolic cosmic mountain of the ancient pagan world, a mythologized version of the pristine Edenic reality.”

78 R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 4. The Canaanite cosmic mountain “Zaphon is the scene of frequent banqueting” (61) which is another line of similarity with Sinai (Ex 4.9-11). For the Sinai traditions, cf. 107-23; D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” pp 482-500 in By Study and Also By Faith, Vol 1 in Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Ocasion of His Eightieth Birthday (Provo, Ut: BYU Press, 1990). Further, Lundquist’s eleventh proposition regarding temples states: “Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often as the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony” (“What is a Temple?” 215).
80 J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 207 (emphasis original). Lundquist writes that even the “temple of Solomon would seem ultimately to be little more than the architectural realization and the ritual enlargement of the Sinai experience” (207). The Presence of YHWH, to be sure, was the determining factor in regarding any locale as “holy.” As the divine Presence migrated from Sinai to Zion, so, too, the associated images.
sea crossing/Sinai account, we will examine further the cosmic mountain attributes of Sinai, including parallels with the tabernacle/temple cultus.

3. MOUNT ZION AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

By its many mythic attributions in both the Psalms and in the prophetic literature, Zion is perhaps the mountain most obviously cosmic in the religion of Israel, the bond and gateway of both heaven and the underworld. The mountain is depicted as primordial, "situated at the center of the world" so that "from it, everything else takes its bearings" (Ps 48):

Great is YHWH, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
On his holy mountain.
Beautiful in elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion on the sides of the North (נִיצַמְנֶת),
The city of the great King.84

Rabbinic literature, such as the Talmudic tractate Yoma, presents Mount Zion as the point from which creation proceeded, the place having a genuinely primordial character in our world.85 Within the Hebrew Bible itself, further, it appears that Zion fell heir to the legacy of Mount Sinai, becoming the mountain of Israel.86 The transfer of theophany language from the traditions

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83 J. D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," JR 64.3 (Jul 1984) 282-83; idem., Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48, 5-19; idem., Sinai and Zion, 115, where Levenson calls this feature "the most important" attribute; M. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 36-47.
84 Cf. R. J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 141: "In the Hebrew Bible, Zion occurs mostly as the name of Jerusalem qua religious center. In some uses, however, Zion is no mere geographical designation but bears a meaning enriched by mythical motifs."
86 J. D. Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 187 (emphasis original). Referencing Psalm 50, Levenson also states: "The Zion material in vv 1-3 thus serves to highlight the cosmic implications of Sinai" (208). Cf. R.L. Cohn, The Shape of Sacred Space, 38. As does Levenson, Cohn also points out that although both Sinai and Zion "are conceived as 'sacred mountains,' they function symbolically in different ways. Mount Sinai, the source of Torah, and Mount Zion, the site of the once and future temple, represent the alpha and omega of biblical sacred geography" (43). However, both mounts, Sinai and Zion, are associated with covenants (cf. Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 206-17).
of Sinai to the Jerusalem cultus of Zion in the Psalms was utilized "to impress upon the
worshipper that the God of Sinai reveals himself anew on Mount Zion. Israel in the Temple
liturgy relives the primal experience of Yahweh at Mount Sinai....affirm[ing] the identity of the
God of Mount Sinai and the Law with the God of Zion."87

The Presence of God, who via the tabernacle migrated with his people from Sinai to his
abode atop Zion, is the ultimate source of the mountain's sacral nature: "Yahweh answers from
his holy hill (Ps 3.5; cf. Amos 1.2), for that is the sacred mount upon which Yahweh's temple is
established (Ps 87.1-3) and the cosmic abode of God localized in Zion for the blessing of his
people (Ps 48.1-3)."88 Commenting on Psalm 74, B.W. Anderson writes: "The center, or
omphalos, of the earth (v 12) refers to Mount Zion (v 2b), where the divine King is
sacramentally present ('tabernacles')."89 So, too, Paas:

In the centre of the earth (where Israel in keeping with ancient Eastern custom situated herself) is found the
holy mount Zion, against which the chaotic waters of the primal sea stormed futilely. On this mountain
stands YHWH's temple, in which He Himself is enthroned and maintains the order of creation.90

Expectedly, then, the temple shares in the mount's traits, and is, as Levenson notes, the visible,
tangible token of the act of creation, the point of the world's origin, and the focus of the
universe.91 The temple of Solomon likely conveyed to its visitors a typological garden of Eden,
the molten sea symbolizing the subdued waters of chaos issuing forth, and the twin pillars

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87 R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 154, 155. He compares Deuteronomy 33.2 with Psalm 50, noting the similar
usage of "He shone forth (h'dof)," for both Sinai and Zion.
88 N.C. Habel, "Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth": A Study in Tradition Criticism," *JBL* 91.3 (1972) 328-29.
'God,' in Hebrew," *JNES* 3.4 (Oct 1944) 259.
to Sabbath enthronement, suggests the idea, developed throughout Scripture, of worship as approaching God upon
his mount (cf. Gen 8.20-1; Ex 3.1-5; 24; Heb 12.12-29; etc.).
90 S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 82.
91 J.D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," 282-83. Cf. E. Bloch-Smith, "Who is this King of Glory?"
Solomon's Temple and Its Symbolism," pp 18-31 in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and
Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, Coogan, Exum, Stager, eds. (Louisville: WJK, 1994).
modeling the trees of life and knowledge. G.E. Wright brings out some of the cosmic dimensions of Solomon's temple on Mount Zion:

The large bronze "sea" closely resembles the Babylonian *apsu*, a word used both as the name for the subterranean fresh-water ocean from which all life and fertility were derived, and also as the name of a basin of holy water in the temples. The great altar for burnt offerings was built in stages like a Babylonian temple-tower, and the lowest stage or foundation of both was named "bosom of the earth." The uppermost stage of the altar was crowned with four horns at the corners (as were Babylonian temple-towers) and was named *har'el*, explained most convincingly by Albright as meaning "mountain of God," and to be compared with the meaning of the Babylonian word for temple-tower (*ziqqurat*), which meant "mountain peak." Old Sumerian names of temple-towers in Babylonia often designated them as cosmic mountains. This and other evidence indicates that the Temple and its paraphernalia were rich in cosmic symbolism, just as were Babylonian and presumably Canaanite temple installations. It is clear, therefore, that Solomon's Temple was to be the abode of the Lord in the sense that it was the earthly representation of the heavenly abode....

The tabernacle/temple cultus, in common with the general sanctuary ideology of the ancient Near East, participated in vertical typology: the tripartite architectural structure related the inner sanctum of the holy of holies to the heavenly sphere (corresponding to the summit of the sacred mountain), so that worship was, to some degree, a participation in the uninterrupted worship of heaven.

This cosmic "parallelism" between mountain and temple underscores once more a critical point: far from being a mere literary image, the cosmic mountain comprises an ideology that is reflected in historical Israel in the cultus of the temple. In summary:

The cosmic mountain imagery is widespread in the Hebrew Bible. This mountain is not only the *Axis Mundi* and the *Omphalos* or navel of the world, but it is also a place of refuge, the source of fertilizing rivers and a

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92 E. Bloch-Smith, "Who is this King of Glory?" 27.
93 G.E. Wright, "The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East," *BA* 7.4 (1944) 74-75. Cf. R.E. Clements (*God and Temple*, 65, 67) who notes: "The furnishings of the temple were full of cosmic symbolism, as was in effect true also for the temple as a whole. The very conception of such a building was founded on the belief that a correspondence existed between the earthly and the heavenly worlds. Yahweh's house in Jerusalem was intended to be a copy, or symbol, of the cosmic 'house' where he had his abode....The underlying idea was that the temple was a microcosm of the macrocosm, so that the building gave visual expression to the belief in Yahweh's dominion over the world and all natural forces." M. Fishbane, too, notes the emphasis of Ezekiel upon the altar of the new Temple, the base being described as *heq ha'aretz*, "the bosom of the earth," and its summit, crowned with four horns, as *har'el*, "the mountain of God," so that the altar is not only the sacred center of the Temple but the axis mundi (*Biblical Text and Texture*, 118).
very holy spot. The two most important cosmic mountains in the Bible are Zion and Sinai, but to the degree that Zion is equated with Eden, Eden also becomes a cosmic mountain. [Eden] is a spot where life itself, that is life with the deity, is offered. But like much mythic thought, its luxuriance is not unmotivated, nor purely literary in origin. Eden, as a luxuriant cosmic mountain becomes the archetype or symbol for the earthly temple. Its fertile streams and life giving viands are not limited to a mythic pre-history. Rather they can be experienced partially and proleptically in the regular cycle of worship at the temple. ... The mountain of Eden was also a holy spot. Because of this, access to its inner sanctum—the location of the tree of life—was carefully guarded. This mountain was divided into zones of holiness, just as Mount Sinai was. Only those of highest spiritual development could reside in its center. Others could derive its benefits only from a distance. The holiness of Eden becomes a very important factor in the interpretation of the Bible. Eden, as cosmic mountain, becomes a hermeneutical tool. It allows these [Syriac Christian] writers to organize the disparate narrative material of the Bible into a meaningful theological unit. On the largest possible scale, that of the entire Bible, Eden is both the image of the ideal first time, and the eschatological goal of the end-time. In between these points, exists [sic] the cultic institutions of temple and church.  

II. THE COSMIC WATERS

The relationship of the primordial waters to the cosmic mountain will now be explored. Previous studies on the cosmic mountain have not dealt adequately with the whole cosmological complex, including the cosmic waters, as we hope to do by manifesting the repeated biblical pattern of going through the waters to the mountain of God. There have been, to be sure, independent studies on the cosmic waters and the river ordeal with notable contributions by H.G. May, T.S. Frymer-Kensky, and P.K. McCarter studies to be synthesized here into a more complete cosmological framework.

Beginning first with the ancient Near East in general, then moving to ancient Israel in particular, we will consider the relation of the waters to the mountain, deductively, through the

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96 Ibid., 198-99, 202. Anderson also makes the important point: “But the description of Eden as a cosmic mountain is more than simply a vestigial survival of an archaic Israelite idea. This motif allowed both Ephraim and the author of the Cave of Treasures to organize the theological content of their Christian Bible. The use of this motif as a hermeneutical device for integrating the message of scripture is an important witness to the value of [the mythopoeic themes] in the Bible itself. Curiously, modern commentators have not appreciated the theological value of these [mythopoeic themes]. Perhaps the study of early exegesis is not without value for the modern biblical scholar” (212, emphasis original). As such, cosmic mountain ideology was an original source and center for the project of biblical theology.

97 H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” 9-21; T.S. Frymer-Kensky, The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East, vols. 1, 2 (Unpublished PhD dissertation; Yale University, 1977); P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” JTR 66.4 (Oct 1973) 403-12. McCarter, for example, ends his article on the “river ordeal” with the prophetic words: “In OT religion, judgment is so pervasive a factor, deliverance from waters or by crossing waters is such a central theme, that future study of the subject promises to be both complex and exciting” (412).
lens of cosmology and cosmogony (including the combat myth), and, more inductively, via epic literature, justifying—it is to be hoped—the need for further study of the pattern of going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship as a significant cultic pattern in the Pentateuch. Finally, and as a basic paradigm for understanding this pattern, we will review the judicial river ordeal in the ancient Near East.

A. Cosmic Waters in the Ancient Near East

The cosmologies of the ancient Near East rather consistently\(^98\) portray the sacred mountain surrounded by cosmic waters.\(^99\) This geography is inseparable from cosmogony in as much as the cosmic mountain—and the temples that architecturally symbolize the mount—represents “the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process.”\(^100\) One of Sargon’s inscriptions describe Mount Simirria, for example, as “a mighty mountain peak, which spikes upward like the cutting-edge of a spear, on top of the mountain-range, the dwelling of Belet-ili, rears its head. Above, its peak leans on the heavens, below, its roots reach into the netherworld.”\(^101\) According to the Babylonian tradition depicted in the Gudea Cylinders, the Eninnu temple built by Gudea represented the primordial hill that arose

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\(^98\) J.E. Atwell (“An Egyptian Source for Genesis 1,” *JTS* 51.2 [2000] 456-57), for example, posits: “the emergence of the first piece of dry land as the waters recede is a universal feature which has been absorbed into all cosmologies.”


\(^100\) J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 208. G. van der Leeuw (*Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, trans. J.E. Turner [London: Allen & Unwin, 1938] 55) states: “The mountain...was regarded as a primal and permanent element of the world: out of the waters of Chaos rose the primeval hill from which sprang all life....it was looked upon as the “navel” of the earth, as its focal-point and beginning. ...the omphalos was a primitive symbol of earth and of all birth; in ancient thought birth from stone was as usual as that from the fertile earth.”

out of the chaos waters (apsu). 102 Similarly, in Egyptian mythology Amun-Re began creation on the primeval mount that had arisen out of the chaos waters (Nun), 103 the temples of Egypt also likely correlating to this primordial mound. 104 Keel notes, for example, how the undulating design of the great wall surrounding the huge temple enclosure of Karnak is “intended to represent the primeval waters which formerly lapped around the temple hill.” 105 Already, then, one can appreciate how intimately connected cult and cosmos were in the ancient Near East.

By its rising above them, the cosmic mountain was thus associated with victory over the waters of chaos, 106 many ANE cosmogonies involving some sort of combat myth. Levenson underscores this concept of the sea in ANE mythology:

The sea was the great enemy of order both in Mesopotamia and in Canaan. Its defeat was the essential element in creation and won the victorious god kingship and the right to a palace (or temple) of his own.

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103 R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 28. Clifford also notes the “view that connects hillock with creation has been plausibly derived from the Egyptian experience of the sinking of the annual flood waters and the emergence of the first isolated peaks of mud, refreshed with new fertile silt and rich with new life” (26).


105 O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 113. The artificial lake of the temple complex is also believed to have symbolized the primeval waters, cf. F.S. Kleiner, Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective, vol. 1 (Boston: Wadsworth, 2009) 56; M.A. Canney (“Boats and Ships in Processions,” Folklore 49.2 [1938] 132) notes, more broadly, that in “ancient Egypt, a great temple was not complete without its sacred lake.”

106 J. Blenkinsopp, e.g., notes “the temple-ziggurat represented the mound of creation, the first heap of dry land to appear over the flood waters. In keeping with this representation of victory over the watery chaos, one of the psalms speaks of Yahweh enthroned over the abyss (yhw lammabbül yāṣāḥ), a powerful mythic image which is fully exploited in Jewish midrash” (“The Structure of P,” 285). However, beyond—perhaps, because of—the conquest of the primeval waters, the mountain is also known for being the source of the waters of life: “In the Phoenician ivory [seal], a masculine deity whose clothing simulates a mountain holds in his hands a vase with four streams flowing to vases at each corner.... One can see here the conception of the mountain within which is concentrated the mysterious powers of life, the source of life-giving waters.... An examination of the Ugaritic texts shows that the mountain of both El and Baal can be called cosmic.....[I]t seems to be the paradigmatic source of water that gives fertility...” (R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 97). The idea that the subdued or “controlled” waters of chaos become the source of the waters of life appears implicit. ANE temples “were symbolically the ‘embodiment of the cosmic mountain’ representing the original hillock first emerging from the primordial waters at the beginning of creation; such waters themselves were symbolized in temples together with fertile trees receiving life from the waters” (G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 195 [emphasis added]). See J.H. Walton, Ancient Near Eastern Thought, 176f. The “cosmic tree,” having its roots sunk deep into the cosmic waters for nourishment brings out this aspect particularly; see, e.g., S. Parpola, “The Assyrian Tree of Life,” JNES 52 (1993) 161-208.

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Creation, kingship, and temple thus form an indissoluble triad; the containment of the sea is the continuing proof of their eternal validity (e.g., Psalm 93). The promise of the divine king to commit the sea/rivers to the charge of his human vassal is surely “anchored in cosmic-mythological symbols of creation.” To be aware of this mythic dimension is not to deny the importance of the “historical symbols...of the grace of YHWH which was disclosed in Israel”. 

The basic outline of the so-called “combat myth” is: the god (Marduk, Baal) battles the sea (Tiamat, Yamm, Lothan) and, upon conquest, establishes cosmic order, his kingship among the gods, and the foundation for his palace (temple). In the Akkadian epic *Enuma elish*, the god Ea establishes his house upon the conquered waters of Apsu. This suggests that his palace/temple served the cosmic function of keeping the waters suppressed. Later, in Tablet V, Marduk, after slaying Tiamat,

laid down her [text: his] head, heaped a mountain upon it,  
Opened up such a spring that a torrent could be drawn off,  
Then released through her eyes the Euphrates and Tigris... 

The gods go on to construct a temple tower called the “house of the foundation of heaven and earth.” Then, having built his lofty abode upon the Apsu, Marduk addresses the Igigi and the Anunnaki:

> When from the Apsu you go up for the Assembly,  
> There will be your night’s resting(-place) to receive all of you... 

This is a simple example of how the cosmogonic myth establishes an obvious pattern, based upon the cosmological geography: one must go through the waters of the Apsu to approach

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108 This basic outline is summarized by J.D. Levenson (*Sinai and Zion*, 152-53). Cf. G.F. Hasel, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EQ* 46.2 (1974) 87: “It appears inescapable to recognize here [in Genesis 1]...a conscious polemic against the battle myth.” For a reassessment of some of Gunkel’s *Chaoskampf* assumptions, cf. J.H. Walton, “Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East: Order Out of Disorder after Chaoskampf,” *CTJ* 43 (2008) 48-63. “In the Genesis prologue,” states M.G. Kline, “the Creator appears as a workman who performs his task and then takes his rest —or, more specifically, he is portrayed as a king who builds himself a palace and then occupies the throne” (God, Heaven and Har Magedon, 38).  
Marduk’s abode.\textsuperscript{113} Our main concern, however, is with the combat outline itself: “the Divine Warrior faces adversaries (the power of chaos), moves triumphant to the sacred mountain (temple), and there is acclaimed as divine King over the cosmos.”\textsuperscript{114} One finds this outline in the Ugaritic literature as well: Baal, after his victory over Yamm (god of the sea), has a temple constructed atop the heights of Mount Zaphon.\textsuperscript{115} This cosmogonic battle outline manifests a pattern similar to what we seek to expose in the biblical literature: through the waters \rightarrow to the mountain \rightarrow for worship (ascribing kingship).

Beyond creation texts, other epic\textsuperscript{116} literature portrays the idea of going through the cosmic waters to the mountain. Unfortunately, Tablet IX of \textit{Gilgamesh} is missing 26 lines near the beginning of the quest, picking up after the hero’s passage to and arrival at the mountain called Mashu where he encounters the scorpion-men guarding its gate, but the mount is described as cosmic:

\begin{quote}
Whose peaks [reach to] the vault of heaven \\
(And) whose breasts reach to the nether world below—\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

However, and while the various summaries of his journeys given throughout the poem (e.g., I i 35-40; X 25-27) do not portray the pattern of crossing through waters to a mountain, the scorpion-being at the gate of the mount pointedly questions Gilgamesh (lines 64-69):

\begin{quote}
“Why have you traveled so distant a journey? \\
Why have you come here to me, \\
over rivers whose crossing is treacherous?”
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{113} Obviously, as his abode is midway between the Apsu and the heavens, approaching Marduk from heaven would not require crossing the Apsu, as the next lines go on to indicate.


\textsuperscript{116} By “epic” we simply mean “texts that narrate the acts of gods and cultural heroes in extended poetry” (K.L. Sparks, \textit{Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature} [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005] 271). While other literary genres like hymns, wisdom tales, and prayers could certainly be utilized, this limited consideration serves merely as a token sample to justify our consideration of the cultic pattern in the biblical literature.

\textsuperscript{117} E.A. Speiser’s translation, \textit{ANET}, 83.
I want to learn your…

…

I want to learn…”

Thus, in the mountain-guardian’s first address to the hero—and this may be significant in light of the gate liturgy concept to be discussed further below—the pattern of crossing treacherous rivers to arrive at the cosmic mountain is discernible. In Tablet X, once through the mountain tunnel, Gilgamesh will have to cross a sea. He runs into the ale-wife, addressing her as follows:

Dwelling on the [sea-shore, O ale-wife, Thou dost see its depth, all [...].
Show (me) the way [...].
If it be seemly, the sea [I will cross].

Siduri the ale-wife responds to Gilgamesh:

Never, O Gilgamesh, has there been a crossing,
And none who came since the beginning of days could cross the sea.
Only valiant Shamash crosses the sea;
Other than Shamash, who can cross (it)?
Toilsome is the place of crossing,
Very toilsome the way thereto,
And in between are the Waters of Death that bar its approaches!
Where then, O Gilgamesh, wouldst thou cross the sea?
On reaching the Waters of Death, what wouldst thou do?

With the boatman Urshanabi, then, Gilgamesh crosses the cosmic seas and waters of death and meets with Utnapishtim at “the mouth of the rivers” (XI.195-96), a designation not uncommon for the abode of the gods atop the cosmic mount. Next, in the famous Tablet XI, Utnapishtim recounts the story of the worldwide deluge. Through the floodwaters, Utnapishtim’s ship comes to a halt upon Mount Nisir (line 140). Atop this mount, he then offers worship to the gods:

118 M.G. Kovacs, The Epic of Gilgamesh: Translated, with an Introduction, by Maureen Gallery Kovacs (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 76. Sadly, another crucial 26 lines are missing at this point as well.
119 A.K. Grayson’s notes and additions, ANET, 507.
120 E.A. Speiser, ANET, 91.
121 Cf. W. Horowitz, Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography, 103-04.
122 The Baal Cycle, e.g., mentions El’s abode as the “source of two rivers” (III AB C line 3; II AB iv-v line 20). This might even be implicit in Utnapishtim’s words, immediately following, to Gilgamesh: “But now, who will for thy sake call the gods to Assembly…?” (E.A. Speiser, ANET, 95), as in: “You made it all this way to the abode of the gods, Gilgamesh, but now who’s going to call them to Assembly?”
Then I let out (all) to the four winds
And offered a sacrifice.
I poured out a libation on the top of the mountain.  

While the broad geography traversed by Gilgamesh moves from lands to mountain(s) to seas, it is precisely Utnapishtim’s residing across the Sea of Death—that is, outside of the immediate geography within which waters surround the lands and Mount Mashu—that makes this eschewed pattern necessary. However, before being removed to the mouth of the rivers himself, Utnapishtim’s epic journey moves through the waters (deluge) → to the mountain (Nisir) → for worship (sacrifice and libation). Keel summarizes the movement thus:

Ziggurat, like “step-tower,” can mean “mountaintop.” In the Gilgamesh epic, Utnapishtim, on the ziggurat, pours out a libation after the flood. Here “ziggurat” is the top of the mountain Nisir, on which Utnapishtim’s “ark” has come to land.

Interestingly, the term “ziggurat” here forms a link between the cosmic mountain ideology of *Gilgamesh*, as literature, and the religious cult of the original audience(s).

Given the inclusion of the primeval waters in the cosmological landscape of ANE cultures, and the significant feature of the primal hill’s arising out of them, it is unremarkable that those waters should be of a piece with the cosmic mountain symbolism informing the architecture and mythology of ANE temples, and taken for granted in much of the ANE literature. One might also expect, moreover, that cultic rituals similarly manifest a cosmic mountain ideology that integrates the cosmic waters. This is precisely what is found, for example, in the New Year ritual of Babylon, the enthronement festival, in which the statue of Marduk was led to a sanctuary where his victory would be reenacted by placing the statue on

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123 Ibid., 95.
125 It may also be that the treacherous rivers apparently surrounding Mount Mashu are simply absorbed into the general delineation of the “difficult mountains,” being inseparable from the idea of the cosmic mountain.
“the sea” (presumably a podium) after a dramatized battle. Another significant ritual, the river ordeal, will be considered in section C below, after a cursory look at the cosmic waters in ancient Israel.

B. Cosmic Waters in Ancient Israel

In the canonical literature of Israel, the cosmic waters play a similarly significant role, particularly in the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives—these, however, will be explored in their respective chapters—in addition to serving as a conceptual backdrop for many of the Psalms. Along with the presence of the cosmic mountain idea in the Hebrew Bible, the mount’s rising above the primordial waters at creation appears implicit. While YHWH is portrayed as the sovereign water-wielder in the narratives of our thesis, that is, quite outside of the combat myth per se, yet, in a mythopoeic manner, the biblical poets utilize the battle imagery to portray him as the divine warrior who has performed great feats in history (cf., e.g., Isa 51.9-10; Ps 89.10-11; Job 26.12-13; Ezek 2.3-6). Indeed, in what may be the earliest Israelite poetry, the Song of the Sea in Exod 15, one finds “the motif of the battle with the sea and

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128 Thus we offer here only the briefest of considerations.
129 Cf. O. Keel’s *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*.
130 “The primordial mound projects backward into history to the period of the creation of the earth, where, according to one Hebrew tradition, the primordial mound was the first land that emerged from the waters of chaos during the creative period (cf. Genesis 1.9-10). Identified as the consecrated topos, the primordial mound represented order and definition amidst the unruly chaotic waters” (D.W. Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 136-37). Cf. also M.A. Canney, “The Primordial Mound,” 25-40.
131 Cf. M.K. Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster*. In pp 55-105, particularly, Wakeman explores the biblical use of the sea-monsters Rahab, Leviathan, Tannin, and the transitional terms Peten, Nahash, Tehom, and Yam. Often, the references comprise mythopoeic descriptions of God’s action in history with, e.g., Egypt being likened to the chaos monster (60-1, 74). Wakeman also notes the dual imagery, waters and mount, ascribed to God: “Corresponding to the two definitions of the monster [land-beast and sea-beast], there are two ways of conceiving of God that have a strong tradition in biblical poetry. He is ‘the fountain of living waters,’ the life-giving force rather than the destructive floods, and ‘the rock of our salvation,’ the security of solid ground rather than its rigid, unyielding closedness. As the enemy is most often described through the figure of the sea, so God is called a rock thirty-three times…” (138). Cf. also N. Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (BS 85; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 102-05.
probably the mount of heritage, the fruit of the victory over the sea.”

Weinfeld notes the idea of overcoming the waters and establishing the holy abode in various “enthronement” psalms:

The enthronement psalm, Psalm 93 (in the background of which stands God’s overcoming the “rivers, mighty waters” — concepts familiar from the Ugaritic myth nhr il rbm — speaks of the establishment of the world, and moreover, of the throne of God, which is established following his enthronement and is mentioned in proximity to the “house of the LORD” and “holy abode” (שְׁכָנָיו וְיהָאָרָא). We find therefore in this psalm the three motives: victory and enthronement, Creation and Temple connected together, as they are in the Mesopotamian epic. The victory over “mighty waters” and the enthronement of God in his “sanctuary” are found also in Psalm 29 (vv 3, 10). In Ps 89 too we find the foundation of the world together with the victory over Rahab, the Teru’ah (v 16) and kingship.

While these various psalms already manifest the prevalence of the cosmic waters within the realm of the cult, one also finds the idea in the expected parallels between cosmology/cosmogony and the temple cultus, specifically in the architectural features of the Solomonic temple. The “Bronze Sea” of Solomon’s temple, for example, may represent the quelling of the great deep. S. Il Kang thus argues translating הָיָם מָּצָאָג (1 Kgs 7.23) as “the Sea has been restrained!” For our purposes we simply note that, based on such cosmological and cosmogonic symbolism found in Israel’s literature and common throughout the ancient Near East, one has reason to anticipate the sort of pattern one in fact finds in the epic narratives of

132 R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 141.
133 M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 508. Quite similarly, H.G. May writes (“Some Cosmic Connotations of mayim rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” 16): “Two significant allusions to ‘many waters’ are in association with the picture of the enthronement of Yahweh. The first is Ps 93, which Montgomery called ‘a brief commentary’ on the myth of the struggle of Baal against Sea and River, and which Gaster believes ‘clearly alludes to the combat of Yahweh (i.e., Baal) against the Sea and River.’ Here the ‘rivers’ (nhrdot), often associated with the unruly waters of the deep, have lifted up their voice and roaring, but mightier than the sound of ‘many waters,’ mightier than the waves of the sea, Yahweh on high is mighty. Note the association of ‘many waters,’ ‘sea,’ and ‘rivers.’ The enthroned Yahweh is one whose power is greater than that of the insurgent waters. The second is Ps 29, a psalm of the enthronement of the storm-God…. Vs. 3 is reminiscent of the conflict with the insurgent waters, and in vs. 10 the Lord sits enthroned above the flood.”
creation, deluge, and sea crossing: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship, a pattern we dub “cultic” in as much as it has to do with approaching God, and which thus foreshadows the tabernacle cultus. Under the monarchy, the temple worship of Israel established upon Zion never lost its cosmic mountain significance, as Ps 99.9 makes clear: “Exalt YHWH our God/ worship at his holy mountain.” Not only the temple but the whole city of Jerusalem could be absorbed into the cosmic mount as the parallelism of Ps 48.1-2 [Heb 2-3] demonstrates:

Great is YHWH/ greatly to be praised  
In the city of our God/ his holy mountain  
Beautiful in elevation/ joy of the whole earth  
Mount Zion on the sides of the north/ the city of the great king

Toward understanding the significance specifically of the “through the waters” aspect of the cultic pattern, we turn now to consider a widespread ANE ritual, the so-called judicial river ordeal.

C. The Judicial River Ordeal

In his study, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” McCarter argues that the widespread Mesopotamian phenomenon of trial by river ordeal, judging in legal cases being a primary function of id, the (divine) River, constitutes a conceptual backdrop by which certain biblical passages may be better understood. Taking the second law of Hammurabi’s Code as exemplary of the basic process, an accused person would cast himself into the river, that is, into the hands of the divine judge, who would then render the verdict as follows:

if the river has then overpowered him, his accuser shall take over the estate; if the river has shown that seignior to be innocent and he has accordingly come forth safe, the one who brought the charge of sorcery

against him shall be put to death, while the one who threw himself into the river shall take over the estate of his accuser. 138

Emergence from the waters thus signified innocence while being overpowered by them signified the divine verdict of guilt. Ordeals, then, were judicial in nature (establishing “legal truth”), supernatural (justice rendered by deity), and universal (widespread throughout the ancient Near East). 139 In the supposition that this paradigm may indeed serve as a framework in which to better understand the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives, we will now review the judicial river ordeal in the ancient Near East and its suggested conceptual application in biblical literature.

To begin, the significant role of cosmology or “cosmic geography” should be underscored once more for its ideological power, its influence upon the basic ANE institutions and rituals. In fact, the close correlation in the ancient Near East between the cosmic mountain and the waters may lie behind the variant translation of the Akkadian word huršānu, given as “mountain (area),” and “the place of the river ordeal.” 140 “From the connection of the cosmic mountain and the world encircling river where the dead were judged, huršān in Akkadian came to denote the place of the river ordeal,” writes Pope, so that huršan becomes virtually identified with the “infernal river,” and the river ordeal ritual itself a symbol of the real huršān of the last


Similarly, the Ugaritic term hršn encompasses both the mountainous and watery features of El’s abode, making the usual formula nhr and thm unnecessary. Ilurugu, another “river of ordeal,” is understood as “cosmic,” a river at the edge of the world that leads to the world below. McCarter further explains the relation of the cosmic river to the cosmic mountain, with application to the biblical psalms:

In the cosmology of Mesopotamian myth, the term huršānu (< Sumerian huršag) referred at once to mountainous regions and to the river ordeal. Mythologically the huršānu functions as the place of judgment and interrogation at the entry to the Underworld. In its cosmic aspect the mountain is the place from which judgment is pronounced. At least this is true at Ugarit, where the cosmic mountain of ’El is also referred to by the borrowed term hūršānu. The connection between the two meanings of huršānu is thus an obvious one, insofar as the river ordeal is understood to take place at the foot of the mountain, the source of the waters and entrance to the Underworld. Understood against this background, the imagery of the psalms in question becomes clear. The threat of death is associated with the raging cosmic waters, which in Israel are understood to be under Yahweh’s control. The appeal of the victim is thus to Yahweh as judge. As might be expected in an Israelite adaptation of this cosmology, there is no question of the River’s functioning independently....[I]t is Yahweh who is responsible for the deliverance from the waters.

Along this line, Keel compares the Babylonian Map of the World with the geographical awareness of the Psalms, and observes:

[The] experiential horizon may have been operative in Ps 139.8-10, which celebrates the omnipresence of God:

If I ascend to heaven, thou are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou are there!  
If I take the wings of the morning [dawn]  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
even there thy hand shall lead me,  
and thy right hand shall hold me.

As in Amos 9.2-3, which cites in the same order heaven and Sheol, the top of Carmel and the bottom of the sea, we have here two cosmographical concepts (heaven and the world of the dead) followed by two predominantly geographical concepts (the locus of the dawn and the remotest part of the sea). The conceptual pairs in Ps 139.8-10 and Amos 9.2-3 may be taken as designations of “above” (heaven, dawn, top of Carmel) and “below” (bottom of the sea, uttermost part of the sea, Sheol) (cf. Ps 68.22). The same is true in Ps 107.3, where we find the conceptual pairs, rising-šāp̄ôn and setting sea. Without any text-critical justification, the

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144 P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” 407-08, 412. The huršan also appears to be a recognized institution, and failure to take the ordeal would result in fines paid at the “gate of the huršan” (T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 415).
more recent commentators emend ים (sea) to יָםִן (south). But if סָפוֹן is understood as “mountaintop” and ים as a paraphrase of “below,” then we have in Ps 107.3 a statement parallel to Amos 9.2-3 and Ps 139.8-10... (heaven, סָפוֹן – Sheol, ים).

Given the cosmological framework of the ordeal, then, the wicked—those declared guilty by the divine judge—are consigned to the watery abode of the dead. The cosmic waters of Canaanite cosmology, for instance, not only have their confluence at the mountain of 'El, but they are also located at the entrance to the watery abode of Mêt (Death). Similarly, the Ilurugu, having access to the nether world (“mouth of hell” ka-gäräša), may indicate guilt or innocence by bringing the accused down (or not) to the netherworld. Jonah 2.7a may be cited as an explicit biblical parallel:

At the roots of the mountains,

147 T.-S. Frymer Kensky, Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East, 596.
148 Ibid. G.A. Anderson, through the lens of Syriac Christian and Jewish exegesis, also points out the significance of this cosmology as conceptual framework: “This mythic idea [of the cosmic mountain joining heaven and earth] is certainly the background for equating the underworld with Gehenna (gay’ Hinnom, “valley of Hinnom”) an infamous valley in Jerusalem. Many have argued that the burning of children in that valley caused it to be identified as the underworld or place of eternal torment. Although this was probably a contributing factor, the mythic idea that the cosmic mountain joins the heavenly sphere to the underworld is the more probable source...[According to Ephraim’s Hymns on Paradise], Jerusalem, when seen as the cosmic mountain, provides entry not only into the heavenly realm, but also the underworld. Access to this abyss is appropriately located at the foot of this cosmic mountain, just as it is in Canaanite religion. The valley of Hinnom is a most fitting referent for this mythic image. The mountain of Eden was the Axios Mundi. It not only reached to the very edge of heaven, but it also was located near the entrance to Gehenna. Only a chasm separated the two. Within paradise were the bubbling cosmic streams which the tormented souls of Gehenna could only glimpse...From this spot of origin, these cosmic streams went forth to fertilize all the earth...In the Cave of Treasures the generation of Noah sought safety on the slopes of the mountains of paradise, but they were unable to climb it. Its holy nature would not allow those of a sinful and profane spirit to benefit from its security. A similar motif is found in the Jewish work Midrash ha-Gadol (on Gen 7.20)...In Surah 11.44-45, Noah’s son attempts to save himself from the flood, he declares: ‘I will seek refuge at a mountain which will protect me from the water.’ Noah replied: ‘There is no guardian today from God’s decree except for the one upon whom God has shown mercy.’ The concept of the mountain as a refuge or guardian, and the attempt by the wicked to ascend it reflects the exegetical world of Syriac Christian and Jewish exegesis (but the notion that one of Noah’s sons attempted to climb it is purely Islamic in origin)” (“The Cosmic Mountain,” 215-16 fn 21, 202, 219 fn 39). This idea fits well with Lundquist’s tenth proposition about temples: “The temple is associated with the realm of the dead, the underworld, the afterlife, the grave...The temple is the link between this world and the next. It has been called ‘an antechamber between the worlds’” (“What is Temple?” 215). Cf. also J.V. Fesko, Last Things First: “God’s revelation is connected to the symbolic imagery of a river in the prophet Isaiah; God’s prophetic word is compared to ‘The waters of Shiloah that flow softly’ (Isa 8.6). Because the people reject God’s word, ‘the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many’” (60), where the idea of judgment is connected with the river symbolism.
I descended to the Underworld. Its gates were behind me forever.

Sheol lies at the roots of the World Mountain.\footnote{Cf. J. A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” 38; A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 71.} “Thus the subterranean waters through which one must pass in the descent to Sheol are identified with the hostile waters of chaos. The victory over menacing death comes from Yahweh, who triumphs over the waters.”\footnote{B. W. Anderson, “Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship,” pp 207-32 in From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 222.} Similarly, Cross writes: “The cosmic river springing up from the underworld is also ‘Judge River,’ \textit{tāpīt nahar}, as in Mesopotamia the place of the river ordeal, the place of questioning or judgment, as one enters the underworld, whence the term \textit{šē'ol}.”\footnote{F. M. Cross, Jr., “The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research,” pp 91-105 in Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives, T. G. Madsen, ed. (RSMS 9; BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984) 95.} Albright, to be sure, had already proposed the etymology of \textit{Sheol} as the place where judgments are made, or “chamber of fates.”\footnote{W. F. Albright, “The Etymology of \textit{šē'ol},” AJSLL 34.3 (1918) 209-10.} This etymology, as Cross convincingly argues, is favorable in light of the Akkadian use of the same root, \textit{sālu}, for judicial inquiry, haling to judgment, and, significantly, “precisely in connection with the river ordeal.”\footnote{F. M. Cross, Jr., “The Priestly Tabernacle, ” 95 fn 11.} In Job 31.23, Job “calls the River of ordeal the \textit{ḥēd ʾēl},” which consistent with the psalms is “where the location of the waters of judgment is ‘at the sources of the sea’ (Ps. 18 [2 Sam 22]: 16) and ‘the root of the mountains’ (Jonah 2:7), in short, at the foot of the mountain of ‘El/Yahweh.”\footnote{P. K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” 410.} The river ordeal thus constitutes a “judgment” through which the righteous are granted access to the refuge of the cosmic mountain while the wicked are consigned to the underworld.

Thus, while the Assyro-Babylonian river ordeal does not appear to have been practiced by Israel, one can, again, affirm its function as a conceptual backdrop, and also note that there

\textit{\footnote{P. K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” 410. In Dante’s Commedia, interestingly, treacherous waters surround the mount of purgation such that Ulysses and his crew are plunged into \textit{Sheol} for their prideful approach (\textit{Inferno XXVI}), while God’s people are granted safe baptismal passage (\textit{Purgatorio II}).}
are some references to ordeals by water in the Hebrew canon. YHWH’s control over the waters, furthermore, includes his ability to rescue souls from Sheol, the “pit” under the waters (cf. Pss 18, 69). McCarter lists Psalms 18 (2 Sam 22), 66, 69, 88, 124, 144 and the psalm in Jonah 2 as examples which clearly presuppose “a situation of judgment by water,” where “the threat of death [is] expressed in terms of raging waters,” that is, of the “cosmic waters,” each passage containing most or all of the following elements:

1. The psalmist is beset by raging waters;
2. He is surrounded by accusers / confronted by enemies;
3. He protests his innocence and reliance upon God, beseeching him for deliverance from the waters;
4. He is drawn out of the waters and set in a safe place.

For the justified individual, vindicated through the ordeal, the process may have had something of a purifying aspect (at least, in the sense of cleansing the person from the shame of accusation). The Babylonian Marduk, for example, claimed to be the god who makes the judgment in the river ordeal, purifying (convicting? – ub-ba-bu) the good and the evil. The Sumerian text Temple Hymn 21 reads: “Uruku(g)...within you [your “core”] is the river ordeal which vindicates the just man.” It should also be noted that the Ilurugu-house may be associated with the washing of ritual purification, as Levitical regulations may also be tied to the cosmic

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158 T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East, 428. This ordeal may have involved a rite of purification (429).
159 Cf. Ibid., 538.
waters of creation (and the deluge). More to the point, the river ordeal follows the basic pattern of going through the waters to the mountain that will be considered in the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives in the following chapters. Far from being a novel interpretation, Kline had already offered such a reading of the deluge in his 1965 article “Oath and Ordeal Signs”:

Archetype of water ordeals was the Noahic deluge. The main features of the subsequent divine-river trials were all found in the judgment of the Flood: the direct revelation of divine verdict, the use of water as the ordeal element, the overpowering of the condemned and the deliverance of the justified, and the entrance of the ark-saved heirs of the new world into the possession of the erstwhile estates of the ungodly.  

Our study however seeks to integrate this aspect into the overall pattern of approaching the divine Presence. Thus it is the righteous or innocent alone who are consequently granted access to the sacred mount. The next section on gate liturgy will explore this approach (subsequent to the water ordeal).

III. THE GATE LITURGY

In Israel, protecting the sacred space of the temple may have entailed a gate liturgy as found in Psalm 15, which begins with the question, emphatically repeated (v 1):

\[

ty\text{HWH, who may abide in your tabernacle?  
Who may dwell in your holy mountain?}
\]

A similar question is asked in Psalm 24 and in Isaiah 33:

\[
\text{Who shall ascend into the Mount of YHWH?  
Or who shall stand in his holy place? (Ps 24.3)}
\]
\[
\text{Who among us shall dwell with the consuming fire?  
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? (Isa 33.14)}
\]

The answer provided by Psalm 15, perhaps recited by the priests guarding the temple precincts, is (v 2): whoever’s walk is “blameless” (טָהִים tāmîm), whoever works “righteousness”

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162 M.G. Kline, “Oath and Ordeal Signs,” 132. Kline also considered the Red Sea and Jordan crossings as “other outstanding water ordeals of the Old Testament” (132-33). His assessment of the deluge as archetype should, perhaps, be balanced by greater emphasis on the cosmic waters of the creation event.

(ῥήμα σεδεq), whoever speaks “truth” (ῥήμα ὑμετ) in his heart—such a one may ascend the mount of YHWH’s abode. The particular ambiguities of this cultic ritual, if it indeed took place at all, are not of immediate consequence. At issue for our purpose is simply that cosmic mountain ideology served as a paradigm or conceptual backdrop for Israel’s cultus so that approaching YHWH in worship at the temple was comprehended, beyond the inevitable metonymy given the temple’s locale atop the hill of Zion, via a narrative liturgy: a mythopoeic journey to the cosmic mountain of God. As an archetypal temple, the cosmic mountain also has gates, barring entrance along the pathway of ascent to the divine abode, so that a ritual “gate” or “entrance liturgy” becomes an anticipated possibility in narratives informed by a cosmic mountain ideology. While this possibility—that the question “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” runs like an undercurrent through the narratives of our thesis—will be explored in the following chapters with reference to the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives, respectively, here we will briefly survey the concept of the gate liturgy in relation to the temple cultus of Israel, including general ANE parallels, and the underlying cosmic mountain ideology informing it.

Fundamentally, the gate liturgy has to do with stipulations for who may enter the sacred space of a temple. Somewhat similar to the entrance liturgies in biblical literature are the inscriptions engraved on side doors leading into the temples of Graeco-Roman Egypt, such as found at the temple of Edfu which reads (Edfou, III, 360.12-361.5):

Do not initiate wrongfully; do not enter when unclean; do not utter falsehood in his house; do not covet the property <of his temple>; do not tell lies; do not receive bribes; do not discriminate between a poor man and a great; do not add to the weight or the measuring-cord but (rather) reduce them; do not tamper with the corn-measure.\(^{165}\)

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Griffiths compares another such inscription (Edfou, V, 334.1-6), which contrasts the one “who speaks falsehood in thy house” with the one “who is pure, he who is upright and walks in (the path of) righteousness,” with the contrasting paths of Psalm 1.\(^\text{166}\) But, further, he also notes the scholarly comparison between these Egyptian inscriptions with the attestations of innocence found in the Book of the Dead \(^\text{125,167}\) a portion of which reads:

Hail to you, great god, Lord of Justice! I have come to you, my lord, that you may bring me so that I may see your beauty, for I know you and I know your name… … I have not done falsehood against men, I have not impoverished my associates, I have done no wrong in the Place of Truth, I have not learnt that which is not, I have done no evil, I have not daily made labour in excess of what was due to be done for me, my name has not reached the offices of those who control slaves, I have not deprived the orphan of his property, I have not done what the gods detest, I have not calumniated a servant to his master, I have not caused pain, I have not made hungry, I have not made to weep, I have not killed, I have not commanded to kill, I have not made suffering…… … I am pure, pure, pure! \(^\text{168}\)

The comparison illustrates once more the cultic correspondence between temple liturgy and narrative—one’s temple service to Horus, in this case, parallels the soul’s journey upon death, both contexts informed by doorways/gates. Spell 127 of the Book of the Dead reads:

O you doorkeepers who guard your portals, who swallow souls and who gulp down the corpses of the dead who pass by you when they are allotted to the House of Destruction…. May you guide N, may you open the portals for him, may the earth open its caverns to him, may you make him triumphant over his enemies. \(^\text{169}\)

In one sense, of course, the concern for who may enter sacred space is already intimated by the presence of doors.

There were many reasons why temple doors were considered so important. They represented the entrance to the holy place, and the gate was often used in pictures as a symbol for the temple itself. …The door, therefore, was the symbol for a central point in religion: the meeting between god and man. \(^\text{170}\)

The doors or gates of a temple, then, are necessitated by (and thus signifiers of) the holiness of the space. \(^\text{171}\)  

Sacredness is one of the main characteristics of temple space identified by

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\(^{167}\) Ibid.


\(^{169}\) Ibid., 115.

Lundquist,\textsuperscript{172} and ultimately derives, as Kraus points out, from the divine Presence: “Der \(\pi\text{ly}^\nu\) wohnt auf dem Zion; gedacht ist an den Tempel (vgl. Ps 43.3; 84.2; 132.5). Der \(\pi\text{ly}^\nu\) hat seine Wohnung „geheiligt“ (\(\tau\text{y}^\nu\pi\)), d.h., er hat sie abgesondert und unnahbar gemacht (Ex 19.23).”\textsuperscript{173}

Protecting the divine abode from profanation was the function—common throughout the ancient Near East—of the temple door guardians (cherubim, lion, genii, etc.),\textsuperscript{174} eventually performed by priests. One such Sumerian guardian Ig-alim(-ma), whose name means “the (divine) door of the bison,” had the primary function, as described in Gudea Cylinder B VI 11-12:

\begin{quote}
To admit the righteous,

to keep away the wrong doer.
\end{quote}

Much like the \textit{šedu} and \textit{lamassu} who guarded entry to temples, then, Ig-alima’s function was “to decide who should be admitted to the temple, i.e. to the god.”\textsuperscript{175} An additional way of protecting sacred space from profanation in the ancient Near East was via the ritual lustrations by which the worshiper could “wash his hands in innocence” (Ps 26.6; cf. 24.4; 73.13).\textsuperscript{177} The emplacement of guardian genii and lustrations/sprinklings thus appear to be the two principal means of

\textsuperscript{171} The same goes for the doorkeepers. “Doorkeepers are vital in protecting this holy space ‘so that no one unclean for any reason should enter’ (2 Chron 23.19)” (R.D. Nelson, \textit{Raising Up a Faithful High Priest}, 136).


\textsuperscript{174} Among the many examples mentioned by Keel is the Imdugud, the lion-headed eagle that guarded the temple gates: “A Sumerian hymn to Enlil praises the gate complex of Ur-Nammu (ca. 2050 B.C.): ‘The shepherd Ur-Nammu raised up to the heavens the lofty ‘House of the Mountain’ [temple of Enlil] in Duranki [‘Bond between Heaven and Earth’ = the temple district of Nippur], set it down to the astonishment of many. With refined gold he richly adorned the front of the ‘High Gate,’ the ‘Great Gate,’ the ‘Gate of Salvation of the Step-Mountains,’ the ‘Gate of the Unharvested Grain.’ There the Imdugud-bird killed many [foes]; no wicked one assails the eagles which stand there. The doors [of the temple] are lofty, clothed with dreadful radiance, vast in foundation, inspiring great fear” (The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 123). Other examples include the pair of sphinxes in Ugarit guarding the temple of Baal; the lamassu, bulls with human heads and eagle’s wings, that guarded Assyrian temples and palaces; two lions from Tell Harmal near Baghdad guarding the entrance of the temple of Nisaba.


\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 155. Kapelrud goes on to delineate the similarities between the Sumerian door-deities and the biblical cherubim, a point to which we will return in the gate liturgy section of our next chapter on the Creation narrative.

\textsuperscript{177} O. Keel, \textit{The Symbolism of the Biblical World}, 123. Keel correlates Ps 26.6 with model of a temple from Gezer which shows two fonts of holy water on either side of the entrance so that the worshiper might wash his hands before going about the altar in the forecourt. As will be addressed in a later chapter, the altar likely represented a miniature cosmic mount so that the pattern of going through the waters to the mount of God is manifest in this cultic act.
protecting sacred space in the ancient Near East, the ritual of the latter protecting from the threat of the former. In Assyria, for example, priests would ladle holy water, using bronze *situlae*, and sprinkle those who dared pass the guardian demons.

Turning now to the general cosmic mountain ideology underlying ANE temples, two features delineated by Anderson are especially relevant: (1) the mountain is “a refuge and place of protection from the powers of chaos,” namely, the primeval waters, and (2) it is also especially sacred:

> [W]e should mention the holiness of the cosmic mountain. Those who would ascend its heights must be righteous (Ps 15, 24.3-6).

Given the assumed mythopoetic cosmology, surviving the “river ordeal,” as considered in the previous section, may perhaps be seen as a prerequisite for the ascent of worship—while the wicked are judged via the waters and consigned to Sheol, the righteous are brought safely through the waters to the mount of the divine Presence. Thus ablutions/lustrations may be the cultic counterpart to the mythopoetic idea of the river ordeal, while the statues and/or priests stationed at the gateway of temples represent the mythic creatures guarding the mount. In the literature of ancient Israel, there indeed seems to be a connection between the entrance liturgy at the gate of the temple (cosmic mountain) and the idea of the river ordeal. Surviving the ordeal is related to having “clean hands” before YHWH who controls the many waters and has founded his throne upon them, as a consideration of several Psalms will seem to justify.

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178 Ibid.
179 Ibid., 123, 126 (see Plate VIII).
181 A.S. Kapelrud, e.g., posited three stages in the tradition of the temple gates in Sumerian religion: (1) the door itself was guardian and god; (2) the duties of divinity were transferred to figures standing beside the gate, the door itself still pictured with wings; (3) the guardians beside the door had taken over all duties and also the divine character (“The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise,” 153).
Psalm 24, likely a pre-exilic witness to YHWH as Creator, asks, “Who may ascend into the mount of YHWH? Or who may stand in his holy place?” This hill, Mount Zion, is central over

incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.'...There is symbolism in raising hands in prayer. The gesture exposes to God both the breast and the palms of the petitioner to show that they are pure (clean). The message of Psalm [24] is clear: In order to enter into the temple (the 'hill of the Lord,' called ‘the mountain of the Lord’s house’ in Isaiah 2.2), one must have clean hands and a pure heart. In other words, both acts (represented by the hands) and thoughts (represented by the heart) must reflect righteousness, along with the lips that utter the prayer" (accessed at: http://farms.byu.edu/publications/books/?bookid=21&chapid=105).

An interesting parallel is found in a Mesopotamian incantation, all the more significant as it mentions two of the rivers of Eden (Gen 2.10-14):

River which is pure,
Waters of the Tigris which are clean,
Waters of the Euphrates which are shining,
Tesba the man of the apsu,
Hala the mother of the mountain,
Enki the king of the apsu,
Asarluhi the son of Eridu,
May they purify my hand,
May they cleanse my mouth,
May they make my foot shining(-clean),
May the evil tongue stand aside.

[Be adjured by heaven, be adjured by earth.]


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Waters of the Tigris which are clean,
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Tesba the man of the apsu,
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Enki the king of the apsu,
Asarluhi the son of Eridu,
May they purify my hand,
May they cleanse my mouth,
May they make my foot shining(-clean),
May the evil tongue stand aside.

[Be adjured by heaven, be adjured by earth.]
the earth that was “founded (יִסָּדָה, y’sadāh) upon the seas” and “established upon the waters,”
and, being the chosen abode of YHWH, only the one “who has clean hands (נֵפֶשׁ כְּפַפָּיִם, n'q̄î kappayim) and a pure heart,” who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,” etc., may ascend.  

Thus the psalm, as Mowinckel noted, contains leges sacrae, “laws of the sanctuary” that serve as qualifications for temple entry, for approaching the divine Presence in the temple—indeed, he posited the sanctuary gate as the primary setting for Decalogue law. Focus then shifts to the approaching Presence: the “gates” (ןַחַלִּים šîkārim), the “everlasting doors” (תּוֹרֹת כְּפַפָּיִם pithē having obtained kingship over the whole earth” (The Psalms in Israel’s Worship I, trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas [1962; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004] 178). He further connects the gate liturgy, the toroth of entry, to the commandments of the covenant at Sinai, at least gesturing, then, toward a view of the scriptural “cosmic” mountain as something of a narrative liturgy: “It is the same tendency that find expression in the traditions about the making of the covenant on Mount Sinai and in the commandments of the covenant, Ex 34 and 20. The custom of announcing the ‘sacred laws’ of the sanctuary, and the tradition about the making of the covenant and the ancient Yahweh law from Kadesh-Sinai have mutually attracted each other, and in this way the old custom of putting questions as to the laws of admittance was filled with the spirit and essence of Yahwism....The existing toroth of entry also belong to the decalitical tradition. The traditional figure 10 in such groupings of the fundamental commandments of the covenant (“the decalogues”) is probably derived from the instruction of pilgrims: one commandment for each finger....The fundamental commandments of the covenant of Mount Sinai encounter the congregation outside the temple gate, and they are also heard at a climactic of the festal cult, at the renewal of the covenant....But in the ‘liturgy of entry’ the commandments are of such a nature that the challenge must be taken up by the individual, who is put fact to face with his personal responsibility....” (179-80). J.L. Mays’s comments on Ps 24, in view of Gen 1, would seem to resonate with God’s seventh day enthronement: “It is the Lord’s purpose to come as the “king of glory” who has won the battle over seas and rivers to found the world. Until the victor appears, it is not evident what the meaning of “world” is. Cosmic gates and sacred doors must open so that the sovereign who owns the world may enter and be present in the world. The liturgy of advent in vv 7-10 intones the meaning and destiny of the world” (“Maker of Heaven and Earth’: Creation in the Psalms,” pp 75-86 in God Who Creates, 79).

In Israel, as well as Egypt, the heart “is the seat of thought and volition, and is therefore a decisive factor in judging a man” (O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 73 fn 83).

This idea is captured in the cultus of Israel as “Solomon’s temple was built upon the high-ground of Mount Zion, the acropolis of ancient Jerusalem. Consistent with this thought, the pilgrims of faith poetically go up to Zion (תְּרוּת, Ps 122.4) to worship the Most High God (יִשָּרֵא, Ps 46.4) who dwells there” (W. Gage, The Gospel of Genesis, 55). An interesting parallel concept occurs in the Mesopotamian incantation: “River which is pure, Waters of the Tigris which are clean, Waters of the Euphrates

S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel’s Worship, 177-78.


in vv 7, 9, and the righteous King’s victorious entrance. “Gate” (שָׁעַר) is used of the tabernacle entrance (Ex 27.27; 35.17; 38.15, etc.), the gates of the Jerusalem temple (Jer 7.2; Ezek 8.14; Ps 118.10, etc.), and Bethel (Gen 28.17) where “the Gate of Heaven” (שער גומרי) is in parallel with “the House of God” (בית יבש), with reference here in Ps 24 being to יְהוָה’s holy mount—as the archetypal temple, the cosmic mountain has gates.

Returning to the qualifications, righteousness is, thus, a cult ethic (Ps 15.2; 24.5; Isa 33.15). The platform (מַקּוֹן) of God’s throne in Zion is righteousness and justice (cf. Pss 15.5; 24.5). 194 The platform of God’s throne in Zion is righteousness and justice (cf. Pss 190 S. Paas points out that use of אלף has reference to the mythic, primeval character of the Temple (Creation and Judgment, 41). Cf. H.J. Kraus, Psalmen I, 345-6. J.L. Mays calls them “cosmic gates” (“Maker of Heaven and Earth,” 79). It may even be that אלף pīhē ūlām in v 7 refers to the gates of the netherworld being opened upon the deity’s return from descending into the abode of death. Cf. A. Cooper, “Ps 24.7-10: Mythology and Exegesis,” JBL 102.1 (1983) 37-60. Cooper thus shows how early Christian exegesis of the psalm, applying it to Christ’s resurrection and ascension, is fundamentally compatible with its content. His interpretation would be strengthened by reference to the waters in v 2, and the general ANE cosmology whereby the cosmic mountain is founded upon the waters of Sheol.


M.C.A. Korpel, A Rift in the Clouds, 380.

The gates of Ps 24 are thus “cosmic” or “heavenly” gates as J.-H. Kraus noted: “Irdisches und himmlisches Heiligtum werden in der altorientalischen Kulptschau stets zusammengesehen. Darum könnte mit Recht gefragt werden, ob mit וַחֲרֵי הָעָלֶה nicht die ‚Tore des Himmels‘ gemeint sind (dann müßte וַחֲרֵי הָעָלֶה im Sinne von ‚ewig‘, ‚himmlich‘ verstanden werden) (Psalmen I, 205).


Ethical purity as a pre-requisite for acceptable worship is not likely, then, a later theological development of the prophets. For the sādīq in relation to Temple entrance, see M.R. Hauge, Between Sheol and Temple: Motif Structure and Function in the I-Psalms (JSOTSup 178; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 29-33; idem., “Some Aspects of the Motif ‘The City Facing Death’ of Ps 68.21,” SJOT 1 (1988) 1-29; G. von Rad, “Die
89.15; 97.2). Therefore, the one who would approach must be righteous. Interestingly, the throne of Egypt during the Ramesside period is known to take the symbolic form $m3\text{t}$, the hieroglyphic symbol for “righteousness” that is at the same time a representation of the Primeval Mound. It may be ventured that the Pharaoh on his throne represents the god enthroned over the mount, both the throne and the mount founded upon righteousness, the pharaoh commonly understood as the deity incarnate. This is precisely what Hellmut Brunner, who suggested a relationship between Solomon’s throne and the mythological archetype of Egypt (cf. Pss 89.15; 97.2; Prov 16.12; 20.8), posited:

Dieser mythische Ort ist in jedem ägyptischen Tempel realisiert, auf ihm steht jeder Königsthron, insofern der König in seinem Amt eben dies göttliche Schöpfungswerk vollendet und bewahrt....Dabei haben die der ägyptischen Mythologie fernstehenden Israeliten die Deutung auf den „Urhügel“ aufgegeben, aber die auf Maat als die „Wahrheit, Gerechtigkeit“ beibehalten.

Keel further relates how this mythopoeic understanding informed the “gate liturgy” of the temple cultus:

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M.C.A. Korpel, A Rift in the Clouds, 285.

“Even in the royal theology itself, the claim that Jerusalem was Yahweh’s earthly abode meant that the inhabitants of the city should be righteous. As the site of God’s throne, Jerusalem should be filled with the righteousness and justice that were the foundation of that throne” (J.J.M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” CBQ 64.4 [2002] 685).

S. Paas, Creation and Judgment, 87; idem., “He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven,” 319-25. Cf. TDOT 7:239. Rising first as it did from the sea of chaos, the Primeval Mount thus illustrates the righteousness must be the foundation of creation/cosmos. Further, the connection to the Primeval Mound links the Egyptian throne with the pyramid. “The step-pyramid had the shape not only of a hill, but (at least in their most ancient form) of a staircase. Spell 267 of the Pyramid Texts reads: ‘A staircase to heaven is laid for him [i.e., the king] so that he may climb up to heaven thereby’” (O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 113). Cf. I.E.S. Edwards, The Pyramids of Egypt (Pelican Book A 168; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1961) 288.

The king was sometimes, in the form of a lion, emplaced as guardian of the temple gates. However, in his role as the priest, the colossal statues of his human form in situ were also emplaced, guarding and mediating temple entrance. Cf. O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 124 ill. 163, 127 ill. 167a; W. Westendorf, Das alte Agypten (Kunst im Bild; Baden-Baden: Holle, 1968) 108. This role seems to fit in with Adam’s role as priest-king in the narrative of Gen 2-3.

The abyss is a dimension of Chaos and of death, but the high place, the mountain, belongs to the temple. In the psalms, the location of the temple is Jerusalem, or more precisely, Zion. One goes up to Jerusalem (Ps 122.4), and at the temple gates one asks who may (further) ascend the mountain of Yahweh (Ps 24.3)...

According to the information provided by the psalms, the pilgrim addressed the priest (or priests) sitting at the temple gates (cf. 1 Sam 1.9), asking who might set foot on the mountain of Yahweh (cf. Pss 15.1; 24.3). The gates of the Jerusalem temple, as “Gates of Righteousness,” were open only to the “righteous.” ...He who professes fulfillment of the conditions (cf. Deut 26.13-14; Job 31) is pronounced righteous (ṣdyq) and may pass through the temple gates confident of receiving blessing from Yahweh (Ps 24.5; cf. 15.5). 200

In Psalm 18, “an immense and splendid panorama of Israelite cosmology,”201 the psalmist recounts how YHWH’s deliverance, in which “the channels of the sea were seen and the foundations (רְבָעִים m6s’d6t) of the world were uncovered” (v 15 [Heb 16]), was wrought because the psalmist had (we are twice told, vv 20, 24 [Heb 21, 25]) “clean hands” (נַפְתָּל h6r y’day). 202 The psalmist’s innocence is also described with the key terms “my righteousness” (סִדְקִים s6dq) synonymously paralleled with “clean hands” in vv 20, 24 [Heb 21, 25], and “blameless” (תָּמִים š6m6m) in vv 23, 25 [Heb 24, 26], the precise qualifications for approaching YHWH’s holy mount as delineated in Psalm 15. This deliverance from the “cords of Sheol,” in which God drew the psalmist “out of many waters” (נַפְתָּל mîmmayim rabbîm), moreover, leads to praise and thankful worship. Surviving the watery ordeal, then, has to do with “having clean hands,” so that washing one’s hands in innocence (whether by cultic lustration or otherwise) seems to carry the symbolism of going through the waters. The priests, to be sure,

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200 O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 114, 126. Keel utilizes the term “gate liturgy” on p 134. Because of the ethical requirements, J.-H. Kraus referred to Ps 24 as a “Thora-Liturgie” (Psalmen I, 194). Cf. also S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel’s Worship, 177-82; R.E. Clements (God and Temple, 74-75): “Because this worship entailed such a high privilege, it could not be granted lightly, or indiscriminately, but was limited to those who showed by their lives and conduct that they were loyal to the covenant of Yahweh (Ps 24.3-4). One of the priests, acting as ‘door-keeper,’ was entrusted with the important task of declaring the conditions of entry into Yahweh’s temple... Such entrance-toroth were part of a liturgical celebration for all who shared in the worship of the temple... The righteous Israelite, on the other hand, knew that in Yahweh’s house there was a ‘fountain of life’ and a ‘river of delights.’ (Ps 36.8-10)”; H. Wildberger, Isaiah 28-39, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2002) 289-92, who states “Scholars have long noted the parallels, in terms of content, with the negative confessions that are found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, chap. 125” (291), illustrating a mythopoeic context for gate liturgies.

201 W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 96. Eichrodt’s ensuing description manifests clearly the archetypal movement in the psalm from the waters of the underworld to the heavenly place of YHWH.

202 Further, Ps 144 cries out for deliverance from the “many waters,” equated with those “whose right hand is a hand of falsehood (יִשְׁפַּד אֲדֹנֵי; יַרְשֵׁי).”
were commanded to wash their hands and feet via the bronze laver (subdued waters?) before approaching either the tabernacle or the altar (cosmic mount?)—upon pain of death, for “they shall wash with water, lest they die” (cf. Exod 30.17-21). Thus, the suggestion that the bronze laver “probably represented the primeval waters in ritual” appears sound.

In the same vein, Psalm 26 offers the pattern of lustration before approaching the divine Presence in the temple: “I will wash my hands in innocence; so I will go about your altar, O YHWH ...YHWH, I have loved the habitation of your house, and the place where your glory dwells.” Around this center, the psalmist conveys the idea of his feet not slipping (vv 1, 12) amidst YHWH’s testing, his vindication contrasted by the judgment of sinners “in whose hands is a sinister scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes” (v 10). In Psalm 118, the psalmist’s deliverance from death leads to the bold proclamation (vv 19-20):

> Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, I will praise YHWH. This is the gate of YHWH, Through which the righteous will enter.

Here, as with Pss 15 and 24, the temple gates, according to their title, serve not only to forbid entrance to the unrighteous, but to bolster the confidence of the righteous to enter into the divine Presence. Thus Psalm 118 explicitly connects gate entry with righteousness:

> This psalm, too, starts outside the temple gate and reflects the entry through the “Gate of Righteousness.” This is probably the name of an actual gate, very likely the innermost temple gate, through which only “the righteous”—the congregation in a state worthy of the cult—are allowed to enter....The very fact that the congregation was allowed to enter through the Gate of Righteousness was at the same time a corroboration of its righteousness and an imparting of the power of “righteousness” and happiness.

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205 E. Bloch-Smith suggests the courtyard symbols conveyed YHWH’s triumphant enthronement, upon defeating the cosmic waters, etc. (“Who is this King of Glory?” 21). If granted, then the ritual approach would also involve a cultic “following in the footsteps of” YHWH, the precise cosmogonic *mimeosis* we are considering.
206 “Those who participate in the cultus without fulfilling the condition of purity proceed on slippery, shaky ground (Ps 73.17-20)” (O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 126).
Beyond a “liturgical temple entrance formula” (Ps 15; 24.3-5; Isa 33.14-16; Mic 6.1-8), biblical literature also contains examples of divine punishment upon human *hybris* by ascent that appear to be of a piece with the gate liturgy, that is, informed by similar cosmic mountain ideology: Isa 14.13-16; Ezek 28.12-19; Gen 11.1-9. The first two references, prophetic oracles, entail “ascending not simply mountains in general but the ‘mountain of God,’” and the third likely involves an (attempted) ascent into the divine abode via ziggurat construction. In the Isaiah oracle, the king of Babylon, who aspires to be enthroned upon God’s mountain, says: “I will ascend (*בֹּאֵל* הָאֵל) to heaven/... I will also sit on the mount of assembly (*בָּהֲרַ-מֹדֵד*) on the farthest sides of Zaphon (*בִּירֵכְתֶּה שָפָן*) (v 13), but is rather, in poetic justice, brought down to Sheol, the “farthest sides” (*בִּירֵכְתֶּה שָפוֹן*) of the Pit (v 15). Similarly in Ezekiel’s oracle, the king of Tyre, set upon the “holy mountain of God” (*בָּהֲרַ-ןְגֶדֶשׁ לֹהִים*) (v 14), also described as “Eden, the garden of God” (v 13), is as a profane thing cast “out from the mountain of God” because he was filled with violence (*חָמָס*) and sinned (v 16). Some have noted how the king’s creation is portrayed in Adamic and priestly terms, as is his judgment: being turned to “ashes” for “defiling your sanctuaries” (*תַּחַל הַנְּבֵי מַחֲטָה*)—an image “suggestive of the expelled primal human as an ex-

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208 The phrase is Waltke’s (“Psalm 15,” 18).
210 Ibid.
212 Interestingly, this is the same sin that brings on the deluge (cf. Gen 6.11, 13), as will be brought out in our third chapter.
communicated priest. In Lev 21.23, the blemished priest is denied approaching the altar lest he “profane my [YHWH’s] sanctuaries” ( nga'ottom). As Cohn’s summary implies, the imagery of ascent to or abiding upon the sacred mount—that is, the imagery of the gate liturgy—serves as the basis for the lament:

The attempts of foreign kings to scale the mythological mountain of God meet with disastrous results. Similarly, foreign kings cannot ascend Zion, Yahweh’s chosen mountain. Only the descendant of David reigns on Zion (Ps 2.6); foreign kings flee in fright (Ps 48.5-7).

Finally, in the Tower of Babel narrative, the *hybris* of building what is likely intended to be understood as a ziggurat by which to ascend into heaven—for its “head/top is in the heavens” (w a v rö’sö basfämayim) (v 4)—ends with judgment and exile, a scattering over the face of the earth (v 8). These three narratives involving a casting down/out of the mount of God (or a ziggurat presumably replicating it) because of sin are at least suggestive for seeking such cosmic mountain ideology—and particularly the gate liturgy aspect with its focus on the question of who may ascend—in other narratives involving mountains. These expulsions, further, echo the primal expulsion of Gen 3 as something of a “gate liturgy in reverse.”

To conclude, cosmic mountain ideology appears to include movement across archetypal geography, namely, that of going through the waters to the mountain, whereupon some sort of gate liturgy takes place—that is, where the question of who may ascend/enter is answered. As it happens, one finds this general pattern of thought in Tablet IX of *Gilgamesh*, already considered, where the hero, upon arrival at the cosmic mount Mashu, is immediately confronted by...
guardians, part scorpion, part human—precisely the sort of creatures typical of the guardian statues emplaced before temples—barring entrance through the gates of the mount. While too many lines are missing to discern whether or not there were any *leges sacrae* involved (and this is not necessarily to be expected), it is, however, (1) tempting to posit some sort of entrance liturgy in the fragmented lines “I want to learn your... / ... / I want to learn...” (67-69), or even constituting the whole conversation itself at the gate; and (2) of interest that the hero’s crossing of treacherous rivers is mentioned by the scorpion-beings at just this point. The end of their conversation resolves in Gilgamesh’s bold declaration, akin to Ps 118.19, “Now! Open the Gate!” (218), and the guardians’ acquiescence, with blessing, to allow him through “the gate of the mountain...” (224). Here we have, then, a narrative historicizing the mythopoeic drama of a Sumerian (Akkadian/Babylonian) cosmic mountain ideology. It would be surprising, given the established lexical and thematic parallels between them (and to be explored in the following chapters), if the particular cosmic mountain ideology informing Israel’s cultus were not evident in the narratives preceding those that recount the establishment of the tabernacle cultus. Indeed, our point is that these narratives, the creation, deluge, and the sea crossing narratives in particular, serve to explain the need for and logic of that cultus. We hope to show, further, that the great question of the Israelite cultus, expressed in Psalms 15 and 24 as a gate liturgy—namely, “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?”—runs as an undercurrent through these same narratives as an integral aspect of cosmic mountain ideology.

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217 As will be evident in the deluge chapter, where flood story parallels are briefly considered, the moral aspect of Hebrew literature is sometimes missing in ANE parallels (e.g., in the other ANE deluge stories, including *Gilgamesh*, the flood was not a punishment for sin, but appears rather to be the result of divine capriciousness).

218 R.D. Nelson, e.g., states: “The Hebrew Bible characteristically presents the practice of sacrifice against the backdrop of Yahweh’s acts of deliverance. Thos who shaped the Hebrew Bible rooted the ritual precepts of Leviticus deep into the narrative of Yahweh’s saving acts” (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 99).
A. Brief Literature Review

The earliest scholarly contributions regarding the cosmic mountain come from the perspective of comparative religion, where the literature has been basic, subsuming it under the broad category of “sacred space,” and mentioning it as one of several forms of the *axis mundi* found widespread throughout the ages and cultures of the world, along with the *omphalos* and the world tree.  

More recently there has been a proliferation of works related in a secondary fashion to the idea of the cosmic mountain, generally as a biblical-theological approach to the temple. While

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each of these works certainly makes its own particular contribution, it would yet be fair to say most of them rely upon (as this chapter already has), some merely rehearsing, the seminal studies of R.J. Clifford, J.D. Levenson, and G.A. Anderson.

In 1972 Clifford published *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, a revision of his 1970 doctoral dissertation at Harvard University under the supervision of F.M. Cross, Jr. Here Clifford acknowledges the need for “systematic and detailed study of the cosmic mountain and center in the great Ancient Near East religions,” his own work laying the foundation for further studies. Primarily tracing the process—he dubs “translatio” (p. 131)—whereby Israel incorporated the Canaanite traditions of the cosmic mountain so that Zion, for example, became the new Zaphon, the abundant examples from Scripture amount (perhaps

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Redaction, Theology and Canon in Exodus 19-24 (SBLMS 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), which seeks to bridge the dichotomy between traditional source criticism and biblical theology by positing a history of redaction based on canon consciousness, is important for its identification of the cosmic mountain (in this case, Sinai) with particular theologies of divine presence. Each of these works has made its own particular contribution, even if only at the level of popularizing the established parallels between the sanctuary and the Creation/Garden narratives. However, the implications of this cultic prologue for the following scriptural narratives have yet to be explored sufficiently. In relation to temple ideology/theology itself, significant contributions have from J. Lundquist (see, e.g., “What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology,” pp 205-19 in The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall. H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, and A.R.W. Green, eds. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983]) and, especially, M. Barker (see, e.g., her Temple Theology and The Gate of Heaven).

221 R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*. Clifford begins the book by providing a general ancient Near Eastern background to cosmic mountain ideology (sampling in the areas of cosmological speculation and ziggurat ideology) and illustrating its significance in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and among the Hurrians and Hittites. The second chapter reviews Ugaritic literature to show the pervasiveness of cosmic mountain ideology in Canaan (a few scholars had already begun work in this area—see his short bibliography on p 4 fn 5). The third chapter considers the cosmic mountain in the Old Testament under the broad headings of Genesis, Sinai, and Zion traditions, and also explores the cosmic mountain symbolism in the Solomonic Temple. In the fourth chapter, Clifford demonstrates how the ideology of a cosmic center was continued in the intertestamental literature. Clifford summarizes the characteristics of the cosmic mountain as its being “the meeting place of the gods, the source of water and fertility, the battleground of conflicting natural forces, the meeting place of heaven and earth, the place where effective decrees are issued,” as well as being the “primal hill” where creation took place (3, 25). A mountain is cosmic in the sense that it is “involved in the government and stability of the cosmos” (ibid). Because of these “realities” the cosmic mountain came to symbolize the divine Presence itself, a point relevant to our thesis (6, 7). Demonstrating rather conclusively from the literature that the concept of the cosmic mountain was part of the complex of mythic or religious ideology in the ancient Near East, and that from “her earliest period as a people, around Sinai, through the time of her settled life, around Zion, sacred mountains played a significant role in Israel’s religious life” (98), Clifford’s book has become the major source for other scholarly endeavors on the topic.

necessarily) to proof-texts paralleled\textsuperscript{223} with Ugaritic literature in something of a history of traditions approach. Working from a source-critical perspective, Clifford’s book does not deal with the final form of the text and is not an attempt at biblical theology. The tabernacle, for instance, along with the tent of meeting, is related to the tent dwelling of El in Ugaritic myths—its relationship to Sinai is not explored; the various strands of Sinai traditions are traced to the Canaanite high god El; Zion’s backgrounds are traced to Baal traditions, etc. Therefore, while accomplishing much needed historical and comparative work, establishing the significant role of mountains in the religious thought of the ancient Near East via textual and archaeological evidence (glyptic and structural), Clifford does not develop the exegetical function of the cosmic mountain canonically, and does not deal with the Eden and Ararat mounts. He also unnecessarily restricts the concept of the cosmic mountain by severing it from the idea of the Weltberg—a position adequately critiqued by Margulis.\textsuperscript{224} By thus dislocating the cosmic mountain from a comprehensive cosmology, the pattern (particularly “through the waters”) we are seeking to establish is eluded. Temples, moreover, as architectural cosmic mounts, plainly included the primeval waters in their lore.\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{223} Some of Clifford’s parallels may not be sensitive enough to the subtle differences involved. Cf. N.M. Sarna’s cautions in \textit{Understanding Genesis} (New York: Schocken Books, 1970) xxvii.

\textsuperscript{224} B. Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg,” 20ff. S.N. Kramer also supports the Weltberg concept in Sumerian mythology (\textit{Sumerian Mythology} [Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 1944; rev. 1961]). As already noted, ANE cosmology need not be thought of as a naïve scientific notion but rather as a mythopoetic concept, and one arguably integral to cosmic mountain ideology. For example, Clifford’s definition of the cosmic mountain includes the mount’s connecting the upper and lower worlds—an idea coherent with a Weltberg-based cosm-/myth-ology. This is not to say that Clifford’s caution against the grand synthesis approach of Eliade, van der Leeuw and others is not helpful. However, his conclusion fails to address how his own findings relate to the broader view of phenomenologists. Cf. the reviews of P.C. Craigie (\textit{HAR} 24.4 [1973] 300-01) and G.F. Hasel (\textit{BO} 31.1/2 [1974] 112-15).

The next significant work was J.D. Levenson's introduction to the Hebrew Bible, *Sinai & Zion*, published in 1985—particularly notable as a Jewish contribution to biblical theology.\(^{226}\) Written at a popular level, Levenson sums up the literature of the Hebrew canon by introducing the history and religion of Israel via the symbolism of the two mountains mentioned in his title: Sinai and Zion, and positing a tension (or pluriform relationship) between their respective ideologies of nomism and kingship (or covenant and temple). Primarily focusing on the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, then, there is little to no discussion on the narratives and figures of Genesis (e.g., Adam, Noah, and Abraham). His chapter on Sinai emphasizes torah appropriately but remains imbalanced by neglecting the significance of the tabernacle cultus. Furthermore, Levenson introduces the concept of the cosmic mountain only within his consideration of Zion (p. 111ff) and the cosmic symbolism of Solomon's temple. Thus, his book is indeed "an entry into the Jewish Bible"—it neither attempts to develop cosmic mountain ideology *per se* nor exploits its hermeneutical significance outside consideration of the Davidic covenant. Our own thesis seeks to show how the cosmic mountain provides both a lens of interpretation for each particular narrative (creation, deluge, and exodus accounts) and a unifying (cultic) theology.

Closer to this goal is the work of another important scholar, G.A. Anderson, who published an article in 1988 on the cosmic mountain interpretation of Eden in early Syriac Christian literature,\(^{227}\) followed by an essay on early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the


\(^{227}\) G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain."
Eden narrative. While certainly focusing upon one biblical narrative, his work is broad in scope, demonstrating the importance of cosmic mountain ideology as a basic paradigm in the thought of biblical and post-biblical literature. Reading the Eden account in terms of cosmic mountain ideology was not simply an oddity of Syriac Christianity but an attempt at reading "the biblical narratives in their own socio-cultural context," the identification of the Jerusalem temple with Eden being "as old as the Bible itself." Anderson thus emphasizes the importance of the cosmic mountain for understanding both the Hebrew and Christian canons. Taking a canonical, biblical-theological approach, we will follow Anderson's insight into the priority of the Eden narrative as displaying an archetype for the cosmic mountain (so that, for example, Moses' ascent upon Mt. Sinai may be viewed as his being portrayed as something of a new Adam).

While several scholars have also affirmed the significance of cosmic mountain (or sanctuary) symbolism in the Eden narrative, the same work has been wanting as regards the deluge narrative—surprisingly so, given the many intertextual and thematic parallels between the two accounts. Our thesis thus hopes for a unique contribution here, in addition to deepening the understanding of cosmic mountain ideology in the creation account(s) via the cosmogonic pattern (thus incorporating the cosmic waters in a more complete cosmological approach) and the gate liturgy (exposing the cultic significance of the expulsion narrative). Given the wide consensus that temples were the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, and given the

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230 Ibid., 203.

231 Ibid., 212: "The use of this motif as a hermeneutical device for integrating the message of scripture is an important witness to the value of myth in the Bible itself. Curiously, modern commentators have not appreciated the *theological* value of these...." (emphasis original). We would, to avoid the confusion of an ambiguous term, replace "myth" with "mythopoeic themes" in this quote.
widespread emplacement of divine guardians at temple entrances, it is remarkable that the gate
liturgy has not been incorporated into previous cosmic mountain studies as we hope to do here.

Most of the scholarship relating to the cosmic mountain, then, has been either focused on
the temple themes found in the Eden narrative of Gen 2-3 or on the cosmic mountain as a broad
paradigmatic concept in the biblical literature. Furthermore, previous studies on the cosmic
mountain have not dealt adequately with the whole cosmological complex, including the cosmic
waters. There have been, to be sure, independent studies on the cosmic waters and the river
ordeal with notable contributions by H.G. May, T.S. Frymer-Kensky, and P.K. McCarter.\textsuperscript{232}

McCarter, for example, ends his article on the “river ordeal” with the prophetic words: “In OT
religion, judgment is so pervasive a factor, deliverance from waters or by crossing waters is such
a central theme, that future study of the subject promises to be both complex and exciting.”\textsuperscript{233}

Our thesis will synthesize scholarship on the cosmic waters within cosmic mountain ideology to
present a more complete understanding of mythopoeic thought in the ancient Near East as
particularly expressed in the Hebrew Bible. Limiting our scope by the criteria of those cosmic
mountain narratives that also involve water, that is, the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea
crossing/Sinai) narratives, we seek to establish (1) that the pattern of going through waters → to
the mountain → for worship is fundamental to biblical cosmic mountain ideology;\textsuperscript{234} (2) the
concept of a “gate liturgy” is also integral to cosmic mountain ideology, serving as an exegetical
key to the narratives in focus; (3) how the tabernacle cultus at the end of Exodus provides an, at

\textsuperscript{232} H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” \textit{JBL} 74.1 (1955) 9-21; T.S.
Frymer-Kensky, \textit{The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East}, vols. 1, 2 (Unpublished PhD dissertation; Yale


\textsuperscript{234} Establishing this pattern will have ramifications, e.g., for Dozeman’s suggestion that the cosmic mountain
tradition(s) of the Sinai complex (Exod 19-24) developed independently of other pentateuchal themes like the
least preliminary, resolution to the exile from God’s Presence in the Eden narrative, with the creation, deluge, exodus texts thus pre-figuring the tabernacle.

Finally, the aforementioned gate liturgy, applied in our thesis as a hermeneutical key to the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) narratives, and so fundamental to the cultus of Israel, is to our knowledge almost completely lacking in previous scholarship. The sole exception is Martin R. Hauge who comes close to our reading by comparing Psalms 15 and 24 with the exodus narrative:\footnote{M. R. Hauge, \textit{The Descent from the Mountain: Narrative Patterns in Exodus 19-40} (JSOTSup 323; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 320.}

Hauge recognizes the “who may ascend” motif as a structuring device and even posits Ps 24 as a version of the exodus story \textit{in nuce}, with vv 3-6 and 7-10 corresponding to Exod 19-24 and 25-40, respectively. While our thesis will deepen and broaden Hauge’s insights by illustrating the prominence of the gate liturgy motif from creation to the tabernacle, it will also fill out his work on the exodus narrative in as much as he fails to correspond the motif to the high priest’s role in the tabernacle cultus, and specifically on the Day of Atonement.

\textbf{B. Cosmic Mountain Ideology and Biblical Studies}

Our thesis, it is hoped, will be found useful as a preliminary to a thematic approach towards a new biblical theology, incorporating and advancing upon the cultic and Presence theologies of the past.\footnote{The notable examples here being J. McKenzie’s \textit{A Theology of the Old Testament} (1974) and S. Terrien’s \textit{The Elusive Presence} (1978). This is not the place for us to defend particularly these two theologies as having the most potential other than to point out that to dwell in the divine Presence seems to us the bedrock theme of Scripture, with...} In the context of the biblical canon, cosmic mountain ideology will be found to be the unifying matrix of various important themes:\footnote{\textit{\textit{58}}}
creation (as the primal mount first to arise out of the waters of creation, making it the omphalos),
(2) temple (as the pattern for which sanctuaries are the architectural replicas),
(3) divine Presence (as archetypal geography for approaching the divine),
(4) kingship (as the place from which the God and his king reigns),
(5) covenant (as the place from which decrees are issued), and
(6) torah/Law (again, as the place from which decrees are issued).

This fact, in as much as each of the unified strands may justly rival for biblical theological
priority, is significant. For the sake of focus, our thesis will not develop the important aspects of
kingship and covenant as related to the cosmic mountain, and, indeed, will only touch upon
creation, temple, and Presence in an incidental fashion. To pick up on the second of the

the cultus being the ordained means of experiencing the divine Presence between the canonical bookends of creation
and new creation.

While kingship and covenant will not be discussed, it should not be missed that each of these have vied for the
dominant biblical theology. Cf., e.g., J. Bright, The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the
Church (1953; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981) and S.G. Dempster, Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the
Hebrew Bible (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003) for examples of biblical theology grounded in kingship. Kingship in
relation to the cosmic mountain of Zion, variously called Zion or royal ideology, would not prove a unique
contribution in any case as Zion ideology is, perhaps, the thought-pattern of the Hebrew Bible most recognized by
scholarship to be a piece with the cosmic mountain idea, affirming S. Terrien’s statement: “The importance of the
omphalos myth for Hebrew religion cannot be underestimated. The ideology of Zion, which became central to the
main form of Judaism in exilic and post-exilic times, appears to have carried with it a persistent ambivalence: on the
one hand, it belonged to the archaic belief in mythical geography, which is unable to dissociate the sacred from the
topo, and finds therein an exceptionally powerful source of religious and sociological coherence. On the other hand,
it participates, through the prophetic interpretation of the Mosaic covenant, in the possibility to absorb a mythical
view of space into a dynamic theology of time, based on a teleology of election, which is therefore open to religious,
more, and political transformation according to the changing conditions of history” (“The Omphalos Myth and
approach. While perhaps insufficient attention has been given to Paul’s correlation of covenants with mountains (see
Galatians 4.24-26), covenant theology itself is also a well-furrowed field. See H. Gese’s insightful discussion on the
correlation of covenant and mountain, Sinai torah and Zion torah, “The Law,” pp 60-92 in Essays on Biblical
Theology (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1981).

We are, further, including redemption with creation as “the two pillars upon which Biblical theology rests (B.
and exodus narratives, the cosmic mountain incorporates both pillars, redemption entailing cosmogonic mimesis.
Regarding creation, it has been posited that “the foundational factor in biblical theology is a creation theology”
(W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation,” pp 53-65 in Biblical Theology:
Retrospect & Prospect, S.J. Hafemann, ed. [Downers Grove: IVP, 2002] 65. He further states on the same page that
latter three, there has been a growing awareness in scholarship that creation is portrayed in
Scripture theologically in terms of a macro-temple. As the Christian canon moves from creation
to new creation, from old to new cosmic temple, with the tabernacle/temple cultus and the body
of Christ/church in between, temple theology will likely prove to be the extensive and unifying
principle of sacred writ—either subsuming the cosmic mountain or vice versa. The deduction
from these sanctuary bookends, namely, that Scripture is primarily cultic in nature, however, has
been slow to follow—even with the acknowledgment that the Pentateuch, for example, contains
numerous stories reflecting points of priestly interest.241 One scholar has thus remarked that the
“priesthood has been marginalized in modern biblical studies,”242 while another recently called
the temple and its rituals “the great repressed of biblical studies.”243 Happily, this scene has


240 Viewing creation as a cosmic temple naturally leads one to consider further the divine Presence approached via the cult. The programmatic verses of Exodus (3.12; 19.4; 25.8) as well as the Song of the Sea (Exod 15.13, 17), summarizing as they do not merely the movement of the book of Exodus but of salvation history in nuce, underscore that to dwell in the divine Presence is indeed the supreme goal of Heilsgeschichte, the bedrock and litmus for a true biblical theology.


243 M. Carden, “Atonement Patterns in Biblical Narrative: Rebellious Sons, Scapegoats and Boy Substitutes,” The Bible and Critical Theory 5.1 (2009) 4.1-4.15. Wellhausen’s “brazen derision of the Priestly material” is often cited as an example of the prejudice against the cultic material in the Pentateuch, with its “post-exilic obsession with
begun to change somewhat,\textsuperscript{244} and our thesis, developing as it does a cultic pattern of
approaching the divine Presence, the nature of man as \textit{homo liturgicus},\textsuperscript{245} that is, in his priestly
role, along with the significance of the tabernacle/temple cultus in general as a narrative-shaping
worldview, seeks a contribution here.\textsuperscript{246}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{244} One pertinent example is the renewed scholarly interest in the Book of Leviticus (cf., e.g., commentaries by G.J.


\textsuperscript{246} Thus what Carden remarks about various narratives in Genesis, Joshua, Judges and 1 Samuel will prove equally relevant to the narratives of our thesis: “Indeed, the Temple and its rituals could be seen to be the driving object of desire of these texts, including the prophets and Deuteronomy” (“Atonement Patterns,” \textit{4}.10). Increasingly, furthermore, the liturgical character of Scripture is being appreciated—cf., e.g., S. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” \textit{Letter & Spirit} 1 (2005) 101-36.
\end{flushleft}
Other areas of scholarship for which our thesis may prove useful include the following:

1) studies in the cosmic symbolism of the tabernacle/temple and its rituals; 247 2) studies in the theology of worship; 3) studies in patriarchal religion; 248 and 4) studies in the doctrines of baptism (i.e., through the waters) and the so-called “Fall” in systematic theology. 249

CONCLUSION

The temple cults of the ancient Near East, including that of Israel, were informed by cosmic mountain ideology. Having reviewed the idea of the cosmic mountain in the relevant ANE and biblical literature, we turned to consider the cosmic waters as a feature integral to the overall cosmology (and cosmogony) that includes the cosmic mountain—that is, the mount rose up from the primeval waters and is surrounded by them. We also posited the judicial river ordeal as a paradigm that accords well with the cosmic mountain’s being a refuge from the waters of chaos as well as its being especially sacred—only the righteous are delivered through the waters of judgment to the mountain of the divine abode. Finally, we considered the temple entrance liturgy or gate liturgy as a cultic ritual meant to guard the sacred space of the temple from profanation by providing stipulations for entrance, expressed most obviously in the biblical literature with the question: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” (Pss 15, 24). The framing of the question itself manifests the cosmic mountain archetype informing the temple cultus.

Having examined the pattern of going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship,

247 R. Whitekettle, for example, has recently posited a connection between the seven and forty day periods of creation and the deluge with Levitical legislation that assumes a correspondence between the earth, the tabernacle/temple, and the womb (cf. “Levitical Thought and the Female Reproductive Cycle: Wombs, Wellsprings, and the Primeval World,” VT 46 [1996] 376-91). Our thesis, developing correspondences among the creation, deluge, and tabernacle narratives, contributes to this understanding.

248 Presuming, again, that temples are the embodiment of the cosmic mountain, then it may be the case, e.g., there is greater continuity between the religion of the patriarchs and that prescribed under Mosaic legislation—indeed, our thesis tends toward seeing the pre-tabernacle narratives as explaining the logic and need for the cultus of Israel.

249 As will be discussed somewhat in the next chapter, the doctrine of the Fall in systematic theology has been criticized in as much as the weight given to Gen 3 by theologians does not appear shared by the authors of the Hebrew canon. Our reading of the expulsion narrative via the gate liturgy, however, if accepted, fully justifies its prominence at the opening of the canon and within systematic theology.
along with the idea of the gate liturgy, as integral facets of biblical cosmic mountain ideology, and having considered the possible scholarly contribution of our thesis, we turn next, in the following chapters, to an analysis of the creation, deluge, and exodus narratives, respectively. Presuming cosmic mountain ideology as fundamental to an authentic reading of these narratives, we endeavor to demonstrate they serve to pre-figure the tabernacle cultus, that is, they serve to explain the logic and necessity of the cultus.
CHAPTER TWO

The Creation Account
I. Through the Waters: Creation as Water Ordeal
   A. God as Water-Controller
      1. Controlling the Waters
      2. The Waters of Life
      3. The Cosmic Waters of Eden
   B. Creation as Earth’s (and Man’s) Deliverance
      1. Drawn out of the Waters
      2. The Earth and Man
II. To the Mountain: To Dwell in the Divine Presence
   A. The Cosmic Temple: Genesis 1
      1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context
      2. The Cosmology of Ancient Israel: God’s Three-Decked House
      3. The Ancient Near Eastern “Kingship Pattern”
      4. The Liturgical Character of the Creation Account
      5. Tabernacle Construction Parallels
   B. The Holy of Holies: Genesis 2-3
III. For Worship: The Liturgical Telos of Creation
   A. Worship as the Telos of Creation
      1. The Emphatic Seventh Day
      2. The Imago Dei and Imitatio Dei
   B. Humanity as Priesthood/Adam as Homo Liturgicus
      1. The Cultic Transition from Gen 1 to 2-3
      2. To “Worship” and “Obey”
   C. The Gate Liturgy: Humanity’s Profound Descent
      1. The Primeval Exile
      2. Displacement
      3. Holy of Holies as Fullness of Life
      4. The Cherubim
      5. The Flame of the Whirling Sword
      6. The Gate of Eden
IV. The Tabernacle Pre-Figured (or Creation Re-Figured)
   A. Experiencing Eden
   B. Re-Figuring Creation

The Creation

INTRODUCTION

The creation account of Genesis 1.1-2.3, widely claimed to have “no superior in sublimity, force, and beauty,”¹ is neither merely the prologue to the primeval narratives and the book of Genesis, nor merely to the Torah itself, but serves as the majestic opening of both the Hebrew and the

¹ W.R. Harper, “The First Hebrew Story of Creation,” The Biblical World 3.1 (1894) 16. Similarly, C.A. Briggs (“The Hebrew Poem of Creation,” The Old Testament Student 3.8 [1884] 273) refers to this “first chapter of the Bible” as “one of the most precious gems of biblical literature,” “a magnificent piece of literature, the grandest representation of the most important of all events.” Cf. E.A. Speiser (Genesis [AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964] 8) who refers to it as “a credo untinged by the least hint of speculation.”
Christian canons.\(^2\) By this hermeneutically significant position the creation account, including
the Eden narrative of Gen 2-3,\(^3\) determines the narrative arc of the whole of Scripture. Thus,
while it has become commonplace to describe the account of creation in terms of the exodus
redemption\(^4\)—and, certainly, creation and redemption are correlative throughout the Bible\(^5\)—it
will perhaps be found more in accord from a biblical theological perspective\(^6\) to view creation as

Theology of Creation,” *ThS* 46 (1985)) similarly writes: “Gen 1.1-2.3 is deliberately preatory to the whole [of chs.
2-11]. As the self-conscious beginning of the Pentateuch, the passage adumbrates the major themes to be developed
in its sections. It is a preamble not only to the first major section of the Pentateuch, Gen 2.4-11.26, the origin of the
nations, but also to the second section, Gen 11.27—50.24, the patriarchs of Israel, and indeed to the entire
Pentateuch as a unified work. Analysis of the account shows it to be an overture*” (521). Clifford further notes
(*Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* [CBQMS 26; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical
Association of America, 1994] 139): “Mesopotamian cosmogonies often functioned as prefaces.” Cf. also S.D.
in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, W.P. Brown, S.D. McBride, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); E.L. Greenstein,

\(^{3}\) Justification for including Gen 2-3 will be considered below.

\(^{4}\) Cf., for example, B.W. Anderson, “The Earth is the Lord’s: An Essay on the Biblical Doctrine of Creation,” *Int
the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh/London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966) 131-43; T. Boman, “The Biblical
Doctrine of Creation,” *CQR* 165.355 (1964) 140-151: “If we would understand the biblical faith in creation, we
must discover the centre of the Old Testament revelation out of which the belief in creation arose as its final
conclusion. That centre is God’s mighty and merciful leading of the people out of Egypt through Moses, particularly
the miraculous delivery of the people at the Red Sea” (141); T. Boman, “The Biblical Doctrine of Creation,” writes
that the “centre of Old Testament religion and the source of the creation idea is the miraculous event at the Red Sea”
(151). Boman further states: “There you have creation as the last and the most comprehensive consequence of the
revelation of Yahweh’s might power over nature revealed at the Red Sea” (142); “We see that create and redeem,
Creator and Savior, are synonyms, because both have their root and origin in the wonderful event at the Red Sea”
(144); C. Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, trans N.E. Wagner (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964) 2:
“Actually the Bible does not begin with Genesis 1 but with Exodus 1.” For a brief review of the debate about the
place of creation in biblical theology, cf. the preface of *God Who Creates*, xi-xvii; and for a brief survey of
contemporary scholarship, cf. S. Paas, *Creation & Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets*

\(^{5}\) “Creation and redemption belong together, as the obverse and reverse of the same theological coin,” (B.W.

\(^{6}\) T.E. Fretheim has been especially instrumental in emphasizing the priority of creation theology. See his “The
Righteousness, and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” pp 102-117 in
*Creation in the Old Testament* (originally published in *ZTK* 70 [1973] 1-19) who claims that “[a]ll theology is
creation theology” (115); S. Paas *Creation and Judgment*, 1-107 W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17: A Foreshadowing
of the New Creation,” pp 53-65 in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect & Prospect*, S.J. Hafemann, ed. (Downers Grove,
IVP, 2002) 65: “we must conclude that the foundational factor in biblical theology is a creation theology.” Certainly,
the new exodus of redemption in the Scriptures is often described in creational terms (e.g., Isa 9.2; 2 Cor 4.6).
the kernel of redemption. That is, beyond recalling the exodus, the creation account itself serves
to interpret the exodus experience in terms of creation.\textsuperscript{7}

Given, however, the significant canonical and theological place of the creation
account(s), the perceived marginalization particularly of Gen 3 throughout the rest of Scripture is
somewhat surprising—especially so the later one posits a final redaction of the material. Some
scholars have claimed the so-called “Fall” narrative is neither referenced nor alluded to
throughout the Old Testament and that, therefore, the traditional theological interpretation does
violence to the text. James Barr, for example, writes: “OT scholars have known that the reading
of the story as the ‘Fall of Man’ in the traditional sense, though hallowed by St. Paul’s use of it,
cannot stand up to examination through a close reading of the text.”\textsuperscript{8} Brueggemann, who
considers this narrative the most misunderstood of the entire Bible, states:

\begin{quote}
It has been assumed that this is a decisive text for the Bible and that it states the premise for all that follows.
In fact, this is an exceedingly marginal text. No clear subsequent reference to it is made in the Old
Testament, though there are perhaps links in Ezek 28. And even in the New Testament the linkage developed
in the Augustinian tradition of anthropology is based on the argument of Paul in the early chapters of
Romans. Even Paul does not make general appeal to this text. ...The text is commonly treated as the account
of “the fall.” Nothing could be more remote from the narrative itself.\textsuperscript{9}
\end{quote}

Westermann, as well, believes the traditional interpretation to be “inaccurate and deceptive,”
positing that the narrative intention lies rather in answering the existential (not causal) “question

\textsuperscript{7} B. Och, “Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation,” Judaism (Spring 1995) 226-27: “the
creation motif...is the fundamental theme which underlies the Biblical text, providing it with meaning and
substance...The very fact that the Bible begins with Genesis is, in my opinion, a literary fact of considerable
theological significance. Scripture opens with a theology of creation and thereby provides a universal context for
determining the meaning of everything that transpires in the entire Biblical narrative. The opening chapters of
Genesis provide a protology for the history of Israel....Accordingly, Exodus is to be understood in light of
Genesis, redemption and covenant as part of the unfolding drama of Divine creation.” Och goes on to quote
Ludwig Köhler (Theologie des Alten Testaments [Tübingen, 1936] 70): “The Old Testament history of creation
does not answer the question ‘How did the world come into being?’ with the answer: ‘God created it,’ but
answers the question ‘From where does the history of God’s people derive its meaning?’ with the answer: ‘God
gives the history of His people its meaning through creation.’ In other words, creation in the Old Testament
does not belong to the sphere of natural science but to the history of man” (227). Cf. also H.H. Schmid,
“Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation.”

\textsuperscript{8} J. Barr, The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) ix.

\textsuperscript{9} W. Brueggemann, Genesis (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982) 41.
of human beings affected by their limited state." \(^\text{10}\) In a more recent work, G. A. Anderson underscores the issue:

Since the rise of modern biblical studies in the early part of the eighteenth century more than a modicum of doubt has been cast on the standard Christian understanding of that story as "the Fall." If the transgression of Adam really does usher in the reign of sin and death from which the rest of the biblical odyssey will seek redress, why is Adam's sin and its consequences never mentioned until the writings of Paul? Could the story really have such intrinsic significance and yet be completely ignored by the rest of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus? The problem is a real and profound one and must be addressed. \(^\text{11}\)

The question here, once more, is whether the canonical and theological place of the narrative is justified when it appears the Old Testament (i.e., the history of Israel's religion) does not, by way of intertextuality, allusion, etc., accord Gen 3 such significance. \(^\text{12}\) Does this account really "have such intrinsic significance"? Is it really "completely ignored" by the rest of the Old Testament? Is it not, finally, a "decisive text," stating "the premise for all that follows"? This problem is, indeed, real—and likely compounded by the reticence to consider Gen 1-3 as a whole. Yet when one approaches the narratives through the lens of cosmic mountain ideology (and, thus, within a cultic context), the "upshot" is found precisely here: (1) Gen 1 and 2-3 are found to cohere more smoothly, and (2) the underlying prominence of Gen 3 throughout the Hebrew Bible becomes more discernible—the canonical logic, that is, becomes manifest. Gen 3, we will argue, establishes the "descent" that generates the question of ascent so central to the cultus of Israel (cf. Ps 15, 24), and the narratives of our thesis. Thus, entirely aside from whether or not the rest of the canon contains allusions to the Fall narrative, \(^\text{13}\) a cultic reading of the text manifests the

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12 See brief discussion in R.W.L Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 71ff; T.E. Fretheim, "Is Genesis 3 a Fall Story?" *Word & World* 14.2 (1994) 144-53. While Fretheim defends a more traditional reading of Gen 3 his summation states: "However generalizable the story in chapter 3, it alone cannot carry the weight and freight of the traditional view; the fall is finally not understood to be the product of a single act."
13 While "Eden" is mentioned several times (even within Genesis itself), an allusion precisely to the Fall narrative seems beyond dispute in Ezek 28.1-19. Cf. Gen 13.10; Isa 51.3; Ezek 31.15-18.
canonical structure’s weight: the narrative and theology of the rest of the Hebrew Bible (and perhaps of the Christian canon as well) is founded firmly upon the opening narrative(s) of Genesis.

To summarize now this chapter’s approach: while the argument has already been made that the cosmic mountain forms a conceptual backdrop to ANE literature, including that of Israel, it may also be the case that the creation account(s) of Gen 1-3 function to establish the cosmic mountain paradigm fundamental to Israel’s tabernacle/temple cultus. For example, v 2 of Gen 1 may be read as key to understanding the nature of the waters surrounding the cosmic mountain, through which one crosses to approach the divine abode. God’s division of those waters may also be understood as determinative for his judicial role in relation to them. The abundant life in the divine Presence narrated in Gen 2 would explain humanity’s need to approach the mount of God, and the expulsion narrative of Gen 3 to justify the tabernacle cultus as the divinely revealed means for that approach. In other words, Israel’s cosmic mountain ideology may be rooted in the opening of its canon. Accordingly, this chapter will outline our study of Gen 1-3 according to the unifying pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, a cosmogonic pattern that will be repeated in both the deluge and exodus deliverances (and so portraying them symbolically as “new creations”). Via cosmic mountain ideology, we will consider (1) the creation waters as an ordeal, (2) the sanctuary symbolism in the creation account(s), and (3) worship as the telos of creation, including how the expulsion narrative determines—that is, comprises the backdrop to—the gate liturgy. This latter point, so we hope to

14 To anticipate somewhat the byproduct of the thesis, though not of this particular chapter, the cultic pattern in the deluge narrative parallels Gen 1-3 as a whole: Gen 7.24 describes the waters as having prevailed over the earth, akin to the condition of the earth described in Gen 1.2a. In Gen 8.1, God sends a “wind” to draw back the waters, paralleling Gen 1.2c. As the narrative proceeds through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, we find Noah, like a new Adam, atop an Ararat mount with (presumably peaceful) animals, receiving the blessing to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (Gen 8-9). Gen 9.18-29 then recounts something of the “fall” of Noah. The same may be said for the exodus narrative and the apostasy/fall of the golden calf incident; and in relation to Israel’s entry and expulsion from Canaan. This pattern itself then serves to manifest the underlying unity of Gen 1-3.
demonstrate, will serve to satisfy the theological weight given the so-called “Fall” narrative, 
questioned and critiqued via the rise of modern biblical scholarship. The creation account(s) will 
be found all the more significant, therefore, when understood as prefiguring the 
tabernacle/temple cultus, functioning to explain its logic and necessity.

I. THROUGH THE WATERS: THE CREATION AS WATER ORDEAL

The three disjunctive clauses of Gen 1.2 emphasize that the primordial\textsuperscript{15} waters of the deep prevailed over the earth/land, making it a “weltering wasteland.”\textsuperscript{16} The significance of this brief portrayal of the pre-fashioned cosmos for the rest of Scripture has been rarely appreciated.

Indeed, that emphasis is stark enough to serve as the foil\textsuperscript{17} for the six days of creation (vv 3-31), counterbalanced by the three-fold description of God’s rest upon completing the heavens and earth (2.1-3). Westermann rightly notes, in this regard, that if one were to look for any dramatic tension in the narrative “it would be in 1.2 and its link with the preceding or following verses, that is, either in the transition from 1.2 to 1.3 or from 1.1 to 1.2f. This is the only place in Gen 1 where there could be any sort of dramatic element.”\textsuperscript{18} That the deluged earth of v 2 could not sustain life links deliverance to creation,\textsuperscript{19} with fruition of life as a point of resolution—a resolution tied thematically to the waters. In the sense that the earth was “delivered” from the primeval waters, we may describe that deliverance in terms of a water ordeal. Under this general


\textsuperscript{17} “A foil is literally something that sets off or heightens an element in the story. Usually this heightening consists of a contrast, but sometimes it is a parallel,” (L. Ryken, \textit{Words of Delight}, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992] 70).


\textsuperscript{19} Cf. B.K. Waltke (with C. Yu), \textit{An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach} (Grand Rapids: 2007) 181; G.W. Coats (“Strife and Broken Intimacy: Genesis 1-3: Prolegomena to a Biblical Theology,” pp. 151-69 in \textit{The Moses Tradition} [JSOTSup 161; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 153): “It is important to note that salvation history is rooted in the creation of the world. The first act of redemption for the people of the world is the creation of the world itself...” Salvation is, thus, an act of creation.
heading, we will now consider God’s role in creation as water-controller and how, via that control, the earth’s creation is portrayed as being delivered from the waters.

A. God as Water-Controller

1. CONTROLLING THE WATERS

The Creation account contains a strong motif of water, a motif not without parallels in the ancient Near East. Water is commonly conceived as a symbol of the oppositional forces of life, an “ambiguous symbol of life and death.” Bechtel correctly identifies “control” as the fulcrum of this ambiguity: “Water is symbolic of death, when it is uncontrolled (too much or too little), and life, when it is controlled, because it produces growth and fertility.” This statement, in fact, summarizes the movement from Gen 1.2 → 2.10-14, from the chaotic waters of the dark abyss to the fructifying rivers of Eden. In the Hebrew Bible, this decisive control is the prerogative of God, a manifestation of his sovereignty. Through his command and “control” of

22 L.M. Bechtel, “Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-4.24,” pp 77-117 in A Feminist Companion to Genesis, A. Brenner, ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 95. Tsumura, also, opens his study on creation by noting the significance of control with respect to water’s symbolism: “In human experience, water occupies a crucial place, both positive and negative. Water is one of the basic necessities for the existence of living things and is thus beneficial when controlled properly; however, it can be destructive when uncontrolled” (D.T. Tsumura, Creation and Destruction [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005] 1). Cf. also TDOT VIII.282-3; R.J. Clifford, Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible, 144.
23 Cf. also Isa 8.5-8 for God’s waters of blessing versus his floodwaters of judgment.
24 Ross traces scriptural mythopoetic language to this end: “The sea was considered a force of chaos, one that the pagans explained with gods or monsters and a cosmogonic battle. The Hebrew poets used some of their designations to teach that the LORD controlled these “seas” (Pss 74.12-17; 89.9-11; Isa 51.9-11)” (A.P. Ross, Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005] 85 fn 10). O. Keel, referencing the ancient Near Eastern query regarding what kept the earth from sinking into the chaotic waters, states that in the OT, the “crucial factor is that Yahweh, a personal power, keeps the earth out of the Chaos-waters (Pss
water, YHWH shows himself sovereign over life. Indeed, the incipient source of this idea may be traced to the parallelism of v 2:

Here “watery abyss” (מָדַע הָאָדָם t'hööm) and “the waters” (חָיָי hammäyim) stand in parallel, \(^{25}\) with likely signifying the negative or threatening aspect of water and אָדָם representing the positive aspect of water under control. One common view regarding אָדָם is that it appears not to have lost entirely all vestiges of its mythological character as a cosmic power, although it is no longer vested with the personal qualities of will and intelligence which appear in the Babylonian Tiamat. The Hebrew t'hööm displays features of power and cosmic range capable of disrupting the divinely given order of creation (cf. Ps 104.7-9) without the waters themselves threatening to overwhelm God. \(^{26}\)

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Landes, who does not find any pejorative connotations with respect to סרח, yet finds a “hint of a possible negative note” in the presence of the סרח מדר, “soaring” or “hovering,” possibly suggesting the hostility of a hawk circling its prey, which motif, he notes, “fits well with those Old Testament passages where Yahweh is depicted as entering into combat with the mighty waters, often personified as Rahab or Leviathan.”27 For our purpose, however, his conclusion, highlighting יָהֵוֹ’s control over the waters, is to the point:

Is Gen 1.2 intentionally alluding to the motif of God’s conflict with the rebellious waters, or is the idea simply of God’s control and authority over the waters for the purpose of utilizing them in creation? Since we perceive no other clues to suggest the writer may have had in mind the more violent conceptuality, it is perhaps better to adhere to the second interpretation—that is, God’s moving above the waters in the power of his direction and ordering. Significantly, quite in contrast with the Babylonian conception, where Ti’amat is slain and annihilated before the cosmos is created, the biblical picture never portrays the destruction of the waters or of them, but only their control and ordering by Yahweh within the created cosmos, which, interestingly, is in keeping with Egyptian creation tradition.28

Verse 2b, further, conjoins the סרח with “darkness” (הָוָאֵק hōēsk). Certainly, an “Israelite thought nothing, not even evil and darkness, could be removed from the dominion of Yahweh”29 —and this, it will be argued below, is the theological implication of v 2c, yet the point here is simply that the darkness of 2b is to be viewed negatively, especially when considering its symbolism throughout Scripture (and particularly in relation to humanity).30 Turning now to 2c,


30 Cf. G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 16. Matthews (Genesis 1-11: 26, 132-33), viewing v 2 as the material result of v 1 (and so a description of the earth in its “pristine state”), is therefore reluctant to view “darkness” negatively, and bases his argument on God’s “demonstrating authority over” darkness by naming it. Conceding his points, however, would mean that even “evil” ceases to be evil—for even evil is never a threat to God’s sovereignty. Thus God’s demonstrating authority over the darkness is not at issue, but rather whether or not the darkness is a threat to us, jeopardizing our life: “The earth is a dark abyss, inhospitable to life. ‘Darkness’ and ‘deep,’ as opposites of ‘light’ and ‘land,’ connote surd evil (Ex 15.8; Prov 2.13). They too become part of God’s creation, doing his will (see Gen 45.5-7)” (B.K. Waltke [with C.J. Fredericks], Genesis: A Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001] 60) and are thus called good only after God has so controlled them for our good. Cf. C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 104; U. Cassuto, Genesis I, 26. This is in keeping with the basic role of darkness/night as a motif of danger in biblical narrative. Cf. W.W. Fields, “The Motif ‘Night as Danger’ Associated with Three Biblical Destruction Narratives,” pp 17-32 in “Sha‘arei Talmon”: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon, M. Fishbane, E. Tov, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992). While Fields deals primarily with
while מים רעים may also be destructive in Scripture, most often the “uncontrolled” aspect is brought out by the use of the attributive adjective “great” or “many,” in the compound term מים רבים (cf. 2Sam 22.17; Ps 32.6; 93.4; Isa 17.12; Jer 51.55). Even “death itself could be viewed as a journey through the מים רבים to Sheol (Lam 3.54). There thus developed a close association between the threatening power of water, especially in its cosmic manifestation as מים רעים and the physical fact of death (cf. Ps 124.5; 144.7; also Ps 18.17[16]; 69.3, 15f. [2,14f]; Isa 43.2).

In this formulation, מים רבים can be in synonymous parallelism with מים as in Ezek 26.19 and 31.15:

Herbert G. May, in his study “Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” states:

The dragon is the sea and the sea is frequently designated in contexts such as this by the expression מים רבים, ‘many waters.’ The ‘many waters’ are the chaotic, disorderly, insurgent elements which must be controlled.... An analysis of certain passages in which the expression “many waters” occurs will demonstrate how the writers use it to indicate the cosmic insurgent elements which may be manifest as the enemies of Yahweh, as the enemies of Israel, or as the enemy afflicting the faithful individual. And whether in the past, present, or future, the struggle is essentially the same, the battle of God against the waters which threaten his rule. And after the conflict he sits enthroned above the waters.... In [Ezek] 26.19 Yahweh will make Tyre a city laid waste; he will bring over it the deep (ךֹֺהֶם), and “many waters” will cover it. The parallelism between “many waters” and “ךֹֺהֶם” suggests this is not a simple image of the waters of the Mediterranean.

“destruction” narratives, examples may be offered outside this category, e.g., Jacob’s wrestling (Gen 32.22-32), the Passover/exodus (Exod 12-14). These narratives present something of a rebirth/creation out of the dark threat of destruction/death.

31 TDOT VIII.275. Further, “the presence of the water in the seas represents a basic feature of the order of creation (Gen 1.10; Hab 3.15), indicating that water itself was looked upon as a supra-mundane aspect of reality. As מים רבים it possessed the power to confer life, yet it was also regarded as a threatening power of chaos which could bring death, and could even threaten to disrupt or even overthrow the order divinely determined for creation (cf. Ps 104.5-9).... The concept of the primeval ocean in the guise of “mighty waters” (mayim rabbim) is widely attested in the OT. At several points it retains marked overtones of its significance as a destructive cosmic power” (270, 283). Cf. L.J.J. Stadelmann’s discussion, The Hebrew Conception of the World (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970) 165-76.

32 Cf. Jon 2.6, however, where מים is in parallel to קֹּהֶם as the “waters” surround Jonah even to his soul, i.e. they are uncontrolled.
swallowing the island of Tyre, although this may be involved...Yahweh makes the “many waters,” the deep, his agent of destruction, as he did at the time of the flood.  

Stadelmann makes a similar observation:

Taken together, the two passages [Pss 93.3-4, 107.23-24] just given refer to large sheets of water. The expression myrm rbym represents the unruly waters of the deep and elsewhere these waters are a symbol of threatening danger [2 Sam 22.17; Isa 17.13; Jer 51.55; Ezek 31.15; Hab 3.15; Ps 18.17; 29.3; 32.6; 77.20; 144.7]. This undoubtedly was the reason why the ocean was associated with the nether world....

Because the context of “primordial” waters in v 2 would make a' -l a, tr a preferable choice, it is possible, then, that myrm was chosen particularly to contrast הֹאשֶׁק and הַרוּחַ. This contrasting nature of the parallelism is more convincing when the other terms in parallel are considered, namely, הֹאשֶׁק and הַרוּחַ. “The antithetic concept is clearly indicated,” states Ouro, “by the opposite or contrasting pair of words hōsek 'darkness' \ raah "lōhîm ‘Spirit of God.’”

We take, then, the wāw of הַרוּחַ as having an adversative sense. By parallel to the deluge narrative whereby, after the cosmos had returned to the watery abyss of Gen 1.2a-b, the structural and thematic turning point hinges upon God’s sending a “wind,” the adversative sense of הַרוּחַ would appear firmly established. The precise nature of הַרוּחַ is not critical to the point as the הַרוּחַ in view is expressly that of לֹהֵם ("God"). Either “Spirit” or “Wind” of God, both—particularly in light

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33 H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” JBL 74.1 (Mar 1955) 9-21 (10, 12, 18). He further notes (12): “The term ‘many waters’ is used with a number of meanings. It may at times mean little more than abundant waters, although it may be implied that such abundant waters have their source in the great deep, the ēḥôm ... But in the passages to be considered there are references, more or less explicit, to the insurgent waters.” May’s article demonstrates a consistent understanding of mayim rabbim as “hostile and insurgent” waters.

34 L.I.J. Stadelmann, The Hebrew Conception of the World, 160. He notes in fn 844 of 160 his preference to “translate myrm rbym as ‘great waters,’ on account of the insurgent-waters symbolism designated by this expression which reflects Ugaritic background. Ug. rb, when used as an adjective, means ‘great.’”


of the role of the רוח in the deluge and in the sea crossing—express God’s control over the waters. 38 Indeed, it seems likely that a double-entendre is in view, even that “Wind of God” may be utilized, as in Wenham’s translation, for “a concrete and vivid image of the Spirit of God.” 39 Examining parallel texts of the Old Testament, Moscati 40 marks the significance of the Spirit’s role in creation, supporting precisely this understanding for 2c:

You send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. (Ps 104.30)

If he should set his heart on it, if he should gather to himself his Spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. (Job 34.14-15)

Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew,” VT 3 (1954) 209-24; E.I. Young, Studies in Genesis One (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1999) 36-42. Common arguments for the interpretation “God” include: (1) the use of אלוהים as “God” in the preceding and following vv 1, 3; (2) the recurring use (35x) in Gen 1 of אדום specifically for the divine name; (3) None of the other eighteen occurrences of רוח אדום can be translated “mighty wind,” with the next usage of רוח אדום in Ex 31.3 expressly meaning “Spirit of God”—and here with a parallel context (constructing the tabernacle = creation); (4) the participle מרטעפר is personification for a leader or protector; (5) Biblical Hebrew has other preferable expressions for “mighty wind,” such as רוח נטור (Ps 106[107]25; cf. 148.8) or רוח גדול (1K 19.11; Job 1.19; Jon 1.4). In any case, S. Moscati urges that even in the elative, אדום “does not exclude the Divinity” (“The Wind in Biblical and Phoenician Cosmogony,” JBL 66.3 [1947] 306), and further states: “The presence here affirmed of a personal אלהים in the primordial chaotic state of the universe shows clearly the autonomy of Hebrew thought. It revivifies and transfigures in a monotheistic and transcendent sense, the elements of a pagan and natural cosmogony, based upon the apparent aspect of the universe, which were parts of the traditional heritage of the Semites and in general of the ancient Near East. So, if there was an old רוח, meaning both wind and spirit in the etymology of the word, it has become in Genesis רוח אלהים, an indissociable element of the transcendent Creator, the immaterial and active principle of physical life” (309).

38 Cf. R. Luyster, “Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” ZAW 93 (1981) 1-10 (2, 6): “Yahweh’s ability to contain and dominate the cosmic waters, the forces of chaos, is the absolute prerequisite and surest sign of his divine kingship. Normally, furthermore, his authority is expressed through the presence of הרוח, variously translated as his breath, voice, or (as in the cases of Noah and Gen 1.2) wind. ... We discover, then, that the wind can either dry up or stir up. Subdue or agitate at Yahweh’s command. It is, as it were, the instrument by which his will, whatever it may be, is executed.” For the role of wind in cosmogonies, cf. S. Moscati, “The Wind in Biblical and Phoenician Cosmogony,” 305-10. However, “Spirit” may be, if accepted, the more obviously contrastive: “But if the phrase כפוך נבר is understood as referring to ‘the spirit of God’ then it [the parallelism of 2b and c] must be understood as a contrast” (Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 106). Cf. also K. Smoronski, “Et spiritus Dei ferébatur supra aquas,” Bib 6 (1925) 140-56, 275-93, 361-95; W.H. McClellan, “The Meaning of רוח אדום in Gen 1.2,” Bib 15 (1934) 517-27; U. Cappello, “La creazione del mondo nella Genesi,” Annuario di studi ebraici I (1935) 18-20; H.M. Orlinsky, “The Plain Meaning of רוח in Gen 1.2,” JQR 48.2 (1957) 14-82.

39 G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 17. Similarly, K.A. Matthews (Genesis 1-11: 26, 135-36) writes: “Yet the Mosaic community may have understood רוח as having a double sense, ‘wind’ as the prototype of the ‘Spirit’ because of Israel’s experience at the Red Sea, where God sent a mighty ‘wind’ to part the waters and deliver Israel from the Egyptians. ... Whether it is understood as ‘wind’ or ‘Spirit,’ the Hebrews could well appreciate the theology: God was sovereignly superintending the condition of the earth and preparing the way for his creative word. The divine superintendence may be likened to an eagle ‘hovering’ (רָפָה) over the earth.” R. Ouro also makes a strong case for the translation “Spirit of God” (“The Earth in Genesis 1.2: Abiotic or Chaotic? Part III,” AJASS 38.1 [2000] 59-67).

Also relevant here, especially given other correspondences (to be developed below), is the role of God’s Spirit/Wind in the construction of the tabernacle.\(^41\)

To summarize, while clauses 2b and c are in parallel with the phrases שָׁלַח יְרוּם and refering to the same phenomenon, yet from the perspective of the waters are a dark watery abyss of death; but with the controlling presence\(^42\) of God, the imagery develops with the potential for deliverance and life. The control over the waters is made explicit with the ensuing narrative, specifically in the acts of dividing or separating (ברוח), perhaps the fundamental feature of Israelite cosmology (cf. Gen 1.6; Ex 20.4; Dt 5.8; Ps 104.3; 136.6; 148.4).\(^43\) Moreover, the depiction of that control is consistently over רוּם, e.g., v 6b: רוּם וְלֵיכָה. Thus, once the narrative proper begins (v 3), with exerting his control, there is no more mention of רוּם.\(^44\) The portrait here of divine “water wielder” is coherent, further, with that of Gen 2, where God is identified as “the causer of rain,” who “is in charge of the rain.”\(^45\) Such an idea, God as “water-controller,” has

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41 B.K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 182-83: “Ancient Near Eastern parallels and early Judaic sources suggest the building of the tabernacle reprises the creation of the cosmos. In that reprise Bezalel is filled with the “spirit of God” (רָעָה ’reshîm) for the purpose of endowing him with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge for his constructive work (Exod 31.3). In other words, רָעָה יְרוּם has a positive theological significance over against primordial darkness and abyss.” V.P. Hamilton (*Genesis 1-17*, 112) concurs: “It is most unlikely, therefore, that the phrase be read negatively in Gen. 1 and positively in Exod. 31.”

42 Cf., e.g., V.P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 115.


44 M. DeRoche states that יָשָׁר יְרוּם “expresses Elohim’s control over the cosmos and his ability to impose his will upon it. As part of v 2 it is part of the description of the way things were before Elohim executes any specific act of creation” (“The Ruah Elohim in Gen 1.2c: Creation or Chaos?” 318, emphasis added). Cf. also G.F. Hasel, “The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” 8-9.

parallels in the ancient Near East. Especially when contrasted with Egyptian theology, God’s control over the primeval chaotic waters appears precisely at point in Gen 1, this control of the waters being peculiar to Enuma elish and Genesis. Furthermore, divinely controlled water is an essential element of the judicial river ordeal, allowing its verdict to be considered a manifestation of the divine will. Frequent mention of God’s seeing (הנה) and declaring goodness (1.4, 10, 12, etc.) may also constitute judicial language. Establishing God as water-controller here in the creation narrative supports the distinguishing (judicial) role of water in the deluge and sea crossing accounts. Once more, then, the depiction of the uncontrolled primal waters as chaos, along with that of God as water-controller, may function to establish an interpretive paradigm for understanding the cultic pattern of approaching God (via a judicial water ordeal where only the righteous are granted deliverance).

2. THE WATERS OF LIFE

Through divine control the waters of chaos become waters of life. Now while human life, to be sure, is the pinnacle creative act within “the heavens and the earth,” yet it is itself but a part of

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46 D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 41: “In various parts of the ancient Near East a rain-god such as Ada, Hadad, and Baal is called “a giver of abundant water-supply.” In the Fekheriyeh Inscription, for example, he is described not only as a rain-giver but also as the “water-controller of all rivers.” Similarly...the LORD God of Genesis 2 is presumably understood as a rain-giver and as the controller of the subterranean waters. When he planted a garden in a well-watered place, he apparently drained the אֶּכֶּס water there. Thus, he is also a controller of both rain and the subterranean water. However, the LORD God is more than a water-controller. He is the maker of the total universe, of “earth and heaven” (הֶאֶרֶץ וְהָאֵשׁ, 2.4)” (emphasis added). Cf. also Tsumura’s chapter 7 “God and the Waters,” pp 128-40 in his Creation and Destruction (esp. 129).


50 G. von Rad notes: “The use of the verb בָּרָד in v 27 receives its fullest significance for that divine creativity which is absolutely without analogy. It occurs three times in the one verse to make clear that here the high point and goal has been reached toward which all God’s creativity from v 1 was directed” (Genesis: A Commentary, rev. ed. [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972] 57).
the broader theme of life.\textsuperscript{51} This becomes more evident upon returning to the foil of v 2 and recalling the significance of יְהָֽהֵֽנָּֽהְ as a realm either, in its more neutral slant, unable to sustain life,\textsuperscript{52} or, more negatively, hostile to it. Further, יְהָֽהֵֽנָּֽהְ is sometimes set forth in the Old Testament as “extend[ing] to the very boundaries of שֵׁלָּל (Ezk 31.15; Jon 2.6ff[5f]),”\textsuperscript{53} the place of the dead. This foil in mind, one might expect the word יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ (“life”/“living”) to receive particular emphasis in the narrative. Given the author’s demonstrable control over the text numerically, it is perhaps not insignificant that the central word of the pericope—literally, with 234 words on either side, is the first appearance in the narrative (and thus also in the canonical Scriptures) of יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ (יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ, “living,” 1.20),\textsuperscript{54} as the waters “swarm with swarms of living creatures.” Wenham points out that the verb יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ (יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ “swarm”) used with its cognate noun יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ (שֶׁרֶשׁ “swarming

\textsuperscript{51} So W. Brueggemann notes: “God is the God of all creation....verses 3-25 protest against an exclusively anthropocentric view of the world” (Genesis [Atlanta: John Knox, 1982] 30-1). Cf. B.K. Waltke, Genesis, 60.

\textsuperscript{52} T.A. Perry, “A Poetics of Absence,” 7.

\textsuperscript{53} TDOT VIII.275.

\textsuperscript{54} In addition to the emphasis of (1) narrative structure, יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ is also highlighted (2) in being the first instance of created life; (3) in receiving the first benediction of God, 1.22 (B.W. Anderson, “A Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story,” pp 148-62 in Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology, G.W. Coats, B.O. Long, eds. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 158: “The first appearance of nepef hayyad (biological life in contrast to organic life) is accompanied by a special blessing (v 22).” Highlighted the more so as it is noticeably absent from the creation of land-animals (1.24-25). Cf. W. Brueggemann, Genesis, 31; K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11: 16, 157; G. von Rad, Genesis, 56); (4) in being accented on this first occurrence (1.20) by the Masoretes with the disjunctive athnak, which “may be exegetically important [for] marking the emphasis of the verse,” thus demonstrating their awareness of its significance (R.T. Fuller and K. Choi, Invitation to Biblical Hebrew [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006] 27 fn8. Cf. also J.D. Price, “Exegesis and Pausal Forms with Non-Pausal Accents in the Hebrew Bible” [Paper presented at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of ETS March 18, 2006, available at: www.jamesprice.com/images/Pausal_Forms_ETS_paper.pdf]; idem., The Syntax of Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible [Edwin Mellen Press, 1990] 18); (5) in its sharply unexpected occurrence within the waters once contributing to יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ wä¢Bhd, vv 20-1: “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures...all the moving living creatures with which the waters swarm” (this significance was not lost on von Rad who states: “nothing in this realm [the sea], which, as we saw, is close nevertheless to the dimension of chaos, is outside the creative will of God” [Genesis, 56-7]); (6) in using “the verb bárâ (‘create’) to designate special and exclusive divine creativity...deliberately. Significantly, it is used first (if we disregard the summary title in v 1) for the creation of living creatures” (G. von Rad, Genesis, 56); (7) in the fifth day’s parallel to the climactic sixth day’s creation of life (1.20-1//1.24-5), so that both the waters and the earth yield יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ; (8) in the sevenfold occurrence of יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ in the fifth and sixth paragraphs (U. Cassuto, Genesis I, 14); (9) in being, before the culminating “very good” divine declaration of v 31, the final emphasis of v 30 as the vegetative plants are expressly provided for יָֽהָֽנָּֽהְ 7v-7v.
things”) carries “overtones of abundant fertility.” These overtones are more explicit when compounded by other terms, such as רזע עמר (“be fruitful and multiply and fill”), in a cluster. Indeed, it “is possible that the Hebrew writer is deliberately exploiting the phonetic similarity of the terms ‘bless’ בָּרָא, ‘be fruitful’ רָבָה, ‘multiply’ רָבָה, and ‘create’ רָבָה, as well as their ideological connections by juxtaposing them in these verses.” Thus the waters, once deluging the earth so that it was בַּאֹר, a sphere hostile to life, now having been subjugated by God are, dramatically, the first realm of life—they have become waters of life. We turn now to consider this subjugation of the waters further particularly in relation to the fructifying river described in Gen 2.10-14.

3. THE COSMIC WATERS OF EDEN

Given the idea that water when uncontrolled brings chaos and death but when controlled and bounded brings life, the movement of Gen 1 to 2-3 may entail the progression from the watery chaotic abyss to the fructifying rivers of Eden. Rivers are associated with the insurgent waters, and the case may be made for a more holistic cosmological portrayal in Gen 1-3, with the deep’s being the source of the fertilizing waters of life:

We have already noted in contexts of the insurgent waters several occurrences of n’hārātq, “rivers.” These rivers are associated with the deep (ʾḥōm) or sea. They are the rivers of the deep. In Ezek 31 of the stately cedar or “world-tree” which is Egypt it is said that waters nourished it, and the deep made it grow, pouring its rivers (n’hārātq) around the place where it was planted, and sending its channels to all the trees of the field (vs. 4). The rivers have their source in and belong to the ʾḥōm beneath the earth....In Ezek 32.13, 14 Yahweh will destroy the beasts of Egypt from beside many waters, and make their waters clear and cause their rivers to run like oil; the antecedent of “their” is “many waters.” Ps 24.2 describes how Yahweh founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers. This close association of sea and rivers explains how the rivers and sea might be linked together as the insurgent waters....[T]he expression “many waters” [in Ezek 31.4ff may] refer to the waters of the deep beneath the earth as the source of fertilizing waters.
Of particular interest here is how YHWH will “cause their [the many waters’] rivers to run like oil,” for it presents the quelling of the deep as a transformation of it into a source of life. Might this idea represent the movement from Gen 1 to 2-3? Precisely such would be in accord with biblical cosmology as it pertains to cosmic mountain ideology, as Stager writes:

Cosmic mountains...were traditionally situated above the primordial waters (the “deep”), which, in an orderly cosmos, became the source of the sacred rivers that watered the four quarters of the earth...These quiet, cosmic waters emanating from the primordial deep signified the orderliness and tranquility of God’s creation, on which humans could rely...In biblical cosmology the earth is an island floating on the cosmic waters that rise in the Garden of Eden, where they benefit humankind.58

To be sure, water appears to be emphatic in both the Gen 1 and 2-3 accounts, serving as a thematic link between them, with both arguably reflecting essentially the same cosmology.59 If the foil of Gen 1 is primarily that of a watery chaos, one might also note (as Levenson does), that Eden is fundamentally the place from which the primordial river springs, dividing into four great branches.60 Indeed, at “the center of the creation narrative in Genesis 2 lies the description of the four rivers which flowed from the Garden of Eden.”61 For paradise, the dwelling of God, to be the source of life-giving waters is, moreover, in keeping with general Mesopotamian thought.62

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59 D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 28-29: “And the underground-water was flooding out to inundate the whole area of the ‘land,’ but not the entire earth as in Gen 1.2. Thus, Genesis I describes an earlier stage in the one creation process in which the waters cover the earth, Genesis 2 a later stage (in 1.9-10) in which the waters have separated and the dry land has appeared.” L.I.J. Stadelmann (The Hebrew Conception of the World) notes: “The emergence of the dry land is preceded by the separation of the waters from the earth. But just as the word ‘earth,’ in Gen 1.2, refers to the earth in its primitive chaotic, unformed state, so the term ‘waters,’ is taken in the sense of abyss, the primeval ocean” (126-27).

60 J.D. Levenson, Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985) 129. Cf. C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 216 who speaks of the “life-arteries” of all lands of the earth having their source in “the river that watered paradise.”


Being the source of waters may even be intrinsic to the name “Eden” itself. 63 If a common West Semitic derivation is accepted, the Hebrew יבנה ʾēden likely means “a place of abundant water supply” (see Gen 13.10). 64 In light of the consistent biblical and comparative background use of יבנה, Anderson thus says

one can finally put to rest the notion that Gen 2.10-14 is somehow secondary to the larger paradise narrative. The presence of these rivers is necessary within the narrative for this particular garden (גנן) to become the gan-ʾēden. It must be original to the story. 65

Beyond contextual coherence, W.H. Shea notes the literary artistry in the river’s description:

The section [Gen 2] begins with a general observation: “And a river went out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it was divided and became four heads” (v 10). The identification and description of each river follows:

(1) “The name of the first was Pishon; it was the one which went around the whole land of Havilah where there is gold—and the gold of that land is good—there is (also) bdellium and onyx stone.”
(2) “The name of the second river was Gihon; it went around the whole land of Cush.”
(3) “The third river was the Tigris; it went east of Assyria.”
(4) “The fourth river was the Euphrates” (vv 11-14).

The description of these rivers has been outlined in decrescendo form, and each of the successive descriptions becomes shorter and shorter. The first description names the river, states its location, and describes the precious metals and stones that were present. The second description names the river and the land around which it flowed, but no detailed information about that land is given. The third description also names the river and its location, but even this description is shorter than that of the previous river. The fourth river is only named; the country or countries by which it flowed are not named, and no description is given. The same pattern is also evident in the Hebrew word counts. The four successive river descriptions are given in 20, 10, 8, and 4 Hebrew words respectively. Perhaps it is coincidental that the second description is half the length of the first, and the fourth is half of the third. What surely is not coincidence, however, is that the

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63 D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 40: “In the light of the new information from Fekherleyeh, Millard, Greenfield, and others have recently suggested that the term ʾēden means ‘a well-watered place.’ This fits the context of Genesis 2 very well.” E.A. Speiser (Genesis, 16) had suggested that Eden, “Akk, edīnu, based on Sum. edan” means “plain, steppe.” While G.H. Gispen considers this meaning “not acceptable,” he does not justify his assertion (“Genesis 2.10-14,” pp 115-24 in Studia Biblica Et Semitica: Theodoro Christianno Vriezen Qui Munere Professoris Theologieae Per XXV Annos Functus Est, Ab Amicis, Collegis, Discipulis Dedicata [Wageningen: H. Veenman En Zonen N.V., 1966] 116). Tsumura considers three theoretically possible explanations for the etymology: (a) Sumerian Loanword Directly into West Semitic, (b) Sumerian Loanword via Akkadian into West Semitic, (c) Common West Semitic (40-41). So, too, J.H.. Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” DOTP 202: “Because the garden was planted in a well-watered place (Eden), it took Eden as its name. ... The picture is of a mighty spring that gushes out from Eden and is channeled through the garden for irrigation purposes. All of these channels then serve as headwaters for the four rivers flowing out in various directions as the waters exit the garden. This type of waterworks was known in the ancient world.”

64 Ibid., 41.

writer designed an intentional and progressive reduction in the length of each statement and the number of words employed to state them. What did the author wish to express by this format? ...[A] preliminary answer is that the writer employed this form to indicate the central point in the narrative. Different subjects precede and follow it, and in a sense the literary style used to describe the rivers expressed the fact that the “watershed” of the narrative had been reached.\(^\text{66}\)

The impression of this “most striking feature of Gen 2.10-14,”\(^\text{67}\) it seems to us, is precisely that of a spring welling up and dissipating as it flows out over all the land—that is, vv 11-14 literally demonstrate what is explicitly stated in v 10. This impression is created initially by the first two names of the river-heads, which seem to spring up and gush over even as they are read: Pishon “the leaper” or “the gusher,” Gihon “the springer out.”\(^\text{68}\) Turning briefly to Gen 2.6, for its relation to 2.10-14, the association (first made in 1907 by Edouard Dhorme) of the term `\(\text{Ra\,Abd} \) in Gen 2.6 with the Sumerian id, “the cosmic river,” “accords well with the presumed Mesopotamian background to the Yahwistic creation account, and so has enjoyed wide

\(^{66}\) W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2.” One might also add that it may be a coincidence that the total number of words describing the four rivers, 42, is divisible by 7.


NOTE: “In biblical literature (as in the ancient Orient) the number four is symbolic, indicating spatial and geographical completeness. It may be applied to limited constructions. More often it designates the entire world: There are four corners of the world (Isa 11.12), four “endings” of the heavens (Jer 49.36; Ezek 37.9; Zech 6.5, etc.). In some instances the number simply means “all over, everywhere,” as in Isa 11.12” (T. Stordalen, Echoes of Eden, 275). Thus, given (1) the prevalence of numerical symbolism in biblical literature, (2) the lack of scholarly consensus as to the geographical referents of the Pishon and Gihon, (3) the literal meaning of these first two rivers — and this with their literary placement at the head of vv 11-14, and (4) the common ancient Near Eastern idea of specifically two cosmic rivers, sometimes even identified as the Tigris and the Euphrates (E.T. Mullen Jr, The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature (HSMM 24; Harvard: Scholars Press, 1972) 151-54; F. Delitzsch, Wo lag das Paradies? Eine Biblisch-Assyriologische studie [Leipzig: Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung,1881] 79-83; R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 18, 48) may it be possible the first two rivers flowing out of Eden are themselves mere symbols of the bubbling-over abundance of the river’s supply? Cf. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain, 101; Cassuto, Genesis I, 116.
acceptance.” Thus construed, v 6 describes the fresh-water ocean watering the earth while v 10 depicts the river watering the garden, implying that the river itself is fed by this subterranean ocean. After considering this theme in *Enuma elish*, Seely writes:

Other Babylonian texts also make reference to rivers coming up from the deep below. The Code of Hammurabi and several sections of the Atrahasis epic mention “floods [rising] from the abyss.” In Babylonian thought then, the earth floated on an Ocean, a Deep, an Abyss (*Apsu*). This ocean was spoken of as being as deep under the earth as the sky was high over the earth. Accordingly, it was an inexhaustible source of water for all springs and lakes as well as for mighty rivers like the Tigris and the Euphrates. In addition, this *Apsu* upon which the earth floated was thought of as the same sea that encircled the earth. Earthly fresh-water springs were, in fact, so closely linked in people’s minds with the great *tehom* below the earth (Gen 49.25; Deut 33.13) that the earthly springs were themselves sometimes called *tehom* (*Ezek 31.4*) or *tehomot* (*Deut 8.7*).71

The *tehom*-water flooding out of the subterranean water in Gen 2.6 may thereby be related to the *nahr*-water of the subterranean ocean.72 Thus understood, a case may be made for viewing Eden’s life-giving73 river as the result of the divine subjugation of Gen 1’s watery abyss.

Psalm 104, generally connected to Gen 1 by scholars, portrays the subdued cosmic waters (vv 6-7) as providing the sources for springs (vv 8-13).74 This composite picture also appears of

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70 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-13*, 64. Similarly, R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 101 writes: “The river which goes out from Eden in verse 10 appears to be an explanation of the *'ed*, ‘the ground-flow’ of verse 6. It may be assumed, then, that the *nahr* of verse 10 rises from the subterranean sweet water to bring life to the face of the earth.” Cf. E.J. Young, *In the Beginning* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1976) 67-68.

71 P.H. Seely, “Geographical Meaning of ‘Earth’ and ‘Seas,’” *WTJ* 59 (1997) 245, 253-54. Seely also notes (252): “In the blessings of Joseph first by Jacob (Gen 49.25 [MT 24]) and later by Moses (Deut 33.13) there is a reference to the ‘deep sea (*tehom*) lying below’ as the source of spring and/or river water for farming.”


a piece with the idea found in Ps 46 whereby the waters that once threatened destruction are subdued and transformed, via YHWH’s victory, into the river of life flowing out of Zion.\textsuperscript{75}

Jerome F.D. Creach, in his article on Ps 1.3, brings out this mythopoeic context:

This point [that plg describes the water that flows from the holy mountain] is abundantly clear in Pss 46.5 and 65.10, where one finds the ancient Near Eastern idea that the earth’s water originates on the mountain of the gods. In Ps 46.5 (nāḥār plāḡāy w yšamm’ḥā ṣā‘-y`lōhīm, “a river, the streams of which make glad the city of God”), plāḡāy w are the courses of the river that flow through the holy city, and the water of this stream is contrasted with the chaotic sea beneath the mountain (46.2-4). In Ps 65.10 (peleg y`lōhīm nāhār māšē’ máyīm, “the stream of God shall be full of water”), the “stream of God” signifies the deity’s power experienced on Zion, and it is spoken of in relation to the taming of the waters of chaos (65.6-8). Clearly, the connection between the watering of the earth and the flowing of the peleg y`lōhīm reflects the belief so common in mythopoetic lore that deities controlled the waters of the earth and guided them to their proper places. The idea of watering the earth (65.10) may include the giving of rain, but the contrast of the “stream of God” with the chaotic waters denotes a water source of “universal” import.\textsuperscript{76}

The importance of the cultic role of this river,\textsuperscript{77} connecting the Gihon of the garden with that of Jerusalem/Zion\textsuperscript{78} becomes evident in light of the ancient Near Eastern background\textsuperscript{79} whereby it

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\textsuperscript{75} S. Kelly, “Psalm 46,” \textit{JBL} 89.3 (1970) 309. The syntax of 2.10-14 may also be brought in here to support the idea of divine control over the waters: “The verbal make-up of the verse is peculiar. Preceding verses have wayyiqtol forms, with YHWH God as agent. Those are taken up again in 2.15. Verse 10 portrays the river as subject for an act denoted by a participle. All verbs describing agency of the rivers in this section are participles. This renders 2.10-14 as a parenthetic description in past durative, a perspective including even the imperfect forms in the section. Yet, the incident is suggested as purposeful through the infinitive construct in 2.10a. The one who conceivably has intention is YHWH God—“Sender” of the garden scheme. Gen 2.10-14 seems to portray a situation provided by YHWH God in continuation of v 8f and as a general background for 2.15" (T. Stordalen, \textit{Echoes of Eden}, 274).


\textsuperscript{77} G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 197-98: “The cultic role of this river is intimated in several biblical texts. We mentioned above the likely cultic role of the river in the anointing of Solomon in 1 Kgs 1, the oracular use of the river in Isa 7-8 and of course the metaphorical usage in Ps 36. Another important text which gives witness to its cultic role is Ps 46.5. This Psalm declares that the river “makes the city of God rejoice.” The term “rejoice” in Hebrew should not be confused with its counterparts in western European languages. The term, in Hebrew (as well as other Semitic languages) very often refers to cultic joy. Significantly, the cultic usage of this stream, and the cultic joy it produces is amply described in the Mishnah (Sukkah 4.8-10). According to this tractate, in the Second Temple period the sacred waters from the Gihon stream were carried to the temple and ceremonially poured into a bowl beside the altar. This cultic description makes an explicit identification between the waters of the Gihon spring and the life-giving waters of the cosmic mountain/temple. As the Talmud relates, there was no rejoicing like the rejoicing of this event (b. Sukkah 51b). This brief description of a Mishnaic ritual builds very nicely on the cosmic role of the Gihon spring as it is described in Gen 2.13 (Urzeit) and Ezek 47 (Endzeit)...The images of Urzeit (Gihon) and Endzeit (waters emanating from temple) come together in the ritual of the cult. This ritual also serves as an exegesis of Psalm 46.5. It interprets, in a very appropriate fashion, the type of rejoicing this river provides for the city of God. It is the source of living waters which may be experienced partially and proleptically within the cultus of the temple.” This provides, of course, the context for John 7.37-39 where Christ’s outpouring of the Spirit is the
was thought the temple’s foundation stone was what kept the waters of chaos subdued.  

Lundquist’s third proposition regarding temples makes this precise connection to the primeval waters:

The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring. The reason such springs exist in temples is that they are perceived as the primeval waters of creation, Nun in Egypt, Abzu in Mesopotamia. The temple is thus founded on and stands in contact with primeval waters.

In rabbinic cosmology, the connection is explicit:

Mount Zion is the capstone which keeps in place the waters of chaos whose subjugation made creation and hence all civilization possible. Were it not for the Temple on Zion, those angry waters would surge from the abyss in which they are imprisoned, undo the work of creation, and return the world to the primordial chaos which is described in Gen 1.2. In fact, some rabbinic sayings mention moments when precisely such a reversion threatened to become reality:

At the time that David dug the foundations [for the Temple], the watery abyss [חַומָּ֣ד] came to the surface and sought to flood the world. David recited the fifteen [songs of] ascent [Pss 120-34] and brought them [i.e., the waters] down [b. Sukk. 53a].

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J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 182: “This association between ancient Near Eastern temples and spring waters is well attested. In fact, some temples in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and in the Ugaritic myth of Baal were considered to have been founded upon springs (likened to the primeval waters), which sometimes flowed from the building itself. Thus, the symbolic cosmic mountain (temple) stood upon the symbolic primeval waters (spring).”


In fact, a late Aramaic translation of the Torah speaks of a rock, the “rock of foundation,” ̀eben Maya, on which the ineffable four-letter name of God was engraved, and with which God “sealed the mouth of the great abyss in the beginning” [Targ. Pseudo-Jon. to Ex 28.30].

Connecting the Eden river of Gen 2 with the deep of Gen 1, then, leads to significant parallels with the temple, precisely the contextual reading we are positing.

To conclude, many biblical and post-biblical creation “descriptions more or less clearly suppose that the creation was preceded by a subjection of the sea by YHWH.” The point here is simply that that subjugation, even as expressed in the dividing of the Sea (Exod 14), is how God controlled the waters of destruction such that they became waters of life. Perhaps, then, the inclusion of Gen 2.10-14 in the so-called “second” creation account, rather than being a mere “excursus,” may be seen as fundamentally related to the subjugation of the primeval chaotic waters in Gen 1, that is, part of a more complete cosmological portrayal. Keel’s comments provide a helpful summation, linking the creation waters, once more, to the cultus of Israel—a point significant to our study:

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82 J.D. Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 133-34; M. Barker, The Gate of Heaven, 18-19; E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 55ff. Cf. Isa 28.16; Matt 21.42; Mk 12.10; Lk 20.17; Acts 4.11; Ro 9.33; Eph 2.20; 1Pe 2.6-8.
83 H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of mayim rabbym, ‘Many Waters,’” [20,] 21: “In Num 20.11 when at Meribah Moses struck the rock, “many waters” went forth, suggesting their origin in the deep. The source of the fertilizing waters in the great deep may in some of these passages be thought to explain the great fertility and luxuriant growth that is pictured. ... The sea of bronze (1 Kings 7.23ff) stood for the cosmic sea, the thôm, as the subterranean ocean from which all fertility was derived. Since it was not fed by tributaries, it must have been the deep (țhôm) which was the source of the river of life which flowed from beneath the threshold of Ezekiel’s temple, beside which grew all kinds of trees for food....” Cf. also J. Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 139, 162; Idem., Creation and the Persistence of Evil, 92-93; G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse and Its Implications for a Biblical Theology of the Temple,” pp 191-209 in Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology, T.D. Alexander, S. Gathercole, eds. (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2004) 194, for other cosmic symbolism regarding Solomon’s Temple. M. Himmelfarb, “The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of ben Sira,” pp. 63-79 in Sacred Places and Profane Places: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, J. Scott and P. Simpson-Housley, eds. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) 65.
84 H. Gunkel, Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation, K.W. Whitney Jr., trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 12, 63. Gunkel has in mind here Ps 104.5-9; Job 38.8-11; Prov 8.22-31; Jer 5.22b; 31.35; Ps 33.6-8; Ps 65.7f; Sir 43.(25) 23; Prayer of Manasseh 2-4.
In the psalms, Yahweh himself is the source of all life. The river of delights emanates from him (Ps 36.8-9). To be sure, the “bronze sea” (cf. 1 Kgs 7.23-26, 44; 2 Chr 4.2-10) is not mentioned in the psalms. However, it does play a part in the water symbolism of the psalms, and it must therefore be considered here. The term “sea” indicates that this is no mere wash basin (though it naturally fulfilled that function). Rather, its water represented the harnessed, subdued Chaos from which the world arose. Whether it represents the heavenly or the subterranean ocean is an irrelevant question since both oceans (and the earthly ocean as well) originally and essentially belong together. ...The subdued primeval waters fecundate the earth (cf. Pss 46.4 with 46.3; 74.15 with 74.13-14; 104.10 with 104.6-9).85

The waters aspect of cosmic mountain ideology, then, serves as a unifying conceptual link between Gen 1 and Gen 2-3. We may already begin to see how Gen 1-3 constructs a cosmogonic “map,” portraying the holy mountain of God surrounded by the subjugated primal waters, and from which flow streams of living waters.

B. The Creation as the Earth’s Deliverance

1. DRAWN OUT OF THE WATERS

Correlative with the transformation of the waters of chaos into waters of life, their control by God leads to the deliverance of the earth, an event in view already in v 2 when the earth is described as a weltering wasteland (רָאשׁ וָטָבָר), deluged in the watery abyss (תֵּהוֹם).86 This idea, to keep our objective in view, is in keeping with the judicial water ordeal paradigm whereby the deity delivers the righteous/innocent through the waters of judgment. Particularly when read from the perspective of הַרְכָּב, the Gen 1 account appears to portray creation as a divine deliverance.

Verse 2, as a foil for the creation work, establishes the “great central theme”87 of the earth—which is the center of description as the emphatic position of this term in the Hebrew

85 O. Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, 136 (emphasis added). He also notes that the bulls bearing the bronze sea are symbols of fertility.
87 R. Ouro, “The Earth of Genesis 1.2: Abiotic or Chaotic? Part I” 262. E.J. Young (Studies in Genesis One, 30-1) calls the earth the “grand theme.”
text indicates particularly in relation and with reference to the waters, giving us a picture of an unformed earth immersed completely in the waters, More precisely, and whatever the particular understanding of מָכָּבֶּד (mabdi‘) functions as a foil inasmuch as the weltering wasteland cannot sustain life. This being so, the earth’s emergence out of the waters becomes a climactic focal point of the narrative. B.H. Anderson refers to the third and sixth days as the “climax point of each section... where in each case two creative events pertain to the earth.” On the second day, God had parted (נַפֹּק עַל־ָהַר nafok ‘al-’ar) the waters vertically, on the third day, he gathered (יִקְוֹאֵד yiqqāwīd) them horizontally, drawing out the “dry land” from the waters by fiat, so that it “appears,” v 9:

The surface of the earth is the third day’s main concern with God’s approving judgment for the work of the second day being delayed until this final separation of the waters (1.10). Notably, hayyabbā‘ā is pointed by the Masoretes with the disjunctive accent athnak, indicating the main pause in a verse, and thus drawing further attention to the dry land’s emergence. In

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91 Here Cassuto’s translation is especially helpful: As for the earth, it was without form or life (Genesis 1, 21).
93 G.M. Landes reads Prov 8.28 as suggesting the vault needed to be strengthened because “the waters above it are quite powerful, so that what is to keep them back must be strong or steady” (“Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8.22-31 and Genesis 1,” 284).
94 K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11: 26, 151 (emphasis added).
96 The athnak occurs “at syntactically and rhetorical significant places in the text that influence exegesis,” (James D. Price, “Exegesis and Pausal Forms with Non-Pausal Accents in the Hebrew Bible” [Paper presented at the
keeping with ANE cosmogony in general, and with the subsequent Gen 2-3 narrative in particular, it may be the reader is intended to understand this emergence of “dry land” in terms of the primeval mound’s emergence.

The earth’s being drawn out of the waters contributes to the idea of the “birth” of the cosmos, and even the earth itself appears to be described in terms of a womb.97 Being delivered from the waters by God’s control,98 the earth is then called to sprout vegetation and fruit-bearing trees, in prospect of the corresponding sixth day (vv 29-30). Now while the theology of the Pentateuch in general and of the creation account in particular precludes any notion of “Mother Earth,” the Scriptures nevertheless poetically attribute birthing imagery to the earth (cf. Romans


98 G.J. Wenham (Genesis 1-15, 20), e.g., notes that it “was God’s power that limited the waters to certain areas (cf. Jer 5.22).”
8.22), qualifying that imagery by the power and will of God.  

By the superintending Spirit the watery tomb, the מים ים, becomes a watery womb out of which יְלַל עדות emerges. Birthing imagery being integral to the portrayal of creation, then, the cosmogonic mimesis of being delivered through the waters will also signify a "new birth."

2. THE EARTH AND MAN

When the close association between the earth/land and man is appreciated, then one can begin to see the pattern of man's deliverance through the waters (via the earth's deliverance) to the mountain of God. Thematically, both the emergence of land out of the waters and the creation of human life form climactic foci, resolving the "formless" and "void" state of the earth, respectively. Here literary form follows substance, for the narrative structure highlights the third and the sixth days of creation, focusing on land and man (see my panel outline below). These two days are also tied lexically by two isolated uses of נָצָר יָס in the narrative, the earth "springs forth" vegetation on the third day and living creatures on the sixth day. Following the panel shift of the first 3 days to the second 3 days, as from general habitat to particular habitants, the

99 K.A. Matthews (Genesis 1-11:26, 152), e.g., writes: "There is no hint of the pagan notion of Mother Earth. The land by itself, of course, does not produce vegetation; rather God enables the land to do so by his creative word." B.K. Waltke (Genesis, 62), similarly, states: "The earth is the agent through which God mediates his generative power. So-called 'nature' is God's mediated power and life. There is no excuse for deifying it as 'Mother Nature.'" Further, while the literal notion of divine birthing is non-existent in the Hebrew Scriptures, the imagery itself is not shunned completely. Cf. M.C.A. Korpel, A Rift in the Clouds (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 246-52 (246); and Num 11.12; Deut 32.18; Ps 2.7; 90.2; Job 35.28-9.

100 Man's tie to land is a pervasive biblical theme. See, e.g., G. Vail, "'Man is the Land': The Sacramentality of the Land of Israel," pp 132-68 in John Paul II and the Jewish People, D.G. Dalin, M. Levering, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

101 G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 6: "Both days have a double announcement of the divine word 'And God said' (vv 9, 11, 24, 26) and the approval formula twice (vv 10, 12, 25, 31), so that they correspond to each other formally. But there is also a correspondence in the contents of the days. Day 3 deals with the creation of the land and plants, while day 6 deals with the animals that live on the land and man..." Cf. also G.W. Coats, Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 45: "The structure would again point to the cohesion of the center element that excludes the seventh day as a part of the conclusion, and it places emphasis on the third- and sixth-day events as climactic." See also J.H. Sailhamer, "Exegetical Notes: Genesis 1.1-2.4a," Trinity Journal 5.1 (1984) 74, 77.
climactic creation of humanity, “the crown of God’s handiwork,” is the emphatic denouement of the earth’s former state. The emergence of the earth from the waters, then, has in view the creation of man, God’s image within the heavens and the earth. While Gen 1.24 reads: “Man” is not listed as one of those creatures and vv 26-27 may appear to preclude God’s creating Man from the earth—a point we need not vie against given the thematic and lexical connections already discussed. The account of Man’s creation in Gen 2, however, quite explicitly links the two (Gen 2.7):

Here, again, we find the underlying sentiment of man’s vital relation to the earth/land—the two are a “package deal.” As is well known, this link is brought out verbally: רָאַם (the Man”) is formed from the הָדָם (the ground”). Now, returning to vv 26-27 of Gen 1, we simply note that the same term is twice used for Man, linking the two accounts. Thus man too, it might be said, emerges from the waters with the earth. As already mentioned, the emergence of land itself may be related to the primeval hillock first to emerge from the waters, the cosmic mountain. Within the context of the judicial river ordeal, the cosmic mountain is the refuge from the primeval waters. Psalm 18.16 [Heb 17], for example, reads:

K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11: 26, 160. Matthews marks the eight-fold emphasis of the creation of human life: (1) the creation account shows an ascending order of significance with human life as the pinnacle; (2) this is the only creative act displaying divine deliberation; (3) this expression replaces the impersonal words of the previous creative acts; (4) human life alone is created in the “image” of God; (5) the verb בָּרָה occurs three times in v 27; (6) the event is given longer description than previous ones; (7) v 27 emphasizes “image” through a chiastic arrangement; (8) unlike animals, said to come from the land, mankind is a direct creation of God.

G.J. Wenham (Genesis 1-15, 27), e.g., states: “With the creation of man the creation account reaches its climax. We have observed how the acts of creation most germane to human existence—the earth, man’s home (vv 9-13), the sun and moon that determine his life cycle (vv 14-19)—were described more fully than other less vital aspects of the created order. But now with man’s creation, the narrative slows down even more to emphasize his significance.” The earth which “commands the attention of the whole report in vv 3-31” (Matthews, Genesis 1-11: 26, 142).

The account’s single use of הָדָם immediately precedes, in v 25.
It may be that the vindicated one’s deliverance from those waters was thought of as cosmogonic mimesis, an experience of the earth’s primal deliverance. Indeed, the portrayal of that primal deliverance appears to function throughout Scripture in an experiential manner, proclaiming that the God who conquered chaos to establish creation will also conquer the historical enemies (often portrayed as chaos monsters) of his new creation, Israel. 106

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY PROLOGUE</th>
<th>Gen 1.1: “In the beginning God created / the heavens and the earth.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DILEMMA DESCRIBED</td>
<td>Gen 1.2a: “Now the earth was formless and void,” 7x2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 1.2b: “And darkness was upon the face of the primordial-abyss.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 1.2c: “But the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the waters.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELIVERANCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Light (1.3-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sky/water (1.6-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Land/vegetation (1.9-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIMACTIC DAY(S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Luminaries (1.14-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fish/fowl (1.20-23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Animals/humans (1.24-31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY EPILOGUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENOUEMENT DESCRIBED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gen 2.1: “Thus were completed the heavens and the earth and all the host of them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 2.2a: “And God completed on the seventh day His work which He had done.” 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 2.2b: “And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 2.3: “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God created and made.” 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Panel Outline (with word-count) – Gen 1.1-2.3 107


107 This basic panel construct of symmetry is traced to Johann Gottfried von Herder, In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis, D.G. Peterson, trans. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1984) 51. A similar conception is to be found in Ps 33.6: “By the word (דָּבֵר) of YHWH the heavens were made [i.e., habitation] By the breath (רֹוחַ) of his mouth, all the host of them [i.e., inhabitants]”—particularly interesting in the means attributed to the creation of each panel (word vs. wind/breath/spirit).
CONCLUSION

Concluding this section by way of summary, we have seen the emphasis on the control or subjugation of the waters as integral to the account of creation, highlighting the emergence of land (and eventually man) from those waters. Narratives of deliverance that parallel this cosmogony, such as the deluge (Gen 6-9) and sea crossing (Exod 14), may thus be said to portray a new creation or rebirth. It may also be the case that the “righteous” one(s), delivered through the waters to the mountain of God, is to be understood in terms of יְהֵן. Furthermore, the abundant life of the divine Presence symbolized by the river links the garden with Israel’s cultus, suggesting that cultus as the means for re-gaining paradise—a point to be developed below. Understood thus, the creation account may be said to prefigure the tabernacle cultus.

II. TO THE MOUNTAIN FOR WORSHIP: TO DWELL IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE

The imagery of Eden as a “world mountain,” notes Fishbane, wends its way through the times and places of Israelite history, and its persistence, which both lends coherence to the Bible and transfigures our understanding of the Bible-as-a-whole, suggests its significance for the ancient Israelites. Having already made the case in the previous chapter that Eden may be seen as the archetypal cosmic mountain, we turn now to consider the cultic aspects of the creation narrative(s) one would expect to find, given that temples were architectural representations of the cosmic mountain. Scholars have, in fact, steadily come to appreciate that Genesis is more concerned with the cult than has previously been realized. This discernment has come via the


growing acknowledgement of temple motifs in its narratives. Because mountains were the original “temples” in the ancient Near East, 110 cosmic mountain ideology 111 is at the root of sanctuary motifs, the presence of a mountain in a narrative even serving as something of a clue that temple motifs are likely present. 112 In this section, we will consider how Genesis 1 depicts creation as a cosmic temple, Genesis 2 presents the garden of Eden as a Holy of holies atop a

sanctuary; (3) the prominence of sacrifice thematically in the Creation, Flood, and Abraham narratives—features that we will develop as well.

110 J.M. Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament,” pp 272-94 in Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994) 273. Lundquist further states that temple ideology was “central” to ancient Israel’s functioning as a society, and that seven motifs (of temple ideology) found in the Sinai narratives “can justifiably be shown to be early, probably dating back to the time of Moses himself and to the Sinai experience” (280).


112 Thus this thesis is positioned within, and seeks to contribute toward the development of, “temple theology.” “Throughout the modern period…the role of the Temple in Israel’s life and its significance for New Testament theology has been ignored if not actively denigrated. The reasons for this modern marginalization of Temple are not hard to see. Among others, the Jewish Old Testament scholar J.D. Levenson has clearly seen the problem, and his essays Sinai and Zion and Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence (Princeton: Princeton U Press, 1988) are classic and seminal attempts to rehabilitate the relevance of the Temple for biblical theology. He, and a growing number across the Old Testament, post-biblical and New Testament disciplines are now recognizing both the centrality of the Temple for Israel’s life and practice and that the Temple cult stands at the centre of a complex of cosmological mythology” (C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation,” pp 81-99 in Heaven on Earth 81-82). Our own thesis posits the water-ordeals or “baptisms” of the Torah are best understood within this “complex of cosmological mythology.” R.M. Davidson (“Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millenium,” JATS 11.1-2 (2000) 102-19) notes the prominence of the temple theme in Scripture: “Some 45 chapters in the Pentateuch are devoted exclusively to the Sanctuary building and rituals; some 45 chapters in the Prophets deal directly with the Sanctuary; and the whole book of Psalms—the Temple Hymnal—with explicit references to the Sanctuary averaging one per psalm. The New Testament has similar Sanctuary saturation, with profuse allusions to Sanctuary terminology and ritual as fulfilled in Jesus. Whole NT books are structured around the Sanctuary, such as the Gospel of John, the book of Hebrews, and the Book of Revelation. It could forcefully be argued that there is more material on the Sanctuary in Scripture than any other subject” (104-05). See the very brief overview, “Sanctuary Ideology in the Ancient Near East” in J.A. Davies, A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6 (JSOTSUp 395; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 141-44.
paradisiacal mountain, and describes humanity as a priesthood.\footnote{J.L. Morrow similarly states: Gen 1-3, “in its account of creation, presents the cosmos as one large temple, the Garden of Eden as the Holy of holies, and the human person as made for worship” (“Creation and Liturgy: The Liturgical Background of Genesis 1-3,” a paper submitted at the Trends of Ancient Jewish and Christian Mysticism Seminar at the University of Dayton, February 26, 2008 [being a revision and expansion of a portion of the work presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in San Diego, November 2007]). Cf. J.V. Fesko, Last Things First, 57-75 for a summary review of temple themes in the Garden of Eden. M. Eliade states: “The temple, the place sacred above all others, is the equivalent of its heavenly prototype—the Garden of Paradise” (Patterns in Comparative Religion, 282).}

The expulsion of Genesis 3, then, would serve to explain the necessity of the tabernacle cultus for (re)entering the divine Presence. There are, moreover, several factors that would seem to justify the consideration of Gen 1-3 jointly,\footnote{Attempts have been made to demonstrate structural, thematic, and lexical affinities between Gen 1 and 2-3. Cf. Z. Stefanovic, “The Great Reversal: Thematic Links between Genesis 2 and 3,” AUSS 32.1-2 (1994) 47-56; R. Ouro, “Linguistic and Thematic Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 3,” JATS 13.1 (2002) 44-54; W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2”; B. Och, “Creation and Redemption,” 229; U. Cassuto (Genesis I, 92-94) demonstrates a “clear intention to harmonize the two narratives,” basing his argument on the parallel emphasis on the creations of man and woman (1.26//2.18); use of special creation verbs for humanity (1.27//2.22); naming (1.5, 8, 10//2.19-20); numerical symmetry based on the number seven; and, thematically, the second account explaining how evil came into the world created “good” in the first account. Cf. also 40-1 and 102-3 for Cassuto’s demonstration of “seed” as a thematic link between the two accounts. Other thematic connections include: (1) life, expressed in Gen 2-3 particularly in relation to covenant fealty (cf. T.N.D. Mettinger, The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-Historical Study of Gen 2-3 [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007] 53ff); and (2) the mysterious origin of evil, expressed in 3.1 by the sudden appearance of the “serpent” (cf. T.N.D. Mettinger, The Eden Narrative, 80-84 for the “serpent” of Gen 3.1 in relation to the chaos battle drama of creation). On this second point, cf. M. Fishbane (Biblical Text and Texture, 22-23) who posits the serpent may “represent some fragment of the inchoate waste and void, that part of the world...resistant to a fixed order.” Cf. also W.H. Harper who considers the purpose of Gen 2 as addressing “that greatest problem of all life, the existence in the world of evil” (“The Origin of Man and His First State of Innocence. Genesis II,” The Biblical World 3.2 [1894] 102); N.M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis: The World of the Bible in the Light of History (New York: Schocken, 1966) 24. This answer, as we will seek to demonstrate below, is only partial. The Creation described in terms of a tabernacle, with humanity functioning as a priesthood, leads to an interpretation of the Fall beyond the origin and existence of evil to the necessity of the tabernacle/temple cultus. One might also add here the syntactic parallelism between Gen 1.1-3 and 2.4-8, which lead Otto to conclude the Eden narrative “ist der Eröffnung des priesterschriftlichen Schöpfungsbericht nachgestaltet” (E. Otto, “Die Paradieserzählung Gen 2-3: eine nachpriesterschriftliche Lehrerzählung in ihrem religionshistorischen Kontext,” pp. 167-92 in “Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit...”: Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen Weisheit. Festschrift D. Michel, ed. A.A. Diesel et al [BZAW 241; Berlin: de Guyter, 1996] 183 fn 16). Cf. W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2,” 49-68 for an attempt “to demonstrate sufficient literary structural parallels between these two narrative [of Gen 1 and 2] to support their unity of authorship.”}

115 However, beyond acknowledged redactional intent whereby the two creation

with 2.4 serving as a “Janus” bridge, “the heavens and the earth” carrying forward Gen 1.1 by recall and the concluding reversed order possibly signaling a change in perspective.\footnote{Cf. B.K. Waltke, An Old Testament Theology, 121-22; Idem., Genesis, 79, 84; C.J. Collins, Genesis 1-4, 108-09; R. Ouro, “The Garden of Eden Account: The Chiastic Structure of Genesis 2-3,” AUSS 40.2 (2002) 221-23; D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 30; G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 46. Not only may the reversed order of the chiasm possibly initiate a change of perspective, but the הָדַת may be...
narratives are allowed to “generate both their meaning and their function within the context of the composition of Gen 1-3,” so that the theological significance of either can only be fully discerned within their relationship,\textsuperscript{116} the cosmic mountain will be seen to serve as a unifying ideology.\textsuperscript{117}

utilized to function like a zoom-lens on a camera to focus the reader’s attention. If legitimate, this function of the ṭol`ddl would explain one of the main contrasts between Gen 1 and 2-3, namely the generic nature of the first account and the individual style of the latter: the first chapter being an account of creation in general, the second being about the garden. Cf. T.D. Alexander, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis,” 259; B.J. Stratton, \textit{Out of Eden}, 28-29; W.H. Harper, “The Origin of Man and His First State of Innocence,” 99-106; B. Och, “The Garden of Eden: From Creation to Covenant,” \textit{Judaism} 37.2 (1988) speaks of the “vertical movement” between God and creation in Gen 1, and the “horizontal perspective” of the Garden of Eden story (145 fn 2). Och also points out how in Gen 2.4b “earth” precedes “heaven” since “now it is man and his earthly existence which will be of primary concern. The focus has moved from heaven down to earth...” (147-48 fn 6). The movement from general to specific, moreover, is in line with I.M. Kikawada’s paper which, upon comparing \textit{Enki and Ninmah}, \textit{Atrahasis}, and Gen 1-2, suggests “there was in the Ancient Near East a literary convention of telling the story of the origin of mankind in a doublet. The first part of the story relates the creation of mankind in more general and abstract terms, whereas the second part of the story narrates it in more specific and concrete terms. The technique of bringing the two independent parts together into a unified narrative is quite similar to the way in which a bicolon in poetry is composed, namely, by the juxtaposition of two similar materials according to the principle of parallelism of the members” (\“The Double Creation of Mankind in \textit{Enki and Ninmah}, \textit{Atrahasis} I 1-351, and \textit{Genesis} I-2,\” pp. 169-74 in \textit{I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood}, 169). Kikawada further adds that “there were more than a thousand years of literary tradition preceding the compilation of the biblical narrative during which the double creation story is used.” (174). Shea agrees: “General parallels can be drawn between Atra-hasis and Gen 1, Gen 2A, and Gen 2B. Both tell the story of man’s creation in more than one segment. This parallelism extends to the smaller units of the story...Such repetition in Atra-hasis is another example of the Semitic parallel writing style that is also found in Gen 1-2...This parallelism can be seen either in terms of smaller literary units, as is the case with Atra-hasis or Gen 1-2. When judged by the literary standards of its time and place, separating Gen 1 from Gen 2 and attributing them to different sources written down centuries apart appears artificial and arbitrary” (W.H. Shea, “A Comparison of Narrative Elements in Ancient Mesopotamian Creation-Flood Stories with \textit{Genesis} I-9,” \textit{Origins} 11.1 (1984) 9-29, accessed at: www.grnda.org/origins/1109.htm).

A. The Cosmic Temple: Genesis 1

Toward elucidating the portrayal of the cosmos as a cosmic temple in Genesis 1, we will examine now various facets of the ANE context of the creation account, as well as its liturgical features and its parallels to the tabernacle construction narrative.

1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context

The meaning of Genesis 1 is specifically derived from and related to the cult, the relationship between cosmos and cult being common among the cultures of the ancient Near East:

The connection of cosmos and temple can be seen in Mesopotamian cosmological texts such as Enuma Elish, in Mesopotamian temple-building texts (esp. the Sumerian account of Gudea’s temple project), in Ugaritic mythology concerning Baal’s seeking a house for himself, and in Egyptian temple texts. These often portray the temple as related to the cosmic mountain or the first primeval hillock to emerge from the waters of chaos.

The temple is portrayed as being in the center of the cosmos, with waters flowing forth from its midst.

Given this association, Levenson sees the parallels between the creation and tabernacle narratives (to be considered below) not as “the invention of P but the distillate of a long tradition in the ancient Near East, which binds Temple building and world building.” Indeed, the temple was thought to be the center and mainstay of creation, with the whole stability of the

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This would include the cosmic waters as a unifying theme, already discussed. Cf. G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” pp 399-404 in I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood, 404. J.N. Walton notes that in the sequence established in Genesis 1-3, the three major categories of ritual concern in the ancient world and the Bible are addressed, namely, sacred time, space, and status respectively (“Eden, Garden of,” DOTP 205. See also idem., Genesis, 180, for blessing as a link between Gen 1 and 2). Also notable, the Deluge narrative of Gen 6-9 parallels that of 1-3 as a unity. And in Ps 46 scholars have found allusions to both creation (the chaotic waters of v 4) and paradise (the life-giving waters of v 5), demonstrating their compatibility within a single discourse. Cf., e.g., S. Kelly, “Psalm 46: A Study in Imagery,” 307-8.


J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” JR 64.3 (Jul 1984) 287.

social order being dependent upon the cultus. The notion of “rest” climaxing the creation account, moreover, is one of the clues to this association, temples being built for the purpose of divine rest. Moreover, the seven-day sequence of creation, being the common ANE period for temple-building/ dedication, has also led scholars to recognize that “creation in Genesis 1 uses the language of temple-building.” In the Baal Cycle, for example, it takes seven days to build the house of Baal in the heights of Sapân. The same septadic pattern is evident within the bounds of the Hebrew Bible itself, in the accounts of the tabernacle (Exod 29.30, 35, 37, etc.) and of Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6.38). The Enuma elish, as another example of relevant ANE literature, portrays creation not so much as a cosmogony but as a myth of the creation of a temple. As we will discuss near the conclusion of this chapter, it may even be the case that the opening verse of the creation account in Gen 1 contains an allusion to temple-building, specifically in the “heaven and earth” merism for “the world.” Considering the heaven and earth/Jerusalem/holy mountain connection in Isaiah 65.17-25, Levenson writes:

YHWH is building a new Temple, therefore creating a new world, and vice versa. In light of Gösta Ahlström’s astute argument that Syro-Palestinian temples were meant to be “heaven and earth,” I am led to wonder whether “heaven and earth” in Isa 65.17 and elsewhere is not functioning as a name for the Jerusalem Temple. The Sumerian parallels are strong. The Temple at Nippur (and elsewhere) was called Duranki, “bond of heaven and earth,” and in Babylon we find Etemenanki, “the house where the foundation of heaven and earth is.” Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the Hebrew Bible begins with an account of the creation of

123 J.H. Walton, “Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East,” 60-61: “In the ancient world, the “rest” of the gods was always in a temple; in fact, temples were built with the purpose of deity resting in them. This rest of the gods often involved their taking control of the cosmos. A god could rest because order had been achieved and everything was now ready to run smoothly. Deities ran the cosmos from their temples... Consequently, when Genesis indicates that God rested on the seventh day, it tells us that in this account of the functional origins of the cosmos, the cosmos is being portrayed as a temple. This connection, which would have been transparent to the ancient audience, provides the key to understanding Genesis 1.” J. Laansma, as well, makes a strong case for understanding a temple metaphor as the clearest and most natural interpretation of the divine rest after creation (“I Will Give You Rest” [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997] 17-76).
heaven and earth by the command of God (Gen 1.1) and ends with the command of the God of heaven “to build him a Temple in Jerusalem” (2 Chron 35.23). It goes from creation (Temple) to Temple (creation) in twenty-four books. 127

The creation account, to summarize, may be positioned within the general ANE understanding of creation as primarily related to the temple cult,128 with the “face value” reading of Genesis 1 regarding the cosmos in terms of a large temple.129 “Indeed, the act of creation may have been identified with the building of the temple-palace, as it was in both Mesopotamia and Canaan; the building of the temple was the climactic act of sovereignty asserted in creation.”130

2. THE COSMOLOGY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL: GOD’S THREE-DECKED HOUSE

Understanding creation as a grand temple requires an appreciation for the cosmology of ancient Israel in which the world was thought of as a three-storied house. Generally, ANE cultures conceived of the universe as a tri-partite structure consisting of heaven (the abode of the gods), earth (the abode of humanity), and the watery underworld (the abode of the dead).131 The

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128 J.H. Walton states that the “face value” of the creation account “contains at least a strong undercurrent of God’s setting up a cosmos intended to function... as a sanctuary for himself. He furbishes it, puts people in it, and takes up his repose (Sabbath) in 1.1-2.3; then he sets up Eden along the lines of the Most Holy Place” (Genesis, 147-48). See the rest of his discussion on 147-51 for the relation of cosmos and temple in the ancient Near East and in the Bible. For the temple as the imago mundi, see M. Eliade, Cosmos and History (New York: Harer & Row, 1959) 17.


“heavens and the earth”132 thus form a three-decked house of God, comprised of heaven-earth-water.133

The triad of heaven, earth, and sea appears quite frequently (Pss 8.7-8; 33.6-8; 36.5-6; 69.34; 96.11; 104.1b-2b; 135.6; 146.6). In the triad, the world of the dead may replace the sea via the concept of the primeval flood (thm) inherent in the ocean (Ps 115.15-17). ...In the OT, the third place is normally taken by the sea (ym), and not by the primeval ocean (thm) or the world of the dead (š’wil).134

This idea clarifies the use of architectural verbs employed in the account. It has been noted, for example, that the creation account presents God as a workman or artificer who builds, inspects,
pronounces on his work, and then takes his Sabbath rest. The Hebrew Bible, to be sure, is replete with descriptions of creation as a tabernacle which God has pitched (cf. Psalm 104; Job 9.8; Isa 40.22) or a house which God has established (with pillars, windows, and doors; Job 26.11; Gen 7.11; Ps 78.23). Consequently, the temple of Zion, as a sanctuary which God has established, becomes a microcosmic metaphor for creation itself. This idea finds explicit expression in Ps 78.69: “And he built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which he has founded forever.”

Later interpreters of Scripture, such as Josephus for example, understood the tripartite structure of the tabernacle to signify “the earth [=holy place] and the sea [=courtyard], since these too are accessible to all, but the third portion [=holy of holies] he reserved for God alone, because heaven also is inaccessible to men” (Ant. III:181; cf. Ant. III:123). Barker quotes a similar second century AD tradition: “The house of the holy of holies was made to correspond to the highest heaven. The outer Holy House was made to correspond to the earth, and the courtyard was made to correspond to the sea....” Later, we will return to this three-fold cosmology and its relevance for understanding the tabernacle/temple cultus.

3. THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN “KINGSHIP PATTERN”

The establishing of creation as a macro-temple positions the account within the genre of the so-called Chaoskampf, albeit thoroughly demythologized from the start, the main elements of which are: (1) the struggle against chaos personified by water; (2) victory over the chaos-waters by the deity who is consequently acclaimed king; (3) the enthronement of the king in his palace (temple). These elements, moreover, figure prominently in the temple liturgies of Israel.

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That God should build his house after conquering the waters of chaos conforms, then, to the overall ANE "kingship pattern," whereby conquest results in sanctuary-building. Further, the Psalms also demonstrate the idea of YHWH's kingship being tied to his reigning over the unruly, raging sea (cf. Pss 18, 29, 89, 93, 104),\(^\text{141}\) so that one might expect sanctuary-building upon the conquering of the watery abyss of Gen 1.2. The emphasis on building the sanctuary as the climax of creation, notes Blenkinsopp, serves to provide Israel "with its own highly unique and appropriate version of creation as a foundation or charter myth for the rebuilt sanctuary and the cult which was to be carried out in it."\(^\text{142}\)

4. THE LITURGICAL CHARACTER OF THE CREATION ACCOUNT

The vast majority scholars recognize the liturgical character of the creation narrative.\(^\text{143}\) One aspect of this consensus relates to the liturgical use of creation stories, which appears to have been common throughout the ancient Near East, evident in Mesopotamia, Persia, and in Israel at least during the Second Temple period.\(^\text{144}\) In reference to creation within a worship setting, B.W. Anderson helpfully, and summarily, writes:

The setting of creation faith within worship is clearly evident in Psalm 24, which undoubtedly was once used in connection with a processional bearing of the ark into Jerusalem during a great pilgrimage festival celebrating Yahweh's kingship...In this liturgical setting the function of creation language is to give the

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\(^\text{141}\) R. Luyster, "Wind and Water," 2-4.

\(^\text{142}\) J. Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," 286.

\(^\text{143}\) W. Vogels, "The Cultic and Civil Calendars of the Fourth Day of Creation (Gen 1.14b)," *SJOT* 11.2 (1997) 168.

\(^\text{144}\) S.D. Ricks, "Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East," pp 118-25 in *Temple of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, D. Parry, ed. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994). Ricks further notes: "It has been suggested that the creation account of Genesis 1.1-2.4 was used in the temple liturgy of Israel at the New Year's Festival before the Babylonian exile, when the enthronement of the Lord was celebrated, and possibly on other occasions as well. The didactic-liturgical nature of the creation account itself, with its constant refrains, 'and God saw that it was good,' ‘and the evening and the morning were the first day,’ etc., strengthens the case for its ritual use" (120). He also correctly states, however, that the absence of any "order of service" manuals, as found in Mesopotamia, means such a suggestion, while attractive, must remain tentative. L.R. Fisher, further, suggests similarities between the biblical Creation account and an Ugaritic cultic text that ends each section with the refrain "day one," "day two," etc. ("An Ugaritic Ritual and Genesis 1.1-5," *Ugaritica* 6 [1969] 197-205). Similarly, N. Wyatt states: "Genesis 1 certainly exhibits a distinctive prose style, with its constant, refrain-like repetition of many phrases, as though it served a liturgical purpose" ("The Darkness of Genesis 1.2," 100).
grounds for praising God. The worshiping community confesses that the earth, and all the creatures it contains, belongs solely to Yahweh, for Yahweh is Creator and King. God's power upholds the world, and God's purpose gives meaning to existence. Thus in the book of Psalms the affirmation that God is the Creator is the Venite, a call to worship...The form of the story [of Genesis 1], however, suggests that it was shaped by liturgical usage over a period of many generations, perhaps in connection with one of the great pilgrimage festivals of Israel. This is the way Paul Humbert reads the story...[Humbert] suggests that the Genesis story is structured in a seven-day scheme not to accommodate an ordinary week but to reflect the festal week, the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles with which the New Year begins...Quite apart from the question as to whether Genesis 1, on the analogy of the Babylonian creation story, is a festal legend, there should be general agreement on the fundamental point: the Priestly account of creation, like the creation psalms of the Psalter, is a sublime expression of Israel's praise. The creation story is most at home in a setting of worship.145

However, quite aside from any suggested Sitz im Leben, discerning its liturgical character begins with recognizing that the creation account possesses a heptadic structure: beginning with a seven-word sentence, developed through seven paragraphs, and climaxing on the consecration of the Sabbath where the “seventh” day is given three-fold emphasis.146 Yet, while “the distinctive aspect of the great cosmogony of Genesis 1.1-2.3 is its heptadic structure,”147 the dominant role of the seventh day,148 the climax of the narrative standing between creation and history,149 in the creation account is rarely appreciated.150 The seventh day, beyond its three-fold repetition, is also emphasized by means of complementary positive and negative statements.151 The Sabbath, then,

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145 B.W. Anderson, “Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship,” 208-11. Anderson further relates Gen 1 to Ps 8 as a witness to the meaning of creation faith in the liturgy of Israel’s worship (214).


147 J.D. Levenson, Creation and the Persistence of Evil, 100.


150 So, too, J.H. Walton notes that the “key to understanding the intrinsic nature of the Genesis cosmology is in an element that is often neglected, the seventh day” (“Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East,” 60).

151 B.W. Anderson, “A Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story,” 159-60: “Picking up the previous verb (way’gallü) at the end of 2:1, though modulating it from the passive to the active (way’kal), he states positively that God brought his work to completion; and, with rhetorical balance, he states negatively that God ceased from the work that he made. This balancing of the positive and the negative...is continued in the next line which speaks about the blessing of the seventh day and also about its removal from the profane sphere, that is, its sanctification. Thus positive and negative statements complement each other, and the epilogue is rounded off with a motive clause, introduced by the particle ki (“for”). The final words, “ser-bard’ lôhîm la`ăšôṯ (literally: “which God created to make”) are difficult to render smoothly into English. The sensitive reader of the Hebrew, however, will sense that the clause echoes the bârâ’ lôhîm of the superscription (1:1) and at the same time recalls the usage of both verbs, bard’ and cfd, in the main body of the story.” In a similar vein, J.D. Levenson (Creation and the Persistence of Evil, 100) writes: “The most reasonable conclusion is that P reflects its momentous decision to organize its creation story around the Sabbath in the several other less obvious heptads that appear in the text. As a result, both overtly and covertly, the text of Genesis 1.1-2.3 points to the seventh day as the clue to the meaning of creation. The Priestly
being the conclusion, culmination, and witness to God’s work of creation, \(^{152}\) as well as the telos of creation \(^{153}\) (to be discussed further below), lends a liturgical purpose to the narrative \(^{154}\) so that it may even—and justly—be called the “cosmic liturgy of the seventh day.” \(^{155}\) Thus may one come full-circle to understanding Genesis I “as a thoroughly liturgical text,” situating its *Sitz im Leben* in “the priestly theology of the cult.” \(^{156}\)

Beyond the heptadic structure and emphasis upon the Sabbath, the repetitive nature of the creation account is suggestive of a liturgy, \(^{157}\) its majesty and rhythm possessing a liturgical cadence greater than the sum of its parts. \(^{158}\) B.W. Anderson notes “the numerous affinities,”

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158. E.C. Brisson, “The Gates of Dawn,” 56. C. Westermann finds the rhythmic structure of the “first chapter of the Bible strikes one... like a mysterious song, like a festal celebration— one could almost say, like a heavenly liturgy. With solemn, ponderous rhythm the same phrases keep reappearing throughout the entire chapter. It affects one as a litany” (*The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, 6). This comports with M. Weinfeld’s opinion, who suggests the
structural and linguistic, between Gen 1 and Ps 104 (certainly utilized liturgically): seven
strophes that parallel the sequence of events in the creation story, with an introductory invocation
echoed by a concluding refrain.\(^{159}\) These liturgical features, then, contribute toward positioning
creation in Genesis 1 within the context of a temple.

5. TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION PARALLELS

That the heptadic structure of Gen 1 contributes to a liturgical framework is reinforced through
the parallel structure of the building of the tabernacle in Exodus.\(^{160}\) "Moses' going up to the
Mountain, which comes mainly in order to receive the instructions concerning the construction
of the Tabernacle (cp. Ex 25.9, 40; 26.30; 27.8; Num 8.4)," notes Weinfeld, "was bound up with
a waiting of six days, similar to the six days required in order to bring the work of creation to
completion."\(^{161}\) Kearney has argued, further, that each of the seven speeches of Exod 25-31
alludes to the corresponding day of creation in Gen 1-2.3:\(^{162}\)

relation de Genèse 1 et du Psalme 104 avec la liturgie du Nouvel-An israélite," in Opuscules d'un hébrásant
[Neuchâtel: Université de Neuchâtel, 1958] 60-83) who argues that both Gen 1 and Ps 104 were utilized in the
Jerusalem Temple cultus. Having noted many of these features in the nineteenth century, A. Briggs argued that Gen
1 is a poem ("The Hebrew Poem of Creation," 273-288). He offers eight characteristic features shared by Hebrew
poetry and the Creation account: (1) Parallelism, (2) even and regular measurement of lines by words or word
accents, (3) archaic words, (4) strophical organization, (5) catch-words or secondary refrains, (6) poetic license in
use of archaic endings, (7) simple, graphic, and ornate language and style, (8) harmonious (though monotonous in
prose) organization of the strophes. Certainly, the "text intentionally uses the poetry of repetition" (L. Schottroff,
"The Creation Narrative: Genesis 1.1-2.4a," 28). H. Blocher refers to the text as a "hymn-narrative" (In the
Beginning, 52).

\(^{160}\) Cf. J. Blenkinsopp ("The Structure of P," 275) who makes the point that the "formulaic and programmatic
character of the work [of P] has also made it easier to find clues at the linguistic and structural levels to the
intentions built into the work." C. Westermann (The Genesis Accounts of Creation, 7-11) points out that the same
rhythmic pattern of creation (Announcement/Command/Report/Evaluation/Temporal Framework), "with some
variations, can be observed in the large legal complex stretching from Exodus 25, through Leviticus, to Numbers
10." For a brief summary of what follows, cf. Coote and Ord, In the Beginning, 95-97; M. Fishbane, Biblical Text
and Texture, 12.


He further notes that P's redaction "with its emphasis on the creation theme in Ex 25-31, appears to be the formation
of a sequence 'creation-fall-restoration' as the unifying framework of Ex 25-40" (383). Cf. also S.E. Ballentine,
Torah's Vision of Worship, 64, 67-68, 138-40; M. Bauks, "Genesis 1 als Programmschrift der Priesterschrift (P8),"
(1) Speech one//Day one: As God brought 'ār ("light") into darkness (Gen 1.2-3), so Aaron causes md'ār ("light") to shine throughout the night (Ex 27.20). The passage about the incense altar (30.1-10) at the conclusion of the speech is also added, suggesting that the enactment of cult is an experience of God’s creative power.

(2) Speech two//Day two: As God divided upper from lower, the dome separating the waters below from those mē’al ("above"), God’s second speech establishes a division into upper and lower, with taxes being paid by those twenty wāmdā‘lā ("and above").

(3) Speech three//Day three: That the making of the bronze laver is associated with the creation of the hammayim ("the seas," Gen 1.9-10) is made explicit in 1 Kings 7.23 where it is called hayyām ("the sea").

(4) Speech four//Day four: Ps 89 underscores the idea of permanence for “holy anointing oil” (Ex 30.22-33), specifically in reference to David’s line which shall be like the sun and moon, thereby forging a link to God’s activity on the fourth day.

(5) Speech five//Day five: The mollusk utilized for making sacred incense (Ex 30.34-38) is tied to the creation of swimming creatures (Gen 1.21).

(6) Speech six//Day six: Ex 31.1-1 designates those who will supervise and carry out the manufacture of the tent and its accessories, corresponding to the sixth day’s creation of man who will have dominion over the temple of creation. Bezalel is filled with the rūḥ lehīm ("spirit of God") in Ex, an expression harkening back to Gen 1.2.163

(7) Speech seven//Day seven: The seventh day of creation is recalled by prescribing the day of rest upon its foundation (Ex 31.17).

Rabbinic interpretation (Mid. Rabb. Num 12.13), also based on intertextual exegesis, had already discerned that “the tabernacle, which was a temple, was a microcosmic reproduction of God’s cosmic temple, the creation”.164

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163 J. Blenkinsopp notes this intervention of the Spirit of God as one of the most important thematic associations between the accounts of Creation and the Tabernacle ("The Structure of P," 281-82). Cf. also J.H. Sailhamer, "Exegetical Notes: Genesis 1.1-2.4a," 82.

164 J.V. Fesko, Last Things First, 70.
Day | Creation | Tabernacle
--- | --- | ---
Day 1 | Heavens are stretched out like a curtain (Ps 104.2) | Tent (Ex 26.7)
Day 2 | Firmament (Gen 1.2) | Temple veil (Ex 26.33)
Day 3 | Waters below firmament | Laver or bronze sea (Ex 26.33)
Day 4 | Lights (Gen 1.14) | Light stand (Ex 25.31)
Day 5 | Birds (Gen 1.20) | Winged cherubim (Ex 25.20)
Day 6 | Man (Gen 1.27) | Aaron the high priest (Ex 28.1)
Day 7 | Cessation (Gen 2.1) | Cessation (Ex 39.32)
Blessing (Gen 2.3) | Mosaic blessing (Ex 39.43)
Completion (Gen 2.2) | Completion (Ex 39.43)

Considering the parallel of Day 4, David J. Rudolph, taking into account “the weight of biblical exegesis and earlier sources,” makes the case for glossing מִשָּׁרָה as “festivals” in Gen 1.14:166

The plural form of מִשָּׁרָה means “festivals” one hundred percent of the time in the Torah. Moreover, and most important for this study, the exact lexical form of מִשָּׁרָה in Genesis 1.14 (m.pl. w/ 5 prep.) means “festivals” one hundred percent of the time in the Hebrew Bible; one instance (Ps 104.19) refers directly to Genesis 1.14. Literary context and ANE background bolster the “[cultic] festivals” reading. Genesis 1.1-2.3 is replete with priestly/liturgical language and havdil imagery. Among ANE creation accounts similar to Genesis 1, an Egyptian and Mesopotamian one (the Enuma Elish) were found which make reference to New Year festivals. Finally, Second Temple Jewish literature generally upholds the “festivals” translation.

Vogels notes that the singular מִשָּׁרָה mo’ed refers, 135 out of the 160 times it appears in the Torah, to the “tent of meeting,” with the majority of the other cases referring either to the “fixed time” of a liturgical festival or as a synonym for the “festival” itself—never referring to the seasons of the year (winter, spring, etc.).167 “Clearly, the word mo’ed,” Vogels concludes, “is part of priestly and liturgical language.”168 He further notes the important stress on the function

165 P.H. Seeley (“The Firmament and the Water Above,” 40) also notes this parallel between creation and the tabernacle, the firmament being commissioned to “separate” (hiphil participle of בִּדְלָה, bdl) the waters in Gen 1.7 and the veil performing the same function in Exod 26.33, to “separate” (hiphil qatal of בִּדְלָה, bdl) the Holy Place from the Holy of holies.


168 Ibid., 166.
of these lights, the paragraph of the fourth day repeating “for” or “to” (lamed) eleven times.\(^\text{169}\)

Understanding the chief function of the זאבע as fixing the days of cultic celebration, Wenham notes the concentric structure of 1.14-18:\(^\text{170}\)

\begin{align*}
\text{A} & \text{ to divide the day from the night (14a)} \\
\text{B} & \text{ for signs, for fixed times, for days and years (14b)} \\
\text{C} & \text{ to give light on the earth (15)} \\
\text{D} & \text{ to rule the day (16a)} \quad \text{God made the} \\
\text{D'} & \text{ to rule the night (16b)} \quad \text{two lights} \\
\text{C'} & \text{ to give light on the earth (17)} \\
\text{B'} & \text{ to rule the day and the night (18a)} \\
\text{A'} & \text{ to divide the light from the darkness (18b)}
\end{align*}

Paul Beauchamp, informed by such an elaborate structure, sees the fourth day as the structural and thematic center, corresponding both to the light of the first day and anticipating the religious festivals of the seventh day, for which signs the luminaries serve.\(^\text{171}\) This is in accord with Vogels’s contention that “festivals” and “years” must be the central concept of the fourth day.\(^\text{172}\) Furthermore, “כָּלָה ‘light, lamp’ is always used in the Pentateuch to designate the sanctuary lamp in the tabernacle.”\(^\text{173}\) The use of כָּלָה referring to the menorah that lights up the tabernacle “may then be our first clue that there is another whole dimension to this text that has often eluded

\[169\] Ibid., 171. He further states that there are “seven functions, a number which is central to the main theme of the priestly creation narrative (7 days) but also to many of its details” (172).


\[172\] W. Vogels, “The Cultic and Civil Calendar,” 174. He too acknowledges the structural significance of the fourth day: “if one regards the story as a presentation of a seven day week, then the fourth day stands in the middle. It is really Mittwoch, both preceded and followed by three other days....Moreover, the number four has in itself symbolic meaning. It is a cosmic number: the four corners of the world, the four seasons, the four rivers of the garden of Eden (Gen 2.10). We have seen there is a clear link between the first day and the fourth day [vocabulary: light, darkness, day, night, separate], but there is also a connection with the seventh day. These three days are concerned with time. The narrative begins with time, mentions time in the middle and ends with time. This gives a triangular structure 1 – 4 – 7....On the fourth day (1.14-19) this first division of time between day and night is confirmed, but something new is added: the distinction between a liturgical calendar with its festivals, and the civil calendar with its basic division of days and years....The sabbath belongs to the cultic calendar. The seventh day is one of these ‘festivals’ mentioned in the fourth day” (176-78).

\[173\] G.J. Wenham, Genesis, 22. This is also noted by Vogels: “The word ma'or = light, luminary is rare in the Bible. Generally it refers –and in the Torah always–, to the lamps of the sanctuary (Exod 25.6; 27.10; 35.8, 14, 28; 39.37; Lev 24.2; Num 4.9, 16)....The sun and moon are like sacred lamps in the sanctuary of the universe. A better translation would be: “Let there be lamps...”, or “luminaries.” This word confirms the liturgical character of the narrative” (“The Cultic and Civil Calendar,” 175).
Fletcher-Louis remarks on how the menorah’s being tended in the “evening” and the “morning” was a cultic action marking the primal boundary of the creation of light on the first day so that the high priest’s role in the cult-as-microcosm mimics the Creator’s in the cult-as-macrocosm. The movement of creation week, then, goes from establishing the period of days (day one) to creating lamps as signs for “festivals” (day four) to consecrating the cultic day (the seventh day).

Finally, the tabernacle’s consecration process, lasting seven days, involves a heptadic pattern similar to the creation account, and which is also connected to the Sabbath. Moshe Weinfeld, in his important 1981 study, demonstrated key lexical correspondences between the completion of creation and the completion of the tabernacle:

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176 D.C. Timmer (*Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 63), rather cautiously, writes: “Other than the intriguing reference to cultic time markers in Gen 1.14, the seventh day of the creation week is the first item that the [Hebrew Bible] places in the semantic field of holiness.”
177 J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 5. J.D. Levenson underscores the importance of the Sabbath ordinance in this connection: “Thus, the account of the construction of the Tabernacle is punctuated by the injunction to observe the Sabbath in *imitatione Dei* (Ex 31.12-17, 35.1-3). The two institutions, each a memorial and, more than that, an actualization of the aboriginal creative act, are woven together not in a purposeless, mindless reduction but in a profound and unite theological statement. Sabbath and sanctuary partake of the same reality; they proceed, *pari passu*, from the same foundational event, to which they testify and even provide access. In a cryptic apodictic pronouncement in Leviticus, they appear twice as if they were formulaic pairs: ‘My Sabbaths you are to observe/And my Sanctuary you are to revere: I am YHWH’ (Lev 19.30, 26.2)” (“The Temple and the World,” 288).
178 M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 503. He further states: “Gen1.1-2.3 and Ex 39.1-40.33 are typologically identical. Both describe the satisfactory completion of the enterprise commanded by God, its inspection and approval, the blessing and the sanctification which are connected with it. Most importantly, the expression of these ideas in both accounts overlaps.” These connections had already been noted by B. Jacob, *Das Buch Genesis* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1934) and M. Buber, “Der Mensch von heute und die Jüdische Bibel,” in *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung*, M. Buber, F. Rosenzweig, ed. (Berlin: Schocken, 1936) 13-45. Cf. also J. Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” 280; J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 142-43; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 130: “The verb ῥάλα is used in the Bible [in Ps 132.8] to describe the coming to rest of the Ark (and presumably of the Tent in Num 10.35)”; P. Enns (*Exodus*, 552) who also sees the specificity and detail of the Tabernacle instruction/construction as a subtle allusion to the orderliness of the Creation account. N. Leibowitz points to similar comparisons by Abranavel and Rashi (*Studies in Shemot: Part Two*, A. Newman, trans. [Jerusalem: World Zionist Assoc., 1983] 479).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>GENESIS 1-2</th>
<th>EXODUS 39-40</th>
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The parallels thus established, when YHWH fills the tabernacle, this is a sign that a new creation has been achieved. Conversely, however, we may also conclude that creation is portrayed as the completion of a cosmic temple, as Fletcher-Louis competently sums it: “The cumulative effect of this intratextuality is to place cosmogony in the context of liturgy and to define the Tabernacle as a microcosm of the universe.” Indeed, creation likened to a temple has been considered “the most fundamental priestly aspect” of Gen 1. Creation in Genesis, we may thus conclude, is described as a temple, constructed as an ANE temple would be constructed.

179 P.J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy,” 381.
180 To be sure, an early Midrash equated the Tabernacle with the creation of the world, corresponding the first day of creation to the Holy of holies, the second day to the veil, the third to the bronze laver, and the fourth to the seven-branched lampstand (Midrash Tanhuma 11.2, S.A. Berman, trans. [Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV, 1996]). The 6th century Egyptian Christian, Cosmas, noting the parallels between the Tabernacle construction and the Creation account, posited that Genesis 1 was itself the record of Moses’ vision of the heavenly “pattern” atop Sinai (Cosmas, books III, V in The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk, J.W. McCrindle, trans. [London: Hakluyt Society, 1897] 110-11, 149-50).
183 J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 9-10. Cf. G.K. Beale, Temple and the Church’s Mission, 51-58, 61-66, 63 fn 78 and 128; V. Hurowitz, I Have Built You an Exalted House, 335-37; P.J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy,” 384; J.D. Levenson, “Temple and the World,” 287-88; C.L. Meyers, The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976) 172; M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and Enthronement,” 507. Beale (“The Final Vision of the Apocalyptic”) offers ten “hints” that the Garden is to be seen as a temple: (1) God’s unique presence, “walking back and forth”/hithallek parallels His presence in the tabernacle/temple; (2) humanity’s commission to “serve and guard” (’abad and shamar) parallels priestly duties; (3) the cherubim guarding the tree of life parallels their symbolic presence at the temple; (4) the “tree of life” probably parallels the menorah; (5) the edenic décor of the tabernacle/temple; (6) Eden’s mountain location; (7) the river flowing out of Eden parallels the river of the eschatological temple; (8) the gold and precious stone parallels; (9) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil paralleled to the ark in the holy of holies; (10) the eastward orientation of the entrance to Eden and the tabernacle/temple. R.M. Davidson (“Cosmic Metanarrative,” 102-19) who writes that Moses under the inspiration of God clearly depicts the Garden of Eden as the first earthly Sanctuary (108) lists seventeen intertextual parallels: (1) eastward orientation (Gen 2.8; cf. Exod 36.20-30, 1 Kgs 7.21, Ezek 47.1); (2)
This conclusion, furthermore, emphasizes a key point of focus in Gen 1: the theology of the divine Presence (in that temple/creation). 184

Having considered the creation account of Genesis 1 in terms of a cosmic temple, we turn now to consider the Eden account of Genesis 2-3 as something of an archetypal holy of holies.

B. The Holy of Holies: Genesis 2-3

And [Noah] knew that Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of YHwh. " Jubilees 8.19185

Though for some time modern scholarship had not recognized “the relationship between the Eden narrative and the very important Canaanite mythic motif of the cosmic mountain,”186 early exegesis did, and some modern studies have. Indeed, Wenham, based on the tabernacle symbolism found therein, considers a “cultic interpretation of Gen 2-3 more likely.”187 His main points, based on lexical and thematic parallels, are summarized below:188

(1) The verb hithallek, meaning “to walk to and fro” (Gen 3.8), he notes “is used to describe the divine presence in the later tent sanctuaries in Lev 26.12, Deut 23.15, 2 Sam 7.6-7. The LORD walked in Eden as he subsequently walked in the tabernacle.”

(2) The cherubim (k’rubim) guarding the eastward entrance to the garden indicates “that it is viewed as a sanctuary, for k’rubim, Akkadian kuribu, were the traditional guardians of holy places in the ancient

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God “plants” (nätaq) the garden in Eden (Gen 2.8) and Israel on his holy mountain sanctuary (Ex 15.17; cf. 1 Chr 17.9); (3) the tree of life “in the midst” (betwk) of the garden (Gen 2.9) and God’s presence in the midst of His people in the Sanctuary (Ex 25.8); (4) God’s “walking around”/hithallek (Gen 3.8//Deut 23.14); (5) the river (Gen 2.10//Ezek 47.1-12); (6) precious metals/stones (Gen 2.12//Exod 25.7; 28.9, 20; 35.9, 27; 39.6, 13); (7) three tiered space; (8) verbal parallels between creation of cosmos and of tabernacle; (9) seven day structure of creation and building of tabernacle; (10) Levitical verbs “to serve and guard”; (11) light and the menorah (Gen 1.14-16//Ex 25.6; 35.14; 39.27, etc.); (12) edenic symbolism in the Sanctuary (Exod 25.31-40; cf. 1 Kgs 6.29, 32, 35; 7.26, 29, 36, 49); (13) God’s clothing Adam and Eve//priests (Gen 3.21//Lev 8.7, 13; Num 20.28; cf. Exod 28.4; 29.5; 40.14); (14) cherubim presence; (15) the cherubim are “placed” (šākan), used of God’s dwelling (Exod 25.8); (16) šākan is the same root for Shekinah glory, God’s visible presence in the sanctuary; (17) Adam and Eve worship God at eastern entrance/gate of Eden (for which, cf. J. Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4.7,” Biblische Notizen 100 [1999] 45-59).

184 See M.S. Smith, The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1, 14-17.27-32. Smith notes that “within this Temple [of creation] the divine Presence is at work. Outside of this Temple are threats of cosmic waters (see Jonah 3.3-9)...” (16). He also, plausibly, regards the light of Gen 1.3 as a powerful statement of the divine Presence (71-79).


187 G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 400. This extensive list, to be sure, justifies Wenham’s statement in his commentary: “Indeed, there are many...features of the garden that suggest it is seen as an archetypal sanctuary, prefiguring the later tabernacle and temples” (Genesis 1-15, 61). See W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17,” 57-61.

188 Ibid., 400-404.
Near East. Further, the entrance to the tabernacle and Jerusalem temple were also entered from the east. In Solomon’s temple two k`rublm guarded the inner sanctuary (1 Ki 6.23-28); and two others upon the ark formed God’s throne within the inner sanctuary (Ex 25.18-22); and pictures of k`rublm decorated the curtains of the tabernacle and walls of the temple (Ex 26.31; 1 Ki 6.29).

(3) The fullness of life to be found in the sanctuary is symbolized by the tree of life in the garden. Not only were trees a regular feature of Abraham’s worship (also being integral to Canaanite shrines), but it is likely that the tabernacle menorah was a stylized tree of life.

(4) The verbs describing Adam’s job in Eden, (l`«obddh ülesdmr&h) “to till and keep it,” are only used together elsewhere in the Pentateuch “of the Levites’ duties in guarding and ministering in the sanctuary” (Num 3.7-8, 8.26, 18.5-6).

(5) Adam’s “quasi-priestly role” may be evidenced in Gen 3.21 where the “LORD God made tunics of skin for them and clothed them,” for “the accounts of the ordination of the priests mention Moses clothing them (Hiphil of lâba`az) in their tunics (ketönel) (Ex 28.41, 29.8, 40.14; Lev 8.13; cf. also Ex 20.23, 28.42).

(6) The geography of the garden in 2.10-14 also has many links with later sanctuary design: the river (Ps 46.5; Ezek 47); the “good gold” of Havilah (Ex 25.11, 17, 24, 29, 36); and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (likened by Wenham to the ark in the holy of holies [Ex 25.16; Deut 31.26], a similar threat of death surrounding the ark [2 Sam 6.7, Num 4.20]).

(7) Concern for cultic issues after Gen 3, such as the acceptability of sacrifice in the Cain and Abel story, make it likely that Gen 2-3 should be interpreted in similar fashion. Indeed, according to the rest of the Pentateuch worship is of the greatest importance, so it is not surprising to find such interests reflected in Genesis 2-3.

Additionally, the root of the verb utilized for God’s setting Adam in the garden, l`în nüah “set to rest,” is used in the nominal form to describe the “resting place” of YHwH’s Temple (cf. Ps 132.14). These connections, not only within the Genesis narrative but throughout Scripture,
have led other scholars as well to conclude that the garden is the archetypal earthly sanctuary, the temple itself being a “virtual garden of Eden” and mini cosmos. Parry, affirming that Eden “was seen to be the prototype, pattern, and/or originator of subsequent temples,” persuasively demonstrates that the garden of Eden narrative accords well with each of Lundquist’s nineteen propositions common to ancient Near Eastern temples. Outside of Scripture, the book of Jubilees clearly comprehends Eden as the prototype of a tabernacle/temple Holy of holies, 1 Enoch 24-27 and Testament of Levi 18.6, 10 also closely associating God’s

193 J.V. Fesko, Last Things First, 58. Among the features of the garden he considers are its eastern location, mountain top locale, river, trees, precious stones, and cherubim (58-67). “The Garden of Eden,” writes Waltke, “is a temple-garden, represented later in the tabernacle” and temple, which was a “virtual garden of Eden” (B.K. Waltke, Genesis, 85). “The cumulative effect of the...parallels between the Garden of Gen 2 and Israel’s tabernacle and temple,” Beale concludes, “indicates that Eden was the first archetypal temple, upon which all of Israel’s temples were based” (Temple and the Church’s Mission, 79-80). He elaborates on 11 parallels between Eden and Israel’s tabernacle/temples: the garden and temple (1) are the unique place of God’s presence dwelling with his people; (2) both are the place where only priests could dwell; (3) both are the place of guardian cherubim; (4) both have an arboreal symbol in its midst; (5) Eden is formative for garden imagery in Israel’s temple; (6) both are sources of water; (7) both are linked closely to precious stones; (8) garden and temple are located on a mountain; (9) both have an eastern-facing entrance; (10) both have tripartite sacred structures; (11) Adam and Even are placed as divine “images” in the Edenic sanctuary (66-80). Cf. also Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 191; M.G. Kline, God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 40.


197 G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,” HTR 82.2 (1989) 139. With reference to the writings of Ephrem, Anderson writes: “It is the image of Eden as a Temple, a spot of purity, that informs Ephrem’s description of Eden. Not only is Eden modeled on the Temple—a common topos in Jewish and Christian literature—but the very sin of Adam is understood as a violation of the laws of Temple-purity. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is understood as a veil which separates, the outer court from the holy of holies wherein resided the tree of life (Hymns 3.3, 5)” (143). Cf M.G. Kline, Images of the Spirit, 35-37; J.V. Fesko, Last Things First, 74. He also mentions Martin Luther “long ago wrote that God built Adam ‘a temple that he may worship him’ [Luther, Genesis, 95]” (74).
Temple with imagery of the Garden of Eden. 198 Thus, many of the symbolic features of Solomon’s temple, for example, were designed to convey to its “visitors that the Temple proper recreated or incorporated the garden of Eden, Yahweh’s terrestrial residence,”199 a notion arguably true for the tabernacle as well. Indeed, we are urging precisely this logic for the Gen 1-3 narratives, namely they serve to explain the necessity and purpose of the cultus.

CONCLUSION

The parallels between the creation/Eden accounts and that of the tabernacle not only portray the tabernacle as a micro-cosmos, but also the cosmos as a macro-tabernacle, with the garden of Eden as an archetypal holy of holies in Gen 2-3.200 In effect, the earth is God’s temple where he can fellowship with humanity.201 The seventh day, as we will consider next, is consecrated for the sake of that fellowship, defining the essence of humanity in terms of priesthood or for the

198 G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 199: “Judaism in various ways understood the Garden to be the first sanctuary. Perhaps the earliest (160 BC) and clearest expression of this is Jubilees 8.19: “And he [Noah] knew that the Garden is the holy of holies and the dwelling of the LORD, and Mount Sinai the centre of the desert, and Mount Zion the centre of the navel of the earth; these three were created as a holy place facing each other.” This is quite interesting because it links the Garden as a Temple with not only that at Sinai, but especially the Temple in Jerusalem. 1 Enoch 24-27 and Testament of Levi 18.6, 10 also closely associate God’s Temple with imagery of the Garden of Eden.”


200 J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 10. Cf. also J.D. Levenson, who writes: “[T]he Temple was conceived as a microcosm, a miniature world. But it is equally the case that in Israel (and probably also in the other cultures), the world—or, as I should say, ideal or protological world, the world viewed sub specie creationis—was conceived, at least in Priestly circles, as a macro-temple, the palace of God in which all are obedient to his commands” (Creation and the Persistence of Evil, 86); “[T]he Temple is an eikon, an image, an epitome of the world. It is not one of many items in the world. It is the world in nuce, and the world is the Temple in extenso….The world which the Temple incarnates in a tangible way is not the world of history but the world of creation, the world not as it is but as it was meant to be and as it was on the first Sabbath” (idem., “The Temple and the World,” Journal of Religion 64.3 [Jul 1984] 285, 297). Cf. G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 208.

201 B.K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1.1-3, Part V,” 32. Waltke compares Isa 40.13-14 with Gen 1 and, agreeing with Whybray’s sense of mîṣpât as building-pattern (vs. “justice”), says the text has to do with “the unusual notion of constructing a building according to a design that fits easily. Isaiah is asking in effect, ‘under whom did God serve as an apprentice to learn how to fashion this building, this temple, if you please, namely the cosmos?’…It is concluded, therefore, that the intent of Isaiah’s questions is to show that God acted alone in the designing and fashioning of this cosmos, His temple” (31-32). Similarly, J.H. Walton, Genesis, 151: “In the ancient Near East as in the Bible, temples are for divine ‘rest,’ and divine rest is found in sanctuaries or sacred space.”

114
sake of worship—thus completing our cosmogonic pattern: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship.

III. FOR WORSHIP: THE LITURGICAL TELOS OF CREATION

The pattern being advanced in this thesis (through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship) is, ultimately, a liturgical or cultic pattern, positioning humanity within that paradigm primarily in terms of priesthood, thus prefiguring the tabernacle cultus. Toward clarifying this understanding, we will examine how Gen 1-3 develops the themes of (A) worship as the telos of creation, (B) humanity as priesthood, and (C) how the gate liturgy idea naturally follows from the expulsion narrative.

A. Worship as the Telos of Creation

Whatever its historical usage in liturgy, Genesis 1 as we will observe declares worship to be the telos of creation, and constitutes a summons to worship, 202 impressing upon its audience that creation is oriented to the Sabbath and thus exists for the sake of worship. 203 Beyond the

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202 S.E. Balentine, The Torah’s Vision of Worship, 68. He also says the Creation account “is, in sum, a symbolic picture of a world where religion and the priestly cult is preordained by God as the highest purpose of creation” (49). Some take the final form of Genesis 1, perhaps by analogizing the exilic enemies as the threatening waters, as expressing the “conviction that proper worship is essential to the preservation and mission of the community even in exile” (E.C. Brisson, “The Gates of Dawn,” 55). S. Paas sees the cosmic symbolism of the Temple as the merging of mythopoetic dimensions with the experiences of present-day reality in Israel’s cultus: “Israel recognized this connection and incorporated it into the context of the temple worship in Jerusalem and the Zion tradition affiliated with it” (Creation and Judgment, 92). Furthermore, the idea of “serving” the god(s) as the goal of creation is (albeit different from Israel’s conception of “worship”) common to ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies: “In the ancient Near East, what results from the process is human society organized for the service of the gods. ... Ancient cosmogonies were primarily interested in the emergence of a particular society, organized by means of patron gods and worship systems, a divinely appointed king (or some other kind of leader), and kinship systems. The something new which was not there before is not the mere physical universe but rather the “world” of human beings organized to serve the gods” (R.J. Clifford, Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible, 7-9). This however is not meant in disregard of the vital differences between such “service,” for as Clifford notes: “If comparison with other cosmogonies does not prove dependence, it does reveal the emphasis in Genesis. Genesis depicts the first man in royal terms, using the nouns “image” and “likeness” (which are found in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions) and the verbs “rule” and “subdue.” In Mesopotamian cosmogonies human beings are invariably slaves created to maintain the universe for the gods, who are idle by vocation” (143).

203 J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), ‘In the Beginning...,’ 28, 31 (for a fuller quote): “This rhythm [of “seven and its cosmic significance”] is itself at the service of a still deeper meaning: Creation is oriented to the sabbath, which is the sign of the covenant between God and humankind....Creation is designed in such a way that it is oriented to
portrayal of the cosmos as a temple, and the liturgical traits evident in the narrative, this statement finds support from the consistent canonical milieu of creation within the context of Israel’s praise. However, the outstanding feature of the creation account, setting the whole cosmos within the perspective of worship as its culminating climax, is the seventh day.

Toward understanding this statement, we turn now to consider (1) the narrative emphasis upon the seventh day, (2) and the imago Dei within the context of that emphasis.

1. THE EMPHATIC SEVENTH DAY

Perhaps the most prominent organizational feature of the creation account is its seven days, the seventh itself being stressed particularly. Emphasis upon the seventh day is accomplished on a variety of levels in the text. The literary structure, balancing and integrating two triads of days, highlights the unique seventh as climactic. Also, while the first six days are mentioned only

worse the meaning and assumes its significance when it is lived, ever new, with a view to worship. Creation exists for the sake of worship. As Saint Benedict said in his Rule: Ope Dei nihil praeponature – “Nothing must be put before the service of God.” This is not the expression of an otherworldly piety but a clear and sober translation of the creation account and of the message that it bears for our lives. The true center, the power that moves and shapes from within in the rhythm of the stars and of our lives, is worship. Our life’s rhythm moves in proper measure when it is caught up in this. Ultimately every people has known this. The creation accounts of all civilizations point to the fact that the universe exists for worship and for the glorification of God....To celebrate the sabbath means to celebrate the covenant.” Cf. also A.P. Ross, Genesis (CBC; Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2008) 41.

C. Westermann (The Genesis Accounts of Creation, 4-5) thus notes: “the whole wealth of biblical statements concerning Creator and creation stand in conjunction with the praise of God....the great majority of passages concerning Creator and creation in the Old Testament are intimately associated with God’s praise.... When the biblical writers speak about Creator and creation, they break forth in praise of God’s majesty, in a joyous, sincere, and spontaneous praise of his glory. ...the real purpose is appreciated only when one considers that the original hearers of the creation account heard it as part of Israel’s total praise of God as Creator, which, for them, had its proper setting in the liturgical psalms.”

R.J. Clifford’s statement expresses well the scholarly consensus: “The seventh day, the day of God’s resting, is the climax of the narrative” (“The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,” 522). G.J. Wenham writes that the sixth day’s work “is not [the account’s] conclusion. The only connection the seventh day has with the preceding days is sequence. Its character and formulae set it apart from the preceding six days. It is pre-eminently the day God ceased his creative work: of all the days the seventh is the only one blessed and sanctified. Its different literary form sets it apart in the narrative, just as the divine rest and sanctification set it apart in fact” (Genesis 1-15, 37). Cf. W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17.”

R.J. Clifford, Genesis, 65. N. Sarna affirms that the “ascending order of Creation, and the ‘six-plus-one’ literary pattern that determines the presentation of the narrative, dictates that the seventh day be the momentous climax” (Genesis, 14).
once, the seventh is mentioned emphatically, three times in three consecutive sentences. The seventh day is also syntactically emphasized: “The disjunction serves thus to highlight 2.2-3 as a conclusion of the scheme, not as another in the successive stages within the scheme. Hence the seventh day is categorically (formally) different from the other six days.” This syntactical separation is, in fact, a case of form following function, separating the seventh day literally even as God within the narrative separates or “sanctifies” (טָבַע) it. As a distinct sub-unit, Gen 2.2-3 may be outlined as a chiasm, centered upon God’s blessing and sanctifying the seventh day.

By this consecration, God created a palace in time, forming a temporal space and filling it with holiness so that here, at the culmination of creation, “forming and filling kiss each other.”

Further, that the “description of the seventh day forms an inclusio around everything in Genesis 1,” may be justly interpreted as the seventh day’s being the fulfillment, purpose, and end of everything in Genesis 1—that is, “the goal of the whole creative process.” Given the temple imagery in the account, along with the later cultic appropriation of the Sabbath, it is likely that the supreme significance of the seventh day is found in God’s indwelling of the cosmos upon it,

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209 G.W. Coats, Genesis, 43.
212 D.C. Timmer, Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath, 66. H. Blocher (In the Beginning, 57-58) similarly notes: “The use of the anthropomorphic figure of the week for the logic of creation and of its completion allowed the author to outline a theology of the sabbath. That was the theme closest to his heart. The narrative has two peaks, mankind and the sabbath. This would be better expressed by saying that the creation of mankind crowns the work, but the sabbath is its supreme goal...It refers him back to his most essential relationship, that with God. That is the message of the sabbath.” Similarly, E. Greenstein (“Presenting Genesis 1,” 4) shows how every aspect of the account has the Sabbath in view: “Genesis 1 sets forth both implicitly and explicitly the rationale on which the Torah’s religion will be founded, or by which the Torah’s religion will make sense. The narrative is structured by the recurrent formula, ‘There was sunset, there was daybreak, one day,’ ‘second day,’ ‘third day,’ etc., into seven sections, seven days....The significance of time is made explicit in the narrative with the creation of the luminaries... ‘to be signs of sacred occasions (mo’adim), days, and years’ (v 14). Days need to be counted for the sake of sacred time. The climax of the creation narrative is not, as some have said, the creation of humanity, but rather the establishment, setting apart, and blessing of the day that has been anticipated by the division of the story into days, the day that retrospectively gives significance to the counting of days, the day that will always be different, God’s day, the seventh day, the Sabbath.”
that is, in the ritual experience of the divine Presence within creation. Some have hereby drawn an analogy between the seventh day rest of God and the bringing into a temple of an image of the deity during the process of temple dedication in the ancient Near East. On the seventh day there is something of a bond, or union, between Creator and creation, as God enters his world, the king enthroned in his temple, vivifying and sanctifying it with his Presence—the

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213 I say "ritual" for the sake of being open to the possibility that God's indwelling on the Sabbath may not have been intended as "once for all," but as establishing a sabbatical pattern of worship, i.e., He would have met in an especially immanent way with humanity every Sabbath. This would seem to follow from the separation of the seventh day as sacred time, even though the other six days were declared "good." The following narrative of the Fall (Gen 3), in any case, does not intimate God's "Sabbath" Presence. Furthermore, the "poem and the praise sung by Creation (including the heavenly retinue) to the Creator," specifically as Sabbath liturgy, celebrates the YHWH's "enthronement upon the completion of His work...Like the Sabbath itself, so also the text [of Gen 1.1-2.3]...is transformed into a cultic-religious experience which recurs every seventh day and comes to commemorate the act of Creation and the enthronement of God" (M. Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement," 509, 512). This statement Weinfeld makes in light of Ps 93's usage as Sabbath liturgy, according to Rabbinical sources as well as the LXX's title to the psalm, "For the eve of the Sabbath." He further states: "In the liturgy of the Sabbath eve the enthronement Psalms 95-99, 29, 92 and 93 are included. The origin of this custom is unknown" (511). S. Paas writes: "It must be stressed how clearly the divine kingship, descriptions of YHWH's palace and His holy mountain in the thought of Israel were related to the faith in His creation power...As King, YHWH is the Builder of heaven and earth; as King, He is also the one who from out of His palace on Zion provides Israel with all goodness and restrains the powers of chaos. In this way, in creation Israel recognized her King and in the mighty Warrior saw her Creator" (Creation and Judgment, 97). Cf. M.C.A. Korpel, A Rift in the Clouds, 208-12; 283-86. Similarly, the LORD's Day celebrates the decisive act of the new creation, i.e., the resurrection of Christ, and Christ's consequent enthronement (cf. Acts 2).

214 G. von Rad (Genesis, 61-2) considers 2.1-3 "one of the most remarkable and daring testimonies" of the Creation account, establishing God's Sabbath rest, not merely as a negative sign marking the end of creating, but positively as a "new thing"—a new creation, as it were, "above and beyond" the other acts so as to become "a third something that exists between God and the world." This interpretation, incidentally, lends itself to the Hebrew text's designation of God's "completion" being on the seventh day (versus the LXX's "sixth day").

215 J.H. Walton, Genesis, 148, 151-52: "This seventh day is not a theological appendix to the creation account, just to bring closure now that the main event of creating people has been reported. It intimates the purpose of creation and of the cosmos. God not only sets up the cosmos so that people will have a place; he also sets up the cosmos to serve as his temple...In a temple-construction project [in the ancient Near East], the structure was built, and the furniture and trappings were made in preparation for the moment when all was ready for the dedication of the temple. On this occasion, normally a seven-day celebration, the functions of the temple were declared, the furniture and hangings were put in place, the priests were installed, and the appropriate sacrifices were made to initiate the temple's operation. Somewhere in the process, the image of the deity was brought into the temple to take up residence (rest). The Sabbath element helps us to recognize the temple-cosmos equation and to realize the contextual significance of the functions and functionaries in the creation narrative." See also S.D. McBride Jr., "Divine Protocol," 11-12, 14: "What takes material shape in response to God's speaking is a palatial abode—fashioned over the course of six days and completed on a seventh. While the edifice teemed with created life, its architecture is inhabitable on a more sublime scale. Cosmos as epitomized in the protocol of Genesis 1.1-2.3 is suited for the creator's own residence...This [seventh] day of silent divine rest is a consummation of all that has gone before because it inaugurates God's residence within the cosmic temple."
Sabbath being, ultimately, about the Presence of God. Read from the perspective of time, the creation account itself may be viewed as an approach to the divine Presence: day one’s evening and morning → day four’s annual cultic festivals → day seven’s “rest.” The account’s catechesis seems clear: the abundant life is found in engagement with the divine. Worship, to conclude the point, is the telos of Creation: “Last in creation, first in intention,” the Sabbath is “the end of the creation of heaven and earth.”

2. THE IMAGO DEI AND IMITATIO DEI

In light of the seventh day’s climactic position in creation, the crown of creation (Man), then, must not be confused with the goal and purpose, the telos, of creation (Sabbath union with God)—the link between the why of Sabbath union with God and the what of Man being the imago Dei. The seventh day blessing comes, in other words, as a fruition of the radical words, “And God said to them” (1.28). In this sense, once more, man is not the culmination of...

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216 Similarly, R.M. Davidson writes: “The Sabbath is holy because God fills it with His presence; therefore, the Sabbath is not just a day, but a Person!” (A Love Song for the Sabbath: How to Experience the Joy that God Intended When He Gave Us the Sabbath [Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1988] 29). That presence is symbolized in Gen 2-3 by the river (cf. Ezek 47.1-12) and Tree of life, so that expulsion from God’s presence necessarily means expulsion from the Garden (see S. Tuell’s “The Rivers of Paradise”). Sabbath worship, via Israel’s Tabernacle/ TEMPLE cultus, provided re-entry into God’s Sabbath presence. Further, by sanctifying Sunday, the “Lord’s Day,” with his presence, then, Jesus Christ affirms it as the new creation Sabbath (cf. John 20.1, 19, 26).


219 Failing to note this connection, J. Atwell (“An Egyptian Source for Genesis I,” JTS 51.2 [2000] 476) writes: “The final stage of the tradition as we have it in Genesis 1.1-2.4a is different. The sabbath has been interposed. As a result the fashioning of human beings “in the image of God” is still very significant, but no longer the goal of the narrative. The thrust of the narrative now leads on through the days of creation to the rest of God on the seventh day. That is now the climax of the story. The effect of the sabbath has been to restore a God-centeredness to the account of the creation of the cosmos.” If, however, “image of God” is seen with the Sabbath as its point and end, then no tension remains.

220 B. Och, “Creation and Redemption,” 228: “The imago Dei describes the uniqueness of human existence by virtue of which entity can enter into a relationship with God. The human being is regarded as God’s counterpart on earth, the “You” who is addressed by God, and the “I” who is responsible to God. This Divine/human affinity, not only determines the meaning of human existence, but also drastically alters God’s relationship to the world. The creator God who has, heretofore, radically separated Himself from His creation now opens up the possibility of entering the world through His involvement with humanity. A Divine/human dynamic is set in motion...

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creation, but rather seventh-day-worshiping-man. Westermann, who considers Gen 2.1-3 “the final chord in the song of creation,”\(^ {221}\) captures well this distinction:

The statement [“the image of God”] really means that God has made man to communicate with him, so that man might speak to God and he might hear God’s word. This, then, shows us the goal of creation. God made man after his image so that the stream of life might flow in the encounter between God and man, in that which transpires between God and man, through which, even though we cannot fully understand it, God works toward the goal of all creation. …This description of man means…that man can maintain his humanity only in the presence of God. Man separated from God has not only lost God, but also the purpose of his humanity. …It is all the more significant, then, that Genesis I does not really close with the creation of man; rather, in 2.1-3, definitely a P section, something is introduced which actually does not belong to the work of creation, but which is given even stronger emphasis by being presented as the conclusion: man is not the goal of God’s creation. From the very beginning the seven-day framework has been progressing toward the seventh day. The goal is really the solemn rest of that day. In the blessing and hallowing of the seventh day, we may detect the still veiled goal, the day of worship on which the responding congregation audibly utters the praise of the Creator which at creation was still implicit in God’s own contemplation of his work.\(^ {222}\)

That the creation of man has particular reference to the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day (2.1-3) also seems a legitimate inference given the poetic nature shared by both man’s creation and the sanctification of the seventh day, inviting their association. Regarding the creation of man in v 27, Cassuto, for example, remarks that the text assumes a more exalted tone and becomes poetic. The verse consists of three lines, each of which has four stresses and contains the verb \(\text{שָׁבַר} ['create']\), the repetition being for emphasis. The first line speaks, in general terms, of man’s creation; the second draws attention to the fact that he was created in the Divine image; the third notes the creation of two sexes. The poetic structure of the sentence, its stately diction and its

which not only enables the Transcendent God to enter the time-space constructs of worldly existence but also provides humanity with the means to transcend the finite and limited structure of creaturely existence.\(^ {\text{i}}\) See also, \textit{idem}, “The Garden of Eden,” 146: With the creation of man, God has someone to whom He can speak. What has, heretofore, been a Divine monologue will, henceforth, become a Divine-human dialogue. The proper function of each created object has been assigned to it by God as a fixed and unchanging part of its essential nature. The essence of man, however, does not reside within man, but is to be found in his relationship to God, namely, that of listening and responding. This Divine-human relationship not only determines the meaning of human existence, but, also, drastically alters God’s relationship to the world. The Creator God who has, heretofore, radically separated Himself from the created world, now opens up the possibility of entering the world through His relationship with man. A Divine-human dynamic has been set in motion which enables the transcendent God to enter the time-space constructs of worldly existence and provides man with the means to transcend the finite and limited structure of creaturely existence. This is the uniqueness of man.” R.J. Clifford similarly states that “only the human race, by virtue of…its freedom to respond to the divine word, directly encounters God” (\textit{Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible}, 144).

\(^{221}\) C. Westermann, \textit{The Genesis Accounts of Creation}, 24.

\(^{222}\) Ibid., 21-22 (emphasis original). H. Blocher similarly states: “What is the basis of the subordination of work to this “chief end” of mankind, “to glorify God and to enjoy him forever” (The Shorter Catechism)? It is nothing other than his creation in the image of God. But what is also meant by the presentation of the divine work at the beginning as a workman’s week, as an archetype of the human week, except that mankind is to live according to the image of his Creator? So we see linking together the meaning of the Sabbath and the theme of the image of God, which are in a manner interdependent.” (\textit{In the Beginning}, 57-58).
particular emotional quality attest the special importance that the Torah attributes to the making of man—the noblest of creatures.²²³

Furthermore, the three lines are each composed with four words, 12 (4x3) perhaps not being an insignificant number given the analogy between the man in the land (יִרְשָׁדְתִּים) of Eden and Israel’s 12 tribes in “the land” of promise (the new Eden). But the progression is also noteworthy: (1) man’s creation → (2) in the Divine image → (3) as two sexes. That those created in God’s image are two sexes, male and female, rounds the poetry off with an open-ended assumption, i.e., fecundity, life—the image of God propagated throughout the earth (and this is made explicit in the divine benediction of the next verse, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth…”). To the point, however, the poetic heights of man’s creation is matched alone by “the beauty and majesty” of the seventh day’s sanctification (2.2-3), which “consists of three consecutive, parallel lines, each of which contains seven words and is divided into two parts, the first part ending in every case, like a threefold refrain, with the words—the seventh day.”²²⁴ In both sections, the creation of man and the sanctification of the seventh day, the poetry of the first two lines are somewhat synonymous repetitions while the third brings in a new element (“male and female” on the one hand, “blessed…and sanctified” on the other). Furthermore, the blessing of the seventh day constitutes

the third time that an expression of blessing occurs in our section. As previously stated, threefold repetition indicates emphasis....The repeated blessings, it may be noted, are in a kind of ascending order: the fish are blessed with physical fertility; on man a twofold blessing is bestowed, comprising both physical fecundity and spiritual elevation; the benison of the Sabbath is wholly one of spiritual exaltation, a blessing imbued with sanctity...elevation and exaltation above the usual level; the seventh day was lifted up above the plane of other days.²²⁵

Firmage also roots the Priestly agenda of Gen 1 in the imago Dei which provides the possibility of holiness (likeness to God) through the worship of God on the seventh day, the “sanctuary in

²²³ U. Cassuto, Genesis I, 57 (emphasis original).
²²⁴ Ibid., 61 (emphasis original). NOTE: “His work” (וֹמֶּרֶנִי) and “which He did” (וֹמֶּרֶנִי) also occur three times each.
²²⁵ Ibid., 64-65.
“time” that is also “the beachhead of holiness in the world.” Thus man, imbued with a “spiritual elevation” that distinguishes his blessedness from that of the other living creatures, must be designed for the “spiritual exaltation” of the Sabbath, which, as expounded later in the Pentateuch, involves the noble concept of *imitatio Dei* (Ex 20.8-11). As Greenstein has written:

The observance of the creation cycle week by week is accordingly a ritual of *imitatio Dei*, “imitation of God,” and it goes far in illustrating the major principle in the Torah’s religion: “You are to be holy/sacred/set apart because I the Lord your God am holy/sacred/set apart” (Lev 19.2)...The principle of separation as a characteristically divine behavior is, of course, established in the Genesis 1 creation story, where the verb *lehavdil,* “to separate,” describes a number of creative acts....

To observe the Sabbath, then, is to participate in the creation event it symbolizes—that is, to re-experience, or enter into, the primal event of God’s hallowing and blessing that causes and effects the basis for the divine-human relationship. The *imitatio Dei* of the Sabbath—the Sabbath “which, to the Torah, is as much a part of the cosmic order as is the foregoing creativity”—is found, therefore, to be of a piece with the *imago Dei,* at the core of humanity’s being and purpose as *homo liturgicus:* “On this day man must recognize the

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227 E. Greenstein, “Presenting Genesis 1,” 5.
228 G.W. Coats, “Strife and Broken Intimacy,” 156.
229 N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 2. He further states: “The seventh day is what it is, because God chose to ‘bless it and declare it holy.’ Its blessed and sacred character is part of the divinely ordained cosmic order” (21).
230 Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*: “Israel’s obligation to hallow the Sabbath day is another instance of this Priestly theology of *imitatio Dei*. We see, then, that Genesis 1.1-2.3, the priestly cosmogony, presents creation as an event ordered toward the rest of God, with which it closes, a rest that signifies an act of redemption and social reform and an opportunity for human participation in the sublime quietude of the unopposed creator God...[T]he Sabbath has assumed the cosmogonic role that the New Year held in some other ancient Near Eastern cultures...” (119); E.J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One*: “The ‘rest’ of God, argues Ridderbos correctly, is to be regarded as creation’s climax, and this rest was expressed by mentioning the seventh day...[Man’s] work, like that of God, is to have the glory of God as its goal” (77).
231 The phrase “*homo liturgicus*” is used by J.L. Morrow (“Creation and Liturgy,” 10) who borrowed it from Scott W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* 1 (2005) 106. Hahn, further, suggests (yet without offering much by way of support) that Adam’s disobedience might be seen as a failure of worship, an abdication of his priestly service in the temple of creation (120).
enthroned Lord of hosts who, having completed his work, awaits in the attitude of majestic
repose, the liturgical response of his creature.” 232

Panning back to view the larger picture as this section concludes, we contend the final
canonical form of Gen 1-3 presents creation as the construction of a divine temple, with Eden as
an archetypal holy of holies, and the human vocation identified as liturgical worship. 233 Our
focus continues now to fill out the worship aspect of this picture, particularly considering how
humanity is presented in priestly terms, a point that will further undergird our reading of the
expulsion narrative within the context of the gate liturgy.

B. Humanity as Priesthood/ Adam as Homo Liturgicus

I. THE CULTIC TRANSITION FROM GEN 1 TO 2-3

Through the cultic lens of cosmic mountain ideology, the pathway from the opening chapter of
Genesis to the second and third is significantly opened—so we hope to demonstrate here. To
begin, there is a sense where, given the *imago Dei*, the prospect of the Sabbath in Genesis 1—
namely encountering the divine Presence as rehearsed above—almost requires the garden of

Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) writes that creation is the space for worship, and
worship, being the soul of the covenant between God and man, is meant to draw the whole of reality into
communion with God (26-27).

233 J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 14. Indeed, the Torah itself presents worship as the goal of creation and, as
such, this goal may be extended through the Christian canon as well. Cf. S.E. Balentine, *The Torah’s Vision of
Worship*, 66. So, too, G.F. Hasel: “The conclusion of the Genesis creation story indicates that just as man is the
crown of Creation, so the seventh day, the Sabbath, is the final goal of Creation” (“The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,”
Association, 1982] 23). R.M. Davidson, e.g., interprets the centrality of the temple in Scripture as the overarching
centrality of worship, the issue at the core of cosmic conflict in the scriptural meta-narrative: “The heavenly
Sanctuary, on the holy mountain, was the location of the throne of God, and here the unfallen universe came to
worship the Most High God. ...Lucifer’s pride led him to rebel against the obedient, humble worship of God and to
aspire to equality with God, to receive worship and adoration himself instead of God [Ezek 28.16]. Rebellion against
God and rivalry with God. The Great War had begun! The issue was worship, and a Cosmic War dealing with
worship had as its natural battlefield the place of worship—the celestial Sanctuary. ...The issue is worship”
(“Cosmic Metanarrative,” 107-08).
Eden narrative in Genesis 2. Read from the perspective of time, as previously noted, the creation account itself may be viewed as an approach to the divine Presence: day one’s evening and morning → day four’s annual cultic festivals → day seven’s “rest.” Moreover, the seventh day, as Balentine provocatively suggests, may also be fundamental to the transition of work, from God’s in Gen 1 to that of humanity in Gen 2-3:

But for all its hallowed distinctiveness, the seventh day is as much the liturgical beginning-point of creation as it is its culmination. The seventh/sabbath day is, as previously noted, the bridge between what has been and what is to be. It stands at the intersection between heaven and earth (Genesis 1.1-31) and what will subsequently happen on earth (Genesis 2.4b-25). It hinges the two creational demands of God: humankind’s stewardship of the earth’s resources in royal terms (Gen 1.28) and the summons to be servants (Gen 2.15). It marks the point where God rests from the divine activity of naming and relinquishes the responsibility for earthly naming to humankind….Genesis 2.3 suggests that when, on the seventh/sabbath day, God rests from a divine creating that is also a making, it is not in order to retire from the world, but rather to wait expectantly—with “the heavens and the earth…and all their multitude”—for the subsequent acts of human making that will bring about new and future creations. This sabbatical symmetry between God’s creation and humankind’s recreation is captured nicely in a Jewish interpretation of the text. N.H. Sarna notes that Ibn Ezra and Radak understood the verb ḥāśah in Genesis 2.3 to mean that God rested from all the work that God created in order “[for man] to [continue to] do [thenceforth].”

While the burden of the following section will be to define that work of humanity in priestly terms, here we simply desire to show how the cultic layer of both accounts facilitates the transition between them, and itself serves to portray Adam as a priest. Considering, in other words, the garden as something of the inner sanctum of the cosmic temple, and its priest the man with the woman to help him, the transition from Gen 1 to 2-3 might possibly be rendered as the movement from creating the cosmic tabernacle to establishing the priestly service of humanity—that is, from the telos of creation as worship to the nature of man as homo liturgicus. This is, again, merely to add the cultic context to the acknowledged relationship between the two

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235 S.E. Balentine, The Torah’s Vision of Worship, 93-94. The Sabbath, then, is fundamental to the concept of the imago Dei, out of which flows imitatio Dei. Cf. J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 292, 293: “The Sabbath provides access to the sanctuary…. [T]he Sabbath routinizes the experience of divine enthronement at creation.”

236 B.K. Waltke, Genesis, 81.
accounts whereby Gen 1 describes the construction of the heavens and the earth, before the narrative of Gen 2-3 describes the events of which the earth will be the theatre, the inversion from “the heavens and the earth” to “the earth and the heavens” in 2.4 symbolizing this change of perspective.237 “The depiction of the garden as a primeval tabernacle of God, followed by the description of God’s placing of humanity in the garden,” furthermore, “bears a strong resemblance to the later establishment of the priesthood in the tabernacle (and the temple).”238 Adding the contextual cultic layer to the transition, in other words, renders the movement from tabernacle to priesthood as seen in the transition from the latter half of Exodus to the first half of Leviticus. Genesis 1, thus construed, begins with the Spirit of God (1.2), requisite to tabernacle building (Ex 31.2-3), and ends with the blessing and sanctification (1.31-2.3) fundamental to tabernacle completion and consecration (Ex 39.43-40.9); and Genesis 2-3 follows thematically with the first Man invested with priestly duties amidst a garden richly laden with tabernacle symbolism.239 Nevertheless, even when considering Gen 1 alone, J.H. Walton, in light of the ANE cosmological context (whereby the cosmos is a temple), yet discerns humanity’s priestly role:

We would conclude then that Genesis 1 is composed along the lines of a temple dedication ceremony in which over a seven-day period, the functions of the cosmic temple are initiated and the functionaries installed. The functions center on the royal and priestly roles of people, but the imagery is defined by the presence of God who has taken up his rest in the center of the cosmic temple.240

238 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 77.
239 This idea is apparently missed by some, such as Niditch, who seem to move from Gen 1 to 3 without acknowledging the presence or significance of the prelapsarian status of humanity: “Two major thematic chains emerge in Genesis 1-11 which describe two key transformations in the Israelite concept of the becoming of the universe. One involves the passage from an initial state of chaos to an ideal cosmos in which all of nature is beautifully arranged and ordered. The other involves the passage from this ideal state to reality, for the first movement from chaos to cosmos stops short of creating those social structures, hierarchies, and definitions which mark real time and the human being’s everyday status in the world.” (Chaos to Cosmos, 6).
But with the depiction of humanity’s work in Gen 2-3, and to which we now turn, that priestly role is all the more manifest.

2. TO “WORSHIP” AND “OBEY”

Within the overall context of viewing creation as a macro-temple in Genesis 1 and Eden as its holy of holies in Genesis 2-3, the priestly nature of humanity becomes apparent. That the garden narrative indeed portrays Adam as an archetypal priest ministering before YHWH is supported also by use of the verbs defining the divine intent, to “work/serve” (דָבַד) and to “protect/guard” (שָמַר) being used together again within the Pentateuch only to describe the duties of the Levites. Along the same lines, J.H. Sailhamer writes that

a more suitable and grammatically sound translation of the Hebrew [2.15] ְלֵצֶר לְשָׁמֵר is “to worship and obey” (Cassuto, 122-23). That is, the man is put in the garden to worship God and to obey him. Man’s life in the garden is to be characterized by worship and obedience; he is a priest, not a keeper of the garden. Such a reading not only answers the objections raised against the traditional English translation, it also suits the larger ideas of the narrative. Throughout ch. 2 the author has consistently and consciously developed the idea of man’s “likeness” to God along the same lines as the major themes of the Pentateuch as a whole, namely, the themes of worship and Sabbath rest. Humankind can enjoy fellowship with God, rest, and worship because they bear God’s own likeness. A further confirmation of understanding ִלְשֶׁם as “to worship and obey” is that in v 16 we read for the first time that “God commanded” (wayy’saw) the man whom he had created. As in the rest of the Torah, enjoyment of God’s good land is contingent on “keeping” (לָשׁוּם) God’s commandments (mi’swôt; cf. Deut 30.16).

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241 J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 173, 182. Although D.C. Timmer (Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath) takes a more conservative approach, he nonetheless concludes: “the Garden was indeed a type of sacred space, and...as a result humanity’s vocation there did have a limited priestly aspect” (86), his reasons for limitation are not altogether clear. Cf. S.E. Balentine, *The Torah’s Vision of Worship*, 49. Cf. also J.H. Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” *DOTP* 205-06. 242 G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 401; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, J. McHugh, trans. (1961; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 348; G.K. Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 68. This seems to be a common early interpretation as the fourth century document Ephraim’s *Hymns on Paradise* demonstrates: “Because Adam was a priest, king and prophet, God made him enter Paradise that he might serve as a priest in Eden, the holy church. Accordingly, Blessed Moses gave this witness about him: ‘...that he might serve God by priestly service in praise and guard that commandment which was entrusted to him by the forethought of God’” (quoted in G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 206). This distinction between chapters 1 (tabernacle) and 2-3 (priesthood) may possibly inform the contextually consistent use of ְלֹהִים in Gen 1 versus yhwh ְלֹהִים in Gen 2-3. Cf. also Cassuto, *Genesis* I, 84-88; B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 51, 59. At the least one might posit that the “combination of it [Jehovah] with the word ‘God,’ found here [Gen 2] and in the following chapter, shows the purpose of the writer or editor to convey the idea that the Creator of the world and the God of Israel were one and the same,” (W.H. Harper, “The Origin of Man and His First State of Innocence,” 97). 243 J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 79. Cf. Noel Due, *Created for Worship* (Geanies House: Focus, 2005) 41-42. In these pages, Due offers a popular-level summary of the garden of Eden as temple.
This understanding of the priestly role of Adam also conforms to—and, perhaps more importantly, completes—the general Priestly categories of sacred space (creation/sanctuary), time (Sabbath), and status (priesthood). Further, there is the parallel, already noted, between Adam’s post-fall vestments and the investiture of the Levitical priests, both needing their nakedness covered (Gen 3.7, 21; Ex 20.26, 28.42) and utilizing the noun הָיוֹת and the hiphil form of the verb נָסַב.

Gen 3.21: יְהוָה God made for Adam and for his wife tunics (רָפָה כְּפָנָיו) of skins and clothed them (נָהַס כִּפְנֵי). Lev 8.13: And Moses brought Aaron’s sons and clothed them (נָהַס כִּפְנֵי) with tunics (רָפָה כְּפָנָיו).

 Likely then, Adam was placed in the garden to fulfill his priestly office.

This more cultic perspective, moreover, was the standard rabbinical interpretation of Gen 2.7: the Aramaic translation of which (Tg. Neofiti) expressly states Adam’s being placed in the Garden “to toil in the Law and to observe its commandments” with v 19 noting that Adam’s naming of the animals utilized “the language of the sanctuary”; Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis states Adam’s creation included “dust from the site of the sanctuary”; Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 11 and 12 and Midrash Rabbah Genesis 14.8 suggest Adam was created “at the site of the later temple, which was also at Eden” or close to it. There has been, in fact, a continuous tradition with respect to Adam as priest and sacrificer, from Jubilees (second century B.C.) to the Rabbinic period, Adam sometimes portrayed specifically as a high priest. Consistent, then, with

247 G.K. Beale, Temple and the Church’s Mission, 67.
249 J. Marcus, “The Son of Man as Son of Adam, Part II: Exegesis,” RB (2003) 374. See Marcus’s fn 14 on the same page for the various early sources describing Adam as priest, high priest, and/or performing sacrifices.
creation's being a cosmic temple and with the garden being a holy of holies, Adam is portrayed as an archetypal priest—not a farmer.\textsuperscript{250} How this priestly status enlightens our understanding of the expulsion in Gen 3 we will now examine.

C. The Gate Liturgy: Humanity’s Profound Descent

Synthesizing the chapter’s labors thus far, we may note “Eden is thought to be a cosmic mountain upon which Adam serves as priest.”\textsuperscript{251} The significance of Adam’s presence atop the mountain will be positioned now within the gate liturgy—that is, Adam is the righteous one able to ascend the mount of YHWH, able to worship in the beauty of holiness.\textsuperscript{252} This understanding, however, is qualified in a negative manner in the narrative: by Adam’s expulsion (descent) upon disobedience, as that righteousness is lost.\textsuperscript{253} Central to the account of Gen 2-3 is the loss of humanity’s approach to the Creator, a (priestly)\textsuperscript{254} loss entailing barred access to life in

\textsuperscript{250} J.V. Fesko, \textit{Last Things First}, 71, 75. However, given that the cosmos is a temple, tilling the earth/farming would in itself constitute priestly labor.

\textsuperscript{251} G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation?” 147.

\textsuperscript{252} This is in accord with seeing that Adam, in “line with the ancient Near East, in which images of the god were in a garden-like Temple, …is presumably that ‘image’ in Genesis 2” (G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 201). Fletcher-Louis (“God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest”) notes: “With a number of recent commentators we must now take seriously the fact that ‘image’ language is cult statue or idol language. This is how the word \textit{selem} is normally used in the Old Testament (e.g. Num 33.52; 1 Sam 6.5; 6.11; 2 Kgs 11.18) and in the cognate Akkadian phrase \textit{alam ili/ilani}. Given that (i) other parts of Genesis 1 are a polemic against the polytheism of pagan cosmogonies and (ii) the Genesis 1 account of creation has its Sitz im Leben in the priestly view of the cult and its liturgy, to use language otherwise reserved for idols for the creation of humanity is either dangerously obtuse or deliberately subversive” (83). For the role of Genesis 1 in relation to the priestly holiness code, cf. E. Firmage, “Genesis 1 and the Priestly Agenda,” 97-114.


\textsuperscript{254} For a reading of Adam as first high priest, and the relation of the Eden narrative to the priesthood, see M. Barker, \textit{Temple Theology: An Introduction} (London: SPCK, 2004) 4.
abundance—life, that is, in the archetypal holy of holies. Indeed, by a canonical reading, Adam’s expulsion from the summit of God’s mount may be seen as the very event that initiates and makes necessary the gate liturgy: having been exiled by YHWH Elohim, who now dares enter—who, the psalmist asks (Pss 15, 24), shall ascend? We turn now to offer a reading of this central tragic event driving the plot of biblical history, humanity’s exile from the divine Presence, in light of the gate liturgy ritual. In a sense, and as discussed in the previous chapter, the expulsion narrative is a “gate liturgy in reverse,” paralleled by Gen 11.1-9; Isa 14.13-16; Ezek 28.12-19, and setting the judgment of God within a liturgical or cultic context. Because a temporary and mediated resolution to this exile is provided via the tabernacle cultus, the narrative may thus be read as prefiguring that cultus—serving to explain its logic and necessity.

1. THE PRIMEVAL EXILE

Upon breaking the commandment, Adam first hides himself from the Presence of the YHWH God (mišp’nè yhwh ’lōhîm), but is then driven out (y’qārêš) so that, out of Eden, he is an exile and a wanderer. Gen 3.23-24 reads as follows:

The narrative emphasis on Adam’s exile is manifest in (1) the repetition of YHWH’s action, (2) the intensifying of that action not only by repetition but from the verb’s escalation from “he sent

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256 R.D. Nelson writes: “Sacrifices and a well-trained and faithful priesthood to offer them are the mechanisms by which Yahweh can graciously embrace an unclean and sinful people. …Priestly ritual is therefore the means by which Yahweh can “accept” (root rsh) Israel. This concept of acceptance is central to the ‘gospel’ of the Priestly Writing” (Raising Up a Faithful Priesthood, 128-29).

out” (יָשַׁלְתִּי, y’sall’h) to “he drove out” (יָגָרֶשׂ, y’gärēš), (3) the twofold securing (לִשְׁמֹר, lišmōr) of the entrance by YHWH with “the cherubim” (הָאָרְבוֹת הָקָרְבּוֹת, hakkerubām) and with “the flame of the swirling sword”258 (הָלָהְת הַהָרֶבֶּה הַמִּתְבָּקֵק, lahat hahereb hammithappeket), (4) by climactic mention of the loss of life via the tree (יָשָׁלֶה הַיָּעֲיֹת, ēś hahayyām), and (5) by the implied conclusiveness of the event inasmuch as the acts are executed by YHWH himself. Exile from the divine Presence, then, is the point of tragedy driving the ensuing biblical narrative toward the mediated denouement of the tabernacle cultus.259 Smith brings out this theme of the divine Presence when he writes:

Man’s relationship to God is described in terms of his walk in the presence of the Lord. Adam initially walked in communion with God. When Adam and Eve were cursed they were driven “from the presence of the LORD” (3.8, 24). Enoch (5.22) and Noah (6.9) “walked with God,” but Cain’s curse resulted in his “going out from the presence of the LORD” (4.16). The ultimate curse of removal from God’s presence is found in the flood incident when all flesh is blotted out.260

2. DISPLACEMENT

Understanding the nature of the garden is coextensive with appreciating the magnitude of its loss.261 The garden itself, a dwelling-place of communion between YHWH and humanity, with the fecundating river and tree of life in its midst, was a sign of the glory of the divine Presence,


259 For the theme of the divine Presence regained via the tabernacle cultus as the structural and theological center of the Hexateuch, as well as from Gen through 2 Kings, see E.G. Newing, “The Rhetoric of Hope: The Theological Structure of Genesis – 2 Kings,” Colloquium 17 (1985) 1-15.


261 Cf. C.G. Bartholomew’s description, e.g., in “The Theology of Place in Genesis 1-3,” 187.
and a seal of the divine will to give humanity himself. 262 Indeed, the movement from intimacy
( Gen 2) to alienation ( Gen 3) appears to be a major motif focusing and integrating the
narrative. 263 Now while attention is often paid to the purpose for Man’s being driven out of the
garden as stated in the second clause of v 23 (to work “the ground” הָאָדָם hāʾadam), 264 yet the
point may rather lie in the locative contrast of the third clause: “from the garden” (מָיְגִין
miggan-ʿedèn) to “the ground,” the ground being the place “from which he was taken from
there” (בְּמֵאָט מָיְגִין הָאָדָם maʾēet memiggan haʾadam). The reader is reminded that Adam was created from
the dust of the ground (2.7) then YHWH had “placed him there” (נִנְחָה מִיֵּשָׁם ninnah mīyšām) 265 in
the garden in the divine Presence (2.8). There had thus been a grace principle at work in Adam’s
fellowship with the Creator. 266 The parallel description of divine action in 2.15 has it that YHWH
carved Adam “to rest” (נִנְחָה yannihèhū) in the garden. Similarly, as we will see in the next
chapter, Noah, who found “favor” (נַח hēn) in the eyes of God, will have the Ark come “to rest”
(נַחֲנָה tānah) at the summit of one of the Ararat mountains. 267 The movement here in Genesis is
thus:

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YHWH "rests" Adam
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``
YHWH "drives out" Adam
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``
“garden” (summit of the mount/ the divine Presence)
``
``
“ground.”
``
``

in Biblical Literature, D.J.A. Clines, D.M. Gunn, A.J. Hauser, eds. (JSOTSup 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic
Press, 1982).
264 For a persuasive reading of the text as Adam and Even also being expelled “from tilling the soil...,” cf. N.
265 Hauge’s pointing out the corresponding applications of šām in Exod 19.2; 20.21, and 1 Kgs 19.9, and cf. Gen
22.4-5, may not be irrelevant (The Descent from the Mountain, 27f).
266 W.J. Dumbrell makes a similar point, “Genesis 2.1-17,” 56.
267 W.J. Dumbrell points out the parallel with Israel, created outside the divine space to be occupied, but brought in
to continue the divine purpose for humanity’s royal, priestly role, later exile for transgressing the law, etc. (“Genesis
2.1-17,” 61-62).
This movement accords well with the cultic spatial movement identified in various psalms:

“...just as ‘life’ was experienced in the cult as being before the very presence of God in the (heavenly) temple, so ‘death’ was experienced in the cult as being cut off from that presence outside the temple. Both descent into Sheol and ascent to the temple had ritual accoutrements. ...The ritual movement [in Ps 30] from mourning to joy has mirrored a spatial movement from Sheol to temple, from the absence of God to the presence of God. ...Moreover, laments highlighted the themes of divine absence and descent, while songs of thanksgiving highlighted those of divine presence and ascent. 268

Being driven away from YHWH’s Presence, then, involves a descent, a ritual or symbolic movement downward, and reflected in the expulsion narrative (when the garden is understood to be located upon the summit of the holy mount of God).

Returning to the second clause of v 23 and to Adam’s purpose outside of the garden “to labor” (לָכָהֶד lăchôd), even that purpose may be understood as functioning to emphasize displacement. When paralleled with the cherubim’s purpose “to guard (לַיִשְׁמֹר lîšmôr) in v 24, there indeed seems to be a deliberate recalling of those same verbs in Gen 2.15 with the tragic change of place evident: “the man was put into the garden for ‘worship’ (לְעָבְדָה lôabbôdah) and ‘obedience’ (לַעֲשָׂמְרָה lââshmârâh); but here in v 23, after the fall, the man is cast out of the garden ‘to work [lăchôd] the ground’ and ‘is kept’ (lîšmôr) from ‘the way to the tree of life.’” 269 Displacement, then, and as Bartholomew has shown, is central to “the horror of this judgment” and “fundamental to the entire Old Testament and presupposed at every point.” 270 The expulsion thus constitutes the first stage shift, an important device in the Pentateuch, and represents a spatial movement that is down and away from God. 271 In Gen 4, moreover, the weight of Cain’s punishment is further (and continual) displacement. 272 Whatever the provenance of Gen 2-3, the

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269 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 95.
272 Ibid.
Babylonian exile would surely have yielded an agonizingly sympathetic reading of this greatest of exiles. Losing the place of Eden meant losing the Presence of YHWH. And yet, as Westermann well noted, man can maintain his humanity only in the divine Presence—separated from God, he not only loses God but also the purpose of his humanity. Adam is now returned to existence before YHWH's gracious act of transplanting him on what we take to be the enclosed garden upon the summit of the holy mount. And thus the gate liturgy begins: when the only ascent had been by divine provision (and this for "unfallen" man), and having been driven out (as a transgressor) by YHWH himself, who now dares ascend? Indeed, the way has been barred in a twofold manner.

3. HOLY OF HOLIES AS FULLNESS OF LIFE

We are reading the garden of Eden as the archetypal holy of holies, with the divine Presence as the ultimate source of its holiness and blessing. Therefore, a deeper appreciation for primeval humanity's profound displacement is gained by understanding the biblical link between holiness and life. That "fullness of life" is intrinsic to God can be seen in Israel's concept of holiness which was fundamentally linked to the distinction between life and death, God's fullness of life making him utterly holy. Purity laws were thus determined by the approach to "the vivific character of the divine realm," so that if "something was not full of life or fully given over to life, it was deemed to be impure and was not allowed to approach the divine realm, often being

274 This reading underscores the presumptuous character of the Tower of Babel project, gesturing toward its antipode in the tabernacle construction, the plans for which were divinely revealed (Exod 25.9, 40).
275 G.J. Wenham, "Why does Sexual Intercourse Defile?" 432.
physically relegated to the wilderness (Lev 4.11-12, 10.4-5, 13.46, 21.1-4)."²⁷⁶ Whitekettle further explains that in

Levitical thought, the divine realm was located at the center of Israel’s wilderness camp, in the tent-dwelling of Yahweh, the [G]od who created life and gave order to the cosmos. Contraposed to this spatial center was a periphery, located in the wilderness beyond the encampment, a place of disorder and desolation.²⁷⁷

Significantly, the wilderness, relegated to the periphery of life/holiness, is described in terms of the earth in Gen 1.2, in a state of in tōḥā (Deut 32.10), while the tabernacle holy of holies is described in terms of the Edenic garden,²⁷⁸ the connections between creation and the tabernacle being widely acknowledged as already reviewed.²⁷⁹ The theme of life in the account of creation, therefore, becomes emphatic when the layer of tabernacle symbolism is acknowledged:

²⁷⁷ Ibid.
²⁷⁸ Interestingly, then, one needs both creation accounts (i.e., the complete portrayal of Gen 1-3) in order to encompass the ideology of the tabernacle cultus, from wilderness to the Holy of holies.
²⁸⁰ Ibid., 400, 404. Cf. M. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 367-408 (emphasis added). Further, J. Blenkinsopp (“The Structure of P,” 278) notes that the promise of divine presence (“I will be their God,” Gen 17.8) is “fulfilled in the construction of the sanctuary and the establishment of the cult in the Sinaitic wilderness,” which further accords with the connection of Eden and the tabernacle Holy of Holies in as much as God is the source of life.

So, too, Anderson notes (in light of Jubilees 4.7) the “movement from Eden to the outside world was a movement from fertility and sexual joy to barrenness, mourning, and sexual

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continence,” its very name likely contributing to this image. The abundant life of Eden, if Gen 1-3 is taken at a synchronic level, serves as a full counterbalance to the “weltering waste” of the earth in Gen 1.2—and no less so when that abundance and fertility has the cosmic river (from a subdued primordial ocean?) for its source. Ultimately, God’s Presence in Eden, as well as in the tabernacle/temple, must be seen as the fertile source of all life-giving waters, the “heavenly river” disseminating spiritual life. The various depictions of a river flowing from the temple, then, serve to demonstrate that the access to the divine Presence via the cultus was meant to be understood in terms of a reentry into the paradise of the mountain of YHWH. Reentry, that is, into the divine Presence, for Eden was the garden of God, and God’s Presence was its central aspect. Walton similarly notes, in conclusion, that God’s presence is seen as the fertile source of all life-giving waters. “It is not only the dwelling place of God. It is also the source of all the creative forces that flow forth from the Divine Presence, that energize and give life to the creation in a constant, unceasing outflow of vivifying power” (Neiman, 324). This concept is well known in the Bible. Ezekiel 47.1-12 shows the life-giving waters flowing from the temple (see also Ps 46.4; Zech 14.8). Perhaps the most familiar picture, however, comes in Revelation 22.1-2, where the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God. With this understanding, it can be appreciated that in the aftermath of the Fall, the greatest loss was not access to paradise; it was access to God’s presence.

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281 G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation?” 139. This suggestion is completely in accord with Whitekettle’s comparison between creation and the womb evident in levitical legislation.

282 G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation?” 136-37: “The very motif of the Garden of Eden, on its own terms, conjures up the imagery of sexuality and procreation. As the recent discovery of the Tel Fekharyeh material shows, the verbal root ‘-d-n has a very prominent association in Northwest Semitic religion with the storm god Baal/Hadad. The verbal root refers to the provisionment of fertility and blessing by this god. Late biblical texts make the very same association. In Isa 51.3 and Joel 2.3 the phrase “Garden of Eden” refers to the marvelous fertility of the land which divine blessing brings about. Ezekiel also characterizes the repopulated fertile landscape of a restored Israel as an Edenic garden (36.35).” Cf. also idem., “The Cosmic Mountain,” 194-97.


284 B.K. Waltke, Genesis, 86-87.


4. THE CHERUBIM

Rather than bringing Adam “to rest” in the garden of the tree of life, YHWH God “stationed” (יָשָׁקֵן: yaškēn) the cherubim at the east of the garden “to guard” (לִשְׁמֹר: lišmōr) “the way” (דֶּרֶךְ: derek) to (the tree of) life (Gen 3.24). The word translated “stationed” or “placed,” (נַבֵּן: ṣāḇēn) is freighted with tabernacle nuances, the tabernacle being the dwelling (מִשְׁנָה: mīšnā) of YHWH’s glory and utilizing garden imagery, including cherubim.\(^{287}\) The presence of cherubim functioning as “gatekeepers” is precisely what sets the narrative within the context of the gate liturgy.\(^{288}\) Kapelrud notes the cherubim of the garden narrative possess the two qualifications typical of Sumerian temple door-deities: (1) being doorkeepers and (2) having a certain divine (or mythological) character. As to the first attribute, he writes:

> The quality of guardian (door-keeper) seems to be kept where the cherubim are spoken of as carved images on the gold-plated cedar planks on the inner walls of the temple and upon the olive wood doors (1 Kgs 6.29-35, II Chr 3.7). The ornamentations here reveal an ancient, mythical thought. The same is, apparently, the case also when the cherubim are spoken of as woven into the texture of the inner curtains of the tabernacle (Ex 26.31, 36.8), and, especially, when they are mentioned as woven into the veil of the ᴰḥʿr, hiding the ark (Ex 26.31, 36.35, II Chr 3.14).\(^{289}\)

Considering the second qualification, Kapelrud points to the cherubim’s association with deity, and to parallels with other quasi-divine creatures that performed similar functions, such as the šēdu, the lamassu, and the kuribi of Assyrian-Babylonian religion.\(^{290}\) As discussed in our introductory chapter, the creature-guardian statues emplaced near the temple gates/doors throughout the ancient Near East are an aspect of gate liturgy inasmuch as their purpose is to protect sacred space from profanation. The narrative of Gen 3 purports to be the source of such a

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287 Cf. G.J. Wenham’s, “Sanctuary Symbolism.”
288 The cherubim’s customary function within the context of the gate liturgy is aside from their “special” function in Ezek 1.15, 10.1ff. Cf. A.S. Kapelrud, The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise,” JAOS 70.3 (1950) 154.
289 A.S. Kapelrud, “The Gates of Hell,” 153. He also mentions on the same page 1 Kgs 6.23-28, 8.6-7, II Chr 3.10-13, 5.7f, suggesting the cherubim here are perhaps best understood “as a kind of doorleaves” in the shape of wings. 290 Ibid., 154-55.
tradition—the original primeval event when the cherubim were literally stationed to guard the mount of YHWH, and thus explaining the rationale behind the temple liturgy itself.

5. THE FLAME OF THE WHIRLING SWORD

In addition to the creature-guardians at the garden entrance, “the flame of the whirling sword” (נהפהקהט הערנ בערה lahat hahereb hammithappeket) is also put there by God. As the cherubim decorate the veil so as to guard the way to the tabernacle/temple Holy of holies (Exod 26.31, 36.35; II Chron 3.14), it may be the flame of the swirling sword finds its typological counterpart in the altar of the same cultus. 291 Hendel, who translates נפחפהקהט הערנ בערה as “flame (a deity) of the whirling sword,” draws a parallel to the West Semitic god Rešep or “flame,” whose name is found in three Phoenician inscriptions from the fourth century B.C. in construct with a weapon (“Rešep of the Arrow”), and who is also described as a “gatekeeper.” 292 What is also significant for our purposes is that the inscriptions are upon an altar and two hearths, 293 dedicated fittingly to the flame deity—thus drawing a correspondence between the flame and the altar. To be sure, the Hebrew Bible is filled with descriptions of a sword “devouring” (חֶבֶר khl cf. Deut 32.42; 2 Sam 2.26; 11.25; 18.8; Isa 1.20; 31.8; Jer 2.30, etc.), 294 precisely the action of the altar fire. Sword and fire appear to be in parallel, for example, in Ezek 23.25 (“your remnant will fall by the sword”// “your remnant will be devoured by fire”). Similarly, Nah 3.15 reads:

291 While he offers no support, exegetical or otherwise, M. Kline states that “any future return to God’s dwelling-place and the tree of life must involve a passage through the flaming sword of God’s judgment, with which the new guardians of the sanctuary were armed. This message too is typologically conveyed in Israel’s history, in the cultus so arranged that an altar with the sacrificial sword stood before the holy dwelling, itself bounded by representations of cherubim in the colors of flaming fire” (Kingdom Prologue, 137).


293 Ibid.

294 Jer 12.12 is, perhaps, significant here inasmuch as it is the “sword of YHWH” that devours, an ascription that may allude to Gen 3.24. The “blade” Abraham takes along with “the fire” to slay is son is formed from the word “to devour,” חַמְמַקֵהֵל hamma”kelet (Gen 22.6). This account of the “binding” of Isaac, notably, takes place upon a mountain (presumably where Solomon’s temple would be built), and, having lexical and thematic parallels with Lev 8-9 and Lev 16 (Day of Atonement), may be said to prefigure the entire cultic economy. Cf. S.D. Walters, “Wood, Sand and Stars: Structure and Theology in Gn 22.1-19,” TJT 3.2 (1987) 301-30.
ISA 34.6 is probably not irrelevant here either as it mentions “the sword of YHWH” (הַכְּפִרָה לֹא הָיוָה) in the context of cultic sacrifice imagery:

The sword of YHWH is filled with blood
swelling with fatness
from the blood of lambs and goats
from the fat of the kidneys of rams because YHWH has a sacrifice in Bozrah
and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

But further, the four horns of the altar are likely explained cosmologically, relating to the four cardinal points of direction, a symbolism paralleling the sword’s whirling “every which way” (הֶזְרֶפֶן in the hitpael). Thus the way to the tree of life in the garden of God, as with the approach to the holy of holies, is guarded by a flame that reaches every direction, suggesting there is no approach apart from being devoured—a thought we will return to in our fourth chapter.

6. THE GATE OF EDEN

YHWH God’s expulsion of the primal couple and his placing the cherubim and flaming sword to guard the garden’s (gate) entrance become particularly poignant apologies for the necessity of the tabernacle/temple cultus. If it may justly be said that Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy all focus to some degree on the way of approaching God through the worship of the tabernacle, then the expulsion from the divine Presence in the garden Sanctuary becomes a manifest “key” to understanding the Pentateuch as well as the tabernacle cultus. The association, all ready developed but relevant here, between the garden and the tabernacle/temple was

[295] If the “it” here (fem. sing. form of the verb) refers to the preceding “sword,” as seems reasonable, then the parallel is strengthened as both the fire and the sword are said to devour.


[297] It is possible, then, this understanding informed the substitutionary aspect of sacrifice in Israel’s cultus.
recognized by the Jewish sages as evident in the midrash that states when YHwH drove out Adam
“from the garden of Eden he revealed to him the destruction of the temple” (*Bereshit Rabbah*
21.8). The Hebrew Bible itself appears to draw a parallel when, with Hosea 9.15 as an example,
similar language is used for the exile of Israel:

**(21.8)**

4.7: **Because of the wickedness of their deeds
I will drive them out

This idea is only strengthened, further, if Joaquim Azevedo’s reading of Genesis 4.7, whereby he
concludes that Adam’s children brought their sacrifices to the gate of Eden, is accepted.298

Without rehearsing his argument, based on grammatical and syntactical considerations,
contextual and background analysis, he posits an understanding of Gen 4.7 as: “If you do not do
what is right, fix it with the sacrificial offering lying at the doorway of Paradise, then his
[Abel’s] desire will be to you and you will rule over him again.”299 Davidson appears to take a
similar reading when he writes:

> After Adam and Even are expelled, in their sinful state they are no longer able to meet with God face to face in the Garden. But...the Gate of the Garden becomes the Sanctuary where Adam and Eve and their descendants were to meet with God, worship Him, and bring their sacrifices. Here the Shekinah glory was manifested as God came down to hold communion with them.300

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300 R.M. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative,” 112. He further writes (same page): “The battle [for worship] rages in the story of Cain and Abel; the issue is true worship, and the battlefield is the place of worship, the Sanctuary.”
To be sure, it can hardly be insignificant that Gen 4.7 presents the first usage of the thematically rich term “door” (Петах petah), and in relation to sacrifice. 301 Eden’s entrance (3.24) is not only a reasonable referent for the door in 4.7, but the cherubim mentioned in 3.24 also correspond, in a cultic setting, “to the apprehension of the shrine as a door to heaven.” Indeed, stationed cherubim, at an eastward entrance—what else can this be but a temple gate? An ancient reading of Gen 3.24 may have recognized, then, not only a threatening barrier to garden entry, but a cultic site, in other words, the place where YHWH, in the consuming theophany of his fiery Presence, was “enthroned on the cherubim” (תְּדֵמָן יִשְׁכָּב חַקְרוֹבִים Ps 80.2; 99.1). In the tabernacle cultus, which likely serves as a conceptual backdrop to the narrative, the door of the tent served as the place to which the people came to present their offerings to YHWH (Exod 40.29; cf. Lev 4.7, 18). 303 The cultic material of the Pentateuch, in other words, demonstrates a concern that sacrificial ritual takes place “before YHWH” (לפנֵי יְהוָה lipnē yhwh) or “at the door of the tent of meeting,” 304 making the garden entrance the likely place of sacrifice since the previous narrative has already marked Eden as the locus of divine Presence, not to mention that most occurrences of the phrase “before YHWH” have a sanctuary or shrine clearly in mind. 305 Thus not only does the conception of paradise as sanctuary already involve its being a place for cultic sacrifice, 306 but also that the ritual is being performed before the divine Presence. 307

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301 F. Gorman, e.g., notes how the ordination of Aaron and his sons in Lev 8-9 focuses especially on the door of the tent of meeting, they remaining at the door for a seven day period (The Ideology of Ritual, 49).


303 F. Gorman, The Ideology of Ritual, 57.

304 Ibid., 38. Cf. Exod 29.42-46 where YHWH says: “There [at the door of the tent of meeting] I will make myself known to the children of Israel.”

305 See M.D. Fowler, “The Meaning of lipnē YHWH in the Old Testament,” ZAW 99.3 (1987) 384-90, who, while affirming the point referenced, adds proper nuance against assuming this phrase in connection with cultic activity is evidence per se of a permanent shrine.

CONCLUSION

In this section we have considered how the creation account of Genesis 1, through the seventh day and the *imago Dei* / *imitatio Dei* dynamic, presents “worship” as the *telos* of creation. Noting also how the garden narrative, filled with sanctuary symbolism, portrays humanity in priestly terms, we examined the expulsion of Genesis 3 and argued for the gate liturgy as its conceptual backdrop. This reading, as we had occasion to address in the introductory section of this chapter, goes far towards justifying its canonical position and (traditional) theological weight in as much as it becomes the foundational story that explains the logic and necessity of the tabernacle/temple and compels the fundamental entrance liturgy of the cultus. Read as a whole, from the majesty of Creator and creation in Gen 1, to the holy intimacy of the sanctuary garden atop the mountain of God in Gen 2, the so-called “fall” of Gen 3 is a descent indeed.

IV. THE TABERNACLE PRE-FIGURED (OR CREATION RE-FIGURED)

A. Experiencing Eden

As we have stressed repeatedly, interpreting Gen 1 and 2-3 in light of cosmic mountain ideology creates a smooth transition between them, with all three chapters bound together as “cultic” literature. What we thus find in the final canonical form of Gen 1-3 is creation unfolding as the construction of a cosmic temple, with the garden of Eden as its holy of holies, and humanity portrayed in priestly terms with the high vocation of worship.\(^\text{308}\) This reading of the narrative further strengthens the suggestion that Gen 1-3 looks forward to the construction of the

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\(^{307}\) Another line of argument would entail the consideration of the gates (of a city) as the typical place of judgment, and thus as the natural referent in God’s confrontation with Cain—i.e., while the term itself is not used, the locale may be presumed. V.H. Matthews, noting that justice/judgment was often executed at the city gates, states that this procedure “is a step beyond trial by ordeal, which is an appeal to the god/s to make a judgment of guilt or innocence” (“Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors,” 28).

tabernacle.\textsuperscript{309} Levenson captures well the significance of Gen 1.1-2.3 in relation to the cultus of Israel:

Cosmogony is not fully grasped until it has been related to the microcosm and to the rites that took place there and were thought to allow human participation in the divine ordering of the world... The reality that the Sabbath represents—God's unchallenged and uncompromised mastery, blessing, and hallowing—is consistently and irreversibly available only in the world to-come. Until then, it is known only in the tantalizing experience of the Sabbath... Genesis 1.1-2.3, the Priestly creation story, is not about the banishment of evil, but about its control. It describes a process of separation and distinction making in which the dark, ungodly forces are effortlessly overcome by placement in a structure in which they are bounded by new realities created by divine speech alone. This new structure is essentially cultic in character. Its construction is highly reminiscent of the rites of temple building... More important, in building the new structure that is creation, God functions like an Israelite priest, making distinctions, assigning things to their proper category and assessing their fitness, and hallowing the Sabbath... Among the many messages of Genesis 1.1-2.3 is this: it is through the cult that we are enabled to cope with evil, for it is the cult that builds and maintains order, transforms chaos into creation, ennobles humanity, and realizes the kingship of the God who has ordained the cult and commanded that it be guarded and practiced.\textsuperscript{310}

Turning to Gen 2-3, moreover, one can appreciate how the story of "the Fall" via a liturgical lens presents more than an explanation for the presence of evil in the world, but is, rather, a catechesis about the utter necessity for, and profound logic of, the tabernacle cultus.\textsuperscript{311} In this sense, one

\textsuperscript{309} G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism," 403.

\textsuperscript{310} J.D. Levenson, Creation and the Persistence of Evil, 91, 123, 127. See also A. Richardson, Genesis I-XI: Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press, 1953) 43: "The distinctive character of the P Creation story is displayed not only by the stylized phrases, often repeated, but by the whole Priestly conception of the created world as the scene of the manifestation of the glorious majesty of God—"even his everlasting power and divinity" (Rom 1.20). The universe as God planned and made it is like P's ideal Tabernacle: everything in it reflects the glory of God...everything performs its duly ordained liturgical office, like the priests and Levites of the sanctuary in their appointed courses." Similarly, C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, "God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest," 82: "Both accounts in Genesis 1-3 describe the contents and order of creation in terms of ancient temple building in general and Israel's peculiar vision of sacred space in particular. "The whole universe must be regarded as the highest and, in truth, the holy temple of God" (Philo, De spec. leg. I:66) just as the cult (the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple) is a microcosm of the whole of creation. Tabernacle and Temple are organized to reflect Israel's understanding of the structure of the cosmos, and the worship and rituals of the cult actualize and guarantee the God-intended order and stability of creation."

\textsuperscript{311} While some scholars critique the classic significance of the narrative by claiming the Old Testament appears to make no use of the story, our reading of the expulsion as explaining (and effectively initiating the gate liturgy) is full in accord with the narrative's contextual weight, being located at the beginning of the canon (cf. R.W.L. Moberly, The Theology of the Book of Genesis, 70ff). This understanding, further, is merely interpretation in light of context: "The first chapters of the Bible are an integral part of the Pentateuch at the center of which is set the account of the exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Sinai, the two events which constitute the basis for the formation of the people of Israel...It is a symbolic presentation of a caesura in the basic design of Creation which resulted in a shattering of the original relationship between God and man that can be reconciled only through the Covenant at Sinai. Theologically, the garden of Eden narrative is the midpoint between Creation and Covenant, and can only be understood within the context of this continuum," (Bernard Och, "The Garden of Eden," 143 fn 1); "The priestly account of creation in Genesis 1.1-2.4a...confers upon Israel and her cultic institutions a legitimacy and validity within the given orders of creation” (J.E. Atwell, “An Egyptian Source for Genesis 1,” 441). Cf. also A.P. Ross, Recalling the Hope of Glory, 81-116.
can say creation is the end and redemption the means to that end, enabling humanity to enter into the *telos* of creation.\(^{312}\) Since the theology of the Old Testament, assuming McKenzie is correct, must be a study of the reality of *YHWH*, then one might expect the cult, as the normal and most frequent manner in which Israel experienced *YHWH*,\(^{313}\) to be a prominent aspect of that theology and of the biblical literature, as we are indeed discovering. In any case, the tabernacle and later temple, as Childs notes, represented in concrete form the heart of Priestly theology, namely, that God is holy and no human being can approach the divine Presence unprepared.\(^{314}\) Understood as such, the question underlying the gate liturgy—"Who shall ascend the mount of *YHWH*?"—will be seen to spring out of the very depths of this theological heart, the cultus itself signifying its mediated answer. Against the backdrop of the tabernacle cultus, then, the message of primal humanity’s exile in Gen 3 becomes: all hope is not lost for the descendants of Adam because the experience of the divine life and delights of Eden can be recaptured in the world of the cult.\(^{315}\)

When the paradisiacal delights of Eden are understood as mere sacramental tokens of life in the

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\(^{312}\) B. Och, “Creation and Redemption,” 230.

\(^{313}\) J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 29, 32. Further, R.D. Nelson writes: “For a long period ritual remained at the very heart of Yahwistic religion. It was not something peripheral or ancillary. It is striking that most of the Hebrew Bible’s theological and ethical vocabulary had its roots in the world of sacrifice and cult” (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 101).

\(^{314}\) B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 163. So-called "priestly" theology may yet prove, whether by ascribing its final redaction to P or otherwise, the determinative theology of the Pentateuch. This understanding, further, is in line with R.D. Nelson’s statement: “Ritual may be seen as the backbone of religion, for it can be carried on even when faith is weak. Moreover, people actually learns what it believes from the way it worships” (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 89). Nelson considers the Priestly Writing in the Pentateuch the Hebrew Bible’s most extensive expression of priestly theology (105).

\(^{315}\) G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 204. J.H. Sailhamer makes a similar connection: “The garden, like the tabernacle, was the place where humankind could enjoy the fellowship and presence of God” (*Genesis*, 75). C.J. Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 185-86, 245: “But even though physical access to the garden and to the tree of life is now closed for mankind, that does not mean that man cannot come into God’s presence. In particular, the sanctuary is the way of access to God’s presence, in its public worship and sacramental rites that address human guilt. This becomes a foretaste of eschatological glory, where the old wound in man and nature will be healed, and it equips the covenant people for perseverance in the covenant under the forgiving grace of God...[T]he covenant ordinances (sacrifices, etc.) were the way back to ‘Eden.’” J.N. Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” *DOTP* 205: “the garden is understood to be the ante-chamber of the Holy of Holies (Eden) in the cosmic temple complex. With this understanding, it can be appreciated that in the aftermath of the Fall, the greatest loss was not access to paradise; it was access to God’s presence. The temple provided for a partial return of that presence, and the antechamber of the temple was reminiscent of the proximity to God’s presence that had once been enjoyed.”
divine Presence, then one comes to see that a cultic return to the divine Presence is, in effect, the way back to Eden. In a profound sense, then, life—the essence of being—is liturgical, so that worship not only fulfills the telos of human vocation but of creation itself. Liturgy sustains creation:

In Torah’s vision, the world is created as part of a grand, cosmic liturgical celebration. The liturgy culminates on the seventh day (Gen 2.1-3), the primordial foundation for the institution of the Sabbath day (cf. Ex 31.12-17). ...It is not just that the tabernacle and its rituals correspond to God’s created order. The Torah also understands Israel’s ritual world to have the capacity to sustain and, if necessary, to restore God’s design for creation. ...[T]he ritual for the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) [for example], seeks both to address and repair the breakdown in divinely established distinctions of holy/profane, pure/impure, and order/chaos. As the Torah understands creation to be the context within which God summons forth the liturgy of worship, so its concomitant focus on the tabernacle suggests that worship is itself an important constitutive act that sustains and reclaims God’s intentions for the created order. ...Though the summon to worship is an extension of God’s creative liturgy of creation, the act of worship is an extension of God’s creative work into the community-building and world-building that uphold the order of creation. ...In the liturgy of Genesis 1-2, the crucial intersection between the ordered world qua ritual world and the relational world is the seventh day...Inasmuch as the Torah begins with the enunciation of a distinctive world order in which God’s crowning act of creation is the seventh/sabbath day, it anticipates that the ritual of worship...will be empowered both to sustain and to redeem the world of God’s design. 316

What the tabernacle is to space, the Sabbath is to time, re-creating the original “seventh day” and thus defining the nature of worship as a re-entry into the divinely-indwelled cosmos before the cataclysmic rupture. 317 In its final canonical form, Gen 1-3 may thus be said to pre-figure the

316 S. E. Balentine, *The Torah’s Vision of Worship*, 63-68, 81, 90. “In the composite vision that connects God, cosmos, and humankind, the critical intersection occurs on the seventh day (2.1-3)” (83).
317 J. D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 297-98: “The world which the Temple incarnates in a tangible way is not the world of history but the world of creation, the world not as it is but as it was meant to be and as it was on the first Sabbath....The glory that had filled the world now fills the Tabernacle and its successors, the Temples of Jerusalem. The Temple is the world before the divine contraction, the world in a state of grace and perfection. No wonder temples in the ancient Near East sometimes contained a paradisal garden and no wonder that Zion, the Temple mountain, “perfect in beauty” (Ps 50.2; Lam 2.15), was equated with the Garden of Eden. The Temple offers the person who enters it to worship an opportunity to rise from a fallen world, to partake of the Garden of Eden. The Temple is to space what the Sabbath is to time, a recollection of the protological dimension bounded by mundane reality. It is the higher world in which the worshipper characteristically wishes he could dwell forever (Pss 23.6; 27.4).” Cf. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 127-28, 133: “The sanctuary, then, is a place in which reality is perceived as a whole, as fresh and un tarnished, where the costs exacted by the harshness of normal life are not paid. The animals offered there, like the clergy who present them, are unblemished ([Lev] 22.20); the materials used in the very construction of the shrine are precious and pure (Exodus 25-30). Once something has been designated for the realm of the sacred, once it has passed into that zone of perfection, it cannot be easily withdrawn (Lev 22.12-16; Num 6.9-20), for the sanctuary is an enclave of ideal reality within the world of profanity. Words like ‘ideal,’ ‘perfection,’ and ‘unblemished,’ suggest that the Temple was, in fact, a paradise. A biblical tradition, in common with the stories of origins found in many cultures, maintained that human experience began in a paradise, called the ‘Garden of Eden,’ the last word denoting in Hebrew ‘luxury’ or ‘delight.’...In short, the Temple is intimately associated with creation. It is, in a sense, the gateway to life as it was meant to be, unlimited by death, eternal life,
tabernacle cultus in as much as this account serves to explain the logic and necessity of that cultus.

B. Re-Figuring Creation

This “pre-figuration” of the tabernacle in the narrative involves, at least for the modern reader, a “re-figuration” of Creation itself. What does the majestic opening line of the Hebrew and Christian canons mean—or, perhaps better, what did it mean for the original audience—when it says that God created “the heavens and the earth”? That this phrase may have been understood in ancient Israel as inclusive of the cosmic mountain is a plausible suggestion—found the more so by synthesizing some of our previous lines of reasoning. When considering creation as a “three-decked house” earlier, it was noted that “the heavens and the earth” is short for and inclusive of a three-fold cosmology: heavens, earth, and sea.\(^\text{318}\) This three-fold cosmology is paralleled and symbolized by the tripartite structure of the tabernacle/temple. Because, further (and as we will have occasion to consider in our fourth chapter), the tabernacle/temple is modeled after the cosmic mountain, we have the following parallel ideas.\(^\text{319}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREATION</th>
<th>COSMIC MOUNTAIN</th>
<th>CULTUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heavens</td>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>Holy of Holies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Mid-Section</td>
<td>Holy Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seas</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Outer Court</td>
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The parallel between the holy of holies, as the divine throne room, and “the heavens” is evident, for example, in Ps 11.4: “YHwH’s throne is in the heavens,” and also explains the logic of why Eden, at the summit of God’s holy mount, should be so richly and symbolically equated with the

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\(^{318}\) That this was still the case in the first century AD is evident in the prayer recorded in Acts 4.24: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them....”

\(^{319}\) Cf. M. Barker, The Gate of Heaven, 65f, for parallels between the bronze sea/courtyard and the primeval sea.
tabernacle/temple holy of holies. The cultic symbolism discernable in the accounts of Gen 1-3 is already suggestive that such a paradigm of creation as cosmic mountain/temple is in view in Gen 1.1. But further evidence is found when one looks to the description of the new creation in Isaiah 65.17-25:

v 17: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth...”/פָּרָשַׁת הפִּקְרִים וַתְּרוּ מִקְרֵי
v 18: “...For behold, I create Jerusalem...”
 v 25: “…They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.”

Here, the phrase “new heavens and a new earth” is equated with creating (ברא) the city of Jerusalem, understood as the cosmic mountain Zion as demonstrated by the final synonymous phrase “my holy mountain.” If the new “heavens and earth” has its primary significance found in God’s holy mountain, then is there any reason to exclude this significance from the creation of the former “heavens and earth”? Indeed, we have already sought to demonstrate the creation account(s) are best understood in terms of cosmic mountain ideology, fraught as they are with sanctuary symbolism. Previously we also noted Levenson’s suggestion that “the heavens and the earth” in Gen 1.1 may be a reference to Jerusalem/land of Israel itself. Before him, Fisher had already shown the possibility of a synonymous relationship between city, temple, and cosmos, arguing that יִשְׂרָאֵל, typically translated “city,” can also mean temple quarter or the inner room of the temple, and can be equated with the mountain of God. Whether or not this should be brought to bear upon the opening verse of Genesis, that the “land” of Israel came to be signified by the “mountain” of Zion, opens up possibilities with regard to reading “the land” (הָעָרֶץ hāʿarē) in the Gen 1 creation account with reference to the holy mountain. There is nothing, in other words, to keep one from understanding the dry land that emerged from the primal sea and

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320 J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 295. If this were the case, such a reading would lend new profundity to Jacob’s discovery and exclamation: “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” (Gen 28.17).
322 Cf. J.D. Levenson, Sinai & Zion, 136-37.
subsequently called “earth” in vv 9-10 as inclusive of the holy mountain of God, especially given
the ubiquitous ANE concept of the primeval mound discussed in the previous chapter, along with
Ezekiel’s paralleling of the garden with the mount (Ezek 28.13-14):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{קָבָע הַגֶּן} & \; / \; \text{you were in the garden of God} \\
\text{קָבָע הַנִּירָה הָרִים} & \; / \; \text{you were on the holy mountain of God}
\end{align*}
\]

Taken as a whole, Gen 1-3 may be read in such a way as to see that “the Garden of Eden was the
first dry land created in the midst of the primeval waters,” and to suggest that

the garden of Eden and the temple had at one time been one and the same. When the Lord triumphed over
chaos and ordered the creation he did establish his temple in Jerusalem, according to the creation story
presupposed in the Psalms. This temple ‘was’ the garden of God on the summit of the holy mountain.

Thus, the cosmology (and cosmogony) symbolized in the tabernacle/temple cultus, helps us to
refigure creation itself.

**CONCLUSION**

Genesis 1-3, to summarize the path we’ve trod thus far, portrays creation as a cosmic temple, the
garden of Eden as the original holy of holies, and primal Man as a priest. This chapter’s
examination of the creation account(s), further, developed what we have called a cosmogonic
pattern whereby the primordial waters are preliminary to the mount of worship, establishing the
cosmology of cosmic mountain ideology foundational to the tabernacle/temple cultus. Creation’s
telos of worship is, then, the goal of the earth’s (and, thus, primeval Man’s) divine deliverance
from the waters, a pattern we will find duplicated in the deluge and sea crossing narratives.

Establishing this cosmic mountain paradigm for approaching the divine Presence, Gen 1-3 sets
forth God as water-controller, and the waters surrounding his mount as the (subjugated) primeval

323 M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 57, 64 (emphasis original).
324 By favoring a transcendent, monotheistic form of theogony for Gen 1, rather than cosmogony (which “is a
libretto to the rites of the cult”), F.M. Cross views creation merely as “a first event—without significance—in a
linear series of epic events” (“The ‘Olden Gods’ in Ancient Near Eastern Creation Myths,” pp 329-38 in *Magnalia
waters of chaos—both features being in accord with the judicial river ordeal. Adam dwelling upon the summit of the mount of YHWH, enjoying life in the divine Presence then issues forth into the whole question of the gate liturgy ("Who shall ascend?"), impressing itself implicitly as a consequence of the expulsion narrative. Thus the exile account of Gen 3, when considered within the cultic context of the gate liturgy, becomes manifestly key to the rest of the biblical narrative, a status more in accord with its significant canonical placement. Finally, because the tabernacle cultus is the means by which humanity may access the divine Presence once more, a line of argument developed canonically via ritual and intertextual links including the Sabbath, one is justified in reading Gen 1-3 as pre-figuring the tabernacle cultus, explaining its significance for the life of Israel. On this point, not only is creation presented as a temple in Gen 1, but God, with his acts of speech, division, and benediction, is likely portrayed as "the ultimate priest."325 Exiled from the divine Presence, where might the faithful Israelite seek this blessing now if not mediated via the upraised palms of the high priest?

CHAPTER THREE

The Deluge Account

I. Through the Waters: The Deluge as Judicial Ordeal

A. God as Righteous Judge
   1. The Judicial Role of God as Main Character
   2. The Judicial Character of God’s Actions
   3. The Judicial Characterization of the Objects of the Deluge
   4. The Judicial Role of the Waters

B. The Deluge as Rebirth
   1. Unleashing the Primordial Waters: The Death of the Cosmos
   2. Escaping the Primordial Waters: The Burial of the Cosmos
   3. Controlling the Primordial Waters: The Rebirth of the Cosmos

II. To the Mountain: Sanctuary Symbolism

A. Ararat as Cosmic Mountain
   1. The Highest Mountain
   2. Geographic Allusions to Eden
   3. Omphalos
   4. Place of Rest
   5. The Divine Presence

B. The Ark as Temple
   1. Tabernacle Parallels
   2. Comparative Literature
   3. Cosmos Analogy
   4. Paradisical Portrayal
   5. Temple Functions

III. For Worship: Who Shall Ascend?

A. Noah as "The Righteous Man"
B. The Gate Liturgy
   1. The Doorway of the Ark
   2. Conditional Entrance into the Ark
   3. Noah as the Enterer
   4. The Doorway Barred

C. The Priestly Sacrifice of Cosmic Atonement
   1. Altar-building and Sacrifice as the Primary Act
   2. A Sacrifice of Propitiation
   3. The Etiological Denouement
   4. Noah as Flood Hero

The Deluge

INTRODUCTION

As the archetype of human catastrophe, hardly any event is better remembered by humanity than an ancient flood. Within Genesis 1-11, Noah’s toledot is the centerpiece, receiving the most extensive treatment as it unfolds the deluge epic. Given the significance of this narrative...
within the primeval history, as well as its acknowledged priestly trace, \(^4\) it would be surprising indeed if the story did not serve a greater cultic schema than presently acknowledged. Yet, while cosmic mountain ideology is an acknowledged backdrop to the religions of the ancient Near East, and to the tabernacle/temple cult of Israel in particular, sufficient attention to its function in this biblical narrative has been wanting. This void is the more critical in as much as there has been a growing development of temple theology in relation to the creation narrative(s), and the deluge has numerous acknowledged parallels, lexical and thematic correspondences, with Gen 1-3. This chapter will accordingly advance a reading of the deluge as liturgical narrative, that is, as understood in light of cosmic mountain ideology (or, alternatively, through the lens of temple typology), functioning to explain the necessity for and logic of the tabernacle/temple cultus.

Approaching the cosmic mountain through an ordeal of waters will be seen to serve as a symbol for approaching God so that the idea of a “gate liturgy” (in a similar fashion to that of Psalms 15 and 24: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?”) will be highlighted. Seeking to understand the narrative within both its ANE and its cultic context, we will thus develop what in the previous chapter we have dubbed a cosmogonic or “liturgical” pattern of archetypal geography: through the waters \(\rightarrow\) to the mountain \(\rightarrow\) for worship.

I. THROUGH THE WATERS: THE DELUGE AS JUDICIAL ORDEAL

“Primarily,” notes Cassuto, the account of the flood “seeks to teach that the world is judged in accordance with righteousness, and that the Judge of the whole earth always acts justly towards

\(^4\) The general consensus among Source critical scholars would have it that the various traditions were “joined and unified in a Priestly edition, thus forming the Pentateuch” (B.W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4\(^{th}\) ed. [Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1986] 453), while those ascribing to essential Mosaic authorship would see the Tabernacle cultus as a dominant context for the Torah.
both the wicked and the righteous.\textsuperscript{5} This insight is in keeping with the idea of the river ordeal, as discussed in the introductory chapter and which constitutes a judgment through which the righteous are granted the refuge of the cosmic mountain while the wicked are consigned to the underworld. Considering Gen 1-3 within the context of cosmic mountain ideology, Adam is the righteous man able to ascend the holy hillock of YHWH. The prerequisite righteousness of Paradise is emphasized by the expulsion of Adam and Eve, upon their disobedience, from the garden of Eden—the cherubim posted at the gates.\textsuperscript{6} As G.A. Anderson stated:

\begin{quote}
The mountain of Eden was a holy spot. Because of this, access to its inner sanctum—the location of the tree of life—was carefully guarded. This mountain was divided into zones of holiness, just as Mount Sinai was. Only those of highest spiritual development could reside in its center. Others could derive its benefits only from a distance.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

Understanding the narrative within the context of cosmic mountain ideology, the מָבָּבּ (mabbûl “deluge”) may be read as something of a cosmic river ordeal with the wicked suffering a watery judgment but through which the righteous are delivered to the refuge of the mountain. This in view, we will look at the narrative role of God as Judge, as well as the judicial nature of the deluge.

A. God the Righteous Judge of All the Earth

1. GOD AS MAIN CHARACTER IN ROLE OF JUDGE

As bookends of the primeval age, the creation and deluge narratives are deeply interwoven with thematic and lexical correspondences,\textsuperscript{8} the history of the “earth-that-was”\textsuperscript{9} ending as it began—

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{6} The bann formula is applied conceptually to Adam. Cf. W.M. Clark, “The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 190.
\footnote{8} Thus, W.H. Green (\textit{The Unity of the Book of Genesis} [1895; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979] 4-5), who notes that many of the words and phrases of Gen 1 “occur nowhere else in Genesis, unless it be in the account of the flood,”
\end{footnotesize}
submerged in the abyss (the הָעַסְתָּהּ wāḇōḥā of Gen 1.2).

One such correspondence is, perhaps, underappreciated, namely, that no less than in the account of creation, the deluge is portrayed as the accomplishment of the acts of God. Through predictive narrative (6.17, 7.4\textsuperscript{12}), by use of the *niphal* passives in 7.11 (all the fountains of the Deep were “burst asunder” [נָסְתָּהּ nēḇq̱u] and the windows of heaven “were opened” [נָפְתָּהּ nipṭāḥā])—as well as their counterparts in 8.2 (וַיָּסֵסָקְרֵךְ, wayyissākērā, וַיָּסֵסָקְרֵךְ wayyikkālē)—and by promissory declaration (9.15), the narrative clearly manifests the deluge as divinely wrought. Westermann highlights the feature that the event is described as due entirely to God’s action; it is not “event” in our sense, but rather “action,” the work of a person. “It” does not rain, but God rains (or brings rain); the flood does not cause destruction, but God destroys. This is reinforced further by the relative clause “which I have made” [7.4]. It says that God is acting with the same directness in the flood as in the creation. The narrative is about an action of God who destroys his own work.\textsuperscript{13}

Thus from the perspective of narrative plot and action, God is the main character in the story, the one whose emotions are exposed to us, who controls and drives the drama, including the role of the waters within it.\textsuperscript{14} As the main character, then, God’s judicial role, common in Israel and

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9 Utilizing the terminology of 2 Peter 3.6: “δό τότε κόσμος”.
11 G.J. Wenham notes, e.g., 6.17’s repetition of the personal pronoun makes it “perfectly clear that God is author of the flood” (Genesis 1-15, 174).
12 Cf. N.M. Sarna’s comments on “I will make it rain” (Genesis, 54).
13 C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 429.
deriving from his kingship ("YHWH reigns as king...he will judge the peoples righteously" Ps 96.10),\(^\text{15}\) is particularly dominant in the deluge plot. The biblical account of the deluge is distinguished from Mesopotamian parallels, moreover, by this role of God as Judge, with water being the means by which he executes his sentence.

2. THE JUDICIAL CHARACTER OF GOD'S ACTIONS

Concerning now the actions of God, the text manifests both clearly and intentionally their being the result of his “seeing” (נָצִיר r’h), phraseology with judicial overtones, involving investigation and consequent resolve.\(^\text{16}\) YHWH saw (יָרָא wayyar’) the wickedness of man and resolved to destroy him (6.5-7); YHWH saw (יָרָא rä-1) the righteousness of Noah and bid him to enter the ark (7.1). Indeed, structurally, the opening of the narrative follows closely the prophetic lawsuit pattern of indictment and sentence.\(^\text{17}\) God’s declaration in 6.13, furthermore, has been recognized as comprising legal speech,\(^\text{18}\) the justice of the verdict made clear once more by God’s investigative action (נָצִיר) and by the report on his findings (וֹחִינַנִי). Thus, to better understand how the narrative would have been read as a judgment ordeal, one needs to focus in on a basic and oft taken-for-granted point: God caused the deluge as an event of retributive justice—that is, the destruction of the cosmos is no less a direct act of God than its creation, and

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16 N. Sarna, Genesis, 47.


18 D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 131; C. Westermann, The Promises to the Fathers, 51. G.W. Coats refers to the narrative opening as a “judgment oracle” (Genesis, 77).
that destruction was accomplished righteously, or judicially. The theological and “experiential”
factor discussed in the previous chapter, whereby the description of God’s creating is recognized
as a “deliverance” out of chaos, here comes into view: as the earth becomes a moral chaos so, in
talianic justice, it will become a physical chaos in the deluge as creation is reversed. 19 Thus
God’s action, beginning with speech, is in both accounts a response to the dilemma of the
earth: 20

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<tr>
<th>DILEMMA</th>
<th>DECLARATION</th>
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<td>Gen 1.2</td>
<td>Gen 1.3</td>
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The poetic justice of God’s response is also brought out by the use of the same root נָשַׁים sht for
both the sin (נָשַׁים wattiṣšāḥēt) and the judgment (נָשַׁים maššīṯām). 21 Given the author’s
control over his material, it is perhaps not insignificant that נָשַׁים appears seven times in the
narrative, and so along with its poetic use should be considered a key term. 22 Interestingly, given
our cultic approach, נָשַׁים is used elsewhere to describe a defective animal or a disqualified priest.

19 Cf. W. Brown, The Ethos of the Cosmos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 54-59; N.M. Sarna, Understanding
Genesis, 55; M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture, 33; J.H. Walton, Genesis (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan,
discusses the Chaoskampf motif as a link between creation and redemption: “Just as the flood demonstrates that
judgment on sin may be depicted as a return to a state of chaos, God’s act of primordial redemption from chaos,
reflected in the covenant with Noah, may be seen as the pattern for God’s redemptive dealings with his world. This
includes the exodus and return from exile, and anticipates the last act of redemption: the final defeat of chaos and the
creation of new heavens and a new earth” (see also fn 42 on the same page). 20 B.W. Anderson picks up on some of the similarities when he writes: “The main action of the drama begins in
6.13-22, introduced by the declarative formula, ‘Then God said.’ God’s first address, in good priestly narrative style,
is structured according to a two-fold announcement-command sequence…[and] concludes with the execution
21 Nearly all commentators recognize this (e.g., B. Jacob, The First Book of the Bible: Genesis, E.I. Jacob and W.
Jacob, eds. and trans. [New York: KTAV, 1974] 49 [orig. Das erste Buch der Tora (1934)]; B. Waltke, Genesis,
135.
that is, those unfit for approaching the divine Presence (Lev 22.25; Mal 1.14; 2.8).\footnote{A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in Exodus,” \textit{AUSS} 24 (1986) 139; S.W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” \textit{Letter & Spirit} (2005) 112.} This makes for a fitting contrast with Noah who, as we will see, is described in terms of qualifying for entry to the divine abode. Furthermore, this “ruin” (רuin) of the earth, resulting from חם hâmâs, is said to come “before God” (בין ה' lîgnê hârı̀lōhîm) in 6.11, implying divine arbitration.\footnote{N.M. Sarna, \textit{Genesis}, 51.} 

3. \textsc{The Judicial Characterization of the Objects of the ýIz}

Not only, however, are God and his actions depicted in judicial terms, but the objects of the ýIz, those who undergo the waters of the deluge, are as well. Whichever way one translates the precise sin of the wicked, חָמָּס (Gen 6.11, 13) is no less than “the culpable breach of a legal ordinance,”\footnote{G. von Rad, \textit{Genesis: A Commentary}, revised (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 127. D. Clines states that the term “usually has religious overtones” (“The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 133). Our translation of “unrighteousness” is comparable to E.A. Speiser’s “lawlessness,” in agreement with Speiser’s opinion that “Heb. חָמָּס is a technical legal term which should not be automatically reproduced as ‘violence’; cf. 16.5” (\textit{Genesis} [AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964] 51). U. Cassuto also prefers “unrighteousness,” חָמָּס qualifying as anything that is not righteous (\textit{Genesis II}, 52-53).} thus judged with the deluge of waters. Sarna defines it as “injustice, lawlessness, social unrighteousness,” bringing out the contrast between חָמָּס and justice/righteousness in Ezek 45.9 (“Put away חָמָּס and destruction, and do what is just and הֶרְienda") and in Job 19.7 (“If I cry out concerning חָמָּס …If I cry aloud there is no justice”).\footnote{N.M. Sarna, \textit{Understanding Genesis}, 52 (w/ fn 45).} The LXX brings out the contrast between “righteous” (δίκαιος) Noah in Gen 6.9 and the “unrighteousness” of his generation in 6.11 by translating חָמָּס as ἁδικίας. By making this distinction as the account opens, that is, before the waters of the ýIz are unleashed, the results of the ýIz in 7.23 are thus depicted, far from arbitrary, as judicial in nature:

\[נַעֲשֶׂה יָדֹת לְכֶלֶם שָׂרִ֣יאל שָׂרָ֑יאל שָׂרָ֜יָא נְפַלָּ֤ה שָׂרָ֣יָא אַרְּבַּ֤א נְפַלָּ֤ה אֶרְבָּֽא אַרְּבַּ֤א קִנֹּ֣א שָׂרָ֤א אַרְּבַּ֤א שָׂרָ֥יָא}

\[נַעֲשֶׂה יָדֹת לְכֶלֶם שָׂרִ֣יאל שָׂרָ֑ayı נְפַלָּ֤ה שָׂרָ֣יָא אַרְּבַּ֤א נְפַלָּ֤ה אֶרְבָּֽא אַרְּבַּ֤א קִנֹּ֣א שָׂרָ֤א אַרְּבַּ֤א שָׂרָ֥יָא]

\[נַעֲשֶׂה יָדֹת לְכֶלֶם שָׂרִ֣יאל שָׂרָ֑ayı נְפַלָּ֤ה שָׂרָ֣יָא אַรְּבַּ֤א נְפַלָּ֤ה אֶרְבָּֽא אַרְּבַּ֤א קִנֹּ֣א שָׂרָ֤א אַרְּבַּ֤א שָׂרָ֥יָא]
“Noah’s conduct,” thus, “exonerates him, and he survives the ordeal because he has not committed the ‘violence’ practiced by his generation.” While the judgment appears collective, it is really, given Noah’s deliverance, exceedingly individual. The utter destruction of the waters merely serves to underscore that “only Noah was left” —the righteous remnant.

4. THE JUDICIAL ROLE OF THE WATERS

Finally, considering the deluge as a water ordeal requires mention of perhaps the most obvious feature in the narrative, namely, that the waters serve as the means for distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked. Water, to be sure, may even be called a principal participant in the drama. The account is replete with terms descriptive of water: hammabbül (which may itself denote “cosmic waters”), mayim, mātār, ma‘y nőt r’hôm rabbā, ṣrubbōṯ haššāmayim, haggesem. More importantly, and in harmony with the

27 K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11.26, 358. For the relation of Noah’s righteousness to his finding grace (Gen 6.8), cf. A.N. Barnard, “Was Noah a Righteous Man?, “ Theology 84 (1971) 311-14; W.M. Clark, “The Righteousness of Noah,” VT 21.3 (1971) 261-80. Presumably, the covenant of 6.18 has already been “cut,” so that Noah’s righteousness, as demonstrated by his obedience, ought to be seen within the context of a covenantal relationship with God, a relationship the basis of which is the favor of God.

28 For any other individual, if found righteous, would have been spared. Cf. N.M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, 52.

29 Cf. K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11.26, 380-81. Use of ʿṣr here, in its verbal form and in the context of surviving an eschatological judgment, is theological, of a piece with its nominal use in relation to the Exile (cf. 2 Ki 19.4; Isa 11.11, 16; 28.5; Jer 23.3; 31.7; 40.11; 50.20; Mic 2.12; 5.7-8; Zeph 3.13; Hag 1.12, 14; 2.2; Zech 8.6, 12-13; 9.8). See G.F. Hasel, The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah, 3rd ed. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1980).

30 The term is Wenham’s (Genesis 1-15, 183).

31 S.E. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer (AB 50; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971) 26. Contra B. Jacob who suggests it means “destruction,” thus needing the explanatory “of waters” (Genesis, 50). Cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, 128; J. Begrich, “Mabbul. Eine exegetisch-lexikalische Studie,” Zeitschrift fur Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete 6 (1928) 135-53. N.M. Sarna posits mabbul as technical term specifically for the upper part of the original cosmic ocean unleashed to fall upon the earth which joins the tehom from beneath to collapse creation (Genesis, 53; Understanding Genesis, 55). J.H. Walton, based on broader cultural usage, suggests the word may have broader currency as a “cosmic water-weapon wielded by deity” (Genesis, 313).
narrative of creation, God is the “water-controller,” or the “water warrior,” who controls “both rain and subterranean water.” In order to destroy the wicked and deliver the just, he “must control the Flood, first unleashing it and then restraining it on schedule.” In distinction from the Mesopotamian river ordeal where judgment in legal cases is the function of the (divine) River *Id*, the waters of the deluge, battle language notwithstanding, are merely the instruments of God. God is thus the one who turns water from a force and symbol of death into one of life, who “sits enthroned over the deluge (םלומ הובע* yammabbûl*)” (Ps 29.10) exerting his sovereign power by means of the גָּדוֹל רעָב râbâ. The deluge of Noah is indeed the supreme example that the waters are completely under the command and control of YHWH, his “wind” being the instrument of execution, the ultimate expression of his power and authority, and the manifestation of his Presence. It may even be posited that, as symbols, water signifies chaos while wind signifies the control that imposes order. The waters that had conquered all creatures having the mn (6.17, 7.22) of life within are now themselves controlled by the God-sent רוח (8.1; cf. Gen 1.2).

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32 J.D. Pleins, *When the Great Abyss Opened: Classic and Contemporary Readings of Noah’s Flood* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) 122-23. Pleins notes the Bible’s “obsession with God’s power over the waters” (122), noting that the “flood story is yet another example of the power of Israel’s God over unruly waters” (123). He further contextualizes the flood story within the ANE, positing that the combat stories of Babylon’s Marduk, the Canaanite’s Baal, and Israel’s God “have as their special focus water” (123).


34 B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 122. Cf. also HALOT, 541 for the “celestial sea.”


36 As R. Luyster points out: “Yahweh’s ability to contain and dominate the cosmic, the forces of chaos, is the absolute prerequisite and surest sign of his divine kingship. Normally, furthermore, his authority is expressed through the presence of his râbâ, variously expressed as his breath, voice, or (as in the cases of Noah and Gen 1.2) wind” (“Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 93 [1981] 2).


38 N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 56.
It is precisely God’s control of the waters, of course, that allows the deluge to constitute a judicial ordeal, that is, that allows the deluge to establish a legal truth: the judged are the wicked, the delivered are the righteous.\textsuperscript{39}

In the narrative, then, God is clearly depicted as righteous Judge, controlling the waters so as to destroy the wicked and to deliver the righteous (qualifying the latter, as will be noted below, to approach the holy mount). Interestingly, one significant reference to the deluge, the recently referenced Ps 29.10 (“\textit{YHWH sits enthroned over the \textit{h}י\textit{n}}”), was interpreted this way in Jewish exegesis, with \textit{y}ä\textit{s}äb taken as referring to a court session and God putting the deluge generation to trial by means of the \textit{h}י\textit{n}.\textsuperscript{40}

B. \textit{The Deluge as Rebirth}

The deluge itself, notes Jacob, is only judgment “for the living creatures, but for the earth it is a bath of purification which washes away its pollution and restores its purity (Num 35.33ff).”\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39}T. S. Frymer-Kensky (\textit{The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East}, 583) establishes the following points regarding judicial ordeals: they are (1) judicial in nature (establishing “legal truth”); (2) supernatural (justice being revealed by the deity); (3) universal (widespread throughout the ancient Near East).

\textsuperscript{40}W. J. van Bekkum, “The Lesson of the Flood: \textit{h}י\textit{n} in Rabbinic Tradition,” pp. 124-33 in \textit{Interpretations of the Flood}, F. G. Martinez and G. P. Luttikhuizen, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 129. Cf. also J. J. Niehaus, \textit{God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 163-71. M. Kline offers a helpful summary: “The judicial procedure employed by the Lord was the divine ordeal. The rival claimants—God’s people and their antichrist foes—were subjected to the ordeal of passage through the waters of death. We may incidentally note that Peter identifies the floodwaters as a baptismal event (1 Pet 3.20f), so advising us that the rite of baptism is a symbolic undergoing of a death ordeal. …In such trials by ordeal the Lord renders a verdict in favor of those in the right by bringing them safely through the ordeal, while the condemnation of the false claimants is registered in their being overcome by the deadly ordeal medium. In the Deluge ordeal God provided Noah with the plans for the ark as the means of deliverance, secured his family in the ark, controlled the mounting waters, and brought the ark to rest on the far side of the flood. By their resurrection-emergence from the death waters (cf. 1 Pet 3.21) the remnant people were declared justified in the sight of God and the heirs of the heavenly kingdom.” (\textit{God, Heaven, and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos} [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006] 86).

\textsuperscript{41}B. Jacob, \textit{Genesis}, 60. So, too, K.A. Mathews speaks of the earth’s “cleansing by waters” (\textit{Genesis 1-11.26}, 360). A. Ross writes that “water was the natural way of purging and cleansing. The water would not only destroy wickedness, but it would wash the world clean so that it could begin afresh” (\textit{Genesis} [CBC; Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008] 73). Furthermore, in the NT “the Flood is clearly connected with the conceptions of judgment and baptism” (H.S. Benjamins, “Noah, the Ark, and the Flood in Early Christian Theology: The Ship of the Church in the Making,” pp 134-49 in \textit{Interpretations of the Flood}, F. G. Martinez and G. P. Luttikhuizen, eds. [Leiden: Brill, 1999] 136).
This idea is in accord with the use of the word רָמַט māḥā (Gen 6.7; 7.4; 7.23 x2), to “blot/wipe out by washing,” which is used for “the washing away of sins” (cf. Isa 43.25; 44.22; Jer 18.23; Ps 51.2, 9; Prov 6.33). McCarthy, furthermore, makes the important observation that the Chaoskampf motif is linked in the Old Testament to moral or social disorder, the waters not being opposed to the divine will but rather its passive instrument, so that the flood “is there to purify, not pollute.” Thus the ultimate purpose of the deluge is to purify. Even the period of rain, forty days and nights, is sometimes connected in the Bible with purification and the purging of sin, as it likely signifies in the present narrative. The period may also represent the introduction of a new epoch in Scripture, serving to transition from the old creation to the new. The water ordeal thus becomes for the righteous participant a “rite of passage,” a new birth that is a precondition for approaching the divine Presence at his holy mountain. Outside of ancient Israel, furthermore, the river ordeal, in as much as it “cleared” the innocent, was also seen as symbolizing purification and cleansing.

Utilizing my own basic outline of the narrative, we will offer a literary reading of the waters that manifests the theme of death and rebirth:

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43 D.J. McCarthy, “‘Creation’ Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry,” pp 74-89 in Creation in the Old Testament, B.W. Anderson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 76-77. This case, however, is not as easily made regarding the waters of the Creation account, and even for the Deluge needs to be nuanced by God’s use of the “wind” (8.1) to control the waters once He has unleashed them.
45 N.M. Sarna, Genesis, 54; idem., Exodus (Jerusalem: JPS, 1991) 155. Cf. Gen 50.3; Num 13.25; 14.34; 1 Sam 17.16; Ezek 4.6; Jon 3.4.
46 B. Waltke, Genesis, 138. Cf. also his fn 58.
48 Cf. the chiastic outlines of G.J. Wenham (“The Coherence of the Flood Narrative,” VT 28.3 [1978] 338) and B.W. Anderson (“From Analysis to Synthesis,” 38). The Mesopotamian flood narratives (Akkadian Atrahasis, Gilgamesh, and Sumerian versions) have also been interpreted as two-sided, with both a destructive and a creative aspect, of
NEW CREATION BEGINS

GOD REMEMBERS NOAH AND ALL LIVING/
GOD CAUSES WIND TO PASS OVER EARTH

8.1

DEATH

DELUGE PREVAILS/
YHWH SHUTS DOOR

7.11-24

NOAH ENTERS ARK
("TEMPLE"/MICRO-COSMOS)

7.1-10

NOAH BUILDS ARK/
COVENANT TO BE ESTABLISHED

6.9-22

OLD COSMOS/MACRO-TEMPLE

[PRE-DELUGE/PROLOGUE]

6.1-8

REBIRTH

DELUGE RECEDES/
NOAH OPENS WINDOW

8.2-12

NOAH EXITS ARK
("TEMPLE"/MICRO-COSMOS)

8.13-19

NOAH BUILDS ALTAR/
COVENANT ESTABLISHED

8.20-9.19

NEW COSMOS/MACRO-TEMPLE

[POST-DELUGE/EPILOGUE]

9.20-29

1. UNLEASHING THE PRIMORDIAL WATERS: COSMIC DEATH

Broadly, the first half of the pericope, 6.9-7.24, marks a return to Gen 1.2a: the earth deluged in a state of מַטַּה וְאָבָה tōhū wābōhū. The deluge is thus an account of creation reversed, an anti-story against the creation story of Genesis 1, starting with cosmos and ending with chaos. Whereas “Gen 1 climaxes in the creation of man, a climax marked precisely by the amplitude and number of words in its treatment, ... here the flood climaxes in the death of man placed at the peak of a crescendo of amplitude.”

Genesis 6.12, then, is laden with bitter irony, as it “echoes” the end of creation in Gen 1.31 from which the de-creation will begin:


50 S.E. McEvenue, Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 63.

The verbs employed for man’s creation in Gen 1.26-27 (כִּי־בָרָא / כִּי־בָרָא) furthermore, are now transposed in Gen 6.7 (כִּי־בָרָא / כִּי־בָרָא) to symbolize its reversal.\(^{52}\) Indeed, the imagery of death begins here in the prologue with YHWH’s declared intent to “wipe out” (הִפְכָּה) humanity (6.7), reinforced in the narrative proper by the declaration to Noah: “I am ready to destroy them (םַשִּׁיתְם mashitām) with the earth” (6.13). The third הָנָה clause in the narrative (6.17) then directs attention to the means by which the destruction will come: הָנָה יִגְּדוֹל. Interestingly, the three הָנָה clauses in the first half of the narrative\(^{53}\) establish the dilemma, the divine response of talionic judgment, and the deluge as the means:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigative report:</th>
<th>6.12: יִקְּחֶה יִקְּדָה</th>
<th>נַחֲלַת נַחֲלַת הַיָּה</th>
<th>לָכְתָה לָכְתָה שֵׁל הָיָה שֵׁל הָיָה</th>
<th>לָכְתָה לָכְתָה שֵׁל הָיָה שֵׁל הָיָה</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarative judgment</td>
<td>6.13: מַשָּׁתַת מַשָּׁתַת</td>
<td>מַשָּׁתַת מַשָּׁתַת</td>
<td>מַשָּׁתַת מַשָּׁתַת</td>
<td>מַשָּׁתַת מַשָּׁתַת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial action</td>
<td>6.17: הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה</td>
<td>הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה</td>
<td>הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה</td>
<td>הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה הָנָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Immediately, then, in 6.17 the waters become a symbol of death: “the deluge of waters” is, given the lamed of purpose, “to destroy” (ְָשֵׁהַל l’sahēl) so that all flesh upon the earth “will perish” (יִגְּדוֹל yigwāl). Thus as the waters rise, death itself rises in conquest. While creation in Gen 1 was marked by the control of waters, so now the presence of unrestrained waters signals a return to non-creation.\(^{54}\) Indeed, both accounts, the creation and deluge, are narrated from the perspective of water:

In the P account of Genesis 1, the reader is introduced to a world in which watery chaos rules supreme until God’s intervention brings order.... The flood account in Gen 6-8 tells the story of how, when the world was corrupted, God withdrew the restraints placed on the waters at the time of creation, and they flooded the world once more from the “great deep” (גָּדוֹל הָאָרֶץ gadol ha’aretz) and the “windows of heaven” (ןַחֲלַת נַחֲלַת שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל שֵׁל Sháhēl).... Thus, the

\(^{52}\) N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 49.

\(^{53}\) These are matched, as we will see, in the second half of the narrative by three more (8.11, 13, 9.9). The הָנָה “acts like a camera shutter to freeze the ‘sight’ which is seen.... It is also used in narrative contexts in Genesis to introduce a change of scene in which a new character appears” (W.M. Clark, “The Righteousness of Noah,” 268-69).

chaos waters by their very nature are symbolic of the \textit{absence} of order and creation. In the flood narrative, they denote the \textit{reversal} of creation.\footnote{Ibid., 243, 244. Cf. J.D. Levenson, \textit{Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible} (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 134-35.}

After a brief forecasting declaration in 7.4 ("I will cause it to rain \textit{mamaf} upon the earth"), bitterly recalling Gen 2.5, the deluge comes in 7.6: \textit{vayyekhol tehoma ve-yado te-\textit{hah}}. A parallel statement is then given in 7.10: \textit{vayyekhol tehoma ve-yado te-\textit{hah}}, the next verse expanding its description, and thus defining \textit{tehoma},\footnote{The same point might be made from the parallel of 7.6 with 7.11, whereby the "floodwaters" (v 6) are defined as the fountains of the great deep..." etc., (v 11).} with what some believe is a verse from an antecedent epic:\footnote{Gen 7.11 displays poetic meter, rhythm, and paronomasia. Cf. H. Gunkel, \textit{Genesis} (7th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) 144; U. Cassuto, \textit{Genesis II}, 84-88; V.P. Hamilton, \textit{The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17, 292-93}; J.S. Kselman, "A Note on Gen 7.11," \textit{CBQ} 35 (1973) 493; G.J. Wenham, \textit{Genesis 1-15}, 181; P.H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above, Part II: The Meaning of 'The Water above the Firmament' in Gen 1.6-8," \textit{WTJ} 54 (1992) 34; N.M. Sarna, \textit{Genesis}, 49; \textit{ibid.}, \textit{Understanding Genesis}, 43. The verse stresses God's active role in the Deluge as well as cosmic dependence upon God's sustaining power: "No language could portray more powerfully the contingent character of the creation. The cosmos is not eternal and self-perpetuating, as Greek philosophers maintained; it is sustained in being by the Creator. Were God to relax his upholding power, everything would lapse into chaos" (B.W. Anderson, "Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith," 90).} \footnote{Cf. L. Jacobs, "Jewish Cosmology," pp 66-86 in \textit{Ancient Cosmologies}, C. Blacker and M. Loewe, eds. (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975) 70; U. Cassuto, \textit{Genesis II}, 87-88.}

\begin{quote}
All the fountains of the great deep were burst asunder.

\textit{vayyekhol tehoma ve-yado te-\textit{hah}}

And the windows of heaven were opened.

\textit{vayyekhol tehoma ve-yado te-\textit{hah}}
\end{quote}

Thus, the deluge of waters is the phenomenon whereby the waters flooded upon the earth both from the deep beneath and from the dome above.\footnote{N.M. Sarna, \textit{Understanding Genesis}, 55.} Here it is tempting to understand with Sarna \textit{tehoma} as the cosmic waters above the dome which now reunite with the \textit{tehoma} from beneath to collapse the cosmos.\footnote{Cf. L. Jacobs, "Jewish Cosmology," pp 66-86 in \textit{Ancient Cosmologies}, C. Blacker and M. Loewe, eds. (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975) 70; U. Cassuto, \textit{Genesis II}, 87-88.} The deluge then constitutes the \textit{reversal} of the second day of creation's separation of waters in Gen 1.7:
The ḳīзи undoes the ṣạbdēl. The separation of waters being, perhaps, the primary act of creation, the (re)unification of those waters becomes the primary means of destruction.⁶⁰ For this idea, von Rad’s comments are worth quoting in full:

Mabbūl does not mean “flood,” “inundation,” or even “destruction,” but it is a technical term for a part of the world structure, namely, the heavenly ocean. This heavenly sea, which is above the firmament (råqēta‘), empties downward through latticed windows (2 Kings 7.2, 19). Here we have the same realistic and cosmological ideas as in Gen, ch. 1. According to the Priestly representation we must understand the Flood, therefore, as a catastrophe involving the entire cosmos. When the heavenly ocean breaks forth upon the earth below, and the primeval sea beneath the earth, which is restrained by God, now freed from its bonds, gushes up through yawning chasms onto the earth, then there is a destruction of the entire cosmic system according to biblical cosmogony. The two halves of the chaotic primeval sea, separated—one up, the other below—by God’s creative government (1.7-9), are again united; creation begins to sink again into chaos. Here the catastrophe, therefore, concerns not only men and beasts as in the Yahwistic account but the earth (6.13; 9.11)—indeed, the entire cosmos.⁶¹

The great summary merism of the cosmos in Gen 1.1, “the heavens and the earth,” is destroyed by a merism of destruction—the unleashing of the waters above and the deep beneath. And just as the separation of the second day leads to the gathering of waters on the third day so that the dry land appears, so now the waters un-gather so that the land disappears (7.17-20). The structure, meaning, and sound combine to mirror the swelling, surging waters.⁶² From 7.17:

\[
\text{wayyirbû hammayim and v 18: wayyyigb\textquotesingle}rû hammayim wayyirbû m\textquotesingle\textsuperscript{o}ôd},
\]

with its heaping up of adverbs, the idea “waters” itself seems to multiply and swell. In the forty-seven Hebrew words of vv 17-20, tautology is utilized to portray the grim watery destruction: “waters” (5x), “multiplied” (2x), “conquered” (3x), “greatly” (3x).⁶³ The deluge drama “is heard in the sound of the words, a sound which swells toward the climax, and becomes muffled and


⁶¹ G. von Rad, Genesis, 128. Westermann seems to miss this point when he says that “in P the whole earth is not destroyed” and that nothing is said about a “new creation of the earth” (Genesis 1-11, 417). Cf. D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 135-37; E. van Wolde, “A Text-Semantic Study,” 23.

⁶² G.J. Wenham, e.g., notes the alliteration of m’s and b’s (Genesis 1-15, 182).


163
heavy toward repose." B.W. Anderson notes the "swelling of the waters is vividly portrayed by the repeated use of the key words ‘the waters prevailed’ to create an ascending affect": 

\[ \text{wayyiqtg\breve{r} m\text{a}mm\text{ayim} (v 18)} \]
\[ \text{w\text{a}mm\text{ayim} g\breve{d}g\breve{r}m (v 19)} \]
\[ g\breve{d}g\breve{r}m \text{hamm\text{ayim} (v 20)} \]

The increase of the waters is also mimicked by the ascending number of words in the cola: vv 18-19 have 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 words, v 20 has 8 words in one colon, v 21 peaking with 16 words. The increase of the waters is also mimicked by the ascending number of words in the cola: vv 18-19 have 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 words, v 20 has 8 words in one colon, v 21 peaking with 16 words. 66

Continuing the irony, while in the creation narrative life was to "multiply" (נָשַׁ֣ר), and fill the earth (1.28), here it is death that is multiplying (נָשַׁר), flooding the earth (7.17)—indeed, v 18, the waters of death are multiplying greatly (נָשַׁר נָשַׁר). This is the justice upon a generation that had "filled" the earth with "great" wickedness (6.1-5, 11-12). The conquering of the waters is expressed by the key word נָשַׁר, gibbor, portraying triumph in battle, likening the chaotic waters to "hostile warriors attacking and undoing God’s creation." 68 The upward movement is

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64 S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 36.
underscored at the outset in v 17 by the movement of the ark—being “lifted” (נָֽנַחְוֹתָה wayyis’ū), it “rose” (וַאֲנָתָרָם wattārām). The covering (waykussū) of the earth is stressed by repetition in vv 19 and 20. While v 19 has it that the “highest mountains” were covered, with v 20 merely mentioning “the mountains,” yet escalation nonetheless comes across through the change of perspective, followed by the subsequent change in particles: the waters thus rise, so to speak, from “the highest mountains under (תַּחַת tahat) the heavens” in v 19 to being “fifteen cubits above (רֶפֶת־בֶּן milma’lā) those mountains” in v 20.69 The conquest of the waters may also be seen by tracing the athnaks of the unit (7.17-24):70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Athnak</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v 17</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>40 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 18</td>
<td>לָהַנַחְוֹת</td>
<td>“the ark”/“the waters conquered”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 19</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>“the waters conquered”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 20</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>“the waters conquered”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 21</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>“all flesh died”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 22</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>“all...died”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 23</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>“the ark”/“they were destroyed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 24</td>
<td>נָֽנַחְוֹתָה</td>
<td>150 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the disappearance of the land, the third day of creation has been undone. Just as the third day’s emergence of land (out of the second day’s separation of waters) was toward the sixth day’s parallel panel of the creation of humanity and animals, so now the unification of the waters and the covering of the land is toward the destruction of humanity and animals—7.21: “All flesh that moved upon the earth perished (כִּבְשֹׁת),” the description of living creatures that follows.

69 Cf. the first mention of the Deluge in 6.17 which was to destroy all flesh “under heaven” that is “upon the earth.”

corresponding to their order of creation (—excepting the sea creatures which were not
destroyed), from birds to animals to creepers to “all mankind.” Verse 22 repeats the conclusion
emphasizing the utter destruction strikingly by fronting the verb “they died” to the end position
with a double-claused subject:

בְּלִּי מַעֹלֶךְ הַיָּמִים מִכָּלָה בֵּית הָאָנֵר מִכָּלָה בֵּית הָאָנָנָה מִכָּלָה

The verb הֵמָּתָה, being stative, marks this climax as an object of contemplation. 71 “‘Perished’
and ‘wiped out’ (vv 21, 23) occur earlier in the flood narrative (e.g., 6.7, 17), but ‘died’ is new to
the story and only occurs here (cf. 9.29). This deliberate reflection of the garden scene (2.17,
3.3-4), where human death is threatened, and the genealogy of Seth (5.5 etc.), where death
reigns, brings forward to culmination the forceful response unmitigated sin requires.” 72 As
Clines so poignantly put it: “The very constitution of man falls apart: at the first, the body plus
breath made a living man, but now that last union is broken, and creation is undone.” 73 Verse 23
then provides a summary conclusion to the denouement of the drama as had been outlined by the
ו clauses: “So He wiped out (יִשָּׁמֵת wayyimah) all living things that were upon the face of the
ground,” the order of v 21 now reversed: “from man to animals to creepers to the birds.” 74 The
divine declaration of the “end” (יַעֲקֹב qēḇ) in 6.13 is thus resolved with the final statement of 7.24:

וַיִּשָּׁמֵּת אֵין תּוֹחֵל יְדוּתַּקְצָה יְבוּשֵׁה גְּדוֹלָה מָלֵךְ הָאָנְר

creation has unraveled back to chaos—back to Gen 1.2. 75

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71 S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 34.
74 While “creepers” does not fit the reversal neatly, the penchant for keeping the narrative from being too clean
appears to be part of the author’s style. Indeed, this may be considered the “biblical” style in general. Cf. W.
Baumgartner, “Ein Kapitel vom hebräischen Erzählungsstil,” in Eucharisterion: Festschrift für H. Gunkel FRLANT
75 U. Cassuto describes the scene similarly: “as though the world had reverted to its primeval state at the dawn of
Creation, when the waters of the deep submerged everything” (*Genesis II*, 97). Cf. B. Vawter, “A Note on ‘The
Waters Beneath the Earth,’” 73; R.W.L. Moberly “Why Did Noah Send Out a Raven?,” 351-52; *ibid.*, *Theology of
291.
“The world in which order first arose out of a primeval watery chaos is now reduced to the watery chaos out of which it arose—chaos-come-again.”

2. ESCAPING THE PRIMORDIAL WATERS: BURIAL WITHIN THE ARK

While the macro-cosmos is buried in the cosmic waters, the ark, serving as a micro-cosmos (as will be demonstrated in the next section of this chapter), may also be seen to constitute a metaphoric burial of all the living creatures within. Several literary features of the narrative point in this direction. The first is simply that the placement of the characters within the ark occurs amidst the very imagery of death already conveyed. In theological language, and as considered a “baptism” in the New Testament (1 Peter 3.20-21), the subjects within the ark are dying to the old creation in preparation for the new. Secondly, the idea of burial is supported in the broader sense of being “hidden out of sight.” To escape the burial of the world in the deluge, Noah and his household, and all the creatures with him, must “enter” (טי) and be “shut in” (קָפָה) the ark. Perhaps a bit speculatively, R.W.L. Moerly points out that humans and animals appear to live in darkness within the ark. Thirdly, the significant term


78 In Gen 23.3, 8 Abraham twice declares his longing to “bury my dead out of my sight.” In Josh 2.6, when Rahab hides the pair of spies from (the sight of) the king’s men, a metaphoric death-burial seems to be portrayed—bolstered by covering them with flax, from which burial linen was made. Incidentally, even the English “ark,” from the Latin arca, from the verb arcere, designates a covered receptacle. Cf. V.P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17, 280 fn 3.

“ark” is most probably an Egyptian loanword from either Tbt, with reference to a chest, casket, coffin, or dby, meaning shrine, sarcophagus. Finally, it is perhaps not irrelevant here to note that understanding the ark as a burial has been a typical reading throughout the history of the church. Waltke takes a similar reading: “The elect covenant family going through the sea of death and coming forth from their burial chamber (Isa 26.19-21) is a pledge that the redeemed will be brought through the cataclysm of the final judgment.” Broadly, then, the idea of burial fits precisely within the context of death and rebirth—to which rebirth we now turn.

3. CONTROLLING THE PRIMORDIAL WATERS: THE REBIRTH OF THE COSMOS

Whereas the “first part of the story represents a movement toward chaos,” the “second part represents a movement toward the new creation, with Noah and his sons as the representatives of the new humankind who were to inherit the earth.” And even as the הַרְעָה rūāh forms the contrasting element (as we have argued it in the previous chapter) that marks the beginning of creation in Gen 1.2c: והרְעָה הַרְעָה מֵעֵכֶרֶב הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְאֶה הַרְעָה הַרְעָה וַיִּרְאֶה הַרְעָה הַרְעָה הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְאֶה הַרְעָה הַרְעָה הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְאֶה הַרְעָה הַרְעָה הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְאֶה הַרְעָה הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְאֶה הַרְעָה H, so in 8.1b the new creation begins with the control of water by means of the הַרְעָה הַרְעָה יְהוָה הַרְעָה הַרְעָה הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים H. The לְהַרְעָה הַרְעָה הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים H-wind is the

81 Justin, in a sermon on Psalm 6, proclaimed that Christ “stayed in the tomb as Noah stayed in the ark” (J. Danielou, From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers, D.W. Hibberd, trans. [London: Burns and Oates, 1960] 96), and John Calvin, for another example, stated: “How great must have been the fortitude of the man, who, after the incredible weariness of a whole year, when the deluge has ceased, and new life shone forth, does not yet move a foot out of his sepulcher, without the command of God” (J. Calvin, Genesis, J. King, trans. and ed. [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975] 280).
82 B. Waltke, Genesis, 152. Interestingly, here, Gen 7.16 and Isa 26.20 both reference safety from judgment via a shut door (וגא).
83 B.W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 38. So, too, J.H. Walton: “[I]t is important to note that theologically this is being presented as a re-creation” (Genesis, 331); G.W. Coats (Genesis: With An Introduction to Narrative Literature [FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] 74) also outlines 8.1-9.17 broadly as “Re-creation”; M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture, 33.
84 So, too, B.W. Anderson: “The statement, ‘God caused a wind to blow over the earth,’ which recalls the ‘wind from God’ (רְעָה רְבּוֹת הָאֱלֹהִים) of Gen 1.2, introduces by way of contrast the theme of the new creation which becomes explicit in 9.1-17 where the imago Dei reappears” (From Analysis to Synthesis,” 36). Cf. also M. Kline: “The Flood narrative itself invites a comparison of God’s action by means of the wind (רְעָה) upon the flood waters (which recall the primal creation conditions) to the hovering of the Spirit (רְעָה) over the deep at the
primary means of God to accomplish his mighty acts (Ex 10.13, 19; Num 11.31; Josh 10.11; Pss 18.7-19; 148.8), being the One who “rides on the wings of the wind” and makes them “his messengers” (Ps 104.3-4), but this is especially so in his role as “water-controller” (cf. Gen 1.2; 8.1; Ex 14.21; 15.10).\(^85\) The following panel, based on insights from Matthews, who notes the echoes of Gen 1 serve to portray a new creation,\(^86\) outlines parallels between the creation and re-creation weeks. Both Matthews and Waltke (who builds on Matthews) leave out the seventh day parallel which I have formulated and here include, believing the “rest” of God, entered into by worship,\(^87\) to be an interpretative crux for both pericopes. In fact, Gen 2.2-3 and 8.22 are the only two places in Genesis where a form of יָדָרָשׁ occurs.\(^88\) Thus in both accounts, creation and deluge, “the theological narrative moves from a display of divine work to the account of divine rest.”\(^89\)

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\(^86\) Ibid., 383. Cf. also B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 128-29. Waltke also notes, based on Wenham’s dating (*Genesis 1-15, 100*), that the acts of re-creation occur on Sunday and Wednesday, the days that began the two triads in the first creation week” (130).

\(^87\) This may explain why many of the sixth day features of Creation, features that are the basis of Sabbath worship (created in God’s image, etc.) resurface at the “Sabbath” section of the Re-creation account (8.20f).

\(^88\) U. Cassuto has also noted this insight as establishing a parallel to the story of Creation (*Genesis II, 123*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREATION: GEN 1</th>
<th>RE-CREATION: GEN 8-9&lt;sup&gt;90&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST DAY</strong></td>
<td>1.2 “earth,” “deep,” “Spirit” (רּוּאָה), “waters”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECOND DAY</strong></td>
<td>1.7-8 “waters,” “sky”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIRD DAY</strong></td>
<td>1.9 “water,” “dry ground,” “appear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOURTH DAY</strong></td>
<td>1.14-19 Creation of luminaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIFTH DAY</strong></td>
<td>1.20 “birds,” “above the earth,” “across (卡尔-פּוֹנֵה) the surface of the expanse”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIXTH DAY</strong></td>
<td>1.24 “creatures,” “livestock,” “creatures that move along the ground,” “wild animals” “man,” “image” “blessed,” “be fruitful,” “increase in number,” “fill the earth,” “rule...every living creature”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEVENTH DAY</strong></td>
<td>2.1-3 “God rested (יִשְׁבֹּת),” “He rested” (שָׁבַת), “God blessed” (וַיִּבָּדַרְק)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as the coming of the deluge in 7.10 is explicitly described in 7.11 as the bursting asunder of the great deep and the opening of the windows of heaven, so now the abating of the waters in 8.1 is described in like fashion in 8.2:

*The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were dammed up and the rain from heaven was stayed.*

The separation of the waters and making of the dome from the second day of creation being unnecessary acts for this re-creation (because of their continuing validity), the stopping up of the fountains beneath and the windows above becomes the intentional parallel—that is, an act that causes a parting of the waters. The creation parallel, as well as the chiastic reversal of the destruction of the deluge, continues into the third day as the waters return to their gathering, and

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<sup>90</sup> Lasting more than a week, Gen 8-9 does not, to be sure, match day per day with Gen 1 although the general flow of the Creation order, as can be seen, is parallel.

<sup>91</sup> This possibility, the unveiling of the luminaries as Noah removes the Ark’s cover (with the Ark being a mini cosmos), is suggested by Kline (*Kingdom Prologue*, 139). A major objection to this suggestion is that the text itself, utilizing a *hinnê* clause, forces the readers “eyes” to regard the *dry ground* not the heavens above.
the land (i.e., the tops of the mountains) is seen (8.5). The emergence of dry land (8.13-14) is
given threefold emphasis: first, by its taking place on New Year’s Day (8.13a; 1.1.601
Wednesday—that is, the 601st anniversary of Noah’s birth); secondly, by the narrative art of
Noah’s own sight of it (8.13b); and, thirdly, by objective statement (8.14). This second half of
the deluge narrative also contains three הָעַד clauses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause Type</th>
<th>Verse(s)</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New life</td>
<td>8.11:</td>
<td>נָחָה אֶל הַגְּדָה כִּסְפֶּה יָדִי דָּוִיד, דָּוִד לָמָּה שָׁמָּה שָׁמָּה לָמָּה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry land</td>
<td>8.13:</td>
<td>הָעַד נָבִיא וּזָדִי נָבִיא נָבִיא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant</td>
<td>9.9:</td>
<td>נְגִי עַל עָלָיו וְעָלָיו אֲנָשָּׁה לָנוּ וּכְבוֹד אֶלֶּה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 8.11, emphasis is given to the new vegetative life, particularly from an olive tree. B. Jacob is
probably right in viewing this olive leaf as a sign that the earth had been purified and
consecrated. The next הָעַד clause, in 8.13, directs the mind’s eye to the dry land. Upon this dry
land, then, the “creation” of living creatures takes place, vv 15-19 emphasizing their “coming
out” from the ark by a four-fold use of נָהָר, a word that may be considered a “creation
term.” Here the previous chapter’s point about the use of נָהָר in creation (Gen 1.12, 24) is
worth rehearsing, namely that נָהָר may be suggestive of birthing, being sometimes utilized “of
children as going forth from loins” and “also of birth” both within the Pentateuch (cf. Gen 35.11;
46.26; Ex 1.5; 21.22; Num 12.12; Deut 28.57) and in the rest of the Hebrew canon (cf. 2 S 7.12;

92 Kline agrees: “The way the literary form of the Flood narrative in Gen 6-8 reflects the style and structure of the
creation account in the Genesis prologue is calculated to identify the Flood episode as a (re-)creation event. To
similar effect is the way the physical phenomena of the flood recapitulate the course of the original creation from the
stage of the unbounded deep to the (re)appearance of dry land and vegetation and the (re)emergence of animals and
man” (God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 88). Cf. C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 444; U. Cassuto, Genesis II, 106.
93 Cf. G. J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 180. Gen 8.5 presents the first of three Wednesdays, the other two being the
drying up of the waters (8.13) and the disembarkation from the Ark (8.14).
94 B. W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 36. An inclusio is formed in vv 7 and 14 by the repetition of
“dried out” (תָּבָע, תָּבָע); “dried up” (תֹּבָע), twice repeated, is sandwiched in between in v 13 (K.A. Matthews,
Genesis 1-11.26, 384). Cf. also G. Larsson, “Chronological Parallels between the Creation and the Flood,” VT 27.4
(1977) 490-92. Larsson demonstrates how the dates in the Flood story link together the old Creation with the new.
95 “And lo what a happy sight! The earth is green and consecrated, because oil is a sign of consecration” (B.
Jacob, Genesis, 58). N. M. Sarna suggests the olive leaf is also a sign of regeneration (Genesis, 58).
96 Cf. S. Paas, Creation and Judgment, 58-59.

171
16.11; 1K 8.19=2Ch 6.9; Jer 1.5; 20.18; Job 3.11; 38.8). Gen 1.24’s use of נָּפָל in particular, where the idea of animals springing forth from the earth in “a creative participation of the maternal earth,”98 seems especially suggestive. In the deluge narrative, however, the ark has replaced the earth—reasons for this being suggested in the next section—so that “all living creatures” (9.10) are defined as “all that came out of the ark.”99 The following is a panel outline of 8.16-19:100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Go out (נָּפָל) from the ark,</strong>&lt;br&gt;you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td><strong>&quot;So Noah went out (נָּפָל),</strong>&lt;br&gt;and his sons and his wife and his son’s wives with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><strong>All living creatures that are with you, from all flesh: of birds and of all animals and of all creepers that creep upon the earth,</strong>&lt;br&gt;bring them out (נָּפָל) with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B’</td>
<td><strong>All living creatures, all creepers, all birds, whatever creeps upon the earth, according to their families,</strong>&lt;br&gt;they went out (נָּפָל) from the ark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><strong>so they may swarm in the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with the repeated use of נָּפָל,101 the E-element, by its exceptionality, serves to emphasize procreative life. Instead of death multiplying by the waters of the deluge, life will multiply.

Noah, as a new Adam, is given, along with his sons, the same blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply” (9.1). God’s rest and blessing after creation (2.1-3; 1.28-30) is paralleled by God’s

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97 BDB, 423. <br>98 G. von Rad, Genesis, 57. <br>99 Cf. S.E. McEvenue, Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 73. <br>100 Like my panel outline for exiting the Ark (independently confirmed by McEvenue’s study [Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 66] who considers 8.16-19 “a most ritual exit, in the most structured and symmetrical unit of the pericope”), Wenham (Genesis 1-15, 177) posits one for entering the Ark, 7.6-16: <br>101 R.E. Longacre notes the delineated participants are subservient to verbal theme of “going out” (“The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 255).
rest and covenant (8.21-9.17), along with the promise that sustaining creation will not “rest off” (ןְּֽדֹֽבּֽהַֽהַֽל; 8.22)—a promise that functions as a new creation theme. The covenantal promise to stay the floodwaters is where the third high clause appears—remarkably parallel to the third high clause of the first half of the narrative as its antipode:

| Deluge 6.17: | Galactic (3.14) k.h. חֹדוֹֽשׁ וְשָֽׁמַֽיִם, כָּלָֽם שָׁלוֹֽם יָֽשָֽׁרָֽאִים |
| No more Deluge 9.9-11: | יָֽשָֽׁרָֽאִים | לֹא יַֽרְבּֽעָֽה זְאָֽהָֽה, שָֽׁלְּוָֽאֹת שָֽׁם לְשׁוֹֽאָֽה יָֽשָֽׁרָֽאִים |

In Wenham’s scene analysis these clauses are set in chiastic parallel as “divine monologues,” fittingly so, for the first is a divine resolve to destroy the earth by the deluge and the latter is a divine resolve never again to destroy the earth by deluge. Between these monologues is the ark in which Noah and his household “survived the passage through the death-waters and came forth alive to inherit the new earth beyond the sea of death.” Benno Jacob’s remarks on 8.13 are pertinent, relating as they do to the rebirth theme:

Not only a new year for Noah begins, but it was a New Year’s Day for the whole world, the birthday of creation; on this very day the world rises again from the chaos of the flood. The removal of the ark’s cover is Noah’s New Year’s celebration with which a renewed creation and a new life start. Now we may understand the arrangements in 6.16. The roof acted as a covering on top of the ark; Noah removes it, not because it hindered his view, but in honor of the day for which one removes the old garment as a woman removes the garment of her widowhood (38.14) or the garment of captivity (Deut 21.13). The last words of verse 13 picture the joy of the sight (1.30). Noah sees the grounds for which he had longed.... This is God’s New Year’s present to him.

Westermann points to the dating structure as a deliberate parallel to Gen 1, the New Year corresponding to the seventh day. Thus, the deluge narrative not only marks a return to Gen

102 For the Noahic covenant’s including the stipulations of 9.1-7, cf. S.D. Mason, “Another Flood?”
105 M. Kline, God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 89.
106 B. Jacob, Genesis, 58-59.
107 C. Westermann, Genesis I-11, 435. Also, 450: “One cannot say that the Sabbath was instituted in Gen 2.1-3 or the New Year feast in Gen 8-9 (P); but both these sections in the primeval event lay a foundation. When the Sabbath and the New Year are set up in the history of God’s people and become fixed institutions, they can be referred to the
1.2, or "the precreation state," but the "post-flood state is therefore a new creation, the cosmic waters have been tamed again." That in exiting the ark Noah is indeed entering a new world can also be argued by the verbal and thematic parallels that link the event to God’s call of Abraham.

Finally, 9.1, 7 repeat the blessing to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth," making procreation life, that is, new birth, an emphatic close. Indeed, the many repetitions of Genesis 1 and 2, mark off Gen 8 and 9 as a new creation.

(1) Since man could not live on the earth when it was covered with water in chaps. 1 and 8, a subsiding of the water and separation of the land from the water took place, allowing the dry land to appear (1.9-10; 8.1-13);
(2) "birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" are brought forth to "swarm upon the earth" in 1.20-21, 24-25 and 8.17-19;
(3) God establishes the days and seasons in 1.14-18 and 8.22;
(4) God's blessing rests upon the animals as he commands them to "be fruitful and multiply on the earth" in both 1.22 and 8.17;
(5) man is brought forth and he receives the blessing of God: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" in 1.28 and 9.1, 7;
(6) man is given dominion over the animal kingdom in 1.28 and 9.2;
(7) God provides food for man in 1.29-30 and 9.3 (incl. direct reference "As I have given the green plant");
(8) in 9.6 the writer quotes from 1.26-27 concerning the image of God in man.


109 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 128; ibid., The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 128:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 8.15-20</th>
<th>Genesis 12.1-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Then God said to Noah (8.15)</td>
<td>a. YHWH had said to Abram (12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Come out from the ark (8.16)</td>
<td>b. Leave your country (12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. So Noah came out (8.18)</td>
<td>c. So Abram left (12.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Then Noah built an altar to the LORD (8.20)</td>
<td>d. So [Abram] built an altar there to the LORD (12.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Then God blessed Noah (9.1)</td>
<td>e. &quot;And I [God] will bless you&quot; (12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. &quot;Be fruitful and increase&quot; (9.1)</td>
<td>f. &quot;I will make you into a great nation&quot; (12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. &quot;I now establish my covenant with you and with your seed&quot; (9.9)</td>
<td>g. &quot;To your seed, I will give this land&quot; (12.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the creation account may be read as an exodus from chaos to cosmos, the deluge narrative reads as an exodus from the old creation to the new. Furthermore, as Genesis 1 foreshadows the covenant at Mount Sinai, both established by “ten words,” so the deluge narrative between them contains a tenfold repetition of “and God/YHWH said” (6.9a, 13a, 7.1a, 8.15a, 15b, 21a, 9.1a, 8a, 12a, 17)——a new world has been established. “The ‘recreation’ motif begun in 8.1-3 concludes with the renewal of mankind on a mountain (8.4).” We, too, now shall approach that mountain.

II. TO THE MOUNTAIN: SANCTUARY SYMBOLISM

The deluge narrative’s parallel themes with creation already suggest the possibility of a similar cosmic mountain context. To be sure, the macro-temple idea of creation is almost inescapable in this account of the world’s destruction. It may even be that the narrative is structured by seven paragraphs to mirror the creation account, both resolving in Sabbath rest (Gen 2.1-3// 8.20-22).

This parallel is suggested lexically in Exod 20.11’s use of יָנָה nwh:114

Gen 8.21: And YHWH smelled the restful (נְפִּים) aroma... Ex 20.11: For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested (נָתַן) on the seventh day; therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

The regular dating of events within the deluge narrative also gives one the impression that history is run like a liturgical calendar.115 It has been noted, for example, that the ark rested on one of the mountains of Ararat in the cultic month of Tishri, the most important month of the sacred convocations, celebrating the Day of Atonement, the Feasts of Trumpets, Tabernacles,

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111 Cf. J.H. Sailhamer, e.g., who points out intentional verbal, thematic, and structural parallels between the deliverance of Noah and the Exodus, e.g.: (1) God remembers his covenant, (2) sends a wind, and (3) dries the waters so his people might go through on dry ground (Genesis, 126).
112 Ibid, Genesis, 131.
113 M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture, 34.
114 Cf. M. Kline, God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 90.
115 S.E. McEvenue, Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 59.
and Sacred Assembly. Blenkinsopp makes the connection here, significant for our study, between creation, the deluge, and the tabernacle/temple:

According to the P chronology the new world emerged from the flood waters on the first day of the liturgical year, the same day on which the sanctuary was set up and dedicated in the wilderness (Gen 8.13; Ex 40.2). It will be recalled that the first temple was also dedicated during Sukkoth, the autumnal New Year Festival (1 Kgs 8.2, 65). We are also told that it took seven years to build which, following probable Near Eastern parallels, may well be related to the seven days of creation. The same dating system requires that the week of creation in Gen 1.1-2.4 be the first week of the liturgical year or, in other words, the primordial New Year Festival.

That the deluge account also, as the creation account, constitutes cultic or liturgical narrative, informed by cosmic mountain ideology, will be manifest after considering the sanctuary symbolism in the narrative, symbolism serving to portray the Ararat mount as a cosmic mountain and the nature of the ark as a temple.

A. Ararat as Cosmic Mountain

The Ararat mount may itself be considered a cosmic mountain for many of the same features as the Eden mount which it parallels, some of which are as follows.

1. The Highest Mountain

A subtle point to be sure, the mount is likely to be understood as something of a primordial mound, the first to emerge from the receding waters since the “tops of the mountains” (8.5) were seen after the ark had rested upon one of the mountains of Ararat (8.4). Similarly, that the ark rests on this mountain before the tops of the (other) mountains are seen lends to the idea that it has come to rest on the highest of mountains. Von Rad believes the mountain of Ararat is

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certainly intended by the author to signify the highest mountain of the world. Some thus read the distributive plural in 8.4 as a singular, designating it as the highest mountain.

2. GEOGRAPHIC ALLUSIONS TO EDEN

That the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers lie in the region of Ararat may be another intended parallel with the mount of paradise (cf. Gen 2.14). Interestingly, “scholars from Philo’s time to the present have placed Eden in the mountains of Armenia.”

3. THE OMHALOS

The narrative portrays the Ararat mount as the omphalos in as much as all living things, humanity and wildlife, flow out from it to fill the earth.

4. PLACE OF REST

Part of the shared terminology between temples and the cosmic mountain they represent is precisely the idea of their being a spot of “rest” (מְנֻהָד m’nūhād), an idea repeated in the deluge narrative with reference to the mount (8.4, 21). Indeed, this is the language used in Ps 132.14 of YHWH’s choosing Mount Zion for his “rest” (מְנֻהָדַת m’nūhātāt). The climactic arrival of Noah to this paradisiacal mountain is, moreover, described in terms similar to that of Adam’s

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118 G. von Rad, Genesis, 129.
120 C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 443-44.
121 N.M. Sarna, Genesis, 57.
125 Cf. R.E. Longacre (“The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 250) who notes the Ark’s coming to rest is the climax of a series of culminating events.
placement in the mount of Eden: Adam was “set”/“brought to rest” (יָשָׁב hiphil) in the garden of Eden (2.15); the ark of Noah comes to “rest” (תָּאָשׁ) on the mountain of Ararat (8.4).  

5. THE DIVINE PRESENCE

Additionally, this mount becomes the meeting place of man with God—the place of covenantal blessing and worship. “Ararat was constituted the holy mountain of the Lord,” writes Kline, “by the positioning of the ark-temple there, by the erection of the altar on it, and, most emphatically, by the sanctifying Presence of the Lord himself—a presence manifested in his revelation of his acceptance of the offerings presented on the altar (Gen 8.20, 21).”  

In sum, while more parallels to Eden could be drawn, along with other characteristic features of the cosmic mountain (such as its being a refuge from the waters), what has been briefly delineated suffices to consider the Ararat mountain in terms of a cosmic mountain, and thus the deluge narrative in terms of cosmic mountain ideology, needing to be interpreted as “cultic” literature. Along this line, Damrosch considers Sinai “a new Ararat,” positing a steady foreshadowing of the Solomonic temple, the greater detail of the tabernacle being the switch-point between the ark and the temple.  

B. The Ark as Temple

While popular depictions of the ark often mislead one into viewing it as a boat, the vessel,
having no sails, rudder, oarsman, etc., was no boat\textsuperscript{129}—and Noah was no “captain,” steering his own fate. Indeed, that the ark was completely given over to the sovereign guidance of God seems to be a primary emphasis in the narrative.\textsuperscript{130} Further, the instructions to build the ark, within the unit of Gen 6.13-17, utilize three times as many verses than for the deluge,\textsuperscript{131} demonstrating both the preeminence of the deliverance motif (over that of talionic judgment), as well as the emphasis upon the ark itself as the means of that deliverance. How would the ANE audience have understood the ark? Several considerations lead to the conclusion that the Ark was meant to be seen as symbolizing a temple. “There are striking parallels between the tabernacle and the ark of Noah,” writes Fretheim, “both of which are viewed as a means by which the people of God can move in a secure and ordered way beyond apostasy and through a world of disorder on their way to a new creation (cf. [Exod] 40.2 with Gen 8.13).”\textsuperscript{132} Beyond this general comparison, moreover, one may also find detailed parallels.

1. PARALLELS WITH THE TABERNACLE

First, there appears to be deliberate parallels between the construction of the ark and that of the tabernacle (as well as that of creation in Gen 1).\textsuperscript{133} The plans for each are revealed by God

\textsuperscript{129} Contra A. Ross, Genesis, 72. V.P. Hamilton (The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17, 281) says Noah may be a “shipwright”; however see his comments on 296.

\textsuperscript{130} U. Cassuto, for example, notes: “In the Torah there is no reference to a ship or to a pilot or to navigation. ...[T]he Torah wished of set purpose to oppose the Gentile tradition and to declare that Noah’s deliverance was not due to his seafaring skill but only to the will of His Heavenly Father. ...[Noah] had to put his trust in the Lord, and He would do what was necessary” (Genesis II, 60-61). So, too, N.M. Sarna writes: “The term [tevah] suggests a boxlike craft made to float on the water but without rudder or sail or any other navigational aid. It does not use the services of a crew. The use of tevah is intended to emphasize that the fate of the occupants is to be determined solely by the will of God and not to be attributed to the skill of man” (Genesis, 52). Similarly, B. Jacob noted: “The ark is not a ship; it has neither a keel, nor a steering apparatus, neither mast nor sail. It shall be a house afloat which can protect its inhabitant during a flood and for this reason be made of wood” (Genesis, 49). C. Westermann makes the point that while Mesopotamian parallels have oddly shaped vessels still referred to as a “ship,” the biblical ark, while looking more like a ship, is rather called a “chest” (Genesis 1-11, 420). Cf. also B. Waltke, Genesis, 135.

\textsuperscript{131} Cf. B. Jacob, Genesis, 52.

\textsuperscript{132} T.E. Fretheim, “Because the Whole Earth is Mine”: Theme and Narrative in Exodus,” Int 50.3 (1996) 238.

\textsuperscript{133} G.J. Wenham notes: “In Exod 25-31, there are also parallels in phraseology with the directions for building the tabernacle and its furniture that suggest that both ark and tabernacle were seen as a sanctuary for the righteous”
God commands the construction (6.14 – Impv הָקַּדֵם // 25.9 – Juss שָׁנוּם); the action is carried out precisely, according to God’s command (6.22: הָקַּדֵּם לִשֵׁם ה-7776 נַּעֲשֵׂה נָּאִי, הָנַּוִּיה נַּעֲשֵׂה מְנַוִּיה; cf. 7.5 // Ex 39.43: הָקַּדֵּם לִשֵׁם הָעַשְׂרִים מְנַוִּיה); the construction is set within the context of a covenant (6.8 // Ex 34.27); the accounts resolve in divine blessing (9.1 // Ex 39.43). Further, if the emendation of הבן qinnîm to הבן qîninîm in 6.14 is valid and “reed” is the correct translation, it may be an allusion to the menorah of the tabernacle, הבן being used of the shaft and branches (Ex 25.31-32; 37.17-18). Matthews also suggests the detail of the olive leaf (8.11) likely caused early readers to make a connection with the tabernacle, olive oil fueling the menorah (Ex 27.20; Lev 24.2-4) and being utilized for anointing the tabernacle and its furnishings (Ex 30.24-29). Another parallel is in the similar dimensions of the ark and tabernacle, being “the only buildings that the Torah describes,” with the surface area of the ark being three times that of the tabernacle courtyard (100 x 50 cubits, Ex 27.9-13). Wenham sums Jacob’s surmise that “if each deck were further subdivided into three sections, the ark would have had three decks the same height as the tabernacle and three sections on each deck the same size as the tabernacle courtyard.”

Steven W. Holloway and Joseph Blenkinsopp posit that the dimensions and design of Noah’s ark correspond to those of the

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135 Ibid., 388.
136 C. Westermann (*Genesis 1-11*, 421) quoting B. Jacob. Although his case is not especially persuasive, H.G. May’s argument for the box-like Ark (“ָדֶרֶנ”) of the Covenant being a miniature temple (“The Ark –A Miniature Temple,” *AJSLL* 52.4 [1936] 215-34) is suggestive by parallel to the box-like tebûd. May does, in fact, draw a parallel to the early synagogue Ark (זרד) in which the Torah scrolls were kept and which were decorated as miniature buildings (225-26). J.D. Levenson notes, further, that Psalm 24 is recited by Jews as the Torah scroll is being returned to this Ark, which he takes to imply that the reading of the Torah is analogous to the ascent of the sacred mountain (*Sinai & Zion*, 170 fn 128), but which, however, may just as easily imply the scroll’s “ascent” into the Ark.
Solomonic temple. It is also possible that the “covering of the ark” (Gen 8.13) establishes a link to the hide “covering of the tabernacle” (Ex 40.19)—the ark being the only exception to the term’s otherwise exclusive usage in reference to the tent of meeting. Perhaps not insignificant is the further link of the technical term mibhayit ṣumihû in 6.14, language shared only with the tabernacle (cf. Ex 25.11; 37.2) and in Solomon’s building program (within an ironic context of the temple; 1 Ki 7.9). Yet another parallel is drawn in relation to the calendar: the deluge waters recede on the same day the sanctuary in the wilderness is later dedicated (Gen 8.13 // Ex 40.2), the first day of the first month—New Year’s Day. Waltke expresses the point of these parallels well: “The Lord specifies the construction of the ark, just as he specified the construction of the tabernacle. He does not entrust the means of salvation to human imagination.”

2. COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Secondly, comparative literature—the Gilgamesh epic in particular—also leads to the conclusion that the ark is portrayed as a temple. In 1927 Paul Haupt posited that “the huge ship of the Babylonian Noah, 525 feet long and 210 feet wide and deep, with seven stories, may have

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139 S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” ZAW 103 (1991) 348. Cf. also J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 286: “[I]n their basic design both Noah’s ark and Solomon’s temple reflect the three-decker world of ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, a feature which, for fairly obvious reasons, could not be reproduced in the wilderness sanctuary.” Cassuto had originally posited that 7: n was best understood as a parallelepiped (Genesis 11,41). Gen 6.16, however, utilizes a different term. Wenham makes the same point, Genesis 1-15, 187. Cf. also K.A. Matthews, Genesis I-11.26, 389.
140 S.E. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 44.
142 B. Waltke, Genesis, 135. NOTE: Parallels of function, such as this quotes demonstrates, will be brought out below in 5. Temple Functions.
been suggested by the colossal Babylonian temple-towers in seven stories." The equation of the Gilgamesh ark with the ziggurat was also made by M.E.L. Mallowan:

[The ark] was described in the Gilgamesh epic as rising in seven stages which were subdivided vertically into nine sections with sixty-three compartments: in one passage it was referred to as ekallu, a noun meaning temple or palace, and I therefore venture to suggest that the narrator had in mind a floating Ziggurat and that he imagined one—always a refuge in time of flood—as sailing over the vast inland sea.

Holloway, who cites both Haupt and Mallowan, convincingly demonstrates that Gilg XI "sports numerous clues as to the ziggurat identity of the ark, and that the description itself is in keeping with those of other ziggurats found in cuneiform literature." The following is a summary outline of Holloway's "clues":

1. While the dimensions of the ark are: length = width = height, the height itself may be measured by a plumb-line with no reference made to the receding upward slope. That the dimensions are further defined as having six roofs and seven vertical components supports a ziggurat complex. According to the Esagila tablet, the great ziggurat of Babylon, Etemenanki, had equal height, length, and breadth (90 x 90 x 90 meters), as did the "ideal" ziggurat form in a tablet published by D.J. Wiseman (21 x 21 x 21 meters). Additionally, modern excavations have revealed several ziggurat foundations that are square in form (with the probability that the original elevation may have matched its width and length).

2. By a multiple entendre, Utnapishtim is guided by the trickster god Ea to tell the community of Shuruppak that he is going down to the apsû with Ea to dwell. The populace would have understood the apsû of Ea to mean Ea's temple of that name in Eridu. Also, the ark's sailing over the waters of the apsû meets the criteria for the sacral locus of all ziggurats to be founded upon the apsû.

3. In Gilg XI, 95 the ark is called ekallu, a common Akkadian word for palace, but not ever used for a sea-going vessel (outside this passage).

4. The identity of the ark is made explicit in Gilg XI, 156 where Utnapishtim says: "I made a regular offering atop the mountain ziggurat" [diš-kun sur-qa-na ina muhhi (UGU) ziq-qur-rat šadi (KUR)].


6. The plan and measurements of the ark/ temple are revealed by a god (Ea) to the king (Utnapishtim?) (Cf. Lundquist's proposition no. 7, "What is a Temple?")

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146 M.E.L. Mallowan, "Noah's Flood Reconsidered," Iraq 26 (1964) 65. His insight about ziggurats providing a refuge during times of flooding is remarkably apropos in light of cosmic mountain ideology.
147 S.W. Holloway, "What Ship Goes There?" 339. Cf. also R.S. Hendel, "The Shape of Utnapishtim's Ark" ZAW 107.1 (1995) 128-29. While Hendel argues against the ziggurat dimensions espoused by Holloway, retaining the traditional reading of the ark as a cube, he agrees that there is an analogy between the seven-storied ark and a multi-tiered ziggurat, and that like "a ziggurat...Utnapishtim's ark does have cosmic symbolism," representing "the universe in nuce." For Utnapishtim's ark as a seven-tiered microcosm, cf. also J. Bottero, "La première Arche de Noé," L'Histoire 94 (1986) 80. M. Kovacs, also, while understanding the ark as a perfect cube, sees it as a "theological allusion to the dimensions of a ziggurat" (The Epic of Gilgamesh [Palo Alto, CA: Stanford U Press, 1989] 99 fn 3).
The ark of Utnapishtim behaved like a temple with respect to its providing a divinely-appointed haven of safety (cf. Lundquist's proposition 8a, “What is a Temple?” 212). Every living thing, further, flowed from the ark like the super-fecundating waters of abundance and prosperity associated with the temple.

Utnapishtim's first act in the new world is to relate humanity to the divine by means of sacrifice (cf. Lundquist's proposition 14, “What is a Temple?” 217f).

That the Gilgamesh epic contains many facets of temple ideology, the ark itself representing a ziggurat, makes it likely the deluge narrative of Genesis was also authored and understood within the matrix of ANE temple ideology. In light of the “Tower of Babel” narrative, which Holloway reads as a polemic against the ziggurat as a religious symbol “well-nigh universal to Mesopotamian civilization,” he believes the change in the deluge account’s ark symbolism from a cosmic ziggurat to a cosmic Solomonic temple, “a symbol as peculiar to Judah as one could hope to find,” was natural.149 “Particularly in light of the ziggurat symbolism in the Mesopotamian Flood narrative,” writes Holloway, “it is unlikely that chance could account for the correspondence in dimensional proportions and structure between Noah’s ark and the Solomonic temple.”150 His theory of provenance aside, that both the deluge of Genesis and the epic of Gilgamesh share a typical ANE context of temple ideology, with the ark representing a temple, appears well founded.

3. COSMOS ANALOGY

Thirdly, and also a feature shared with comparative literature,151 the ark of Noah is presented as a micro-cosmos or “cosmos in miniature,”152 and so as a temple.153 In Gen 6.16, God commands: “Lower, second, and third decks you shall make,” reflecting the three-decked world of ANE

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150 Ibid., 349.
152 M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture, 30.
153 Cf. S. Paas, Creation and Judgment, 90.
cosmography,\textsuperscript{154} noted already in the creation account of Gen 1. The micro-cosmos of salvation, the ark in 6.16, is then immediately contrasted with the cosmos damned to destruction in 6.17. The ark, that is, will function as a substitute cosmos and refuge from the destruction of the world. And once this mini-world is made, such that it is suitable for inhabitants, it is filled up with living creatures: wildlife, herd-animals, creepers, birds, human beings, so that it is a “creation in miniature.”\textsuperscript{155} To be sure, the mainline imperative to build the ark (6.14) is the backbone upon which the paragraph hangs, all other verbs expressing in detail its outworking.\textsuperscript{156} In the previous chapter of our thesis, we suggested the possibility that “the heavens and the earth” (a merism for the “three-decked house” of heavens-earth-sea) of Gen 1.1 may have been understood in terms of a cosmic mountain, along the lines of the parallelism of “new heavens and a new earth”/“Jerusalem”/“holy mountain” in Isa 65.17/18/25. That argument is, perhaps, strengthened here as it appears Noah’s three-decked ark, symbolizing a temple, constitutes a microcosm of “the heavens and earth,” with living creatures to-boot. Moreover, as my panel outline (below) exposes, the building and filling of the ark in 6.13-22 exhibits a correspondence with the “building” and filling of the cosmos in Gen 1:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Anu – Heaven
  \item Enlil – Esharra
  \item Ea – Eshgalla
\end{itemize}


\textsuperscript{155} B. Waltke, \textit{Genesis}, 121.

| BUILDING THE ARK/ MICRO-COSMOS  
GEN 6.13-16 | FILLING THE ARK/ MICRO-COSMOS  
GEN 6.17-22 |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DECLARATION OF JUDGMENT (MACRO-COSMOS)</strong></td>
<td><strong>FILLING THE ARK/ MICRO-COSMOS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh (גָּדוֹל) has come (נָפַל) before me for the earth (גּוֹרְעָה) is filled with unrighteousness from them — look at me (בָּדֵן). I am ready to destroy (כָּבֵד) them with the earth (גּוֹרְעָה).”</td>
<td>17 Now look at Me (בָּדֵן). I Myself am ready to bring (כָּבֵד) the deluge of waters upon the earth (גּוֹרְעָה), to destroy (כָּבֵד) from under the heavens all flesh (גָּדוֹל) having the spirit of life within, all that is upon the earth (גּוֹרְעָה) will perish.</td>
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<th>INSTRUCTION FOR SALVATION (MICRO-COSMOS)</th>
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<td>17 Make yourself an ark of gopher-wood; with reeds 157 you shall make the ark, and seal it inside and outside with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 A roof 158 you shall make for the ark, finishing it within a cubit from above; and the entrance of the ark you will set in its side. Lower, second, and third decks you shall make (ךְָבָּד).</td>
<td>18 But I will confirm My covenant with you and you will enter the ark — you, your sons, your wife, and the wives of your sons with you. 19 And of all living, of all flesh, you will bring two of everything into the ark to keep alive with you — they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kind, of animals according to their kind, and of all the creepers that creep on the earth according to their kinds — two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. 21 But as for you, take for yourself of all food that is edible and gather it for yourself, and it will be for you and for them for food. 22 Noah did according to all that God commanded him — just so he did (ךְָבָּד).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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157 Cf. E. Ullendorff, “The Construction of Noah’s Ark,” *VT* 4.1 (1954) 95-96. For otherwise, cf. E.A. Speiser, *Genesis*, 52. Also, Ullendorff’s comments about the two parts of the building description, moving from general (v 14) to detailed (vv 15-16) may also be applied to the “filling” section, moving from general (vv 18-19a) to detailed (vv 19b-21).


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One can readily see the parallels between vv 13 and 17: both (1) involve divine resolutions to destroy the earth; (2) utilize a הָבוֹל clause; (3) use the same terms the same amount of times (רְצָה x1; מַעִשֶׁה x1; אָבְרָהאַם x1; גִּבְרָלָתִּים x2), the first two only appearing in the DECLARATION section.

Instructively, here, “end” (רְבּ) of v 13 is in parallel, utilizing a form of אָבְרָהאַם, with “the deluge” (טֵבִית) in v 17. The panels themselves are in parallel by their vertical Declaration and Instruction structure (including the shift from macro to micro-cosmos, the juxtaposition of which also serves to emphasize the ark’s “replacing” the cosmos), as well as by the horizontal thematic progression from building to filling the ark. Further, both panels end with a form of the word (ךְָבָּד).
The entire unit itself is synthesized by seven uses each of the words “ark” (ark) and “make/do” (nvv), each appearing five times in the first panel and twice in the second. And, finally, there is a Command/Fulfillment frame around the unit with the terms “God” (God) and “Noah” (n7) in chiastic arrangement (6.13//6.22). While the outline may, perhaps, be susceptible to a more detailed delineation of parallels to the creation account, yet this broad panel structure is adequate for a general comparison: the ark, like the “heavens and the earth” of Gen 1, is first built into a three-tiered “cosmos,” then filled (with language explicitly recalling the creation narrative, e.g., “after their kind” ג והם). Significantly, Noah, the image-bearer of God, functions as God in the building of this miniature cosmos.

4. PARADISIACAL PORTRAYAL

Fourthly, the narrative portrays the ark with paradisiacal motifs. Noah, as “Adam redivivus,” abides peacefully with the animals in the Paradise of the ark. And like “the garden, the ark is constructed as a space for faithful living in the presence of God.” Especially within the context of a corrupt generation that has utterly “destroyed” its way on the earth, Noah’s household along with the remnant of creatures manifests the glory of a colony of heaven, the very irruption of the kingdom of God amidst the chaos of a world consigned to destruction. Thus Sarna writes: “Noah’s ark is the matrix of a new creation, and, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, he lives in harmony with the animals.”

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159 As does the Creation account (cf. Gen 2.3). Indeed the repetition of רָצוּת throughout this Ark pericope (x7) recalls its repetition in Creation (x10).
160 Further, the enigmatic use of ר אֹכְל in v 16 at the least serves to recall the two-fold use of ר אֹכְל in Gen 2.1, 2.
163 N.M. Sarna, Genesis, 50.
prophecies look to the peaceful dwelling among animals as an expression of Paradise, e.g., Isaiah
11.6-9 (cf. Hosea 2.18): 164

The wolf also will dwell with the lamb,
The leopard will lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child will lead them.
The cow and the bear will graze;
Their young ones will lie down together;
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child will play by the cobra's hole,
And the weaned child will put his hand in the viper's den.
They will neither hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of YHWH
As the waters cover the sea.

This Zion hymn of Isaiah portrays the paradisiacal nature of YHWH's “holy mountain,” such
cosmic mountain ideology underlying the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem, but also informing our
understanding of the ark as a temple in the deluge narrative. Even as Isaiah foretells the nations
streaming to “the mountain of the house of YHWH” (Isa 2.2), this cosmic mountain motif is also
evident in Gen 7.6-16 with its emphatically expansive description, noted by Cassuto, of the
remnant of all living creatures parading into the ark:

Here we have a mighty and amazing spectacle: the tremendous, endless procession of all the creatures
streaming from all parts of the earth to Noah's abode in order to find shelter with him in the ark. ...[A]
magnificent and graphic picture of that wondrous scene, the mass pilgrimage from all parts of the world to
the one place that promised salvation to every species of creature. 165

It may indeed be that this archetypal salvation through the ark has informed the hope of Zion, to
which the nations will stream. Exodus out of the “old cosmos” and entrance into the ark,

164 B. Jacob captures the image well: “[The animals coming to Noah] expresses not merely that the animals seek
human companionship with man, but that it is this man Noah alone whom the whole animal kingdom, forgetting all
enmities, obediently follows as their provider into the ark. It is a model for the general peace among all creatures in
Messianic time. This is more than the peace in Adam’s paradise. He who causes this miracle is a pious man who
walked with God” (Genesis, 53). B. Waltke writes: “Within this miniature cosmos, which is designed by the
Creator (see 6.15), human beings under God tend to the creation (6.18), animals submissively stay within their space
(6.20), and vegetation sustains its lords (6.20)” (Genesis, 155). Cf. G.M. Tucker, “The Peaceable Kingdom and a
Theology, 155.
165 U. Cassuto, Genesis 11, 80.
dramatically underscored by the phrase “on that precise day” (יֵשָׁבָה בְּיָמָיו 7.11), “on this same day they entered” (יֵשָׁבָה בְּיָמָיו 7.13), foreshadows the exodus out of Egypt (יֵשָׁבָה בְּיָמָיו 7.13) and arrival at the cosmic mountain of Sinai (“that same day they entered” אָרְסָן יֵשָׁבָה בְּיָמָיו Exod 12.17, 41, 51) and Israel camps at the foot of the mountain and Moses ascends to the cosmic mountain of Sinai (“that same day they entered” אָרְסָן יֵשָׁבָה בְּיָמָיו Ex 19.1-3) where Israel camps at the foot of the mountain and Moses ascends to meet with God. Furthermore, this paradisiacal depiction also serves the portrayal of Noah as a righteous man, even as a “righteous king,” for the peaceable kingdom is precisely the result of the just ruler’s advent (i.e., the Messiah). Concluding this point, now, we note the ark was designed to be a replica of the cosmos conceptualized as a three-storied house, the temple residence of God (Isa 66.1). Besides the three-storied structure, the door and window are mentioned as architectural features of the ark, and these too have counterparts in the cosmic creation house with its window of heaven (cf., e.g., Gen 7.11; 8.2) and door of the deep (cf., e.g., Job 38.8-11)—the two access points for the flood waters. As in the case of other replicas of the heavenly sanctuary, like the tabernacle and temple as well as the visible cosmos, so in the case of his ark-house it was God who provided the architectural plans (Gen 6.14-16)...Accordingly, the ark, replica of the cosmos, with prototypically glorified occupants, was in typological symbol the consummate cosmic holy city as well as the cosmic heavenly temple.

5. TEMPLE FUNCTIONS

K.A. Matthews considers the ark’s “only religious significance lies in how Noah foreshadows Moses and his faithful carrying out of the Lord’s tabernacle plans.” Aside from the obedience of building a structure, he rejects Holloway’s thesis and gives the ark “no cultic significance,” stating the dimensions of the ark and Solomonic temple, while having “a general similarity...rectangular and three-story in shape,” are not the same and that there are no allusions to the ark as temple or palace in the Old Testament. One might argue that the tabernacle and temple narratives are themselves such allusions; that cultic themes do pervade the ark narrative; that the parallels he concedes between Noah’s and Moses’ obedience in construction invite a

166 It is also marks entrance to the Holy of holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev 23.28, 29, 30). Cf. also K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11.26, 375.
168 M. Kline, God, Heaven, and Har Magdemon, 87, 89 (cf. 32).
170 Ibid.
consideration of the parallels between the ark and the tabernacle that are constructed by them as “the only buildings the Torah describes”, and that requiring architectural similarities beyond a rectangular three-storied shape may easily be subject to reductio ad absurdum (ad ridiculum). Aspects of Matthews’s argument, that the ark narrative cannot allude to the temple because “there is no allusion to the ark as temple in the Old Testament,” may also be questioned as circular. Moreover, considering the point made earlier that the ark is not a ship leaves open to investigation the question of what the ark is meant to be taken for in the narrative. It is to be hoped, then, that a return to the fundamental question “What is a temple?” will demonstrate convincingly that the ark indeed functions as a temple, and that parallels between Noah’s and Moses’ obedience inform a theological significance to the ark itself not commonly appreciated. Furthermore, and for the sake of clarity, we do not contend for the ark’s being a temple—only that it is portrayed as a temple in the narrative for theological reasons. Our interpretation of the ark, furthermore, may lead to a more satisfying conclusion, if not resolution, regarding the enigma of the term: יָדוֹן. In an article on this subject, for example, Cohen dismisses Cassuto’s suggestion that the biblical narrative refers to the ark as a parallelepiped “and not that of a ship,” and rejects outright the widely accepted Egyptian cognates אֲבָכָת and תב (‘chest, coffin,’ “palace, house”) because “never are either of these words used in Egyptian texts for boats.” He further rejects the use of “palace” אָכַלֶּל in the Akkadian flood story as suspect even while admitting that reference to a “gate” בָּהּ on both vessels, Utnapishtim’s ark in the Akkadian flood story

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171 As previously quoted, C. Westermann, Genesis I-11, 421.
172 These pre-tabernacle narratives, we have been suggesting, serve the purpose of explaining the logic and necessity of the tabernacle/temple cultus. So, one may ask, “What does the tabernacle symbolism of the ark teach?” And a basic, at least preliminary, answer, for example, would be: “The life-delivering, cosmos-sustaining function of the tabernacle cultus.”
173 C. Cohen, “Hebrew tbh: Proposed Etymologies,” JANES 4 (1972) 39 (emphasis original). While, with Cassuto, he posits the use of “ark” in Exod 2 as deliberately recalling the deluge narrative (and with this we certainly agree), this in no way resolves the problem—any rare or made up term, then, would establish a link, but why יָדוֹן?
and Sargon's receptacle in "The Legend of Sargon," is "exceedingly rare in nautical terminology."\textsuperscript{174} While one awaits a solid philological explanation of נב, the suggestion that the ark is being deliberately portrayed in terms of a temple at least explains (1) the absence of more common nautical terms, i.e., for "ship, boat," and (2) the significant presence of the "gate,"\textsuperscript{175} uncommon within nautical contexts.

Considering, then, Lundquist's propositions for defining a temple,\textsuperscript{176} we turn now to examine how the ark functions as a temple within the deluge narrative. Lundquist's propositions are as follows:\textsuperscript{177}

1. The temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.
2. The cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process.
3. The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring.
4. The temple is built on a separate, sacral, set-apart space.
5. The temple is oriented toward the four world regions or cardinal directions, and to various celestial bodies such as the polar star.
6. Temples, in their architectonic orientation, express the idea of a successive ascension toward heaven.
7. The plan and measurements of the temple are revealed by God to the king, and the plan must be carefully carried out.
8. The temple is the central, organizing, unifying institution in ancient Near Eastern society.
   \textit{&a}: The temple is associated with abundance and prosperity, indeed is perceived as the giver of these.
   \textit{&b}: The destruction or loss of the temple is seen as calamitous and fatal to the community in which the temple stood.
9. Inside the temple, images of deities as well as kings, temple priests and worshippers are washed, anointed, clothed, fed, enthroned and symbolically initiated into the presence of deity, and thus into eternal life.
10. The temple is associated with the realm of the dead, the underworld, the afterlife, the grave—being the link between this world and the next.
11. Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often at the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony.
12. The tablets of destiny are consulted, making the deity's will known to the people.
13. There is a close interrelationship between temple and law in the ancient Near East, the building or restoration of a temple perceived as the moving force behind a restating or "codifying" of basic legal principles.

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\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 41-43.
\textsuperscript{175} In the gate liturgy section of this chapter we will consider the gate aspect of the ark, if only in relation to the deluge narrative (not with reference to comparative ANE literature).
\textsuperscript{177} J.M. Lundquist, "What is a Temple?"
The temple is a place of sacrifice.

The temple and its ritual are enshrouded in secrecy.

While these categories are descriptive, it is, of course, unnecessary and unreasonable to demand of one narrative that every defining attribute of a temple be checked off as if the ark's being a temple were a matter of argument rather than a shared ANE assumption. However, the many ways in which the ark does function as a temple in the narrative are nonetheless impressive. The plan and measurements of the ark were revealed by God, and carefully carried out (prop. 7). The ark functions as a refuge from the waters of chaos, a feature implicit in props. 1, 2, and brought out as a distinctively Semitic characteristic of the cosmic mountain by G.A. Anderson. In this regard, some scholars have noted the parallel function of deliverance between the ark and tabernacle. Waltke, for example, points out that as the ark preserved Noah's covenant family through the chaotic waters, the tabernacle and Solomonic temple would later preserve the covenant people among the chaotic nations. Sailhamer similarly notes that salvation through the ark during the forty days and nights of rain may be an intentional comparison with the salvation through the Tabernacle during the forty years in the wilderness. Returning to props. 1 and 2, we recall that while the mountains are covered, the ark remains above the waters—a feature common to cosmic mountain ideology. Now while authorial intent on this point is

178 G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 190, 200f. NOTE: S.W. Holloway delineates the temple as a haven from the waters of chaos as an expansion of Lundquist's prop. 8a ("What Ship Goes There?" 336). M. Kline also notes the ark, "a sanctuary in the sense of a refuge from the stormy deep, was also a sanctuary in the sense of holy house of God. That is another feature common to the occurrences of the Har Magedon pattern we are examining; each involves the building of a temple as the site of assembly for the meeting of the Creator-King with his worshippers, men and angels" (God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 87).

179 B. Waltke, Genesis, 152.

180 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 122. Walton's depiction of the tabernacle is significant here precisely because he is not deliberately correlating it to Noah's Ark—the parallel is simply manifest of itself: "The sanctuary of Israel represented a small, idealized island of order in a world of threatened chaos. It was a place that preserved equilibrium for God's presence, which in turn was an anchor against disorder" ("Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of Leviticus," BBR 11.2 [2001] 296).

181 For example, in the 2d century B.C. book of Jubilees (4.24), Eden is thought to have functioned as a refuge from the flood waters, a feature later ascribed in Rabbinic legend to the Temple Mount of Jerusalem (b. Qidd. 69a-b). Cf. G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 201-02; A.J. Wesinick, The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the
debatable, it is yet a salient feature in the narrative that the ark gradually ascends heavenward, from the moment of its being lifted so that it rose upon the waters until those waters covered the highest mountains under the heavens, finally resting upon one of the mountains of Ararat (prop. 6).  

7.17b offers three “pictures” of progressive movement: the waters increased – lifted the ark – so that it was high above the earth. The ark, further, serves as a link between the old cosmos that was destroyed and the new creation (prop. 10). Within a cosmos of utter death and destruction, the outpouring of life from the ark, as all the animals and birds and creepers along with Noah and his household emerge, may be linked with the fecundating waters of life that pour out from the temple, the abundance and prosperity connected with it (props. 3, 8b). More directly, the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers lie in the Ararat region so that there might be a subtle reference to Gen 2.14 in “one of the mountains of Ararat” (8.4). That humanity and all living creatures spread out from the ark to cover the earth also gives the ark a cosmic orientation (prop. 5). This emanation of life into the world further defines the ark as the omphalos or umbilicus mundi (props. 1, 2, 4). Noah’s building an altar and offering up a sacrifice also links the ark with temple ideology (prop. 14), along with God’s benediction and covenant (props. 12, 13). Furthermore, Holloway’s double expansion of Lundquist’s third proposition, that the temple is founded upon the chaos waters, the apsû, as a ritual guard against them, and that the world is recreated every year by agency of the temple whose activities serve to define the primordial and liturgical New Year also find resonance with the deluge narrative. “This association of the temple with the control of water and the forces of chaos goes back to earliest


182 Cf. A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 73-76. The Egyptian term for Pyramid M(e)r, Wiercinski points out, may be defined as an “instrument or a place to ascend.”

183 C. Westermann, _Genesis 1-11_, 438. He discusses here the “strong” effect of this “majestic” sentence.

184 N.M. Sarna, _Genesis_, 57.

185 These are listed as Holloway’s own props. 2a and 2b (S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 332-33).
times.”\footnote{186} It has already been noted how the flood waters receded from the land of the new creation on New Year’s Day (Gen 8.13), paralleled by the dedication of the tabernacle (Ex 40.2), and later by that of the Solomonic temple (1Kings 8.2, 65). However, regarding the *apsû*, what Holloway notes about the Gilgamesh narrative is true also of the ark of Genesis: “the ark, built to the specifications of the god Ea to sail over the *apsû*, the chaos waters, met the criteria for the sacral locus of all ziggurats, i.e., it was founded upon the *apsû*\footnote{187}—thus, satisfying Lundquist’s prop. 4. To be sure, the language of 7.18, echoing Gen 1.2, is striking and, in all likelihood, intended to parallel the *zînī*-controlling Wind with the ark. H. A. J. Kruger sees further significance:

\[\text{According to ancient myth...a stone or some plug was placed over the waters below (the “deep”). The removal of this plug would result in the waters of the abyss rising and flooding the earth. ...In mythical literature this “stopper” was portrayed as a cubic object, and sometimes as an “ark.” Noah’s ark probably had a definite role to play in bringing the flood to an end. The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat and the waters subsided. Thus, initially the waters subsided when God created heaven and earth. Subsequently, the flood threatened creation. All the fountains of the great deep burst forth (Gen 7.11; 8.2). Eventually, when the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (8.4), the threat of the waters from the deep was reversed once again (8.1b-3). Thus, a subtle interaction is created between the ark which came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, posing as a “plug,” and the subsequent abating of the waters. It would seem that the ark played a double role, serving both as a seal against the waters from the deep surging upwards, and as a refuge for Noah (and his family). The ark in its function as a “stopper,” or “plug” reversed the flood.}\footnote{188}

While the text of Genesis, to be sure, emphasizes God as sovereign “water-controller,” and the abating of the waters as a result of divine faithfulness (8.1), yet the sequence Kruger brings out allows for a possible artistic and subtle portrayal of the ark as “stopper” in as much as the temple, being founded upon the *apsû*, serves such a function. So, too, Holloway:

The arks [of Gilgamesh and Genesis], together with the mountains upon which they rest, are therefore “primordial hillocks.” The death-dealing chaos waters upon which temples are founded and arks float are

\begin{footnotesize}
\end{footnotesize}
“healed” by the transformative functions inherent in any vital temple center. These are transmuted into Waters of Life, symbolized by the divinely nurtured “seed of all living” streaming away from the arks. 189

Certainly, one may observe the “peculiar rhetorical effect” of the ark’s coming to rest upon the mount in 8.4—the last three words of the eleven-word sentence modifying the first, stretching the thought out until it lands with a creak and a bump (טְבֵּשׁ מִיִּים ‘al hārē ḫrārā) — and assume emphatic significance beyond the play. 190 Further, that resting of the ark is surrounded by receding waters: 191

8.3: And the waters returned from the earth...
8.4: And the Ark rested... on one of the mountains of Ararat.
8.5: And the waters steadily decreased...

Finally, Noah likely offers the sacrifice to YHWH within the vicinity of the ark (prop. 14). Gen 8.19 ends, in fact, with “the ark”/ מִרְפְּאָה, and v 20 immediately begins with the Noah’s building the altar: נִשְׁבַּת נְרֹךְ לְאֵל.

CONCLUSION

Thus, and according to my literary outline delineating the ark as a temple/micro-cosmos, the ark provides an exodus out of the chaos of death and entrance into the birth of a new cosmos, this significance having implications for Israel’s understanding of the tabernacle (and later temple).

By considering the ark in light of (1) parallels to the tabernacle construction, (2) comparative literature, (3) cosmos analogy, (4) paradiplacal portrayal, and (5) temple functions, the salvation of Noah indeed appears to have been by means of a divinely instituted temple, through “the construction of the ark-temple.” 192 Westermann, too, noted the “profound meaning” of the parallel between the ark and the tabernacle: “P looks to the Tabernacle, the place where Yahweh meets his people, as the goal of the history which begins with the covenant with Abraham and

190 Cf. S.E. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 36.
191 Cf. C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 144.
192 M. Kline, God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 81.
extends to the erection of the sanctuary in Jerusalem.”  

This is in keeping with Sailhamer’s insight that the attention of the author of the deluge narrative is focused upon the ark, not the waters.  

III. FOR WORSHIP: WHO SHALL ASCEND?  

As the righteous man, Noah not only passes through the נָעַ֥ר petah of the ark sanctuary, but is able to approach the mount of YHWH for worship. Thus the ark comes to rest (נַנַּח) upon one of the mountains of Ararat (עַרְאֲרָא עֹרְלָן), where upon Noah builds an altar to YHWH and offers a “restful” (עָלָה תַּחַס) -smelling burnt offering (8.4, 20-1)—worship, then, being the climax of the recreation, for the “first thing Noah does is to engage in worship.”  

Toward understanding the significance of this worship, we will consider Noah as the righteous man, the gate liturgy with reference to the ark’s entrance, and then the altar and sacrifice in relation to its effect upon the deity.  

A. Noah as “The Righteous Man”  

Because “righteousness” (צדק sedeq), as discussed in the introductory chapter, is the prerequisite for ascending the holy mountain of God, it is good for us to consider how deliberately the present story attributes this characteristic to Noah. The righteousness of Noah is emphatic in the deluge narrative. As the “paragon of righteousness,”  his righteousness is commemorated in the subsequent Scripture of both the old (Ezek 14.14, 20) and new (Heb 11.7) covenants. Indeed, Noah is the “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet 2.5). Jewish literature as well: Sirach (44.7), Jubilees (5.19), Wisdom of Solomon (10.4), 1 Enoch (67.1)—each marks his righteousness as the  

193 C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 421.  
194 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 118.  
The central point of the Noah narrative. In fact, the history of interpretation, both Jewish and Christian, so reflects Noah's righteousness as a dominant motif, the terms "righteous" or "righteousness" almost always appear in the same context as the name "Noah." Structurally, the statement of Noah's righteousness in Gen 6.9 is the midpoint or "focus" of the Primeval History, upon which the cycle of 1.1-11.26 hinges. Being the first man called "righteous," and this at a transitional verse, he stands as the archetypal righteous man. His particular righteousness is stressed by contrast with "his generations" (אֱלֹהִי), with "the earth" (אֱלֹהִי), with "all flesh" (בָּרָא), that had destroyed its way on the earth as the singular exception (6.9, 12). Indeed, in a literary mirror to Noah's life amidst the wicked, form following substance, Noah (6.8-10) is sandwiched amidst two descriptions of the wickedness of

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198 G.A. Rendsburg, The Redaction of Genesis, 23. Rendsburg explains: "Everything from 1.1-6.8 shows the gradual trend from tob, 'good' (1.4), to ra', 'bad' (6.5), culminating with the hope personified by Noah (6.8). It will be Noah with whom God makes the covenant. Everything from 6.9-11.26 repeats the first sequence, showing the trend from saddiq, 'righteous' (6.9) to yaz'mi, 'devising evil' (11.6), culminating in the hope personified by Abra(ha)m (11.26). It will be Abra(ha)m with whom God makes another covenant" (23).


200 Lexical and thematic links (some of which are developed in this chapter) portray Noah as a new Adam and Enoch, and a type of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, beyond more general characterizations as prophet, priest, and king. In relation to kingship, e.g., W.M. Clark sees Noah within the context of election ideology as "Yahweh's saddiq," the basic function of an ANE king being to preserve world order ("The Righteousness of Noah," 277-78). ANE parallels (Ziusudra in the Sumerian account; Utanapishtim in Gilgamesh) promote viewing the Flood hero as a king (cf. also W.M. Clark, "The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History"; M.E.L. Mallowan, "Noah's Flood Reconsidered," 70; A.S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," Orientalia 32 [1963] 56-62). Kingship ideology may include the idea of primordial man abiding on the cosmic mountain (cf. J. van Seters, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King," ZAW 101 [1989] 333-42), developed messianically in Pss 2, 110, etc., and probably relates theologically to Adam's original "anointing" as prophet, priest, and king.

201 G.W. Coats states that the basic structural opposition characterizing the whole story is righteous Noah versus the corrupt and violent earth; the first part of the account narrating the destruction of the corrupt and violent earth, the second part its recreation with righteous Noah (Genesis, 76-77). Cf. also W.J. Dumbrell, Covenant & Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 13-15.
the earth (6.5-7 and 6.11-12). Wenham posits a rough palistrophe in 6.5-8 that also contrasts Noah with the rest of mankind (A//A').

\[\begin{align*}
A & \text{ The LORD sees mankind, 6.5} \\
B & \text{ The LORD regrets, 6.6} \\
C & \text{ The LORD says "I shall wipe out," 6.7} \\
B' & \text{ because I regret} \\
A' & \text{ The LORD sees Noah, 6.8}
\end{align*}\]

More explicitly, Noah’s “righteousness” is contrasted to the earth’s “destruction” in the following chiasmus, also by Wenham:

\[\begin{align*}
6.9 & \text{ Noah was righteous... among his contemporaries (11ýt'i)} \\
6.11 & \text{ The earth was ruined (nnnl)} \\
6.12 & \text{ God saw the earth was ruined (in t)} \\
7.1 & \text{ The LORD said... “you I have seen are righteous in this generation (ר"ב).”}
\end{align*}\]

Indeed, the key words of 6.5-8 form a paronomastic allusion to the name of Noah (ר"ב):

“regretted” (ר"ב), 6.6,7 (which meaning is contrasted by its use in 5.29 as “relief, comfort”); “wipe out” (ר"ב), 6.7; and “favor, grace” (ר"ב), 6.8—note here the iconic palindrome: “Noah (ר"ב) found grace (ר"ב).” Tying the finding of grace to Noah’s name makes for an interesting parallel with the Gilgamesh epic where Utnapishtim’s name means “I have found life.” While the ironic wordplay on Noah’s name between 5.29 and 6.6, 7 serves as contrast, the rest of the
wordplays build upon the birth etymology—from 6.8 \((n\text{ב})\) to 8.4 \((n\text{ג})\) and 8.9 \((n\text{ט})\), reaching fulfillment in YHWH’s smelling a “restful smell” in 8.21, replete with poetic assonance:

Some have also detected in Noah’s name \((n\text{ג})\), the echo of Enoch’s \((n\text{ג})\), an allusion made unmistakable in 6.9 (cf. 5.22, 24). Among other things, the allusion serves to accentuate Noah’s righteousness, in its recall, not merely of Enoch, but of the theologically significant genealogical line (especially so in contrast to Cain’s).

Particularly in the unit of 6.9-12, the righteousness of Noah, \(n\text{ג}\) named four times, appears deliberately contrasted with the wickedness of the earth, \(n\text{ג} n\text{ג}\) also being stated four times.

Brought into sharp focus by this contrast, the righteousness of Noah is then telescoped, given explicit four-fold, escalating emphasis in lines utilizing echo, repetition, and taw-aleph linking.

Noah was a righteous man,

\begin{verbatim}
unblemished was he in his generations
- with God Noah walked.
And Noah bore three sons....
\end{verbatim}


210 Cf. G.J. Wenham who speaks of a “progressive build-up in Noah’s characterization” (*Genesis 1-15*, 170). B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 123: “Thus, the narrator explicitly and forcefully characterizes Noah in the very first words of the act, escalating his godly virtues from “righteous” to “blameless” to his highest accolade, ‘he walked with God.’”


212 I am following “most commentators ancient and modern” in understanding 9b and 9c as two clauses (cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 169; R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 241). However even if the “perfectly righteous” translation were preferred, the adverb may still be accounted as adding emphasis so that it remains a four-fold one.
Gen 6.9b-d forms a ten-word sentence, highlighting Noah's being the tenth generation since creation (Adam), that begins and ends with "Noah."\textsuperscript{213} Gen 6.9b is the Pentateuch's first use of "righteous" (גָּדוֹל) which, in legal contexts—and such is the river ordeal concept—means "innocent" or "acquitted."\textsuperscript{214} The term has its origin in legal terminology, implying that one is judged to be in the right, or whose conduct is deemed right by the divine Judge.\textsuperscript{215} That this righteousness is the reason God delivered Noah and his household from the deluge waters is made explicit and central in 7.1: "And YHWH said to Noah, 'Enter, you and all your household, into the ark for you are the one I have seen righteous (גָּדוֹל) before Me in this generation.'"\textsuperscript{216} Noah is singled out in the direct speech three times (one pronoun and two pronominal suffixes), singled out for salvation, and the reason: because (וֹ) he is righteous. The didactic principle seems clear: only the righteous will be delivered through the waters to the holy mount. "The main purpose of the story of the Flood," writes Sailhamer, "is not to show why God sent a flood but rather to show why God saved Noah."\textsuperscript{217} "Stress is laid not on the sinful generation, but on the one ᵁᵈᵈⁱᵈ."\textsuperscript{218} This central purpose, as Westermann indicates, is rooted in God's covenant


\textsuperscript{216} Cf. M. Kline, \textit{God, Heaven, and Har Magedon}, 79: "...this righteousness of Noah is declared to be the ground for granting to him salvation from judgment and inheritance of the kingdom in the ark."

\textsuperscript{217} J.H. Sailhamer, \textit{The Pentateuch as Narrative}, 124; \textit{ibid.}, \textit{Genesis}, 118.

\textsuperscript{218} Y.T. Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," pp 50-117 in \textit{Chiasmus in Antiquity}, J.W. Welch, ed. (Provo, UT: Research Press, 1981) 100. 1 Peter 2.4-10, as an example of first century apostolic exegesis, also brings out God's ability to deliver the few righteous ("Noah, the preacher of righteousness [δικαίος ὁ προφήτης]"; "righteous [δικαίος] Lot...his righteous [δικαίος] soul") while condemning "the old world [κόσμον]," the "world of the ungodly [κόσμος ὁ ἄγαθος]," and the "cities of Sodom and Gomorrah." W.M. Clark, noting similarities between the Flood and Sodom stories, states that the question of righteousness is central to both ("The Flood and the Structure of Pre-patriarchal History," 195). Cf. H.H. Schmid, "Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: 'Creation Theology' as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology," pp 102-117 in \textit{Creation in the Old
its first usage in Scripture found in 6.18. In 6.9c, Noah is called “unblemished” or “blameless” (ןָחָיִם tāmūn)—this, as with “righteous,” being the term’s first instance in the Bible. Most frequently used to describe unblemished (and thus approved of God) sacrificial animals (Leviticus 1.3, 10, etc.), וְיִשַׁהְיָמָן is rarely applied to people as here. While “righteous” is used in a legal context, “blameless” is a cultic context, both, significantly, converging upon Noah within a narrative both legal and cultic—these were not likely to be rigidly disconnected in the ANE milieu. Wenham notes that “blamelessness” is the prerequisite for close fellowship with God, Ps 15.1-2 declaring that only the blameless may dwell in God’s holy hill, and this very significant point will be developed below. Pairing “righteous” with “blameless” signifies an absolute commitment to righteousness. 6.9d defines Noah’s righteousness and unblemishedness more concretely with the phrase “—with God Noah walked.” The inversion of the Hebrew (יִשָּׁהְיָמָן hithallek-nōah) whereby “Noah” ends the sentence that began with “Noah,” serves to emphasize him as a character. While Adam had walked with God in the midst of the paradisiacal garden (3.8), Noah walks with God amidst a crooked and perverse generation. fronting the verb, Noah’s dependence upon God is emphasized, accentuating also that the “standards by which Noah’s righteousness is judged are divine, not human.” Interestingly, blamelessness is utilized adjectivally in Ps 119.1 with reference to walk: “How blessed are those

223 B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 133. Waltke references Deut 32.4; Ps 18.30; 19.7-8.
226 N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 50.
whose walk is blameless, who walk according to the Torah of YHWH.\textsuperscript{227} Perhaps, then, “walking with God” has reference here to walking according to the Torah of God. To be sure, Noah’s exacting obedience to the commands of God, likened to the precision carried out for the construction of the tabernacle, is a pedagogical point in the narrative. In any case, Noah’s walking with God is contrasted with the all flesh of 6.12 which had destroyed its (or his, i.e., God’s?) “way” (רַוְיָה) upon the earth. Noted by many commentators,\textsuperscript{228} there is also here a parallel being drawn with Enoch who walked with God and so was subsequently translated into heaven. “In describing Noah in this way,” Sailhamer notes, “the author intentionally draws a parallel between the deliverance of Noah from the Flood and Enoch’s deliverance from death (5.22-24). The point is clear enough: God delivers those who ‘walk with’ him and who do not ‘corrupt his way.’”\textsuperscript{229} Not only is Noah being paralleled to Enoch (תָּנַח הַנּוֹכַךְ) thematically in 6.9, but the poetic syntax of the phrase appears to be making a visual allusion to Enoch as well, the last three letters, read backwards, being: $H-N-K$.\textsuperscript{230} Next, the statement of Noah’s begetting three sons in 6.10 also confirms, albeit subtly, Noah’s righteousness (cf. Job 1.2; 42.13; Pss 127, 128).\textsuperscript{231} Finally, 6.22 highlights his righteousness by the rare and emphatic statement of Noah’s exacting obedience, such a formula paralleled by the construction of the tabernacle.\textsuperscript{232} Given the other creation vocabulary in the deluge narrative, the use of the word $ן	ext{k}{	ext{ן}}$ may be a deliberate


\textsuperscript{228} J. Sailhamer, The Pentateuch as Narrative, 124.

\textsuperscript{229} J.M. Sasson, “Word-Play in Gen 6.8-9,” 166.

\textsuperscript{230} G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 170. Wenham also notes that having three sons links Noah with “Adam and Terah (Gen 4.1-2, 25; 11.27), who also fathered three sons and stand at turning points of history” (170). Cf. also M. Kline’s proposal that the sons were born by divine intervention, God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 80.

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., 176. Wenham also notes that verbal allusions to the Creation account suggest Noah is more like God than like Adam. B. Jacob notes that God had only “said” in v 13, but Noah, taking it as a command, is thus praised in v 22 for his obedience (Genesis, 50). Cf. N.M. Sarna, Genesis, 53.
echo of creation's irresistible obedience to the divine word (1.7, 9, 11, 15, 24). If YHWH's command to build the ark is a test of faith (i.e., to build an ark before the coming deluge is revealed), as von Rad plausibly suggests by comparing the account to the test of Abraham, then his obedience is being magnified all the more. Noah's faithfulness is stressed in the Hebrew of 6.22 by a chiasm: הַיְּדוּעַ ... וְהָבֹא אֶל. Upon entrance into the ark obedience is further stressed through use of an inclusion, 7.5a, 7.9b. These reports on Noah's obedience, tied to the building and entering of the ark, serve as a key didactic refrain, keeping Noah's righteousness in view. The parallel phrasing of Noah's obedience to God's command for exiting the ark (8.16-17//18-19) also illustrates his minute obedience. Furthermore, it may be postulated that Noah's differentiating between clean and unclean animals, altar-building and sacrifice, and Sabbath observance contribute to his righteous obedience, as well as his overall concern and care for the animals. As a last point, his righteousness is not only stressed by

234 G. von Rad, Genesis, 120. From a Source-critical perspective, von Rad states that while P asserts Noah's righteousness, the Yahwist demonstrates it by Noah's obedience.
236 S.E. McEvenue, Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 28, 33.
237 Cf. B. Waltke, Genesis, 124, 131.
238 Ibid., 141. That obedience is also notable in Noah's not exiting the Ark until commanded by God to do so. Thus Calvin states: "How great must have been the fortitude of the man, who, after the incredible weariness of a whole year, when the deluge has ceased, and new life has shown forth, does not yet move a foot out of his sepulcher, without the command of God" (Calvin, Genesis, 280). So, too, B. Jacob notes: "It is generally assumed Noah sends forth the birds to discover whether the earth is dry so that he can disembark. Noah however will not disembark until told by God; Noah is not impatient" (Genesis, 57).
240 G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 177.
241 B. Waltke, Genesis, 124. The narrative certainly marks out Noah's care, e.g., of the dove (8.9), the description of which John Skinner called "unsurpassed...for tenderness and beauty of imagination" (A Critical Commentary on the Book of Genesis [2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930] 156). So, too, von Rad marks how the dove's return is "described with great affection; the narrator's eye lingers on every movement" (Genesis, 121).
contrast with “all the earth,” but also by the deliberate suppression of any statement concerning the righteousness of Noah’s family. 242

B. The Gate Liturgy

Setting the narrative within the context of cosmic mountain ideology, Noah may be viewed, as was Adam in Gen 1-3, as a priest. 243 Not only by his association with the sanctuary symbolized by the ark, but also in his distinguishing between the clean and unclean animals (7.2), 244 his sabbatical agenda (8.10, 12), 245 and, perhaps chiefly, 246 in his offering up of the burnt offering to YHWH, 247 Noah is portrayed as a priest. The priest is the righteous man who may draw near to God, so that we are hereby brought back to the idea of the “gate liturgy.”

Is the concept of the gate liturgy to be found in the deluge narrative? Broadly, and in as much as it may be related to the river ordeal, 248 the idea that only the righteous man may “enter” is certainly present. Righteousness, in the ancient Near East, was associated with the primeval

244 Cf. Lev 10.10, 11.1-47. Kline notes: “That the ark was a sanctuary, a holy theocratic formation, and its occupants a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, is also evidenced by the introduction of the clean-unclean distinction in the regulations governing the gathering of animals and birds into it (Gen 7.2, 3). Elsewhere this distinction appears again in the Israelite theocracy in connection with dietary rules” (God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 88). Cf. N.M. Sarna, Genesis, 54.
245 Compare to the priestly regulations, Lev 12.2, 13.4-5, 21, 26, 31-33, 50-54, etc.
246 J.R. Davila (“The Flood Hero as King and Priest” JNES 54.3 [1995] 199-214) isolates the sacrifice as the “faint echo [in the J source] of the Flood hero’s priestly status in Mesopotamia” (208), and finds that in ANE parallel Flood stories the hero was most likely a priest. Cf. also A.S. Kapelrud, “Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings,” 56-62. Kapelrud highlights that temple builders were kings under the god-king, but also served as the high priest for that god-king.
247 For a brief discussion on viewing the sacrifice as propitiatory versus as a thank-offering, cf. G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 189-90. Kline refers to this priestly duty as a consecration of the world to God (God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 91).
248 An interesting parallel is in a Nungal hymn of Sumer, where the temple is called “Ilurugu-house which does not kill the upright (while) sorting (out) the evil” (T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East, 538).
mound, being the foundation of the earth (and thus of the king’s throne), and so may be paralleled with the biblical cosmic mountain imagery of Gen 2-3. And even as Adam’s disobedience caused him to be expelled through the cherubim-guarded “gates,” so Noah’s careful and complete obedience is here emphasized as a display of his righteousness, enabling him “to enter.” Viewing the ark as a kind of temple, moreover, and recalling that the temple is an architectural cosmic mountain, a full-orbed gate liturgy comes into focus.

1. THE DOORWAY OF THE ARK

Part of the divinely revealed instructions for the ark include setting “the entrance of the ark” (הַנַּחַת הַמִּסְיָר) on its side (6.16), a feature emphasized in as much as it is fronted before the verb:250

The doorway is mentioned in 6.16 “because entering and leaving the ark is central to the subsequent narrative (cf. 7.16).” It is the text itself, in other words, that sets the door at center stage. The deliverance from the deluge waters, and establishing of the covenant, is then described with particular reference to entering the ark in v 18: “But I will confirm My covenant with you and you will enter (נָא) the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” The term נָא bō together with the following enclitic pronoun, is traditionally rendered “you.” The term הָבָּן bō is used 14 times in the narrative (6.9-9.17), the first pair of uses rather

249 In Egypt, e.g., the symbol for the throne dais in the Ramesside period was m3t, standing for “righteousness” and representing the “Primeval Mound.” Cf. S. Paas, Creation and Judgment, 87; idem., “‘He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven...’ (Amos 9.6a)” UF 25 (1993) 319-25; L. Jacobs, “Jewish Cosmology,” 73. See Pss 9.9; 97.2; Prov 10.25; 16.12; 20.28. Kingship, as the highest authority, was often associated with justice/righteousness in the ANE and in the Bible, royal symbols becoming symbols of justice so that the throne was identified with the administration of justice (i.e., the throne “of justice”) and the hall as a court of law (1 Ki 3.9; 7.7) (Z. Falk, Hebrew Law in Biblical Times, 2nd ed. [Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2001] 50; idem., “Two Symbols of Justice,” VT 10.1 [1960] 72-4). The implications, having Cosmic Mountain ideology in mind, are that the mount, being the deity’s throne, is necessarily a mount of justice/righteousness, the waters being the “court,” whereby those who approach are tried by ordeal. “Kingship, justice, wisdom and other institutions were to a greater or lesser extent, whether explicitly or implicitly, based on creation” (S. Paas, Creation and Judgment, 19).


ironic: “The end of all flesh has *come* before Me” (6.13) and “I Myself am ready to *bring* the deluge of waters upon the earth” (6.17). All other uses have reference to entering the ark (cf. 6.18, 6.19, 6.20, 7.1, 7.7, 7.9, 7.13, 7.15, 7.16 [2x], 8.9, 8.11). Such a proliferation of “entrances,” and these in relation to the temple-like ark, may at least cause one to suspect an entrance liturgy ideal at work.252 Indeed, both the entering and exiting of the ark are elaborately emphasized, paralleling each other by the fourfold repetitions of קָבָה (7.13-16)253 and of קָפָה (8.16-19):254

## EXIT — Genesis 8.16-19

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&quot;<em>Go out</em> (קָפָה) from the ark, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.</td>
<td>A’</td>
<td>&quot;<em>So Noah went out</em> (קָפָה), and his sons and his wife and his son’s wives with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>All living creatures that are with you, from all flesh: of birds and of all animals and of all creepers that creep upon the earth,</td>
<td>B’</td>
<td>All living creatures, all creepers, all birds, whatever creeps upon the earth, according to their families,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><em>bring them out</em> (קָפָה) with you</td>
<td>C’</td>
<td>they went out (קָפָה) from the ark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>*so they may swarm in the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.</td>
<td></td>
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252 M. Kline, whose (over-lapping) study regards eschatological “har-magedon” typology, notes the emphasis on “redemptive gathering”: “In the days of Noah the ark was the refuge into which the remnant people were gathered. This theme of gathering into the ark is given great prominence in the composition of the Flood narrative. It is the theme of the second of the seven concentrically arranged sections of the account (Gen 7.1-5) and it is recapitulated at the beginning of both the third section on the flood proper (Gen 7.6-12) and the fourth section on the prevailing of the judgment waters (Gen 7.13-24). This triple mention of the gathering is indicative of its importance in the Flood judgment seen as a redemptive act. That the Lord himself is the Gatherer-Harvester is manifested by the fact that the entry of the remnant people into the ark was sealed by his act of securing them within the sanctuary place of refuge (Gen 7.16)” (God, Heaven, and Har Magedon, 87).

253 "The sentence structure is dominated by a single verb that occurs four times: ‘They went in’ 13, 15, 16. Apart from this, there is only one other finite verb, in the last sentence: God has ‘commanded’ it” (Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 436). NOTE: My structural outline, by including vv 6-12, adds two more occurrences of קָבָה (vv 7, 9).

254 "By highlighting this particular verb, the author emphasizes the departure from the ark" (V.P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17, 307).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Now Noah was a son of six hundred years</th>
<th>A'</th>
<th>And it happened after seven days (in the sixth hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month of the seventeenth day of the month, on that precise day —)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>when the deluge came, the waters upon the earth.</td>
<td>B'</td>
<td>the waters of the deluge came upon the earth. all the fountains of the great deep were burst asunder, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>So Noah entered —and his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him— into the ark, from the face of the waters of the deluge.</td>
<td>C'</td>
<td>On this same day, Noah entered (κατα), and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>From the clean animals and from the animals that are not clean and from the birds, and from all that creep upon the earth.</td>
<td>D'</td>
<td>they and all wildlife according to their kind, and all herd-animals after their kind, and all creepers that creep upon the earth after their kind, and all birds according to their kind: all little birds and all winged creatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>two by two they entered (νεκταριον) to Noah into the ark, male and female,</td>
<td>E'</td>
<td>And they entered (νεκταριον) to Noah into the ark, two by two, from all flesh that has the breath of life within. And those that entered (νεκταριον) were male and female of all flesh;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>just as God commanded Noah.</td>
<td>F'</td>
<td>they entered (κατα) just as God had commanded him —now YHWH shut him in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The central account of entering the ark, 7.13-16, has been noted by scholars for its expansive detail and "festive tone," giving it a dominating role. Indeed, the repetition of κατα serves to

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255 This is based on Wenham's outline, *Genesis 1-15*, 177. Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 431. R.E. Longacre ("The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative," 247) suggests a broad chiasmus: Yahweh (7.1-5) — Noah (7.6-10) — Noah (7.11-16a) — Yahweh (7.16b), which I have worked out in more detail:

A LORD/ enter (7.1)
B delineation of animals (7.2-3)
C rain on the earth/ forty days and forty nights (7.4)
D LORD commanded him/ Noah was six hundred years old (7.5-6)
E Noah with his sons, his wife, his sons' wives, enter ark (7.7)
E' clean and not-clean animals, by pairs, enter ark to Noah (7.8-9a)
D' God had commanded Noah/ six hundredth year of Noah's life (7.9b-11)
C' rain on the earth/ forty days and forty nights (7.12)
B' delineation of animals (7.13-14)
A' entered/ LORD (7.15-16)


257 C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 431. He further states, also relevant, that the "studied solemnity" of the entrance into the Ark "lays greater emphasis on God's saving action over against his sentence of destruction"(431); 7.13-16a is "the climax" of the narrative (436). Cf. J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 125.
portray entrance into the ark as a great procession. To be sure, entering the ark is the only means of refuge and deliverance from judgment. But further, beyond Noah’s sole reception of the divine “blueprints,” entrance into the ark itself, being discriminatory, also serves to promote a liturgical reading. The ark as temple (cosmic mountain), that is, in temple mythopoetic context, holds promise for unfolding the emphasis.

2. CONDITIONAL ENTRANCE INTO THE ARK

Who shall ascend the hillock of YHWH? In Gen 1-3 Adam must descend and be barred from the gates of Paradise through his disobedience. Here in Gen 7.1, YHWH says to Noah: “Enter (אָבָא), you and all your household, into the ark for (נָע) you are the one I have seen righteous (יְהִי רְשֵׁי) before me in this generation.” Running like an undercurrent through the text is the fundamental question of epic event: Who may enter and so be saved? Thus we find that entrance is (1) by divine prerogative and command alone: יִשְׂרָאֵל, and (2) that it is conditioned morally and ethically: רְשֵׁי יְהִי יְהִי רְשֵׁי. The second point explains the first—and this is at issue in the narrative: Noah’s righteousness is the reason why YHWH grants him and his household entrance, that entrance itself being indistinguishable from salvation. “I have seen,” further, forms a remarkable contrast with 6.5, 12 (also echoed in “this generation”). From the perspective of a cosmic “river ordeal” with God as Judge, destruction and salvation are both fully explained: “for (כִּי) the earth is filled with unrighteousness” (6.13) and “for (כִּי) you are the one I have seen

258 Ibid., 436.
259 For issues concerning the precise nature of this righteousness, cf. W.M. Clark, “The Righteousness of Noah”; C. Westermann’s brief review (Genesis 1-11, 426-27). Even if one takes, with Clark (274), the כִּי as promissory rather than causal, “righteousness” is still the emphatic prerequisite of entry.
260 K.A. Matthews, similarly, states: “the Lord explains that Noah’s moral conduct is the reason he and his family are preserved” (Genesis 1-11.26, 357).
261 B. Waltke, Genesis, 137.
righteous” (7.1). We return now to Wenham’s insight regarding the “blamelessness” (תאניım) of Noah being a “prerequisite for close fellowship with God” and its correspondence with Ps 15.1-2, considered by Koch the clearest example of a temple entrance liturgy:

YHWH, who may dwell in Your tent, who may tabernacle on Your holy mount?
Whoever’s walk is blameless (ש minOccurs), whoever’s deeds are righteous (צדק).

The holiness of YHWH and his dwelling taken for granted, emphasis rather is focused upon the entrance liturgy—upon the repeated interrogative who (למה). Significantly, the deluge narrative begins in 6.9, as if in answer, by ascribing both attributes to Noah:

נה איש צ實現ים תנייה יבтелиיהו

The ark – tabernacle parallels extend, then, beyond their construction to the emphasis placed on the conditionality of their being entered. Leviticus 1.3 states only “unblemished” (טוממין) animals may be presented, and this at the “entrance” (שער) of the tabernacle of meeting before YHWH. As the tabernacle/temple is an architectural cosmic mountain, entrance into the holy of holies symbolizes ascent to the summit of God’s holy mountain—“who shall ascend?” may thus, as will be considered in the next chapter, be linked to the Day of Atonement.

Our reading of the deluge narrative, we trust, is not merely original and fresh, but grounded textually. As such, hints and gestures of this reading may be glimpsed in the work of other scholars. Westermann, for example, stated: “One can understand too the studied solemnity [of 7.13-16a]. P portrays here the entrance of the obedient, pious man into the place of salvation or preservation, a very reserved and distant hint of the entrance into the sanctuary, the place of

265 The conditionality of entrance/doorway bolsters the argument for viewing the ark as symbolizing the tabernacle/temple.
salvation and preservation." Sailhamer also emphasizes the parallels of entry between the ark and tabernacle. However, rather than linking הֵרָם with Noah’s character (6.9), he mentions that Noah’s entry into the ark is accompanied by “seven pairs” of every clean animal. Of further significance, Hamilton notes the correspondence, all the more remarkable as he is not working under a temple mythopoeic context, between the garden of Eden and the ark:

There is much here reminiscent of Gen 3. Inside the ark parallels inside the garden; outside the ark parallels outside the garden. Inside there is salvation; outside there is not. Inside there is immunity from disaster; outside there is inevitable death.

Given the analogy between the garden and the holy of holies of the tabernacle/temple, and that between the ark and the tabernacle/temple, Noah’s entrance may be understood as that of a high priest, the “righteous man,” ascending the cosmic mountain of YHWH—an idea “fleshed out,” as it were, when Noah walks the summit of the Ararat mount. The veil or separing off the holy of holies served as an “objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas,” a manifest function of the ark door.

3. NOAH AS THE ENTERER

In every sense, then, Noah is defined as one able “to enter.” The “you” of 7.1 stands at the head of the Hebrew clause emphatically. The narrative, further, makes it a point to qualify the other

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268 V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 295. Hamilton makes another salient comparison: “In one way Noah’s experience at the top of one of the mountains of Ararat is no less frightening and undoing than is that of Moses at the top of Mt. Sinai. Both find themselves at the top of a mountain that is enveloped in either a rainstorm or an electrical storm” (301).
“entries” as being via Noah.  
7.1—his sons (יִשְׂרָאֵל), his wife (וָנָה), and his sons’ wives (יִשְׂרָאֵלָה), they enter with him (וָנָה),
7.7. Indeed, this delineation is a key expression in the narrative (6.18; 7.7, 13; 8.16; cf.
7.1). Hamilton notes the use of the resumptive pronoun at the end of 6.18 serves to establish
Noah as the character of supreme significance in the paragraph.  
The exclusivity of Noah and
his household, so as to make Noah the father of a new humanity, may even be considered the
most significant distinctive of the Torah’s deluge narrative when compared to the Mesopotamian
parallels, even so as to constitute a major theme. Even the wildlife enters “to keep alive with
you” (לְאִתָּך֝), 6.19, for “everything will come to you” (לְאִתָּך֝), 6.20, specifically “to Noah into the ark” (לְאִתָּך֝), 7.9, 15. This phrase is all the more significant as the
construct, the double use of ‘el in asyndeton (with one ‘el referring to a person and the other to a

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271 Cf. K.A. Matthews (Genesis 1-11.26, 368) who notes how the singular “you” is highlighted throughout the
narrative. 
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you” (לְאִתָּך֝), 6.19, for “everything will come to you” (לְאִתָּך֝), 6.20, specifically “to Noah into the ark” (לְאִתָּך֝), 7.9, 15. This phrase is all the more significant as the
construct, the double use of ‘el in asyndeton (with one ‘el referring to a person and the other to a

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274 Cf. Waltke’s comments (Genesis, 136).
275 N.M. Sarna, Genesis, 48. This fatherhood is part Adam typology: Noah is the first born after Adam’s death;
both beget three sons, one of who turns out to be degenerate (49-50).
276 Their coming “to you to keep alive” highlights that for the creatures Noah, as mediator, is savior.
place), is rare. And yet, it occurs four times in the deluge narrative, every time with Noah and the ark as the two objects harmonized (7.9, 7.15, 8.9 twice).

Returning to 6.18 one finds God’s covenant with Noah at root: “But I will confirm My covenant with-you (גֵּפֶן), and-you-will-enter (גַּמֵּשׁ) the ark—you (גֵּפֶן), and-your-sons (צְּבָע), and-your-wife (גְּרֶנֶשׁ), and the wives of your-sons (צְּבָע) with-you (גֵּפֶן).” Thus there are three clauses, the first and last ending with the emphatic “with you” גֵּפֶן.

Entrance into the ark being central (18b), that entrance is by way of covenant with Noah (18a), Noah himself—you (גֵּפֶן)—being defined as inclusive of his household (18c). In 7.1 it is precisely “your household” that replaces v 18’s delineation.

A similar relationship is offered in regard to the creatures of the earth, manifest by tracing the three different forms of נַנְבִּיָא bō that tie 6.18-20 into a literary unity. Noah is told, v 18, “you will enter” גֵּפֶן, then, v 19, “you will bring...with you” (גֵּפֶן...גֵּפֶן) the living creatures, and

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279 For the unnecessary “with you” utilized to establish Noah as the thematic participant, cf. R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 243-44.
280 While consigning 6.18 and 7.1 to P and J respectively, S.E. McEvenue yet notes their both having an emphatic ‘attd (The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 48). Also relevant, McEvenue (51) draws out the chiastic symmetry in vv 13-21, reflecting the alternating emphasis of the LORD (“I”) and Noah (“you”):

| 13b | wʻhinʼnf |
| 17a | waʻnft |
| 18b | ‘attd |
| 21a | wʻattd |
then, in order for him to bring them with him, the living creatures, v 20, “will come to you”
(דבשְׁתִי עָבְרָנִי). Here, the third masculine singular objective suffix is striking—it was Noah whom YHWH shut in, his household and all the living creatures, the remnant cosmos, being delivered “in him.” This “celebrated” sentence, striking in its anthropomorphism, serves “as a final punctuation of the unit,” contrasted by the onset of the deluge in the next unit. YHWH’s shutting the door is highlighted, first, as the climactic conclusion to the unit of 7.6-16, and secondly, by its contrast to Mesopotamian parallels whereby the heroes shut themselves in. Here Longacre’s comments are worth quoting:

What do we do, however, with the striking clause, ‘And Yhwh shut him in’ at the end of verse 16? This clause seems to be something special. It represents an event which is subsequent to the simultaneous events which are reported in the embedded simultaneous paragraph which precedes it. Although cryptic and short, this sentence patterns as one of the main events of the story. In brief, God who has threatened to judge mankind and encouraged Noah to make extensive preparations to save himself from the catastrophe, now here deliberately shuts the gates of mercy on mankind while shutting Noah securely within. Further, it pictures God in an active role such as is not usual in other references to the catastrophe....

That Noah is shut “within” or “behind” the door, emphasizes the wicked who are excluded, outside the door, for the next verse immediately begins: אֵל יְלַעַר לָא בִּ֗א. That deluge had already been defined a few verses earlier in 7.11 as the opening (�单ק) of the windows of heaven, so that the account may be read as the difference between two petahs. YHWH’s shutting the door

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282 The examples could be multiplied. In 6.21, Noah is commanded: “But as for you (גִּמְלָה), take for yourself (ןָּפָּג) and gather it for yourself (ךָּבָּר),” such a work then defined as being “for you (גִּמָּל) and for them (גִּמָּל).”
283 B. W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 35. B. Jacob refers to these words as “the religious quintessence of the whole story” (Genesis, 54). Cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, 120.
284 B. Waltke, Genesis, 139.
manifests his “radically” distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked. Andersen demonstrates chiastic patterning links entry into the ark with the onset of the deluge:

The whole of Gen 7.6-16 is an elaborate piece of epic composition, in which there are only two events both already stated at the beginning, namely, the onset of the flood and entry into the ark. Descriptions of these events alternate—flood (v 6), entry (vv 7-9), flood (vv 10-12), entry (vv 13-16a), flood (v 17). A third event (the closing of the door) is mentioned only once (v 16b).

Wenham agrees this coming of the flood and entry into the ark are to be seen “as essentially one event.” So, too, McEvenue notes the “sharply contrasted echo: on this day of condemnation, on this same very day a festive salvation by entry.” Longacre, as well, utilizing discourse analysis, determined the cosmic catastrophe is contemporaneous with Noah’s entering the ark as one event, the second event being YHWH’s shutting Noah in the ark. The dating of 7.11 serves, further, “to solemnize” the opening of the flood gates, and both “solemnize the entry, as is clear from ‘on this day’ and ‘on this very day’ in 7.11b and 7.13a. The second date, and the second cosmic effect (i.e., 7.11) are referred to the entry....” Mesopotamian parallels confirm the expression “on that day” as a day of both destruction and recreation, violence and birth.

One might even refer back to 6.17, 18 for the same point: the first mention of יָזִּית is set in contrast to Noah’s deliverance via the ark which is itself mentioned as consequent to the covenant. Thus, given the deluge, the contrast is between the salvation of the righteous (by entrance) and the judgment of the wicked (by barred entrance), the focal point being the shutting...

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286 So B. Waltke, Genesis, 152. Cf. Gen 19.10; Ex 12.23; Josh 2.19; Matt 25.10-13. “God’s distinguishing grace makes the entrance to the ark a seal of safety to Noah, but it is the door of death to the world” (W. Gage, The Gospel of Genesis, 125).
289 S.E. McEvenue, Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 62.
291 S.E. McEvenue, Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 54 (emphasis added).
293 S.E. McEvenue notes that vv 17 and 18a are related by contrast though he unjustly severs mention of the Ark (18b) from the unit (The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 47).

213
of the door in 7.16. The point is reiterated clearly at the close of the chapter, vv 22 and 23, where the dramatically detailed account of the death of “all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life...from man to animals to creepers to the birds,” etc., is followed by: “Only Noah survived, and those who were with him in the ark” "שֹׁהוּ כָּל־נְפֶשׁ וְגוֹזָם אֵלֶּה מִמָּזִיקָם. This contrast is emphasized by the parallel use of *niphals*, ascribing the divergent fates to YHWH’s sovereign justice.294 Indeed, the ark’s entry and exit frame the deluge.295 The same relationship between ark and deluge is established with the building instructions for the ark. Gen 6.14-16 is a tight literary piece, with הָיוֹתָה ("make") as the first and last word, and the ark, as *leitmotif*, occurring 12 times (5 times as the noun הָיוֹתָה תֶּבָּה, 7 times by suffix).296 This piece, however, is framed (6.13, 17) by divine declarations to destroy (רָצַע שִׁלַּח) all flesh (יָשַׁעַל kol-bāṣar) and the earth (הָארֶץ hā’āres). The ark, by way of summary, as a typological (or symbolic) temple, is highlighted as the means of deliverance, and Noah, the righteous man, is the only one able to enter—the rest who are saved are so only because they are both (1) with him (שָׁם), and (2) in the ark (תֶּבְּא). Here, Jacob captures the theology vividly: “The others will be saved ‘with Noah.’ The essence of the whole story is the preservation of the world for the sake of a pious man; all others live so to speak in his shadow.”297 But God’s everlasting covenant, significantly, is established not merely with Noah but with his sons and their seed along with every living creature—these are all defined in 9.10 more narrowly as “all that came out of the ark (רָצַע שִׁלַּח כְּלָל),” which is also to

297 B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 50.
say, all who had entered. To close with a basic point: an “entrance liturgy” regards (1) entrance stipulations for (2) an entrance/doorway (תָּרֶה) of (3) a temple or sanctuary. The entrance/doorway of the ark qualifies without question for the first two and, given the nature of the stipulation (גֵּרָה 7.1) along with the manifest parallels with the tabernacle/temple, the case for the third is strong. It may also be helpful at this point to recall the last chapter’s discussion on the gate of Eden. The first two mentions of תָּרֶה in the Pentateuch are the garden “entrance” (Gen 4.7), likely referring to the cherubim-guarded way to the tree of life, and Gen 6.16, referring to the entrance/doorway of the ark.

C. The Priestly Sacrifice of Atonement

Noah, as pointed out earlier, is portrayed as priest. Holloway, who describes Noah as “one exercising priestly functions,” states: “as a priestly figure only is Noah qualified to administer an ark patterned on the Solomonic temple.” Beyond this, however, Noah stands as the prototypical— one might even say “cosmic”—priest chiefly in his offering up of the lavish, especially in proportion to the remnant of animals exiting the Ark (cf. Westermann’s remarks [Genesis 1-11, 453]). Further, and contrary to the LXX and Sam.,’s addition of “clean” to the birds, 7.3 designates the seven pairs toward “keeping the species alive.” Thus their inclusion in 8.20 may function as a literary device to demonstrate Noah’s piety. B. Jacob even founds man’s permission to eat animal meat (9.3) upon the basis of Noah’s offering up of animals. He also suggests the offering up of the seven clean pairs, based on the parallel with Job (Job 1.5), was for humankind (the seven members of Noah’s household) to stand atoned in the new creation.
world-atoning, God-propitiating sacrifice atop the mountain. Thus Matthews well refers to Noah as the “priest for the postdiluvian world.”

The narrative emphasis upon Noah’s act of worship, his building the altar and offering up the burnt offerings, will become particularly evident as we consider now its depiction as the first act of the new creation, its propitiating nature, and its function as the dénouement to the etiological narrative.

I. ALTAR-BUILDING AND SACRIFICE AS THE PRIMARY ACT

Gen 8.20 “records the first building of an altar in Scripture (one is evidently presupposed but not mentioned in 4.3-5) and the first offering of ‘burnt offerings’ (נָאַרָיִם).” Thus the first human work witnessed by the liberated earth, as von Rad observes, was “an altar for God the Lord.”

By portraying worship as the first act of the new creation, the narrative thus creates an emphasis upon Noah’s altar-building and sacrifice. While it is true the “first building,” as Westermann also underscores, “is an altar built to Yahweh,” yet that act, in retrospect, is shown in the narrative to have been, far from a spontaneous response to deliverance, the fulfillment of methodical calculation from the beginning. Indeed, the discussion of “clean” (ךָּפֶּה tāhōr) animals in 7.2, the first occurrence of this root (cf. Lev 11; Deut 14.3-12), clearly looks toward the sacrifice of 8.20. Meat not having been allowed the table of man thus far in the narrative’s...


302 G.J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 189. Cf. his discussion on the nature of the sacrifice as propitiatory (189-90).


304 C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 453.

history, the distinction between clean and unclean must be cultic rather than dietary. Not only the antediluvian preparations for sacrifice, but also the singular usage (in Genesis) of a common technical term in cultic law, “restful smell” (יְהַנֵּיהוֹהָה rēah hanniḥōāh 8.21; cf. Lev 1.9; 2.2; 3.5, etc.), underscores the significance of Noah’s act. Sailhamer, further, notes the significant parallels between Noah’s altar and Moses’ altar at Mount Sinai in Exod 24:

1. The building of the altar follows a major act of God’s salvation—God’s rescue of Noah from the flood and God’s deliverance from bondage in Egypt; (2) the altar and the offering mark the establishment of a “covenant” (בְּרִית bērīṯ) with God (Gen 9.9; Exod 24.7); (3) the outcome of both covenants is God’s “blessing” (Gen 9.1, wayḇāreḵ; Exod 23.25, ʿāḥērāḵ); (4) the central provision is protection from the “beasts of the field” or “wild animals” (Gen 9.2, ʾaḥayyāt ḫāˇāreḵ; Exod 23.29, ḫayaṭṭāḵ ḥāṣṣāqeh) and human enemies (Gen 9.5-6; Exod 23.22); (5) specific mention is made that the “earth” will be preserved from further destruction (Gen 9.11; Exod 23.29); (6) in Genesis the visible “sign” of the covenant is a rainbow in the “clouds” (beʾḥāṣnān, 9.13-17); in Exodus the covenant is marked by the appearance of the glory of God in the “cloud” (heʾḥāṣnān, 24.15) that covered the mountain; (7) both covenants state stipulations that must be obeyed (Gen 9.4; Exod 24.3).

2. A SACRIFICE OF PROPITIATION

The burnt offerings (_offerah) offered up by Noah are a means both of calling upon YHWH and of atoning for the worshiper (cf. Lev 1.4; Job 1.5). Though the significance of this act of worship is often understated for theological reasons, the text clearly indicates God’s heart changed toward mankind though mankind’s heart itself had not changed (cf. 6.5, 8.21). Indeed, given

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306 J.H. Walton, Genesis, 313.
308 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 131; idem., The Pentateuch as Narrative, 128. For the fourth and last points, cf. S.D. Mason, “Another Flood?” NOTE: The usage of “clouds” in Gen 9.13-17 assumes their presence, thus forming a more striking comparison between the Ararat mountain and Mount Sinai: the Presence of God is marked by a cloud-covered mountain.
309 B. Walke, Genesis, 142.
310 G.J. Wenham steers a clear course: “Ultimately, of course, the acceptance of every sacrifice depends on God’s antecedent gracious purpose, whereby he appointed the sacrificial system as a means of atonement for reconciliation between God and man. A fundamental principle of the Levitical law is ‘I have given (the blood) for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls.’ But this is not to deny sacrifice’s importance; rather it is to assert its real efficaciousness, because God has declared it so and promised to respond to it” (Genesis 1-15, 190). Also considering the sacrifice propitiatory: H. Gunkel, O. Procksch; J. Skinner; G. von Rad; J.H. Sailhamer; B. Waltke. Contra: U. Cassuto; A. Dillman; C. Westermann; A. Ross, who suggest the sacrifice was merely an act of thanksgiving.
311 B. Walke rightly states: “The Flood effects no fundamental change in humanity, but Noah’s sacrifice effects a change in God by pacifying his righteous indignation against sin” (Genesis, 143). It also helpful here to keep in mind J.H. Walton’s discussion of the LORD’s being “sorry” in Gen 6.6, 7 as an “auditing of accounts” (Genesis,
that God’s heart has changed while the primary reason for the deluge (man’s heart) has not changed, the Deity, apart from a propitiating sacrifice, would seem open to the charge of capriciousness, the reader wondering: “Was the flood in vain?”\(^{312}\) That is, did the deluge accomplish anything if the original circumstance and conflict remains? Indeed, ancient Mesopotamian parallels lead precisely to this conclusion. In the Sumerian flood account, for example, the gods immediately lament over the irrevocability of their decision, the deliverance of Ziusudra by the clever god Enki being a private and covert attempt to undermine the totality of devastation (iii.15-17):\(^{313}\)

\[
\text{That day Nintur wept over her creatures}
\text{and holy Inanna was full of grief over their people;}
\text{but Enki took counsel with his own heart.}
\]

Similarly the *Epic of Gilgamesh* portrays the gods as horrified over the weight of their impulsive decision (XI 113-126):\(^{314}\)

\[
\text{Even the gods took fright at the Deluge,}
\text{they left and went up to the heaven of Anu,}
\text{lying like dogs curled up in the open.}
\text{The goddess cried out like a woman in childbirth,}
\text{Belet-ili wailed, whose voice is sweet:}
\text{“The olden times have turned to clay,}
\text{because I spoke evil in the gods’ assembly.}
\text{How could I speak evil in the gods’ assembly,}
\text{and declare war to destroy my people?}
\text{It is I who give birth, these people are mine!}
\text{And now, like fish, they fill the ocean!”}
\text{The Anunnaki gods were weeping with her,}
\text{wet-faced with sorrow, they were weeping [with her,]}
\text{their lips were parched and stricken with fever.}
\]

Enlil is even reproached by Ea for “acting with rashness,” and banned from coming to the offering for “he, unreasoning, brought on the deluge.” Divine capriciousness is all the more emphatic in the Mesopotamian literature in that whenever a reason for the Flood is given, it is either (1) simply the unexplained will of the gods (as in *Gilgamesh*), or (2) a human fault that is non-moral in nature (*Atrahasis*). Furthermore, the individuals spared the flood are not portrayed as exemplarily pious—that is, there is no didactic reason for their (arbitrary) salvation. To Enlil, therefore, the great question is posed: O warrior, thou wisest among gods, how thus indiscriminately couldst thou bring about this deluge? Thus the ANE parallels sharpen the issue for the biblical account.

Once the flood started, the gods were terror-struck at the very forces they themselves had unleashed. They were appalled at the consequences of their own actions, over which they no longer had any control. The gods, we are told, “were frightened by the deluge,” they “cowered like dogs crouched against the outer wall; Ishtar

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318 N.M. Sarna makes a similar point: “The Bible leaves no doubt as to God’s motivations. The choice of Noah is inspired solely by his righteousness; caprice or partiality play no role in the divine resolution. In none of the Mesopotamian versions is any reason given for the divine favor to one individual...This scene, it will be noticed, is thoroughly devoid of an universal significance, completely empty of any didactic values” (Understanding Genesis, 51, 57). Cf. E. Noort, “Stories of the Great Flood,” 23-26.
320 While not agreeing with his conclusion, we believe H.P. Müller is correct in pointing out that the diminished role of guilt in the ANE flood narratives highlights that issue in the Biblical version (H.P. Müller, “Das Motiv für die Sintflut: Die hermeneutische Funktion des Mythos und seiner Analyse,” *ZAW* 97 [1985] 295-316). It is even more sharpened by the travesty of Hollywood’s misrepresentation of God as capricious in the fashion of the pagan deities, such as in the 1999 TV miniseries on Noah’s ark, starring Jon Voigt (cf. J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 333).
cried out like a woman in travail.” After the deluge, there were arguments, quarrels and mutual recriminations among the gods. 321

Is YHWH thus capricious? Was he taken aback by the uncalculated use of his own cataclysmic power? Or had he simply forgotten the utilitarianism of a humanity created to meet his needs?

To be sure, the point of the biblical narrative appears to be the opposite—YHWH is discriminate, able to save one family amidst the destruction of a godless generation (cf. Gen 18.25; 2 Pet 2.4-11). “There are two elements in the flood,” noted Benno Jacob, “the destruction of all living and the rescue of Noah. Both must be motivated.” 322 All the charges are avoided when the change of heart is understood, according to the text, as wrought by the aroma of Noah’s pleasing sacrifice. 323 YHWH does not merely “change his mind” as some suggest, 324 rather, his just wrath has been abated. That his heart has changed (i.e., been propitiated) is brought out by his speaking “to his heart” ( דבר ללבו). The wayyiqtol of 8.21 manifest the progression: 325

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321 N.M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, 48.
322 B. Jacob, Genesis, 48 (emphasis added). Cf. also C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 393-94.
323 D. Clines, for example, affirms God’s sheer grace and mercy in promising not to send another Flood but, by failing to anchor that divine mercy in the sacrifice of Noah, he leaves one wondering if the biblical account is all that distinguished from the Mesopotamian narratives, as his article claims. While affirming that the cause for the Flood remains unchanged, Clines simply states that God has now bound himself to a different course of action, merely shifting the emphasis from capricious judgment (in the Mesopotamian accounts) to capricious grace (in the biblical account). Cf. “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” esp. 138-40. W. Brueggemann portrays God as realizing after the flood that all “the terror of the waters has not changed” mankind, his deep grief itself being what finally “enables God to move past his own interest and to embrace his creature-partner in new ways” (Genesis, 80-1, 82). Failing to connect that change of heart to the propitiatory sacrifice, one is left with the impression that God somehow matured through the experience of the flood: “God has made a decision about the grief and trouble of his own heart....Because of the revolution in the heart of God, that relation [between God and creatures] is now based in unqualified grace....God’s creation is for all time protected from God’s impatience” (83-85). While he marks God’s remembering of Noah as the turning point of the narrative, Brueggemann states that creation’s assurance of divine good will is based upon the fact that “something has happened to God” (88), a change which he describes, again, as a maturing (rather than a being propitiated via Noah’s sacrifice, an event which he mentions only in passing on p. 80), and so leaving open the charge of divine capriciousness.
324 E. Noort, e.g., writes that “YHWH has come to ‘accept’ humanity’s evil inclinations, and will not again endanger the world order. Furthermore, human maliciousness will no longer affect YHWH’s ability to be God” (“Stories of the Great Flood,” 17).
325 The LXX, as Waltke notes (Genesis, 142), manifests the connection between the sacrifice and God’s resolution by the paraphrase “having considered.” V.P. Hamilton (The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17, 309) notes: “The first and second halves of this verse [8.21] have a cause-and-effect relationship. Observing Noah’s actions and smelling the aroma of his offering, Yahweh binds himself to a negative course of action for the future.”
The chiastic parallel, in 6.5-7, makes the same point—YHWH responds out of his heart (6b, 7): 326

Thus, until his heart is changed by the sacrifice—even after the deluge event, there is no divine resolve toward forbearance and blessing. 327 Further, the term used for YHWH’s smelling or breathing the sacrifice, נֶאֶפֶךְ, is a technical cultic term for God’s pleasure in the sacrifice and worshiper (cf. Ex 29.18; Lev 1.9; 3.16; Num 15.3). 328 The pivotal and efficacious sacrifice of Noah, then, by propitiating the wrath of God, changes mankind’s position from cursed to blessed. 329 “From the narrative it was Noah’s offering for atonement that prompted God to declare his new intentions toward the sinful earth, despite human propensity toward sin.” 330 Sailhamer similarly writes: “Humankind is fallen (9.21); but through a sacrifice laid as an

326 N.M. Sarna makes a similar point: “This statement [in 8.21] of divine resolve is a foil to that of 6.7; there it was for destruction, here for salvation. Similarly, the present observation on the nature of man verbally echoes that of 6.5. The whole makes for an inclusion, or envelope-like structure, with the chiastic reversal of the order signifying the antithesis to the antediluvian situation” (Genesis, 59).

327 Cf. G.J. Wenham, “The Akedah,” 94-95; J. Skinner, Genesis, 157. While N.M. Sarna posits the forty days of the Deluge as a period of atonement (Genesis, 54, 356), K.A. Matthews rightly notes that “forty days are not sufficient, for it is not until the sacrifice Noah offers that the Lord’s anger is fully pacified” (Genesis 1-11.26, 373). Matthews portrays the sacrifice as both a “thank offering” and one of atonement (392-93). See also J.H. Sailhamer, “Creation, Genesis 1-11, and the Canon,” Bulletin for Biblical Research 10.1 (2000) 89-106 (103).

328 B. Waltke, Genesis, 142.

329 “Mankind shall find its higher moral unity not in Adam, the natural man, but in that pious father who by his offering brought about God’s gracious resolution to preserve the world. Noah’s offering is burnt completely on the altar; it is an expression of complete devotion to God and at the same time atonement and intercession for the other survivors” (B. Jacob, Genesis, 63).

330 K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11.26, 393.
offering on the altar, they may find and enjoy God’s blessing (8.21-9.3).” Indeed, the ensuing covenant (9.9) has even been viewed as repayment for Noah’s offering. Damrosch sees Noah’s role as reversing the estrangement between God and Adam, pointing to the intertextual links between 5.28-29 and 3.17-19, and to the echo of Adam in 6.6: וֹיָדָם—God thus repented of “making the Man/Adam.” He also points out the poetic parallelism, inverted, between 5.29a-b and 6.7c-8a:

Noah’s name, then, plays on God’s “repenting” the making of וֹיָדָם. While YHWH had declared in 6.7, “I will blot out וֹיָדָם,” yet the deluge narrative indicates no quelling of his wrath by the destruction of mankind—the waters relent only because, 8.1: “But God remembered Noah.”

332 B. Waltke, Genesis, 146. That the ensuing covenant is based upon the atoning sacrifice of Noah is further verified by the chiasic structure of 8.20-9.17, connecting 8.20-22 with 9.8-17 (Ibid., 127). B. Jacob also states God’s monologue in 8.21-22 is “motivated by Noah’s sacrifice” (Genesis, 62).
333 While some point to 9.18-29 as the fulfillment (i.e., Noah’s viniculture), the overall effect of that narrative tends rather to Noah’s shame. However, potent viniculture should in any case be seen as the fruition and demonstration of the blessing or “relief from the curse”—that is, the result of 8.21ff and not the blessing itself. Cf. R. Hendel, “Leitwort Style in the J Primeval Narrative,” 104-05; E.G. Kraeling, “The Interpretation of the Name Noah in Gen 5.29,” JBL 48.3/4 (1929) 138-43 (esp. 139). Kraeling points out that (1) the OT nowhere makes any allusion to the “restful” effect of wine; (2) it is unnatural to suppose the disgraceful situation of Gen 9.20f suggests a fulfillment of 5.29 as a “cup of comfort.” W.M. Clark considers the vineyard story a “verification” that the curse has been lifted, the promise of 8.21 being the fulfillment of 5.29 (“The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 208). If one considers the curse of the ground as referring to the land’s being filled with the blood of violence/ḥāmās (cf. Gen 4.9-14), the Lord’s “washing” of the earth and Noah’s propitiatory sacrifice as fulfilling the etiology makes sense even more strikingly. The idea of a relationship between the ground and ḥāmās is suggested by T. Frymer-Kensky, “The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1-9,” 147-55.
334 D. Damrosch, The Narrative Covenant, 128-131. Cf. also H. Marks, “Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology,” who states “The stylistically obtrusive echo of Adam’s own name etiology in the middle of the gloss alerts us to Noah’s role as the second Adam (נָּוְאָה, 2.7) – an association resumed in the concluding vineyard episode, where Noah is again introduced as the first “man of the soil” (נָּוְאָה, 8.20)” (25).
335 Ibid., 130.
Salvation via the ark does not fulfill Noah’s etiology. Rather, Noah is saved in order to worship, to offer the sacrifice that causes God another “repenting” (ניוחם nihamî) that is a “rest/comforting” (חניה החניא hannihôah), that turns cursing into blessing.\footnote{336} Noah’s priestly mediation is the means by which relief from the toil of the cursed ground became a reality.\footnote{337}

“For God as well as for humanity, Noah is the consolation for the fall of Adam.”\footnote{338} This point is more clearly seen by following the narrative’s climactic association of Noah’s name with the “spirit of life” (6.17; 7.15; 7.22 [cf. 2.7] - נפשׁ וָני תָּה נָפָשׁ נֶפֶשׁ נָפָשׁ) as the burnt offerings rise to YHWH and he smells the “restful smell” (ונפל נָעַמֹת וְנָעַמֹת וְנָעַמֹת 8.21). From the narrative viewpoint of the character of God, the story is about the grief (אכזב ‘eveb) that fills his heart by man’s wickedness, a point not resolved until the divine pain and indignation is assuaged by Noah’s atoning sacrifice.\footnote{339} That this propitiation marks the true resolution of the narrative, and Noah’s etiology, is manifest by its parallel to the conflict of the prologue in 6.5-7.\footnote{340}


\footnote{338 D. Damrosch, \textit{Narrative Covenant}, 130.}

\footnote{339 Cf. B. Waltke, \textit{Genesis}, 142. E. Noort writes “the final form of the Biblical text places not the unblemished Noah but the remorse of God at the beginning of the Flood story. The character of this definitive account is coloured by this arrangement. In the final redaction, the narrative begins with a God deep in sadness and remorse about what his creation has become” (“Stories of the Great Flood,” 30).}

\footnote{340 Cf. H. Marks, “Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology,” 26; E. van Wolde, “A Text-Semantic Study,” 24. While working from a source critical perspective, S.E. McEvenue (\textit{The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer}, 29-30) delineates 8.21 as J’s theological conclusion, and the covenant blessing and sign as P’s—both “conclusions” precluding any suggestion that Noah’s etiology and/or the narrative’s point is not resolved until the viniculture of 9.20.
The movement from YHWH’s regret (אכזב) to his rest (נענ) to his rest (נענ) brings fulfillment to Noah’s etiology as evident from the etymological gloss itself where three stems from the prologue first appear, 5.29: Noah will “bring relief/comfort (פקידונ) work [literally “makings”] (ילקוח...) and toil [vexation] (לבקות),” associating Noah’s name to the prologue conflict and its resolution—a conflict particularly nuanced by the divine perspective (i.e., both discovered [“YHWH saw,” 6.5] and resolved [“YHWH smelled,” 8.21] from the divine perspective), God being the main character in the narrative. The two alternatives for God in relation to mankind, שאר and שימ, to save and to destroy, are reconciled in 8.21. From a text-semantic perspective, then, the narrative tension is not released with the abating of the waters in Noah’s salvation, and neither is the etiology fulfilled—these two elements converge, rather, upon the sacrifice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEN 6.5-7</th>
<th>GEN 8.21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YHWH saw that the wickedness of man (אדם) was great in the earth, and that</td>
<td>And YHWH smelled the restful smell (שלום), and every imagination (תוכל) of the thoughts of his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every imagination (תוכל) of the thoughts of his heart (לב יד) was only evil (悪い)</td>
<td>heart (לב), “I will never again curse the ground (אדמה) because of man (אדם) for the imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continually. And YHWH was sorry (אכזב) that he had made (נבר) man (אדם) on the</td>
<td>(תוכל) of man’s heart (לב) is evil (悪い) from his youth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earth and it grieved ( компани) him in his heart (לב). So YHWH said, “I will</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground (האדם).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here my own basic chiastic outline is relevant in the connection between 6.9-22 (NOAH BUILDS ARK/COVENANT TO BE ESTABLISHED) and 8.20-9.19 (NOAH BUILDS ALTAR/COVENANT ESTABLISHED), emphasizing as it does the cosmic significance of the altar. 346 Notably, the name YHWH occurs six times in the narrative, three with reference to entering the ark (7.1, 5, 16), and three with reference to the altar (8.20, 21). Part of the emphasis also lies in the fact that Noah's altar-building is the first recorded instance in Scripture. 347 It may even be that the altar of burnt offering in the later Israelite cultus, possibly designed as a "cosmic mountain"/three-stepped ziggurat, 348 reflects Noah's burnt offering on the "world mountain." The altar, to be sure, became the exclusive locus of the priests, their function often being defined by the duty of ascending the altar ( commentaire 1 Sam 2.28) so that deposed priests were those "who did not ascend (营业执י) the altar of YHWH (השם, בזון יבשא)" (2 Kgs 23.9). 349 While Waltke's outline, based on Anderson's, does not highlight the altar-building of Noah, the parallel is nevertheless

346 B.W. Anderson's outline leaves out both the building of the Ark and the altar ("From Analysis to Synthesis," 38); G.J. Wenham's includes the building of the Ark but not the altar ("The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," 337-38).
347 K.A. Matthew's footnote 82 (Genesis 1-11.26, 391) is relevant here: "According to some Jewish authorities, the altar was that of Adam, used by Cain and Abel (4.3-4) but later destroyed in the flood; it thus was rebuilt by Noah. It was also identified as the altar of Jerusalem, showing a linkage between the antediluvian fathers and Israel's worship (Tg. Ps.-J.; Gen. Rab. 34.9). In Tg. Ps-J, at Gen 22.9, Abraham is said to have rebuilt Noah's altar."
348 The altar and ziggurat parallel was, to our knowledge, first suggested by P. Haupt, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, trans. C.H. Toy (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1899) 187-88. Cf. W.F. Albright, "The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering" JBL 39.3/4 (1920) 137-42. Albright also makes the following points: Assyrian zikkuratu means properly "mountain-peak" (zikkuratû sadîl), but can stand for the entire temple-tower, even as ar'el refers to the highest stage of the altar but can stand for the whole altar (140); the four horns atop the altar likely have cosmic significance, representing four mountains (141); E. Robertson, "The Altar of Earth (Exodus XX, 24-26)," JJS 1 (1948) 21; A. Parrot, The Tower of Babel (London, SCM Press, 1955) 34; R.L. Fisher, "The Temple Quarter," JSS 8.1 (1963) 37; M. Kline, "The Messianic Avenger," Kerux 7.1 (1992) 20-36. Kline notes that both altars and ziggurats are topped with horns (for ziggurats, see Enuma Elish, VI, 66), and posits the altar as a stylized stepped mountain. D.W. Parry ("Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God," pp 482-500 in By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, vol. 1, J.M. Lundquist, S.D. Ricks, eds. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990], accessed at: http://maewellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=63.) writes that like "the temple itself, Israelite sacrificial altars had the appearance of miniature mountains" both "in form and substance" (Ex 20.24-25; Josh 8.31).
not lost on him: “Moreover, whereas Noah’s obedience in building the ark provided humanity’s salvation through the Flood (6.22), his soothing sacrifice provides salvation after it (8.20-21).”

4. NOAH AS FLOOD HERO

The pacification of God, then, via Noah’s atoning sacrifice, is the final dénouement of the deluge account. Indeed, Rendtorff saw 8.21 as key not only for the conclusion of the deluge narrative but of the primeval history itself. Thus the “focus of the story is not on the flood,” as Brueggemann notes, “but upon the change wrought in God which makes possible a new beginning for creation.” This interpretation is in keeping with the overall structure of Genesis whereby human history is divided into three periods, each with a paradigmatic sacrifice of great moment: the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, and Abraham. A comparison here between Abraham and Noah is instructive:

But it is not simply that an extraordinary act of obedience by a righteous man [Abraham] leads to extraordinary blessing. It is that one man’s obedience climaxing in an act of sacrifice leads to extraordinary blessing. ...[T]he faithful obedience of Noah culminating in his sacrifices after the Flood changed God’s disposition toward sinful humanity. Noah’s sacrifice guaranteed mankind from the threat of a further deluge. Similarly Abraham’s obedience guaranteed the future of his descendants and that through them blessing should come to all nations.

This priestly interpretation of Noah, moreover, accords with the late 2nd century B.C. work Jubilees, wherein Noah’s righteousness consists in obedience to sacerdotal legislation.

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350 B. Waltke, Genesis, 126.
351 In as much as any biblical character, apart from God, may be considered a “hero.” Most, rather (and including Noah), are more properly depicted as “saints,” human beings who submit to God’s will and are used of him for great deeds.
352 B. Waltke, Genesis, 122-23. Westermann calls the divine decision to never again destroy humanity the “goal” of the narrative (Genesis 1-11, 475).
354 W. Brueggemann, Genesis, 73. God’s heart, then, is the real sphere of drama (cf. 78-9).
357 J.C. VanderKam, “The Righteousness of Noah,” 20. Noah is also depicted in Jubilees “in the important priestly function of establishing (and celebrating) festivals in the sacral calendar (6.8-10, 22-38)” (21). Matthews also points out that this interpretation was common in the intertestamental period: “Noah was perceived in Jubilees and 1 Enoch
And he made atonement for the earth, and took a kid and made atonement by its blood for all the guilt of the earth; for everything that had been on it had been destroyed, save those that were in the ark with Noah. (6.2)

Thus, while God is the main character in the narrative, Noah the righteous priest may yet be considered the literary “hero” of the story who both “walks with” and “propitiates/brings to rest” God.358 “Noah,” in fact, “brings comfort both to humankind and to God.”359 But further, not only by the הָרֹס הַנֶּפֶשׁ phrase in 6.9; not only because the narrative begins and ends with (God’s speech to) Noah,360 and not only because the various word-plays on his name indicate Noah as a central character;361 but because the central question362 of the text is a soterio-liturgical one: “Who may ascend the mountain of YHWH?,” the narrative of the deluge is really a narrative about Noah.363 This is the same as to stress that the narrative is not about the judgment of the world, but how it was that Noah was saved from that judgment. For example, Sailhamer notes God’s gracious response to Noah’s righteousness and obedience of faith as the central purpose of the account:

as a priest who made atonement for the corrupted earth and maintained the laws of cultic purity” (K.A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11.26, 357).

358 Cf. E. van Wolde, Words Become Worlds, 77, 83. B. Jacob (Genesis, 66) is thus able to describe Noah as a “pre-Israelite hero” for whose virtue the world and mankind owes its preservation. B. Waltke poignantly asks: “Can God count on Noah? To be sure, God authors covenant, but it cannot be effected without Noah’s fidelity (see 7.1). If Noah does not build the ark and enter it, not only Noah and all life will perish, but so will God’s purpose to rule the earth through Adam and his promise to crush the Serpent through the woman’s seed. The future of salvation history rides on Noah’s faithfulness” (Genesis, 123). We use the term “hero” not in the humanistic literary tradition (e. g., Gilgamesh, Achilles, etc.), but in the Scriptural tradition of the “saint,” i.e., “hero of faith.”

359 J.H. Sailhamer, Genesis, 118.

360 The shift in emphasis caused by this frame leads Westermann, e.g., to say the narrative of the flood has been “converted” into a “narrative about Noah” (Genesis 1-11, 412). He establishes, as other commentators do, that the soteriological significance of Noah’s piety is the point of the narrative, a point saliently in accord with establishing that ethical requirement within the broader cultic context of approaching God (Ps 15; 24). Westermann does, in fact, view the setting apart of the sanctuary as the goal of the whole work (414).


363 It is yet true, however, that the action and dramatic elements continually point the reader to the nature and character of God. Cf. J.H. Walton, Genesis, 332.
The account of the flood begins in v 9 with a description of Noah’s righteousness. The purpose of the story is not to show why God sent the flood but to show why God saved Noah. The ark, not the flood, is the focus of the author’s attention.  

W.M. Clark, considering the narrative from the perspective of royal election, writes:

As the king functions on behalf of the entire people from whom he is chosen, so the choice of Noah is not to the exclusion of the rest of mankind but rather for its salvation. Noah is the potential $addiq on whose subsequent actions depends the salvation of mankind.  

As the priestly figure able to ascend the mountain of YHWH, moreover, Noah stands as a new Adam, the primordial man who dwells in the divine Presence—homo liturgicus. As such, he foreshadows the high priest of the tabernacle cultus who alone will enter the paradisiacal Holy of holies.

**CONCLUSION**

A new beginning for the new creation is possible only via Noah’s sacrifice. Noah is thus a prototypical mediator, the priest whose obedience quelled the wrath of God. The righteous priest and his burnt offering, moreover, “are prototypes of Israel’s priests and their sacrifices (cf. Job 1.5; 42.8).” Once more, then, the narrative catechizes Israel regarding the logic of the tabernacle/temple cultus.

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365 W.M. Clark, “The Righteousness of Noah,” 277. Clark also states: “Noah becomes by virtue of the acceptance of his sacrifice a $addiq in relationship with Yahweh. ...[Noah was] to function as a $addiq for the salvation of mankind” (274).
366 This point gains in significance upon viewing the covenant, which ensures the survival of creation (cf. R.W.E. Forrest, “Paradise Lost Again: Violence and Obedience in the Flood Narrative,” *JSOT* 19.62 [1994] 3-17), as a response to Noah’s propitiatory sacrifice. Even as in the Cain and Abel narrative, the existence of humanity is bound up with the offering of sacrifice (cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 402).
367 B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 159. We agree as well with the rest of Waltke’s statement that Noah the priest and his burnt offering also “prefigure Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and his sacrifice.”
368 While one might agree with Kraeling (“The Interpretation of the Name Noah in Gen 5.29,” 143) that the “flood-story as such has all the earmarks of a cult-legend that was used in connection with a seasonal festival,” limiting the application to pacification against excess winter-rains unnecessarily excises the narrative from the purpose of its placing within the Pentateuch. Cf. G.J. Wenham, “The Akedah,” 93-102, for how the Genesis stories express principles integral to cultic law; D. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 261-97: “Thus the priestly writers orient the Yahwistic flood story toward the ideal of order of ritual...” (293).
CONCLUSION

The pattern of through the waters↗ to the mountain↗ for worship is fulfilled. Positioned within its ANE context, the deluge narrative, as all stories of a watery triumph, is not an end in itself, but rather "the ideological foundation upon which solemn temples, lofty palaces, and entire societies were built." Thus one might conclude with Westermann that the setting apart of the sanctuary is the goal of the primeval history of Genesis, determining "everything in it and is at work...shaping the narrative." That goal, further, calls for a reading of the deluge narrative within its temple mythopoeic context, that is, within a cosmic mountain ideology. Indeed, the story of the deluge accords well with many of the cosmic mountain features delineated by G.A. Anderson:

As in other chaos sequences in the Hebrew Bible, the powers of destruction are conceived of as turbulent waters. The mountain of God affords the ultimate bulwark against such a mighty adversary. Finally, we should also mention the holiness of the cosmic mountain. Those who would ascend its heights must be righteous (Ps 15; 24.3-6). The cosmic mountain is more than just a literary image. This mythic image is reflected in historical Israel in the cultus of the temple.

The pedagogy of the narrative, then, paralleled to the account of Paradise, finds culmination in the ritual of the tabernacle cult, namely restoration into the Presence of God.

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369 J.D. Pleins, *When the Great Abyss Opened*, 123. He offers Marduk's creation of Babylon and Baal's building his house at Ugarit as examples.


CHAPTER FOUR

The Exodus
I. Through the Waters: Exod 14
   A. Death to Life-in-Egypt
   B. The Waters of Creation and the "Rebirth" of Israel
II. To the Mountain for Worship. Exod 19-24
   A. Mount Sinai as Cosmic Mountain
      1. Sinai as Central Mountain of the Torah
      2. Sinai as Central Mountain of the Cultus
   B. The Gate Liturgy
      1. Moses as New Adam
      2. The Holiness of Sinai
      3. "Who shall Ascend?"
   C. The Altar and the Divine Presence
      1. The Altar as Mountain of God
      2. Theophanic Presence atop the Altar
      3. Sacrificial Ascent
III. The Cultus of Israel: Exod 25-40
   A. The Centrality of the Tabernacle Cultus
   B. From Creation to the Tabernacle
   C. From the Ark of Noah to the Tabernacle
   D. From Mount Sinai to the Tabernacle
   E. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood
   F. To Dwell in the Divine Presence

The Exodus

INTRODUCTION

The exodus, in the words of Frye, "is the definitive deliverance and the type of all the rest," so that we may say "mythically the Exodus is the only thing that really happens in the Old Testament." The exodus out of Egypt is an event at the heart of biblical faith, in which creation and redemption coincide, whereby YHWH's victory over the waters of chaos becomes identified with his victory at the Sea through which Israel, his "son" (cf. Exod 4.22-23), is born. It is a

3 S. Paas, Creation and Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 426. Thus J.K. Bruckner (Exodus [NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008] 128-29) refers to the scope of the Lord's self-revelation via the exodus as an act that is both cosmic and historical, redeeming creation back to the Creator.
second act of creation whereby the host of Egypt, an incarnation of the chaos dragon, is slayed by YHWH to establish his kingdom.5 Broadly, the book of Exodus narrates how by mighty signs of power YHWH delivered Israel from the Pharaoh’s oppression in Egypt and brought his people to himself at Sinai in order to dwell in their midst by means of the tabernacle.6 The epic7 movement entails transforming the work (םְיוֹרֶה) of the sons of Israel from slavery to worship, from building the mishkan/“cities of storage” (לְיָיְיָה יִדְוַי 1.11) for Pharaoh to the construction of the mishkan/tabernacle (םֵּשָּׁנַק נֵבֶר) 39.32) for YHWH.8 It is no small irony here that the title for Egypt’s king, “Pharaoh,” means literally “The Great House.”9 These building programs, and the broader “kingship pattern” of royal victory and temple building within which they are set, lend coherence to the book’s narrative.10 The narrative’s progression from Egypt to Sinai, from

6 This summary follows roughly that of A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn and Learning to Read Exodus,” CTJ 34 (1999) 35. O.T. Allis similarly states: “The God of Israel, who has delivered His people from Egyptian bondage and brought them to the Mount of God, and who has manifested Himself to them, shown them His glory, and given them His Law, will now condescend to dwell in the midst of the people whom He has received into covenant relation with Himself” (God Spake by Moses: An Exposition of the Pentateuch [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1951] 81). G. Davies (“The Theology of Exodus,” pp 137-52 in In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements, E. Ball, ed. [JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 149) states the “book of Exodus tells the story of the people of God as they pass from persecution and slavery through liberation, revelation and rebellion to the establishment of a place for true worship in the presence of their God.”
7 The “story is epic in content and scope” (T.B. Dozeman, Exodus [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009] 44 and fn 135).
10 A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 261-62. “The abundant evidence of this pattern suggests it is a well-known literary configuration with central, cosmological significance” (262). The kingship pattern is discussed further below. The following outline is based on Leder’s (33):

A Out of Egypt: Lament to Praise (1-15.21)
B Through the Wilderness: Waiting upon the Creator (15.22-18.27)
A’ To the Mountain of God, Sinai: Becoming YHWH’s People (19-24)
slavery to covenant, chaos to creation, is itself symbolized by the fundamental transition upon archetypal geography: from Waters to Mount.\textsuperscript{11} “The great contrast between Mount Sinai and the Nile is symbolic: while the Nile stands for Egypt, the mountain indicates the God of Israel, one of whose epithets is ‘rock’ (גֵּרְמִי).”\textsuperscript{12}

Already, then, the cosmogonic pattern, to be considered in this chapter as the overarching movement of Exodus, begins to emerge: through the waters $\rightarrow$ to the mountain $\rightarrow$ for worship,\textsuperscript{13} a pattern we have identified to be of a piece with cosmic mountain ideology, fundamental to the religions of the ancient Near East, including the cultus of Israel. Wensinck,\textsuperscript{14} early in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, had noted an oft-repeated pattern in biblical literature: Chaos $\rightarrow$ Creation $\rightarrow$ Covenant, tabulated as follows by Wyatt:\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
C Tabernacle: Instructions for God’s mediated Presence (25-31) & B’ Golden Calf: Waiting upon YHWH (32-34) \\
C’ Tabernacle: Construction for God’s mediated Presence (35-40) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{11}] Cf. F. Polak, “Water, Rock, and Wood: Structure and Thought Pattern in the Exodus Narrative,” \textit{JANES} 25 (1997) 19-42 (29-30, 39). Polak continues: “This water-mountain symbolism is a particular application of a general pattern which, as stated at the outset of this study, forms a schematic landscape, illustrated by many examples from the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern sources, e.g., Egyptian creation narratives, neo-Assyrian reliefs, and Mesopotamian poetry” (34-35). A.C. Leder similarly refers to Egypt and Sinai as “antipodes,” the movement from one to the other accomplished via itinerary notices (“Reading Exodus to Learn,” 33). This is in accord with Dozeman’s two-part summary of the book of Exodus as the Power of Yahweh in Egypt (1.1-15.21) and the Presence of Yahweh in the wilderness/Sinai setting (15.22-40.38) (\textit{Exodus}, 44-45).
\item[\textsuperscript{12}] Cf. J.D. Levenson, \textit{Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible} (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 23. Polak has discerned that the triad of water, rock, and wood dominates the architecture of the Book of Exodus in its entirety, the mountain symbolizing God and the Nile representing Egypt, while the wood (such as Moses’ staff in Exod 3-4) mediates between them (“Water, Rock, and Wood,” 19). This delineation is suggestive for the Deluge narrative whereby the Ark (wood) certainly seems to mediate between the waters and the mount. Further, in Exod 7.14-18 Pharaoh, being likened to a dragon (cf. Ezek 9.3-5; 32.2-6), is linked to the Nile (see Ph. Guillaume, “Metamorphosis of a Ferocious Pharaoh,” \textit{Biblica} 85.2 (2004) 232-36).
\item[\textsuperscript{13}] There are lexical and thematic links between the Nile in Exod 2 and the Sea Crossing in ch. 14 (cf. W.H.C. Propp, \textit{Exodus 1-18} [AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999] 502) so that the pattern of going “through the waters” may embrace in general fashion the substance of Exod 1-15.
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] A.J. Wensinck, \textit{The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites} (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1918) 50-55.
\end{enumerate}
While the concept of covenant is vital to each of the texts in our thesis, its relationship to cosmic mountain ideology unduly broadens our theme and will not be discussed here. Understanding covenant as the context of worship, however, brings the two patterns into more obvious harmony, lending credibility to our own three-part scheme. This significant pattern, moreover, occurs no less than three times within the bounds of Exodus: (1) in Exod 2-3, Moses is delivered through the waters of the Nile and brought to Mount Horeb;\textsuperscript{16} (2) in the Song of the Sea in Exod 15, Israel is delivered through the Sea and brought to “the mountain of your inheritance/...the sanctuary, YHWH, your hands have established”; (3) and then, of course, the general movement of the book itself in Exod 14, 19-24 which, due to space considerations, will be the focus of our study here.

Given our contention that from a biblical-theological approach the exodus should be read and understood in light of creation/cosmogony (and not \textit{vice versa}), the many intertextual parallels of the exodus with the creation and deluge accounts may yet support Frye’s insight, already quoted, that the exodus is the only thing that really happens in the Old Testament—this, however with two caveats. First, the exodus must be understood fundamentally as a cosmogonic movement before it is applied to the creation account (i.e., when “exodus” language is defined via a chaos $\rightarrow$ cosmos pattern).\textsuperscript{17} Second, precisely by maintaining the canonical approach

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
   & Chaos (flood) & Creation (exodus) & Covenant  \\
\hline
Genesis & Genesis 1.2 & Genesis 1.3-25 & Genesis 1.26-31  \\
Genesis & Genesis 7.17-8.9 & Genesis 8.10-19 & Genesis 8.20-9.17  \\
Exodus & Exodus 1.22, 2.3-5 & Exodus 14-15 & Exodus 19-24, 32-34  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{16} As explained earlier in the introductory chapter, while many years go by between the Nile deliverance and the removal of Moses’ sandals before the burning bush, the actual narrative time is rather brief. For the distinction between narrative or discourse time and narrated time, cf. J.P. Fokkelman, \textit{Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide} (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 35-37.

\textsuperscript{17} With similar insight, M. Barker suggests the Song of the Sea in Exod 15 may utilize the language of an early creation myth (\textit{The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem} [1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008] 66).
(beginning with creation and progressing to the exodus), the exodus itself is thereby seen as the culmination of the cosmogonic pattern, that is, as “what really happens.” Accordingly, when the cloud of glory transitions from the summit of Sinai to the tabernacle holy of holies, the cultus of Israel is neither merely being established nor merely subsuming the mantle of the Sinai event. Rather, from the perspective of the Torah’s final redaction, the tabernacle cultus subsumes the mantle of Sinai as “culminating cosmic mountain,” a culmination that has been an accumulation throughout the narratives of Genesis—narratives, that is, with the ultimate purpose of explaining the significance and logic of the tabernacle cultus. As such, the narrative arc (and drama) traced from the beginning of Genesis to the conclusion of Exodus becomes manifest: from the divine Presence signified and lost in Gen 1-3 to the divine Presence regained via the tabernacle in Exod 40. We turn now to develop this idea by considering the narrative of exodus, as with the previous chapters, according to the cosmogonic pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, ending with a brief examination of the tabernacle cultus so as to see how it forms the literary and theological culmination of the preceding narratives.

I. THROUGH THE WATERS: EXODUS 14

A. Death to Life-in-Egypt

Considering the cosmogonic pattern as an “exodus,” the creation account involves an exodus from chaos to cosmos, the deluge account involves an exodus from old cosmos to new cosmos, and the exodus account, in its broadest context, involves an exodus from Egypt to Promised Land—that is, an “ecclesiological” (in its fundamental etymology as “called out assembly”)

18 To be sure, the relationship between the so-called “Sinai tradition” and Israel’s cultus has long been noted. See S. Mowinckel’s classic study, Le Décalogue, Études d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses, no. 16 (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1927), e.g., in which he posits cultic practices affected the Sinai tradition. Cf. W. Beyerlin, Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions, trans. S. Rudman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965) 145-67; S. E. Loewenstamm, “Sinai, ma’amad har Sinai,” Encyclopedia Biblica, vol. 5, col. 1032 (Heb.) (Jerusalem, 1968). While this may be the case our biblical theological and canonical approach explores the reverse possibility. In any case, upon tracing traditions to cultic practice, one is still left with the further query: from whence the cultic practice?
exodus, a coming out from among the nations, as it were, to be a royal priesthood and holy
nation. In this section, therefore, we want, via a literary reading, to bring out some of the ways
the narrative emphasizes the distinction between Egypt and the sons of Israel, and the need for
the latter to “die” to life-in-Egypt. The distinction between the two communities/camps will (as
we will see in the next section) prove an eschatological one. As with the deluge, YHWH, water-
controller and ordeal Judge, demonstrates once more his ability to meet out exacting justice.

With its ironic contrast and mounting tension, the pursuit scene has justly been described
as a literary masterpiece. Suspense grows as the reader “watches” what the unsuspecting sons
of Israel cannot see (v 9), “the Egyptians with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his
horsemen and his army”—the longest description of the enemy in the entire chapter. The focus
shifts briefly in v 10 to the sons of Israel even while they lift up their eyes, then back to the
Egyptian might as it bears down up them, this time watching through the very eyes of the prey
(מַעֲשָׂה). Israel thus “feared greatly” (יִכָּנֶס), cried out to YHWH, and complained to Moses.
The “murmuring” clearly manifests both Israel’s fear of death and the preference for slavery in
Egypt over that death (vv 11-12):

“Is it because there were no graves in Egypt
that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?”

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19 There is a sense in which Egypt symbolizes Sheol and the Promised Land symbolizes the heavenly Mount Zion,
but this will not be developed here.
20 Ibid., 39.
21 Ibid. Ska refers to the “parade-ground inspection” of Pharaoh’s army obliged upon the reader.
22 Cf. G.W. Coats, Exodus 1-18, 115; M. Vervenne, “The Protest Motif in the Sea Narrative (Ex 14.11-12): Form
and Structure of a Pentateuchal Pattern,” ETL 63 (1987) 257-71; C. Meyers, Exodus, 114; W.H.C. Propp, Exodus 1-
18, 495; S.J. DeVries, “The Origin of the Murmuring Tradition” JBL 87 (1968) 51-58; B.S. Childs, “A Traditio-
of the Reed Sea Motif,” VT 17.3 (1967) 253-65; D. Patrick, “Traditio-History of the Reed Sea Account,” VT 26.2
(1976) 248-49. Patrick makes a plausible suggestion unpursued: “Perhaps, of course, the wilderness cycle never
existed apart from the story of the exodus, but then it is of little moment whether the Reed Sea account belongs to
the wilderness or exodus. In that case it would always have been what it is now, a transition from the one to the
other” (248). T.W. Mann, at the least, is correct to state that “while the Sea may not be simply the climax to the
plagues and the Passover, neither is it merely ‘the first in a series’ of crisis stories in the Wilderness theme” (“The
Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” JBL 90.1 [1971] 28).
What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?
Is this not the word we spoke to you in Egypt
saying, ‘Leave us alone and let us serve Egypt’?

For it would have been better for us to serve Egypt
than to die in the wilderness.”

Syntactically, giving attention to the seven clause endings, the preference for Egypt over the
wilderness is five to two.23 The vacillation toward resolution is evident: “in Egypt” – “out of
Egypt” – “in Egypt” → “serve Egypt” – “serve Egypt,” along with the straw alternative “die in
the wilderness” – “die in the wilderness.” The first sentence sets up the contrast, while the last
demonstrates the resolved choice, and the central three clauses hammer in the decision: “Egypt-
Egypt-Egypt,” and mark the desire to return: “out of – in – serve Egypt.” Indeed, the Israelites
very much speak as Egyptians:24

Israel: What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?...better to serve them (v 11)
Pharaoh/Egypt: What is this we have done that we have let Israel go from serving us? (v 5)

Next, and for the three rhetorical questions, Moses answers with three imperatives.25 It is
tempting even to see his answers as consecutively responding to their questions: to their fear of
death, vacillation, and false assessment, Moses answers with (1) “do not fear,” (2) “stand fast,”
and (3) “see the salvation of YHWH.” The form of the three injunctions—assurance, directive,
and prediction—may be classified as a “war oracle.”26 The direct speech of Moses, to be sure,
drives to the heart of their enslavement, and of the drama itself (v 13): “Do not fear!”27 The
command is repeated verbatim (ךָתַתךָּנַנְרַ) when the people find themselves before the even more

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24 B.S. Childs, Exodus, 226.
27 Cf. B.S. Childs, Exodus, 226. T.B. Dozeman (Exodus, 313) posits Moses’ exchange with the Israelites as the center of a chiasm:
A The cry of the Israelites to Yahweh (v 10)
B The complaint of the Israelites to Moses (vv 11-12)
B’ The response of Moses to the complaint (vv 13-14)
A’ The response of Yahweh to the cry of Moses (v 15)
threatening event of YHWH’s theophanic Advent at Sinai (20.20). Moses next calls upon them to “see” (מָצָא) the salvation of YHWH, promising they will never again “see” (בִּי כָּל) their enemies forever because YHWH will fight the battle on their behalf, this the “most basic tenet of Old Testament holy war.”

But the faith requisite to conquer such fear is an obedient faith that journeys out to the sea as night and death approach. Here the sign and the signified swirl into one as the darkness and the sea, along with the armies of Pharaoh—that is, as chaos—threatens to fall upon and undo the sons of Israel.

Fundamental to the “exodus” movement here, then, is the choice between identifying with the chaos/old cosmos/Egyptians out of fear, or with the people of YHWH out of faith. Why allegiance to the camp of YHWH is so crucial will be made abundantly clear upon entering the waters.

B. The Waters of Creation and the “Rebirth” of Israel

“The most prominent use of the mythology of the sea,” so notes Dozeman, “is to describe the exodus.” YHWH’s control of the sea constitutes a creation theme. Creation themes pervade the book of Exodus from the beginning as the sons of Israel experience creation blessing while the anti-creational Pharaoh and his Egypt receive talionic retribution, being destroyed by the forces of chaos, the threat of which are but the birthing pangs for the creation of Israel. The language of Ex 1.7, 12, 20 recalls the language of creation at the beginning of Genesis:

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29 T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 299.
30 T.E. Fretheim has been especially instrumental in emphasizing the creation theology so pervasive in the book of Exodus. Among other insights, he notes that (1) Exodus 1 sets up the issue as a creational one as Pharaoh seeks to subvert divine creational work; (2) the plague cycle demonstrates the cosmic effects of the conflict; (3) Egypt itself embodies the forces of chaos, threatening to undo God’s creation; (4) the redemption itself is in the service of creation as its end; (5) the water and manna miracles in the wilderness are symbolic of the continuing creation activity of God reinvigorated by redemption; (6) Israel, in receiving the Law at Sinai, is addressed as humanity was on the sixth day; (7) the Tabernacle worship set up is an appropriation of the creational purpose (see his articles, “The Redemption of Creation”; “Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” as well as his commentary on Exodus).
God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful (יִרְבּוּ) and multiply (יִרְבּוּ) and fill (יִבְיַשֵׁם) the land (יָרֵא)…”

But the sons of Israel were fruitful (יִרְבּוּ), and swarmed (יָרֵא), and multiplied (יִרְבּוּ), and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land (יָרֵא) was filled (יִבְיַשֵׁם) with them.

The use of “swarm” (יָרֵא) in 1.7 hearkens to its usage, three times, in Gen 1.20-21, and “mighty” (יִרְבּוּ) may be intended as a subtle recall of the two-fold use of יִרְבּוּ in Gen 2.23.

Bypassing other examples, we turn to the obvious illustration of the plagues as YHWH’s unleashing the forces of anti-creation/chaos upon the Egyptians until they suffer pre-creation darkness and death:

The most basic perspective within which the plagues are to be understood is a theology of creation. ...Seen against this background, Pharaoh’s oppressive, anti-life measures against Israel are anticreational, striking at the point where God was beginning to fulfill the creational promise of fruitfulness to Israel (Gen 1.28; Ex 1.7). Egypt is an embodiment of the forces of chaos, threatening a return of the entire cosmos to its precreation state. The plagues may thus be viewed as the effect of Pharaoh’s anticreational sins upon the cosmic order writ large.31

J. Currid exposes how the plagues constitute a “de-creation” of Egypt:32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creation Day</th>
<th>Creation Description</th>
<th>Plague on Egypt</th>
<th>Plague Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 Gen 1.1-5</td>
<td>Light created out of darkness</td>
<td>Plague 9 Ex 10.21-29</td>
<td>Darkness prevailing over light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 Gen 1.6-8</td>
<td>Ordering and separation of the waters</td>
<td>Plague 1 Ex 7.15-25</td>
<td>Chaos and destruction brought by the changing of water into blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3 Gen 1.9-13</td>
<td>Appearance of dry land and creation of vegetation</td>
<td>Plagues 7-8 Ex 9.18-10.20</td>
<td>Destruction of vegetation by hail and locusts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4 Gen 1.14-19</td>
<td>Creation of luminaries</td>
<td>Plague 9 Ex 10.21-29</td>
<td>Darkening of luminaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5 Gen 1.20-23</td>
<td>Creation of birds, fish, and swarming creatures in the sea</td>
<td>Plagues 1-2 Ex 7.15-8.15</td>
<td>Death of fish; multiplication and death of frogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6 Gen 1.24-31</td>
<td>Creation of land animals and humans</td>
<td>Plagues 3-4 Ex 8.16-24</td>
<td>Pestilence of insects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plague 5 Ex 9.1-7</td>
<td>anthrax;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plague 6 Ex 9.8-17</td>
<td>boils on beasts and humans;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plague 10 Ex 11-12</td>
<td>destruction of firstborn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The creation theme reaches its apex in Exod 14 and the sea crossing, where the armies of Pharaoh are destroyed in the depths of the sea in the darkness of night while the sons of Israel emerge out of the sea upon dry land in the light of dawn. The separation of darkness and light, evening and morning; the division of the sea by the ruah of God; the emergence of dry land—all these aspects of creation unfold within the narrative, particularly in vv 20-22:

"amidst the sea at night," one finds three consecutive sentences ending with “the night” (ולהה בלילה).

Now the “stage is set for the divine victory over the forces of chaos.” God’s creating then begins, once more, with separation, first between the two camps accomplished by the glory

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33 See T.E. Fretheim, Exodus, 153: “It is the sea crossing that lifts up the cosmic side of the divine activity, bringing God’s creational goals to a climax. It is only as the sea that the forces of chaos are decisively overcome and the world is reestablished on firm moorings....It is a cosmic victory.” J.K. Buckner, Exodus (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008) 129: “The luring of Pharaoh into the heart of sea revealed the Creator’s move to redeem creation and restore it to the Creator.” Cf. also B.F. Batto, Slaying the Dragon, 82.


35 Cf. U. Cassuto, Exodus, 167. NOTE also how the preceding clause ends with “darkness” (היר), and how the last two sentences (“all the night”) are further paralleled by consonance and assonance (היר - היר).

36 T.E. Fretheim, Exodus, 158.

37 Cf. N. Sarna, Exodus, 73. J.D. Currid interprets the separation as symbolic of the “children of darkness” and the “children of light” (A Study Commentary on Exodus, vol. 1 [Darlington, Eng; Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2000] 300).
cloud. This leads to the separation between darkness and light, as the cloud “shines light” for Israel while enshrining the Egyptians in darkness, a token for the complete cycle of deliverance which moves from evening (when Egypt is apparently triumphing) to morning, the “first day” for liberated Israel. Perhaps most conspicuous, the mighty eastward “wind” of v 21, the instrument and manifestation of Yhwh—indeed, perhaps it is “in this event above all others that the wind of Yahweh revealed its power,” parallels both the creation account in Gen 1.2 and the deluge in 8.1, signaling the shift from chaos to creation.

The imagery here, and even more powerfully in Exodus 15, is from the creation of the world in Genesis 1. It is a re-creation of part of the creation event, creating now a whole people who, for the first time in history both trust and fear the Lord together (v 31). Three phrases allude to the creation: as God’s spirit hovered over the waters (Gen 1.2) so Moses was told to raise his staff over the sea; as God separated the water (Gen 1.7) Moses’ action divided the water; and as God made dry ground (Gen 1.9) so the people would go through the sea on dry ground.  

38 If M.G. Kline’s proposal that the rāah šlōhim in Gen 1.2 represents the glory cloud (see Images of the Spirit [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1999] 13-34), then similarities with the Creation account become more profound. T.B. Dozeman notes that the fire imagery likely symbolizes the divine Presence in the cloud, a common metaphor for divinity in the ancient Near East (Exodus, 310). T.W. Mann concludes that the pillar of cloud involves holy war imagery (“The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” 19-24).


40 J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 45-46. T.B. Dozeman also notes how the Sea event is “carefully orchestrated by time,” from night into morning (Exodus, 316).


42 M. DeRoche, “The Ruah Elohim in Gen 1.2c: Creation or Chaos?,” pp 303-18 in Ascribe to the LORD: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie, L. Eslinger, G. Taylor, eds. (JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988) 314; J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 42. B. Och notes that the Sea crossing is a microcosmic reenactment of the original act of Creation as well as a miniature reenactment of the flood catastrophe (“Creation and Redemption,” 236).

The word for “dry ground” (נַחַר: yabbdšd) in vv 16, 22 connects the creation (Gen 1.9, 10), deluge (Gen 8.7, 14), and sea crossing accounts. The “conquest” of the waters is evident by their being divided, allowing God’s people—as innocent Adam and righteous Noah before them—to walk dry shod upon the land, the waters being “as a wall for them on their right hand and their left” (vv 22, 29). That conquest may also be suggested by the special usage of נָחַר (hărābd, “wasteland”) in v 21, rather than the more common term נַשָּׁמ (yabbāšā, “dry ground”) found vv 16, 22, and 29. Bruckner notes how the word sounds like בָּרָב (hereb, “sword”) suggesting this as the “sword” by which YHWH defeated Egypt. Regarding now the “wall” of waters, the term נַחֲרַת (hōmd) is often employed architecturally in Hebrew for the fortifications surrounding a city, further flavoring the text with a “conquest” nuance. In light of the eastward orientation of ANE cultures, and because, “in the Bible, ‘right’ is also taken to mean ‘south’ (Josh 17.7; 1 Sam 23.19, 4; 2 Ki 23.13; Ps 89.13; Job 23.9), whilst ‘left’ corresponds with ‘north’ (Gen 14.15; Josh 19.27; Ez 16.46; Job 23.9),” Israel journeys between the walls of water to the east, leaving Egypt behind in the west. In the ancient worldview, the sun “descended” into the darkness of death in the west along its circuit under the earth, regenerating itself in the primordial ocean so as to “resurrect” in the morning. Passage through water, moreover, is “birthing language.”

45 J.K. Bruckner, Exodus, 133. One might compare the syntax of v 21: נַחַרְנוּ:...ךָשֵׁפֶן with Jer 25.31 הָרָבָּהַ: הָנַחֲרַת, and Micah 6.14 הָרָבָּה: הָנַחֲרַת, “put/deliver to the sword.”
46 Cf. J.D. Currid, Exodus, vol. 1, 302.
49 T.E. Fretheim, Exodus, 159. Similarly, E. Fox (The Five Books of Moses [New York: Schocken, 1995] 330): “The narrator was concerned to demonstrate God’s final victory and to portray Israel’s escape in terms of a birthing (through a path, out of water).”
“beyond the grave” as it were, eastward into the dawn of rebirth. Meanwhile, the “Egyptians, like the corrupt and sinful generation destroyed by the deluge, remain in the waters of primordial chaos,”\(^50\) in the west. As with the deluge, “what was done in Genesis 1 is undone with the plagues,” the returning of the waters at Moses’ command being “the ultimate creation reversal.”\(^51\) Indeed, “the waters returned” (םיריכב חסוד) is repeated verbatim in both the deluge and sea crossing accounts (cf. Gen 8.3; Exod 14.26).\(^52\) The term “covered” (כֶּסֶף) in 14.28, for the flood of waters that drowns the Egyptian chariotry, is also shared with the deluge narrative (Gen 7.19-20).\(^53\) In the sea crossing, then, one finds both creation (Gen 1// Exod 14.16, 21) and deluge (Gen 6-9// Exod 14.26, 27). Moreover, and again as with the deluge, the event at the sea constitutes an “ordeal” whereby YHWH, as Judge, determines to save the righteous and destroy the wicked through the waters. Indeed, he had already defined the deliverance to Abraham in Gen 15.14 as judgment: “...the nation whom they serve I will judge (דָּנ).” Later, in the first disclosure to Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3), YHWH’s theophany is set within the context of his role as Savior and Judge.\(^54\) Thus the waters of destruction become the waters of salvation for the people of God (cf. 1 Pet 3.20). For the sons of Israel, the sea, so representative of threatening darkness and chaos, becomes orderly, divided and standing so that dry land appears, forming a way, a “path” (cf. Isa 43.16). The imagery of the waters transforms from a symbol of death to life.\(^55\) Significantly, the symbolism of the waters follows the symbolism of darkness and light, for in v 27 “the sea returned” (םיריכב חסוד) precisely at the “turn of the morning” (转折 ני)-note

51 P. Enns, Exodus, 274.
55 Ska ("The Crossing of the Sea," 44-45) refers to this as “antiphrasis,” a double negation that yields a positive meaning. He offers the cross of Christ, whereby the instrument of death and torture becomes a symbol of eternal life, as another example.
how “daybreak” interrupts the sequence: “the waters returned—at daybreak—to its original course.” The three paragraphs of the pericope, thus, follow roughly the three watches of the night: six to ten P.M., ten P.M. to two A.M., and two to six A.M., so that the overall progress of each unit may be traced in relation to place and time, whereby dusk, evening, and morning mark the advance toward, entrance into, and exit of, the sea:

(1) towards the sea at dusk,
(2) amidst the sea at night,
(3) the other side of the sea at dawn.

Entering the waters, the sons of Israel die; emerging out of the waters, they are reborn. While the Egyptians are destined to have the sea as their end, Israel emerges out on the far side of the sea to discover life beyond death, even as night gives way to daybreak. The initial separation by the pillar of cloud between the camps of Israel and Egypt proves to be soteriological—that is, between life and death, as evident in the threefold occurrence of Israel–Egypt in the final verse, v 31. Egypt dies in the waters—that is, “God cuts off the Egyptians’ participation in the new creation”—whereas Israel dies and is reborn. Israel’s sea crossing is thus a “rite of passage,” separating the old life from the new. “Both in creation and exodus God wrought the

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60 T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 160. B.F. Batto similarly states that Israel’s epic tradition has been cast so as to “make Israel march right through the middle of the ‘Sea of End,’” with Combat Myth language being used “to portray Israel’s emergence as a nation as a new creation” (*Slaying the Dragon*, 149).
61 W.H.C. Propp, e.g., notes that “water can symbolize both death and birth. Israel’s emergence from the Sea might be regarded as a rebirth or resurrection (compare Jonah 2). 1 Cor 10.1-2 aptly analogizes the Sea crossing with Christian baptism, itself symbolic of birth” (*Exodus 1-18*, 562).
impossible, and defeating the powers of the resisting enemy, brought forth new life. The whole ordeal, moreover, may be characterized as a judicial water ordeal, the “sea” being prominent from the very start:

14.1 Now YHWH spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, that they turn back and camp before Pi-Hahiroth, between the Tower and the Sea, before Baal Zephon, in front of it, you will camp by the Sea."

In summary, the “redemptive creation of Israel at the sea is cast in the same narrative style of original creation as the pillar of divine presence brings light into darkness (Ex 13.21, cf. the first creative day), the waters are divided (Ex 14.21, cf. the second creative day), and the dry land emerges (Ex 14.29, cf. the third creative day)." Thus, Israel’s salvation via sea, wind, and

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63 B.S. Childs, Exodus, 238.

64 Perhaps “Mouth-of-Freedom” (following Mekhilta [Beshallahay, Wayehi, 1] and Targum of pseudo-Jonathan), presuming a contrived Hebrew word-play on “House of [the goddess] Hathor” (Cf. N.M. Sarna, Exploring Exodus, 108). Word-plays recur rather consistently throughout Exodus (cf., e.g., “Massah” and “Meribah” in W. Johnstone, “From the Sea to the Mountain: Exodus 15.22-19.2: A Case-Study in Editorial Techniques,” pp 245-63 in Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction-Reception-Interpretation, M. Vervenne, ed. [Leuven: Leuven UP, 1996] 248-49. Another example is the use of the root kbd: for the “heavy” labor imposed upon the sons of Israel, 5.9; the “glory” YHWH gains in victory, 14.4, 17; the “hardening” of Pharaoh’s heart, 7.14, 8.15, etc.; the chariots YHWH caused to drive “heavily,” 14.25. Cf. J.D. Currid, Exodus, vol. 1, 304). “Mouth” before the crossing thus gets rounded out with “lip” (v 30) afterward. While the location of this reference has proven elusive for modern scholarship, its importance has not: “The purpose of so precise a location, one that provides no less than four points of reference, not only suggests a historical base for the Exodus route described in this narrative, but also implies that the directions so specified are important for an understanding of the narrative” (J.I. Durham, Exodus [WBC; Waco: Word, 1987] 186). Cf. J.D. Currid, Exodus, vol. 1, 286-87. It may be the points of reference have more to do with theology than geography, making the point that the sons of Israel are wedged between “death” and “idolatry”: Baal (Idolatry) in the NORTH vs. Egypt (Death) in the SOUTH, the Sea (Death) in the WEST vs. the Tower (Idolatry) in the EAST.

earth, is an act of creation by God-the-Creator—salvation is new creation. Given the creation theme, it

should not surprise us, then, to see that the descriptive language in chapter 14 takes us into the realm of cosmic battle. The defeat of the Egyptian forces is nothing less than the defeat of chaos, of the universal forces antithetical to life and represented in mythic terms by raging waters. The “dragons” and “leviathan” that are crushed when God divides the primordial sea—doing so brings about “salvation” in the world in Ps 74.12-17—are the pharaoh’s armies. Crushing them brings redemption to the Israelites. The prose narrative echoes these mythic ideas, and the following Song gives resounding emotional expression to them.

The sea crossing deliverance not only parallels the account of creation, but the deluge event as well, for just as God “remembered his covenant” (Exod 2.24), sent “a strong east wind to dry up the waters before his people” (14.21), so they “walked through on dry ground” (14.21-22), so in the deluge account God “remembered” those in the ark (Gen 8.1), sent a “wind” (Gen 8.1), so his people might come out on “dry ground” (Gen 8.13-14). Depicting God as water controller, allowing his people passage through the waters (eventually to his mountain) while consigning the Egyptians to destruction so that “not so much as one of them remained” (v 28), thus portrays the event in terms of the judicial river ordeal.

II. TO THE MOUNTAIN FOR WORSHIP: EXODUS 19-24

While all biblical theophanies represent crucial and decisive moments in history, Sinai alone qualifies as the preeminent theophanic revelation of God. Worshiping God “at this mountain”

67 J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 42. T.E. Fretheim (Exodus, 159) writes: “The result is not simply historical redemption but a new creation.” J.K. Bruckner (Exodus, 133): “God used the basic components of creation: the pillar of cloud, fire, wind, water, dry land, light, and the cover of night.” Similarly, Dozeman notes that by paralleling the Red Sea crossing with Genesis 1, the event constitutes “an act of creation” with “universal significance” (Exodus, 304).
70 J.K. Kuntz, The Self-Revelation of God (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 72. J.J. Niehaus calls the Sinai theophany “a touchstone for prior and subsequent glory theophanies in the Bible because the Sinai event was constitutive in Israel’s history and crucial in salvation history” (God at Sinai: Covenant & Theophany in the Bible
(3.12) being the sign given Moses by YHWH, all of the subsequent narrative, including the refrain, "Let my people go so they may worship me" (5.1; 7.16; 8.1, 20; 9.1, 13; 10.3), has been driving to Exod 19,71 to the shadow of the Mount equated by YHWH with worship. YHWH's descent upon Sinai then became the pattern for worship, a similar consecration being required to approach his Presence at the tabernacle, the shofar utilized to imitate the sound of his advent (2 Sam 6.15; Ps 47.5).72 The imagery of the cloud further underscores the cultic setting of the theophany on the mountain.73 After a brief consideration here of the place and form of Exod 19-24 within the overall exodus narrative, we will go on to examine: (A) Mount Sinai as cosmic mountain, (B) the underlying concept of the gate liturgy whereby Moses alone is able, Adam-like, to ascend the mountain of God, and (C) the relation of the altar to the divine Presence.

Structurally, Exod 19.1-2, utilizing an overcoding device whereby the initial temporal phrase is expanded by a preposed temporal clause, effectively bifurcates the book of Exodus, with the first half (Exod 1.1-18.27) setting the context for the events at Sinai.74 Thus while the lack of a waw marks a "decisive break,"75 yet the summary superscription itself serves to cast the

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previous material of chs 1-18 as a preface to the events at Sinai. Thus, our “→ to the mountain” aspect of the pattern is quite justified from the text itself.

The Sinai narrative of Exod 19-24 holds a central place in the Pentateuch and, from a literary and form-critical perspective, has been one of the most difficult and controversial areas within it. More recent studies have tended to appreciate the careful composition of the Sinai pericope. Niccacci, for example, who divides the Sinai narrative into three sections (19.1-20.17/20.18-23.33/24.1-18) by the verb forms used, considers Exod 19-24 a “straightforward complex” comprising:

(1) a promise by the God of the exodus from Egypt of establishing a special relationship with Israel on condition of keeping the divine will;
(2) a theophany aimed at inspiring on the people the awe of God and of Moses his envoy;
(3) the Ten Words and the Covenant Code as the basis of the covenant;
(4) the ratification of the covenant.

Broadly, and also manifesting coherence, the literary structure of the Sinai narrative forms a chiasm:

A Narrative: conversation with Yhwh, visibly present on Sinai (19.1-25)
B Laws: Ten Commandments (20.1-17)
C Narrative: Moses mediates between Yhwh and the people (20.18-21)
A' Narrative: conversation with Yhwh, visibly present on Sinai (24.1-18)

The Sinai “complex” may be extended, however, beyond the bounds of chs. 19-24, as the miraculous waters from the mount at Horeb-Sinai in Exod 17 have been demonstrated to be of a piece with cosmic mountain ideology. Indeed, the resolution of the narrative is that, due to the miraculous supply of water, it has become evident YHWH, who may even be described as the source of water, is “in our midst” (v 7), precisely the significance of the river of Eden.

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80 See W.H. Propp, Water in the Wilderness, esp. 59-61, who also argues persuasively that the “rock” (ṣūr) of Horeb must denote the “mountain” of Horeb or part of it, as “in most biblical attestations” (21-22, 60) –indeed, the term may relate to the appellation “El Shaddai”; D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” pp 482-500 in By Study and Also By Faith, vol. 1 in Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday (1990), accessed at: http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=63, who makes the connection of Ex 17 with Lunquist’s proposition (“What is a Temple?” 208) that the “temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring.” J. Blenkinsopp extends the Sinai-Horeb narrative to ch. 34 (“Structure and Meaning in the Sinai-Horeb Narrative (Exodus 19-34),” pp.109-25 in A Biblical Itinerary: In Search of Method, Form and Content; Essays in Honor of George W. Coats, E.E. Carpenter, ed. [JSOTSUp 240; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997]). T.E. Fretheim, further, is correct in pointing out that, thematically, the narrative begun in 19.1 of Exodus is not completed until Numbers 10.10 (“Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 230. Exod 19.1-Num 10.10 is framed, moreover, by Israel’s desert experiences, Exod 15.22-18.27 and Num 10.11-20.13 (cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 32). G.C. Chirichigno (“The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” Biblica 68 [1987] 457-79) also notes that chs 19-24 are but one unit within the larger account of Exod 19 to Num 10 (457). Based on syntax analysis, A. Niccacci remarks that the “end of Exodus 24 is not the end of the text,” the narrative continuing through the end of Exodus (“Narrative Syntax of Exod 19-24,” 224). T.B. Dozeman is probably correct in stating that the drawing of water from the rock at Horeb, the divine mountain (17.6) and Jethro’s leading the Israelites in worship on the mountain of God (18.1-12) are foreshadowings of the “pivotal role of the divine mountain throughout chaps. 19-24” (Exodus, 411).

81 W.H. Propp, Water in the Wilderness, 10. Propp lists, in fn 10, the following refs.: Jer 2.13; 15.18 (negatively); 17.13; Ps 42.2; 63.2.
82 Cf. Gen 2.10-14; Ps 46.5; 65.10; and the discussion of this theme in the Creation chapter of this thesis. W.H. Propp also makes the connection of the water-in-the-wilderness motif with the description of the earth in Genesis.
Niccacci also argues persuasively that the Sinai pericope does not end with the close of chapter 24 but extends to the end of the book of Exodus as a "continuous text centered around Mount Sinai." Yet the cluster of key words, like "mountain" and the verbs of ascent and descent, appearing almost exclusively in chapters 19 and 24, support viewing a narrower Sinai narrative unit (chs 19-24). That chapter 24 rounds out the literary complex begun in 19 may be surmised by the evident literary frame whereby the key stem d-b-r, "to speak, word," has a sevenfold use in each chapter, with the stem y-r-d, "to go down," appearing seven times in chapter 19, and its antonym 'l-h, "to go up," appearing seven times in chapter 24. Dozeman proposes a thematic development in the account of revelation in chs. 19-24, positing the following parallel structure based on Covenant Proposal and Covenant Ceremony.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Proposal of Covenant</th>
<th>Covenant Ceremony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The commission of Moses</td>
<td>19.3, &quot;Thus you will say&quot;</td>
<td>20.22b, &quot;Thus you will say&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call &quot;to see&quot; a past action of God</td>
<td>19.4, &quot;You have seen what I did to the Egyptians&quot;</td>
<td>20.22, &quot;You have seen that I spoke to you&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer of covenant</td>
<td>19.5a, proposal: &quot;If you obey my voice and keep my covenant&quot;</td>
<td>20.23-23.19, law: Book of the Covenant (24.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise of reward</td>
<td>19.5b-6a, people: &quot;You will be my personal possession&quot;</td>
<td>23.20-33, land: &quot;I will send my messenger before you...to bring you to the place&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proclamation by Moses</td>
<td>19.7, Moses &quot;called&quot;</td>
<td>24.3a, 7a, Moses &quot;called&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's acceptance</td>
<td>19.8a, &quot;We will do&quot;</td>
<td>24.3b, 7b, &quot;We will do&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noting parallels between Ex 19.2b-8a and 20.21-24.3, Alexander argues persuasively for greater literary unity in the Sinai narrative than has been acknowledged in the past. In light of

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2.4b-7a and the river in vv 10-14 (Water in the Wilderness, 12). T.B. Dozeman considers the question "Is Yahweh in our midst?," initiated in the water episode at Meribah (17.1-7), as the central theme of the second half of Exodus (Exodus, 46). Cf. also S.D. McBride, Jr., "Divine Protocol," 27-29.


85 N.M. Sarna, Exodus, 150. For d-b-r, see Exod 19.62, 7, 8, 92, 19; 24.33, 4, 7, 8, 14. For y-r-d, Exod 19.11, 14, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25. For 'l-h, Exod 24.1, 2, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18.

86 T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 442.

published texts regarding treaty negotiations and alliances from Mari, paralleling somewhat the
pattern of ceremonies and rituals embodied in the Sinaitic covenant, appreciation for the
underlying unity of the Sinai pericope has grown.  

Thus, while our approach continues to be canonical, considering the final form of the
text, and thematic, considering primarily the aspects of the Sinai narrative that expose cosmic
mountain ideology, examining the Sinai complex (Exod 19-24) is justified from a form-critical
perspective as well.

A. Mount Sinai as Cosmic Mountain

I. SINAI AS CENTRAL MOUNTAIN OF THE TORAH

There is a sense where the Mountain represents arrival, the journey’s end, Israel having
completed the narrative cycle of Moses’ earlier pattern: Egypt – Waters – Wilderness –
Sanctuary. Thus through the cosmic waters the sons of Israel journey to find themselves, as
Adam and Noah before them, at the cosmic mountain, gathered for worship. Och similarly
writes:

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88 See F.H. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai in the Light of Texts from Mari,” pp 119-34 in Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume, C. Cohen, et. al., eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004). Polak believes this “unity is intrinsic to the intertextual tradition of this pericope rather than artificially imposed by the redaction” (123). He posits, further, that what began as a monolocal ceremony was changed to a bilocal one in light of the people’s reaction of fear (Exod 20.18-21). He thus describes the logic of the covenant ritual (132-33):

(a) the Israelites are presented with a covenant proposal that is accepted;
(b) they prepare for the meeting with the divine partner on the lower slopes of the mountain (for an intended monolocal ceremony);
(c) they reel back in fear, and thus Moses ascends to the mountain to receive the covenant terms (having switched to a bilocal ceremony);
(d) at the foot of the mountain, the terms are ratified by the entire community;
(e) on the mountain, the Israelite delegation meets with the divine partner.

A. Niccacci (“Workshop: Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24,” 224) posits a similar complex: (1) a promise by the God of the exodus from Egypt of establishing a special relationship with Israel on the condition of keeping the divine will; (2) a theophany aimed at inspiring in the people the awe of God and of Moses his envoy; (3) the Ten Words and the Covenant Code as the basis of the covenant; (4) the ratification of the covenant. For relation to Hittite literature, see G.E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” BA 17.3 (1954) 50-76.

89 L. Thompson, Introducing Biblical Literature, 99.

90 Interestingly, T.B. Dozeman (God on the Mountain, 19) structures the Sinai pericope as (1) purification, (2) theophany of God on the mountain, and (3) sacrificial ritual at the base of the mountain. This cultic movement

The journey of man which began at the Garden of Eden moves on to its ultimate destination: Mount Sinai. The theophany at Sinai marks the culmination and fulfillment of God's creational plan. The encounter between God and Israel at Sinai can be seen as a return to beginnings, an iterative event which is a reenactment of the original encounter between God and man at Eden. For this purpose, God has created a new people to stand before Him at Sinai as Adam stood in His presence at Eden. What began at Eden is now completed at Sinai.91

Approaching the Mount is not only via the waters, but in contrast with the judgment of those waters, as Ps 78 (vv 53-54) exemplifies:92

And he led them safely and they feared not but the sea covered their enemies/ and He brought them to his holy domain, the mountain which his right hand had created.

Thus, in the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives, the Waters symbolize death93 while the Mountain symbolizes life mediated by the Presence of God,94 the concentrated Presence of God.95 Turning now to the latter theme, Dozeman notes the prominence of the mountain setting in Exodus 19-24:

It [the mountain setting] is underscored at the outset of the Sinai Complex [being mentioned in 19.2b, 3a], and it is referred to frequently throughout: twenty-one times the definite noun for mountain is used alone, with a preposition, or in construct with Elohim; the mountain occurs an additional fifteen times in construct with Sinai. The emphasis on the mountain setting distinguishes the Sinai Complex from Israel's other itinerary stops, as a geographical midpoint between Egypt and Canaan. However geography does not exhaust the important role of the mountain setting, for it also functions symbolically as a cosmic mountain....96

follows broadly the pattern of waters → mountain → for worship, as seen in the larger Exodus narrative, as well as in the Deluge account.

91 B. Och, “Creation and Redemption,” 238.
92 Cf. F. Polak, “Water, Rock, and Wood,” 34: “The psalmist continues to contrast the drowning of the Egyptians with the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan.” Polak speaks further about the “opposition” between water and mountain, the “contrast between the unfathomable depth of the primeval water and the immense height of the divine mountain” (36).
93 The waters can only symbolize rebirth (for all who pass through them) because they first symbolize death—thus, everyone dies by the waters, the righteous alone are reborn. Baptism then means “exodus,” an exit that is a dying to the Old Creation (for Noah)/ Egypt (for Israel) and an entrance into, and living for, the New. The ones who do not die to the old cosmos must then die with it (i.e., the wicked generation of Noah’s day/ the Egyptian armies).
94 M. R. Hauge, e.g., says the “holy mountain represents the divine reality” (The Descent from the Mountain, 99).
95 L. Thompson, Introducing Biblical Literature, 99.
As of chapter 19, the rest of Exodus, the whole of Leviticus, and Numbers 1.1-10.11, all—some 58 chapters at the center of the Pentateuch—takes place at Mount Sinai.\(^{97}\) The “Ringstruktur” of Exod 15.22 – Num 21.18, proposed by A. Schart, also highlights the significance of Sinai within the Pentateuch:\(^{98}\)

A  Exod 15.22-25  transformation of water from bitter to sweet  
B  17.1-7  water from the rock  
C  17.8-16  Amalekite-Israelite war  
D  18  leadership relief for Moses  
E  18.27  the Midianite Hobab, Moses’ father in law  
F  19.1-2  arrival at Sinai  

SINAI  

F'  Num 10.11-23  departure from Sinai  
E'  10.29-32  the Midianite Hobab, Moses’ father in law  
D'  11  leadership relief for Moses  
C'  14.39-45  Amalekite-Israelite war  
B'  20.1-13  water from the rock  
A'  21.16-18  the spring  

Within chs 18-40, the term “the Mountain of God” (הר פארד) and its synonyms are used forty times in what amounts to “clear theological usage.”\(^{99}\) Exod 19.18 alone refers to the mountain three times, with unusual personification (Mount Sinai “trembled,” יָדָר wayyeh\(^{3}\) rad) that underscores its cosmic quality.\(^{100}\) The setting of the divine mountain itself may be considered a central theme of the pericope.\(^{101}\) Structuring the narrative around the mountain is in keeping with the “theological concern for sacred space.”\(^{102}\) Sinai stands, quite literally, at the center of the wilderness journey, with six stations between Egypt and Sinai, and six stations following


\(^{100}\) T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 457; *idem.*, *God on the Mountain*, 102-03 and fn 47. The unusual personification is evident by the LXX’s change so that the text reads “the people” trembled (457).


Sinai to the plains of Moab. At the center of the coordinated narrative of Exod 19.1 through Num 10.10 stands "the peak of the mountain itself, where Moses negotiates on Israel’s behalf the decisive self-revelation of Yahweh in Exodus 33.12-34.9."104

2. SINAI AS CENTRAL MOUNTAIN OF THE CULTUS

As the locus of the decisive self-revelation of YHWH, to approach Sinai, then, is to enter the sphere of the cult, for "Israel celebrated liturgically on the sacred mountain in the house of the Lord."105 The encounter at Sinai was a cultic one, the blast of the ram’s horn, for example, signaling the Presence of Yahweh in the worship of Israel (cf. 2 Sam 6.15; Ps 47.6 [5]),106 and the threefold division of the Mount being later reflected in the tabernacle construction. It is thus with good reason that Durham labels the Sinai pericope as the "Advent of Yahweh’s Presence."107 Exod 19 has even been considered "the enthronement of God on the mountain."108 The factor most determinative for the form of the entire Sinai narrative, the "supreme event of Exodus," so Durham rightly states, is:

of course the gift by Yahweh of his Presence to Israel. From beginning to end, and in both its positive and its negative features, the Sinai narrative sequence, and indeed the Book of Exodus of which it is the important center, is linked to the Advent of Yahweh’s Presence to Israel at Sinai.109

The reason for the dominating role of Sinai, then, is precisely because the essential relationship of YHWH to Israel is disclosed via cosmic mountain ideology,110 that is, Sinai “provides the

109 Ibid., 260. Similarly, C. Houtman (Exodus, vol. 2, 425) refers to the event as the "unexcelled and irresistible majesty of his appearance.”

253
framework of the ultimate religious experience.” Indeed, that Sinai is one of the most important cosmic mountains in Israel’s history is widely acknowledged. Some even argue that Sinai, upon which God revealed the “true tabnit, the sanctuary which served as a model for all the replicas, especially the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem,” is thereby the true “mountain of God,” the God whose oldest surviving appellation may have been ג' סינ AI zeh sinay “the One of Sinai” (cf. Judg 5.5; Ps 68.8 [Heb]). If it is true, further, that Sinai “was the precursor and prototype of later Israelite sanctuaries,” as at least a canonical reading suggests, then the possibility is open for the pre-Sinai cosmic mountains to function similarly in as much as they are eventually subsumed under Sinai’s mount. As the locus for the revelation of the heavenly tabnit, for the gradations of sacred space, for the giving of the tablets of the covenant, for the source of miraculous waters, for sacrifice, and for the sacral, communal meal, Sinai would seem to qualify as the cosmic mountain of Israel par excellence, subsuming the

110 J.D. Levenson, Sinai & Zion, 18.
111 M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 26. His full quote is relevant: “This is added to by the connection of the mountain imagery and temple categories. Given the function of temple motifs as the traditional expression for the ‘reality apart’, it is even possible to regard the encounter scenes with Moses as individual applications of a typical situation usually connected with temple categories. With such a background, Moses could represent the ideal religious figure, while the mountain scene provides the framework of the ultimate religious experience.”
112 See, e.g., G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 192; R.J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and in the Old Testament, 98; idem., “The Temple and the Holy Mountain,” p 107-24 in The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives, T.G. Madsen, ed. (RSMS 9; Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984); J.D. Levenson, Sinai & Zion, 15-86; D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God.” Parry rehearses Lundquist’s propositions (“What is a Temple?”) to demonstrate Sinai’s role as a cosmic mountain. As Lundquist’s first proposition makes clear, the temple is “the architectonic embodiment of the cosmic mountain,” so that whatever attributes of a temple there may be they are so precisely and only in as much as the temple is symbolic of the mountain itself.
113 D.N. Freedman, “Temple Without Hands,” 28-29, 21. So, too, J.M. Lundquist: “The conceptions of Zion as a holy mountain go back ultimately to the inner-Israelite experience at what is probably the holy, cosmic mountain of religious literature, Sinai” (“What is a Temple?” 207; emphasis original). At the least, T.E. Fretheim is correct in noting that the immediacy of the theophany at Sinai was a unique divine appearance unparalleled in the OT (Exodus, 214).
114 D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God.” This is, of course, the fundamental proposition of Lundquist (“What is a Temple?”). That being the case, the attributes he goes on to delineate regarding temples are true first and foremost of cosmic mountains. Thus, it would be more accurate to attribute, first, the same propositions to cosmic mountains, then to offer the most fundamental proposition last, namely, that the temple is an architectonic representation of the cosmic mountain (and therefore inherits the attributes of sacral space, etc.).
previous cosmic mountains as their anti-type. Dozeman notes that Sinai becomes the mountain of revelation upon the descent of the Glory of YHWH, where he reveals the two tablets of testimony (31.18; 34.2, 4, 29, 32), the sacrifices (Lev 7.38), the Sabbatical Year (Lev 25.1), the Holiness Code (Lev 26.46), the remaining laws within Leviticus (Lev 27.34), and the legislation concerning the daily offerings (Num 28.6). Thus “Mount Sinai, the mountain of law-giving, stands in the Canaanite tradition of the cosmic mountain.”

Given, next, that the tabernacle is constructed as a portable Sinai (as will be argued below), then a convincing case is made for the function of the cosmic mountain narratives in Genesis and Exodus as being liturgical, that is, as explaining the logic and significance of the tabernacle and later temple.

In as much, however, as the tabernacle/temple is copied after the נֵבֶר revealed to Moses atop Mount Sinai, the tabernacle/temple itself points to the reality of the heavenly Mount Zion. Thus, as Clifford states:

> The historical exodus has become a type of a life entrusted to God. The mountain is the goal of pilgrimage, of the final rest after the escape from the dominion of evil. The mountain of God in the beginning has become the mountain of God at the end.

B. The Gate Liturgy

According to our liturgical reading of the creation account, Adam is shown as the man who must descend the mount of YHWH, cherubim barring the entrance to fallen Man. In his prelapsarian

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115 Cf. R.L. Cohn (*The Shape of Sacred Space*, 54) who refers to Sinai as representing preeminently the axis mundi (sacred space) and the illud tempus (sacred time).


118 This narrative intention, incidentally, does not diminish claims to historicity – quite the reverse in as much as real significance derives from true explanation.

state, however, he is first described as one placed/brought to rest (בָּשֶׁם Gen 2.15) in the
mountaintop garden of Eden, the first “Holy of holies” as it were. Taking a similar reading of
the deluge account, it was noted how Noah, righteous and blameless as he was (cf. Ps 15), is
consistently portrayed as one able to enter the temple-like Ark, and so also the Ararat mount.

We turn now to consider how Moses is portrayed in the Sinai narrative primarily in terms as the
only one able to ascend the holy mountain of God.

1. MOSES AS NEW ADAM

As Exodus 19 and 24 portray Moses’ ascension of Mount Sinai to YHWH, it is quite possible that
Moses is to be viewed as a new Adam entering the paradisiacal Presence of God. In the last
chapter Noah’s presentation as Adam redivivus was noted, so that it may not be irrelevant here to
provide a sketch of how Moses is himself presented as something of a “Noah redivivus” and,
thus, also as a new Adam. Moses’ birth narrative in Exodus 2.1-10, to be sure, has many
parallels with the Deluge account: while others are presumably drowned in the Nile, the infant
Moses is delivered via the “ark” (arkם), the only other use of the term outside the Flood
narrative. However, a further parallel occurs in 32.7-10 where we read that the Israelites have
“corrupted themselves” (גָּנַה 32.7; cf. Gen 6.11), having “turned aside quickly from the way
(גָּנַה 32.8; cf. Gen 6.12)” which YHWH had commanded. After his investigated judgment (“I
have seen” [רְאָא, “Look!” [רְאָא] 32.9; cf. Gen 6.12), YHWH resolves to do with Israel and
Moses what he had already once done with the world and Noah, namely, to destroy all the people
and to begin afresh (v 10), making out of Moses a “great nation” (הָעָם). Further, given all

120 For parallels between Moses and Noah, particularly with reference to covenant, see R. Rendtorff, “Noah,
Abraham and Moses: God’s Covenant Partners,” pp 127-36 in In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament
Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements, E. Ball, ed. (JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic
121 Thus T.E. Fretheim posits that God here would have been starting over with Moses as “a new Abraham”
(Exodus, 258).
the plays on Noah's name in the Deluge account, it is perhaps not insignificant that what YHWH commands of Moses in v 10 may also be a subtle play on Noah: "Now therefore, let me rest/comfort-to-me (ךֵּלֵב הַנַּחַמ דָּתָג)....," reaffirming "the root וַיִּתְנַחֵל, as his ultimate decision to "repent" of the intended slaughter (ֵרָעִי...הַנְּעֵשׁ), reaffirms the root וָנִחֵל." 122 Then, in 33.17 YHWH says of Moses: "...you have found (גָּאִסְתּ) grace (גָּאָסָה) in my eyes (גָּאָסָה)," an unmistakable comparison with Noah of whom we read: "But Noah found (גָּאִסְתּ) grace (גָּאָסָה) in the eyes of (גָּאָסָה) YHWH" (Gen 6.8). 123 Thus, both Noah and Moses are pivotal figures in a turning "from judgment for the past to hope for the future (Gen 8.1; Exod 33.11)." 124 Moberly's comparison is worth quoting in full:

This striking similarity between the flood and Sinai, between Noah and Moses, is of great theological significance for the interpretation of each story. For each story is a critical moment. First for the future of the world, then the future of Israel is in the balance. The world, while still in its infancy, has sinned and brought upon itself Yahweh's wrath and judgment. Israel has only just been constituted a people, God's chosen people, yet directly it has sinned and incurred Yahweh's wrath and judgment. Each time the same question is raised. How, before God, can a sinful world (in general) or a sinful people, even God's chosen people (in particular), exist without being destroyed? Each time the answer is given that if the sin is answered solely by the judgment it deserves, then there is no hope. But in addition to the judgment there is also mercy, a mercy which depends entirely on the character of God and is given to an unchangingly sinful people. And not only this. Both Ex 32-34 and the flood narrative contain another theological paradox that God's mercy...is yet mediated through a man. Obviously the role of Noah as mediator is rudimentary in comparison with that of Moses, yet it is Noah's special position that ensures that man will not be totally destroyed (Gen 6.8), God remembering Noah is the turning point of the story (Gen 8.1), and God responds to the acceptable sacrifice of Noah as to the prayer of Moses (Gen 8.20f).

Furthermore, and if the last chapter’s suggestion regarding the ark as tabernacle/temple be accepted, both Noah and Moses construct sanctuaries and altars, the plans being revealed by God exclusively to each. "Moses, then, is another Noah whose career inaugurates a new epoch." 126

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123 Among the several parallels between Gen 1-9 and the book of Exodus T.E. Fretheim delineates is that between "Noah and Moses (see 2.1-10; cf. 33.12-17 with Gen 6.8)" (“Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 231).
125 R.W.L. Moberly, At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34 (JSOTSup 22; Sheffield: JSOT, 1998) 92.
Beyond these similarities, R. Rendtorff brings out further parallels between Genesis and Exodus, noting how “in both cases, the first gift of God (creation/covenant) is endangered by human sin and threatened to be destroyed because of God’s wrath. In both cases God changes his mind because of (the intercession of) one man (Noah/Moses)” (“‘Covenant’ as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus,” JBL 108 [1989] 393).

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128 The need for consecration also includes the blood rite described in 24.3-8, for, as Nicholson points out, “blood conveys holiness to that with which it comes into contact,” so that the rite, and more precisely the covenant it seals, is a “matter of Israel becoming Yahweh’s holy people” (E.W. Nicholson, “The Covenant Ritual in Exodus XXIV 3-8,” 83). One purpose of the covenant ritual is “to create a community united in worship” (J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Meaning,” 124).

129 The need for and legitimation of a mediator is one of the themes of the narrative. J. van Seters refers to as a “standard Yahwistic theme” (“Comparing Scripture with Scripture,” 113, 120).

130 G.C. Chirichigno, “The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 476, 479. He further notes the correspondence to the “concern for holiness…expressed in the theophany in Exod 3 where Moses was warned not to come near Yahweh and was asked to remove his sandals, for the ground he was standing on was holy ground (v. 5). In this respect, the theophany in Exod 3 may be seen as a biblical analogy to the theophany in Exod 19” (476).


terms occur over eighty times—and that mostly in the setting of the mountain of God, beginning with 3.5.\textsuperscript{133} He further states:

The key for interpreting repetition in Exodus 19-24 is the setting of the mountain, not the development of the plot or the unfolding chronology of the story. The repeated trips by Moses relate the two worlds of heaven and earth in the setting of the divine mountain. The result is a narrative that is spatial in form whose aim is to address the central theme of holiness.\textsuperscript{134}

Structurally, vv 10-25 contain several parallel concentric patterns that isolate the bounding of the mountain in relation to the people’s meeting with God:\textsuperscript{135}

\begin{verbatim}
vv 10-15
A Go to the people (10b)
B consecrate them today and tomorrow (10c)
C let them wash their garments (10d)
D let them be ready for the third day (11)
X set bounds for the mountain... do not ascend the mountain (12-13)
A' Moses descended from the mountain to the people (14a)
B' he consecrated the people (14b)
C' they washed their garments (14c)
D' Be ready for the third day (15b)

vv 16-19
A there were thunder and lightning flashes (16b)
B thick cloud on the mountain (16c)
C a very loud trumpet sound (16d)
D ... all the people in the camp trembled (16e)
X Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God (17)
A' Lord descended upon Mt Sinai in fire (18a)
B' smoke ascended from it (18b)
D' the whole mountain trembled (18c)
C' the sound of the trumpet grew louder (19)

vv 20-25
A Moses ascends from the people (20)
B Yhwh speaks to Moses:
Descend the mountain/priests/Yhwh break out against them (21-22)
X Moses replies: The people cannot ascend Mt Sinai... 'Set bounds around the mountain' (23)
B' Yhwh speaks to Moses:
Descend the mountain/priests/Yhwh break out against them (24)
A' Moses descends to the people (25)

Thus the people’s coming before God at the foot of the mount in v 17 is literarily “bounded” by the twofold warning in vv 12-13 and 23, framed as a chiasm: (a) set bounds, (b) do not ascend // (b')
cannot ascend, (a') set bounds. The set-apartness of God requires a set-apartness on the part of those
\end{verbatim}


\textsuperscript{134} T.B. Dozeman, \textit{Exodus}, 433-34.

\textsuperscript{135} Cf. G.C. Chirichigno, “The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 467-68, 476; T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 17. Cf. U. Cassuto (\textit{Exodus}, 233) that the repetition of the bounds in v 23 serves “(a) to stress still further the thought that the boundary between the two spheres, the human and the Divine, is not be effaced; (b) that it was necessary to repeat the warning at the crucial moment when the Revelation was about to take place (see Mekhilta). It may also be added that the triple reference to an important subject (vv 12-13; 21-22; 24) accords with a common literary practice.”
who would approach. To be sure, the mountain setting itself, with God at the summit and the people at the foot, with Moses mediating in between, serves to underscore the distance between the sacred and the profane.\textsuperscript{136} Dozeman outlines vv 16-19 as a chiasm, highlighting the meeting of the people with YHWH at the mountain (C, C\textsuperscript{'}):

\begin{itemize}
  \item A The sound of the horn (qōl šō[pn̄]r) v 16a
  \item B All the people (kol-ha[š̄]m̄) tremble (harad) v 16b
  \item C The people approach the mountain v 17
  \item C\textsuperscript{'} Yahweh descends on Mount Sinai v 18a
  \item B\textsuperscript{'} The entire mountain (kol-ha[š̄]h̄r) trembles (harad) v 18b
  \item A\textsuperscript{'} The sound of the horn (qōl ha[š̄]š̄ō[pn̄]r) v 19a
\end{itemize}

The holiness of the mount itself, moreover, is directly related to the Presence of YHWH (cf. also Ex 3.4-6).\textsuperscript{138} As Cross has noted, the “primary locus and normative form of the theophany of

\textsuperscript{136} T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 418.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 449.
\textsuperscript{138} Cf. A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 132: “Sinai became holy because of God’s [P]resence, and it was fenced in so as to avoid any violation of its sanctity by the Israelites.” Cf. J.I. Durham, Exodus, 265, 272; C. Houtman, Exodus, vol. 2, 451; J.J. Niehaus, God at Sinai, 25-6. Because even the Cosmic Mount functions to some degree as a symbol for YHWH’s Presence, “a signifier of divine cultic presence” (T.B. Dozeman, God on the Mountain, 15), Cosmic Mountain ideology/ Temple theology may be subsumed under the broader “theology of the Presence of God.” Indeed, as J. van Seters points out in his review of Dozeman’s work (JQR 82.3/4 [1992] 583-85): “The symbol of the cosmic mountain becomes a way of discussing the continuities and discontinuities of a theology of divine presence through various redactional stages.” Dozeman further notes how the Cosmic Mountain form of theophany dominates Exod 19-24, and how the genre of divine theophany, particularly on the mountain, “plays a central role in developing the theme of divine presence in Exodus” (Exodus [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009] 4-5). J.W. Hilber also underscores the centrality of the divine Presence, particularly in Ex 24 as the climax of that theme throughout the book of Exodus: “The presence of Yhwh stands out as the most distinguishing feature of the covenant relationship. Divine presence ‘characterizes’ the covenant relationship in the sense that God’s presence is the benefit of the covenant (with all that his presence means for the worshiper’s protection and subsistence)” (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24, “ JETS 39.2 [1996] esp. 177-78(184)). F. Polak demonstrates how the theophany theme (also a subset of the theology of God’s Presence) “dominates the entire book of Exodus. This overarching theme makes its first appearance in the revelation of Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3-4), reaches its climax in the Sinai theophany and comes to its final completion in the revelation to Moses on the mountain (chs. 33-34). The book closes with the descent of the cloud on the ‘Tent of Meeting,’ as the radiance of the kabod fills the tabernacle (40.34-35)” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 113). Theophany, again under the broader category of the divine Presence, continues then in YHWH’s dwelling in the sacred cultic site of the Tabernacle, a theme at the heart and center of ancient Israelite religion (see R.E. Clements, God and Temple [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965]), for there is a close relationship between the themes “Theophany on the Mountain” and “Sanctuary of God,” and, indeed, the construction of “Yahweh’s sanctuary is central for developing the theme of the divine presence in the second half of Exodus” (T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 6-7). The theophany theme, then, “stands at the center of the book as a whole, and permeates all traditions, sources and redaction layers” (“Theophany and Mediator,” pp 113-47 in Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction-Reception-Interpretation, M. Vervenne, ed. [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996] 113). Further, E.G. Newing (“A Rhetorical and Theological Analysis of the Hexateuch,” SEAJT 22 [1981] 1-15) argues that the structure of the Hexateuch places the central focus upon the divine Presence in the Tent at Mount Sinai (Exod 33.1-17), specifically “mediated through the face to face encounter with Moses and represented realistically in the Covenant Law written on the tablets of stone” (11; see his diagrams

260
Ritual and Symbolism, D. Parry, ed. [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994] 126,134), illustrating the divine Presence to be... "Theophany Topos and Mountain of God," JBL 86.2 [1967] 207). To be sure, the Mount of Eden itself was "holy because God's presence was found there," the eastward orientation also alluding to that Presence in as much as the "Hebrew for east means 'faceward or frontward'; thus, driving Adam from before his face is part of the continuing eastward movement" (D. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," pp 126-51 in Temple of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism, D. Parry, ed. [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994] 126, 134), illustrating the divine Presence to be fundamental to any biblical theology. A.C. Leder also notes the Presence theme at the end of Exodus: "Unlike the rest of Adam's descendants who continue life outside of God's presence, these children of Adam and Abraham are beginning to enjoy the presence of God again and to do the work for which all of Adam's descendants were created" ("Reading Exodus to Learn," 19). As the background and context to Exodus, Genesis demonstrates a progressive "loss" of the divine Presence. While he does not relate the phenomena to the divine Presence per se, G. Nicol does note the progressive change in God's activity throughout the three major sections of Genesis: in the Primeval History (chs. 1-11), God appears as a character among characters; in the Patriarchal Narratives (12-36), He appears in dreams at holy places; and in the Joseph Story (37-50), He has more of a hidden influence ("Story-Patterning in Genesis," pp 215-33 in Text as Pretext: Essays in Honor of Robert Davidson, R.P. Carroll, ed. [JSOTSup 138; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992] 215. Nicol also points out the patterning of the Tower of Babel after the expulsion from the Garden [226-29] so that one may detect a continuation of the theme of the progressive distancing of humanity from the divine Presence even in the "new creation" after the Deluge). This movement may even be tracked somewhat geographically in Genesis as the narrative begins with the on the Peak of Eden and ends with the descent to Sheol-like Egypt, preparing for the theme of the divine Presence in Exodus. J.I. Durham aptly sums up the book of Exodus in relation to Presence: "With Yahweh's Presence promised, then demonstrated, then given to Israel in theophany at Sinai, the first half of Exodus ends. The second half of the book is preoccupied with response to that Presence, in life, in covenant, in worship, and even in disobedience. The largest part of that second half has to do with the communication to Israel of the reality of that Presence, through a series of set-apart places, set-apart objects and set-apart acts, all of them intimately connected, in one way or another, with Yahweh's Presence. This final chapter [40] sums up the symbolisms of those places, objects, and acts, then recounts the fulfillment of the ideal of the Exodus theology of the Presence: Yahweh among his people, not in his mighty deeds, or in his rescue, or in his provision, or in his guidance, or in his judgment, or to a distance on a forbidden and foreboding mountain, but there in their midst; the symbol of his nearness visible to all, and all the time, Yahweh protecting and guiding, Yahweh teaching and blessing; Yahweh's Presence settled in Israel's center, Yahweh's Presence filling their Holiest Space, Yahweh's Presence in their living place, wherever it might be, and when; Yahweh's Presence in them" (Exodus, 501). For the theology of the Presence of God, see W. Brueggemann, "Presence of God, Cultic," pp 680-83 in IDB, Supp. Vol., K. Crim, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976); R.E. Clements, God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965); B.A. Levine, "On the Presence of God in Biblical Religion," pp 71-87 in Religions in Antiquity, J. Neusner, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1968); S. Terrien, The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); L. Brisman, "On the Divine Presence in Exodus," pp 105-22 in Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987). Brisman offers a particularly helpful look at the theme of the mournful loss of the divine Presence in Exod 33 with God's mercy demonstrated by his acceding to Moses' request to allow his panav, his face, to accompany Israel rather than an angel (116-21). For the Presence as expressed by the Hebrew term "face" panim, which occurs more than twenty times in Exod 32-34, see H.C. Brichta, Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1992) 117; J. Plastaras, The God of Exodus, 264. Further, because the "wind is the most potent manifestation of Yahweh's divine presence" (R. Luyster, "Wind and Water," 4), the Creation (Gen 1.2) and Deluge (Gen 8.1) fall within the scope, along with Exod 14-15, of theology of the Presence. Extending the theology of the Presence to the eschatological hope of the Hebrew and Christian canons, Isaiah 65-66, taken up by the Apocalypse of John, presents the hope of life within the full divine Presence of YHWH in the cosmic temple of the New Creation (cf. D.C. Timmer, Creation, Tabernacle, 149).
Yahweh is found in the episode at Sinai.”¹³⁹ In light of the overall narrative pattern of the book of Exodus, as summarized particularly in the Song of Exod 15, Cross is also correct to position YHWH’s theophany within the pattern of the deity’s return to his Cosmic Mount after victory, there revealing himself as the enthroned king—that is, the theophany begins “not at Sinai, but at the sea.”¹⁴⁰ The mount is holy not only because of YHWH’s Presence, but simply because it has been set apart for it. Thus we see that in vv 10-13, before the theophanic Presence, Moses is ordered to put to death by capital punishment any who touch the mountain, but in vv 20-25, that is, after YHWH’s arrival, YHWH himself will “break out” against the violators.¹⁴¹ Further, and as Alexander has noted, “the dominant issue in the dialogue between Yahweh and Moses [in 19.20-25] is the holiness of the mountain.”¹⁴²

3. “WHO SHALL ASCEND?”

Holiness being one of the chief attributes of the Cosmic Mountain, with access to its summit barred, the cultic question naturally arises: “Who may ascend the mountain of God?”

Significantly, then, we find that Moses is continually described as one—the only one—who is able to ascend. The poetical¹⁴³ Exod 19.3 strikingly states:

³⁹ F. M. Cross Jr., Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, 163. So too C. Houtman refers to the “extraordinary manifestation and presence of Yhwh” that was “holy beyond words” (Exodus, vol. 2, 460).
¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 163-64.
¹⁴² T. D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative in Exodus XIX 1-XXIV 11,” VT 49.1 (1999) 18. Alexander also notes on the same page that by “commanding Moses to warn the Israelites against ascending the mountain, God implies that some of them at least tend towards disobedience rather than compliance. Significantly, this will be highlighted later when they construct the golden calf (Ex 32.1-8).” This presumption, then, manifests itself in the failure to consider what may perhaps be called the most significant question of worship in the Bible, i.e., “Who may ascend?” Cf. M. R. Hauge, who parallels the people’s wish for the divine presence “in front of us” with the divine intention to “dwell in the people’s midst” (The Descent from the Mountain, 63-4). Hauge also notes the parallels between the Golden Calf episode and the worship of ch. 24 (66-70). A. M. Rodriguez, further, points out that the use of نِم in the narrative, also used for unfit sacrifices/priests (cf. Lev 22.25; Mal 1.14; 2.8), portrays the rebellious people “like a defective animal or disqualified priest, unable to come into God’s Presence” (“Sanctuary Theology in Exodus,” 139).
¹⁴³ D. K. Stuart (Exodus, 421) mentions, e.g., the metrical balance and parallelism throughout, by syllables: 10/10/2/7/7/7.
But Moses ascended to God...

The vav is justly interpreted as disjunctive inasmuch as the line “is not given as a consequence of the preceding situation which, in this case, depicts the children of Israel setting up camp in the wilderness” so that here the focus shifts by way of contrast between the action and the person. Indeed, the contrast between the people encamped around the mountain who are to “guard” themselves so as not to “ascend the mountain (יהוה הרים) or touch its base” (Exod 19.12) and Moses who ascends the mountain continues throughout the narrative, and is one of the many parallels Alexander delineates between 19.3 and 20.21:

Further, whereas the wayyiqtol form of מְנַעְרָה would have been utilized for mere sequential action in historical narrative, the qatal appears to function as “pinning an attribute” on the subject, so that the subject appears in focus (versus the action)—that is, Moses’ identity is manifest as an “ascender” to God. In any case, the point is made both by repetition (Moses’ repeated ascensions) and by contrast (the repeated injunctions against the peoples’ ascending the mount). Verse 20, for example, reads:

Then YHWH descended upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain (יהוה השם יָרָא). And YHWH called Moses to the top of the mountain (יהוה השם יָרָא), and Moses ascended (גָּדָה).

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146 B. Rocine, *Learning Biblical Hebrew*, 21: “The qatal verb form gives an attribute to the subject of the verb.” Cf. the bibliography provided by Rocine in fn 2 of same page. Thus Rocine himself translates the nuance of Ex 19.3 as “But Moses was a goer up to God” (93).
Note the emphasis on the “head” (ןָּהֲרָה) of the mountain as the particular locus of YHWH’s descending Presence, a feature not only consonant with the general ANE concept of the cosmic mountain, but particularly relevant with reference to the holy of holies in the tri-partite structure of the tabernacle. The summit, in contrast with the foot of the mountain, is the locus of theophany. Also note how once more, lest Moses’ prerogatives result in presumption on the part of Israel, the people are immediately warned in the following verse (21) not to follow Moses’ approach. The contrast is explicit in v 23 as Moses, speaking from the heights of the mount, states what may be considered the primary danger involved in the worship of YHWH:

לֹּא עָלָיו הָאָרֶץ לְאֶלְּהָרָה

The people are not able to ascend the Mount of Sinai.

“The people are not able to ascend the Mount” raises the question: Who is able to ascend the Mount? Evidently, Moses is quite able. As Mediator between God and the people, he is able to ascend to God whereas the people may not, and able to descend to the people whereas God may not (lest they perish). Indeed, keeping up with Moses’ ascents and descents is “one of the main problems of Exodus 19.”

There are three principle “characters” in the Sinai narrative:

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147 U. Cassuto, Exodus, 233.
148 Although one might argue, based on the birth narrative of Moses (Exod 2.1-10), that Durham overstates his point, he nonetheless expresses the emphasis upon Moses’ (unexpected or “dislocated”) mediatorial role well: “Most of the narrative of Exodus from chap. 7 to this point has involved the proof to Israel of the Presence of Yahweh in the mighty acts in Egypt, the guidance through the wilderness, the deliverance at the sea, the provision and protection en route to Sinai, and the bringing of Israel to himself at Sinai. All the preparation of Israel, finally at Sinai, has been to the end that they, and no one else, might be ‘completely ready’ to encounter Yahweh on that most important ‘third day.’ The boundaries that have been set up are for Israel’s protection in the midst of an experience of rendezvous. Israel is made ready for holiness. Israel is commanded to ritual purification and cultic abstinence. Israel is brought by Moses from the camp to the perimeters of safety at the base of Sinai, there to meet and be met by Yahweh. Then, suddenly, just at the very moment when the experience of Yahweh so longed for has arrived, Moses, represented throughout the narrative as eagerly longing for Israel to know it, is suddenly thrust into the center as the sacerdotal/prophetic intermediary between Yahweh and his people” (Exodus, 269). Cf. B.S. Childs, Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 108-12.
151 G.C. Chirichigno, “The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 460. Chirichigno thus delineates the narrative interaction into five rhetorical elements: MU – Moses goes up to the mountain; YM – Yahweh address Moses; MD
YHWH, the people of Israel, and Moses who, as the “go-between,” mediates between the two. \(^{152}\)

Winther-Nielsen, utilizing discourse-pragmatic analysis, delineates vv 16-19 as the climax of the narrative, focusing on Moses’ role as mediator, conversing with God. \(^{153}\) The singular role of Moses, to be sure, is a matter of emphasis throughout the entire Sinai narrative:

The emphasis on the mediatorial role of Moses and the need for distance between God and the worshippers in Exod 24.1-2 echoes motifs from the two divine speeches that were addressed to Moses in Exod 19.20-25, when Israel and the priesthood were forbidden to ascend the mountain while Moses was singled out as an acceptable mediator. In Exod 24.1-2 the danger of the cosmic mountain is again underscored, so that in the end only Moses is allowed to approach God. \(^{154}\)

Throughout chapter 19, Moses is thus continually ascending and descending to maintain the dialogue between YHWH and Israel, vv 20-25 in particular displaying this role with a palistrophe: \(^{155}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{A} \quad \text{Moses ascends from the people (v 20)} \\
&\text{B} \quad \text{Yhwh speaks to Moses (vv 21-22)} \\
&\text{C} \quad \text{Moses replies (v 23)} \\
&\text{B'} \quad \text{Yhwh speaks to Moses (v 24)} \\
&\text{A'} \quad \text{Moses descends to the people (v 25)}
\end{align*}
\]

Thus Dozeman, who sees the function of Sinai’s symbolic cosmic mountain role as disclosing the essential relationship of YHWH to his people, writes:

The opening verses of the Sinai Complex would certainly appear to encourage a study of the symbolic role of the mountain setting, since it is used as the focal point for introducing the main characters, and since it continues to be a central structuring device throughout the Sinai Complex. Note, for example, how Yahweh and Israel are introduced in Exod 19.1-3a as stationary characters, who are carefully juxtaposed to each other at the summit and base of the mountain, while Moses is presented as the one who moves vertically between the two parties as he explores the spatial relationship between them. And note how this interrelationship between characters in the setting of the mountain continues to be a structuring device throughout the Sinai Complex, especially with regard to the movement of Moses. His movement up and down the mountain yields the following scenes: Exod 19.1-8a (Proposal of Covenant); Exod 19.8b-19 (Theophany); Exod 19.20-20.20

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\(^{155}\) T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 17. To Alexander’s scheme we have merely added “from the people” (as evident from v 17) and “to the people” (v 25b) to bring out Moses’ role as mediator. G.C. Chirichigno notes how the rhetorical pattern of 19.3-8a also brings out Moses’ privileged status in communicating with YHWH (“The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 464.)
Exodus 20.18-21 may serve as a summary of Moses’ role in the peoples’ relationship to YHWH.

After witnessing the thundering, lightning flashes, trumpet sound, and fuming mountain, the trembling people say to Moses, “You (יְהֹוָה) speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die” (19). The account then closes with a characterizing summation in v 21:

So the people stood afar off
mashe'et nes anan kavan la-as irahim

but Moses drew near to the dense darkness there where God was.

Again one finds the contrast between the people and Moses, standing versus drawing near, “afar off” versus “there” (זאפה) in the Presence of God. The spatial relationship is demarcated linearly with reference to the mount, standing afar off being at the foot/lowest part of Sinai while drawing near having reference to the head/summit.

We turn now to Exodus 24, which may be considered “the climax of the covenant-making experience that was formally initiated when YHWH descended on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19),” whereby the “sealing of the covenant, first announced in Exod 19.3, is brought to consummation in Exodus 24, and the response of the people in 19.8 is reaffirmed in 24.3, 7.” The correspondence is brought out structurally, as observed by Sarna: an inclusio is formed by the sevenfold use of the stem רבד dbr both in chs 19 and 24, and by the sevenfold use of the stem ירד yrd in ch. 19 which is counterbalanced by the matching use of the antonym על in ch

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157 It is perhaps not insignificant here to point out that the spatial idea of “drawing near” (ἐπέση; LXX εἰσόδιον), finding its basis first in the cosmic mountain setting and later applied within the Tabernacle cultic liturgy, becomes something of a technical term for worship. Cf. Heb 10.19-22 where entering (ἐσόδος) the Holy of holies in the heavenly Mount Zion is equated with drawing near (προσερχόμεθα).
24.160 Exod 24, to continue, reaffirms the demarcation of space as, in the first verse, Moses is
called to “ascend” (חָרַם), along with Aaron and his sons, and seventy elders of the people, and
worship from “afar” (בֹּלַח). While seventy-four men are called to worship YHWH from afar it is
significant that the imperatival “ascend” is masculine singular, reserved as it were for Moses the
“ascender” par excellence. The stark contrast is evident at the outset, 24.1: “But to Moses, he
[God] said, ‘Ascend to YHWH.’”162 Indeed, the point is immediately underscored in a threefold
manner (v 2):163

מָסַר מְלֹא הָעָבָדִים
And Moses alone may draw near to YHWH

בָּרָא אֵל
but they [the elders, Aaron and his sons] must not draw near,

וֹגַעְתָּם אֵל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
and the people are not to ascend with him.

160 N.M. Sarna, Exodus, 150; also noted by J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 177 fn 4.
161 The round number seventy likely suggests a complete representation of all Israel (cf. Ex 1.5) as a new creation
among the nations (cf. Gen 10 where the Table of Nations is represented by seventy tribes), and may have ritual
significance within the context of sacrificial feast in the ancient Near East. Cf. J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in
Exodus 24,” 180 with fn 15; as ref. by Hilber: S.G. Vincent, “Exegesis of Exodus 24:1-11” (unpublished paper,
162 Cf. T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 563.
163 Exod 19.13 presents the only case in the narrative where the term for ascend with reference to the mountain
appears positively in the third masculine plural: “When the trumpet blast sounds long, they may ascend (להמָסַר) the
mountain.” Polak keenly notes that it “is not easy to bring this statement in accordance with the preceding
restrictions” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 134). The perceived incongruity of the pericope is typically resolved by
source-critical analysis. Considering, however, the final form of the text, with its emphasis on the necessity for
Moses as mediator, we simply note that v 13 is mitigated by the ensuing description of the people’s merely being
brought to the foot of the mountain (v 17), along with the explicit interpretation of that ascent being via Moses alone
(vv 20-25), and by the use of the verb, with precisely the same inflection, but with the particle of negation here in the
inclusio of 24.2 where we read the prohibition that the people are not to ascend (להמָסַר). The Mekilta of R.
Ishma’el interprets the injunction of 19.3 as relating directly to the account of Moses’ ascent with the seventy elders
in 24.1, 9 (cf. F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 134)—thus, a “federal” interpretation ultimately expressed via
Moses’ role as mediator. For another option, that of a deliberate blurring and ambiguity, see M.R. Hauge, The
Descent from the Mountain, 47-48. N. Winther-Nielsen, using discourse-pragmatic analysis to identify 19.16-19 as
the peak of the narrative, posits the prohibitions in vv 21-24 as the major dramatic reversal resulting from that peak,
i.e., there is a dramatic and logical change rather than a contradiction (“Toward the Peak of Mount Sinai”). Since
approaching any mountain involves some level of ascent, Bruckner affirms the NIV’s interpretation that the people
are to climb “up to the mountain,” i.e., up to the foot of the mountain, thus removing any supposed contradiction
(Exodus, 179).
This is balanced by ch 19’s “three negative purpose clauses prohibiting the people to ascend the holy mountain and approach the presence of God (19.21c, 22b, 24d), otherwise they will perish (19.21d).”

Niccacci writes:

Thus, with a three-stage going up—Moses went up with the chosen group (24.9), with Joshua (24.13, 15), and finally alone (24.18)—the command of 24.1 is fully executed. The delaying effect of the narrative is powerful and the tension becomes higher and higher. The inaccessibility of God and the mediatorial role of Moses are forcibly stressed.

Here three gradations of holiness, or “levels of nearness,” are evident, accessed by Moses, the elders with Aaron and his sons, and the people. This tri-partite division of the mount into bands of holiness will later be reflected in the tabernacle. The holy mount, then, does not mirror the tabernacle, but quite the reverse: the tabernacle is patterned after the mountain. This is part of chapter 24’s stress on the centrality of God’s Presence via covenant “as it is symbolized and experienced in worship.” Notice also once more that, while the priesthood and elders are allowed partially up the mountain, so that the people may have justly been barred from ascending particularly “with-them,” yet the verb is again restricted to Moses so that the people are barred from “ascending with-him” (וַיְנַגֵּא). Whether the people’s prohibition is in view (v 2) or the partial allowance of the priesthood and elders (v 1), Moses alone is the ascender. “The divine mountain,” writes Hauge, “is ascended by the extraordinary human actor, leaving the rest of

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164 N. Winther-Nielsen, “Toward the Peak of Mount Sinai,” 15.
166 J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 180. Hilber continues: “The people remain at ‘the foot of the mountain,’ where the ceremony takes place (v 4). Moses and the others ‘come up’ for the communal meal (vv 9-11). Only Moses ‘draws near’ (i.e. into the very cloud of God’s glory, vv 12-18). The word nägaʿ (‘draw near’) here implies closeness for verbal and visual interaction (Gen 43.19; 45.4) or face-to-face negotiation (Num 32.16)” (180-81). For “gradations of holiness,” see J. Milgrom, Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology (Leiden: Brill, 1983) 44; N.M. Sarna, Exodus, 151.
168 P. Enn, Exodus, 391.
170 This point is likely the motivation for the narrative’s depiction of Moses ascending and descending the mountain “an inordinate number of times,” as J. van Seter puts it (“Comparing Scripture with Scripture,” 115).
humanity far below.” Then once again, in 24.9, though Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders are all in purview with regard to “seeing” God (גִּצֹּת; v 10), the verb “ascend” is restricted to Moses (לָגַל; v 9). From this midpoint of the mountain, and after an exceptional scene of communing with the God of Israel, YHWH calls to Moses (v 12): “Ascend (לָגַל) to me on the mountain and be there (ךָּךְ)....” Clearly the summit is the place of God’s (however temporal) dwelling, so that ascending “the mountain” (הִרְסוּת) is equated with ascending “to me” (ךָּךְ)—the God of the mountain. The same point is made also in the reflex of Ex 20.21 by the use of “there” (ךָּךְ). In response, we read that Moses arose with Joshua his minister (v 13a). While both Moses and Joshua are in view yet the following verb of ascent is the—by now expected—third masculine singular (13b): 173

This seeming incongruity is, typically, “corrected” by the Septuagint in a twofold manner: (1) by deleting the second occurrence of “Moses,” and (2) by changing the third masculine singular form of the verb for ascent into the plural form. 174 To be sure, the narrative has been something of an interpretive puzzle. However, once Moses’ role is seen within the context of a “gate liturgy,” similar to Noah’s role regarding entrance into the ark, 175 then rather than viewing the

172 T.E. Fretheim notes: “The special import of this visit is the special presence of God that is vouchsafed to these individuals as representatives of the people....This serves to make an important point: God is committed to a real presence with this people in all of their journeyings, a deeply personal level of involvement....This anticipates the discussion between Moses and God in chapters 32-34, where the continuing divine presence with Israel is at issue” (Exodus, 259-60 emphasis original).
173 The seeming incongruity draws attention to Moses’ exclusive role as ascender. A.M. Rodriguez, e.g., comments: “The biblical text seems to suggest that Moses and Joshua went up together (24.13). But according to 24.15-18, Moses alone ‘entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain’” (“Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 132 fn 13).
175 The gate liturgy also informs the door motif found throughout Scripture, whereby safety is found amidst judgment: for Noah (Gen 7.1), Lot (Gen 19.16), Israel (Exod 12.23), Rahab (Josh 2.19), and for the Christian via the “door” of Christ (Matt 25.10-13; Heb 10.19-20). Though he makes no connection to the gate liturgy, cf. B. Waltke, Genesis, 152. Integral also is the Tabernacle drama on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16; 23.26-32).
apparent incongruity as the result merely of the accretion of various strands of tradition, one begins to understand the purposive logic underlying the narrative phenomena. Continuing to v 14, there is, further, an immediate contrast as the elders are commanded to stay (יהוה). A further summary statement reiterates the portrayal, v 15:


And Moses ascended to the mountain and the cloud covered the mountain.

Thus it is clear that “Moses alone could ascend all the way up the mountain, near to Yahweh (vs. 2 [of Ex 24]) where the glory of Yahweh was manifested in a special way.”

Tabernacle parallels are suggestive here in as much as entering the Holy of holies, behind the veil, covers the high priest’s meeting with God from the sight of the people, just as the thick darkness of the cloud here covered Moses. That the summit of the mount corresponds to the holy of holies is already somewhat commonplace in scholarship. Rylaarsdam, for example, states: “Moses is asked to come up to God, to enter what in the temple was known as the holy of holies.”

YHWH’s theophanic manifestation upon Sinai is even traced by Beyerlin to the concealing cloud of smoke appearing above the mercy seat of the ark (cf. Lev 16.2), which he in turn derives from the “censer full of coals of fire” in the sanctuary. “Conversely,” he writes, and with this we are in agreement, “this cultic ceremony served to realize in a dramatic way the Sinai theophany and its accompanying phenomena.” Thus, once more we find the tabernacle served as a portable Sinai, but more to the point: Sinai served to pre-figure the tabernacle.

179 Ibid., 134-35.
Now if Kline is correct in positing that the glory cloud of God's Presence rested upon Eden's mount\textsuperscript{180}—beyond the correspondence between Paradise and the tabernacle\textsuperscript{181}—the parallels with Sinai are striking. Niehaus similarly makes the case that the post-lapsarian Presence of God was a storm theophany, יְהֹוָה לְקָדָשׁ qōl yhwh in Gen 3.8 translated as YHWH's thunderous Presence and the primal Couple's response being likened to Israel's response to the "thunder" (יָרְחָב haqqōlōt) in Exod 20.18.\textsuperscript{182} Another correspondence, noted by Currid, is the death sentence imposed for disobeying God's word: "you shall surely die," נָטַע הַצְּדָקָה (Gen 2.17)// "he shall surely be put to death," יָרְחַב הַצְּדָקָה (Exod 19.12).\textsuperscript{183} The parallel between Eden and Sinai becomes more evident at the close of Exod 24, vv 16-18:

> Now the glory of YHWH dwelled (שָׁכָנָה) upon the Mountain of Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The appearance of the glory of YHWH was like a consuming fire (שָׁמַעְתָּ בָּשְׁמַעְתָּ) on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the sons of Israel. So Moses entered into the midst of the cloud and he ascended (עָסָנָה) the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Beyond the obvious allusion to the six days of creation, with the seventh as the symbol of Divine-human engagement, Och points out the correspondence between the tree of life and the Torah which is "a tree of life to them that hold fast to her" (Prov 3.18; cf. Deut 30.15-16).\textsuperscript{184} Moses ascends the summit of YHWH's Mount, then, precisely to gain life for the sons of Israel. The first use of the root for "dwelled" (שָׁכָנָה), moreover, is Gen 3.24 when the cherubim are "caused-to-dwell" (לִכְּבָנָה) at the gate of Eden, along with "the flame of the whirling sword."

YHWH's glory dwelling (שָׁכָנָה) atop Sinai's mount, like a "consuming fire...in the eyes of the

\textsuperscript{180} M.G. Kline, Images of the Spirit, 35-42.


\textsuperscript{183} J.D. Currid, Exodus, vol. 2, 22. Further, each phrase caps its respective sentence.

sons of Israel," may serve a similar function—that is, as a warning that the summit may not be ascended. The storm and fire imagery presents the coming of YHWH, language recurrent in OT theophany accounts, and finding parallels in Canaanite descriptions of a deity's arrival. In general we can affirm with Sarna that the "function of the detailed, elaborated, and animated descriptions of the upheavals of nature is to convey in human terms something of the ultimately inexpressible, ineffable impact of the awesome and mysterious manifestation of the Divine Presence." 

Returning to τῷ, the usages that follow Exod 24.16 are found in Exod 25.8 and 29.45 and have direct reference to the tabernacle:

25.8: Let them make for me a sanctuary so I may dwell (ἵνα ἐκεῖ) among them.
29.45: I will dwell (ἵνα ἐκεῖ) among the sons of Israel [in the Tabernacle, cf. v 44], and I will be their God.

As YHWH dwelled amidst Israel upon Sinai, so he will do so through the tabernacle (constructed according to the revealed tabnit), the "portable Sinai." Indeed the sparse narrative itself, the event it describes, may have served as something of a portrayal of worship, vivifying the liturgical realities of tabernacle worship, including the role of the "seventh day." To be sure, the final instructions regarding the establishment of the cult deal with Sabbath law (31.12-17), concluding with "for in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested (πάση) and was refreshed." From this perspective, Exod 24.16-18 is of a piece with the creation narrative as "liturgical narrative." On the sanctified day, the seventh day set apart for the creature's encounter with the Creator, YHWH calls out to Moses. Because the description

186 N.M. Sarna, Exploring Exodus, 134.
187 So labeled by various scholars, e.g., T.E. Fretheim, "Because the Whole Earth is Mine," 232; idem., Exodus, 274.
188 See S.W. Hahn, "Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic," Letter & Spirit 1 (2005) 109: "Moses' time on the mountain can be seen as a kind of 'new creation'—the cloud of divine Presence covers the mountain for six days and on the seventh, God's instructions consist of a series of seven commands that
of the glory of YHWH as a “consuming fire” follows the seventh day (instead of being appended immediately after mention of the cloud in v 15, after the glorious presence in 16a, or even after the mention of the cloud again in 16b), the impression left is that the seventh day, as set-apart or sacred time, indeed brought with it the special immanence of Israel’s God. “Moses ascends by himself ever higher into the mountain (vv 15, 18 must now mean stages in the ascent).” More to our point, however, is simply that the one in place as First Man in this portrayal, biding quietly alone throughout the six creational days, only to emerge as the Creator calls him out on the seventh as some new Adam, this one is Moses. Thus the seventh ascent finds “Moses alone reaching the top.” Justly then Exod 24 has been described as a going “back to Eden.” Sinai continues the creation of Genesis 1, portraying Israel as YHWH’s new creation. As he had created the cosmos out of chaos through his word, so now YHWH creates social order, in conformity with that cosmic order, via the giving of the Law. To state it within the context of worship, the cult transforms chaos into creation. “Six days pass before the creation of the document that symbolizes the creation of the covenant community. The seventh day, the day of theocratic rest, is the day for communion between YHWH and Moses who draws near.” The seventh day is not only highlighted thematically, as the day when YHWH calls out for his servant

continue for seven chapters and conclude with the ordinances for the seventh day, the sabbath (Exod 31.12-17).”

190 B. S. Childs, Exodus, 504-05. Childs points out that if read as whole the repeated ascents offers a coherent picture of a gradual ascent to different levels of the mount. J. D. Currid similarly notes: “The verb to ‘go up’ is used seven times in this chapter...and the seventh time the word appears is when Moses reaches the summit of Sinai, goes into the cloud and remains there for forty days (24.18)” (Exodus, vol. 2, 134).
191 By J. W. Hilber (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185).
194 T. E. Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation,” 362. Similarly, R. L. Cohn writes: “Indeed, the giving of the law at Sinai is analogous to the act of bringing order out chaos in creation myths” (The Shape of Sacred Space, 56).
to ascend, but also by the literary structure itself which centers upon the seventh day (24.15-18a):\textsuperscript{197}

\begin{itemize}
\item[A] And Moses ascended into the mountain
\item[B] and a cloud covered the mountain
\item[C] and the glory of YHWH tabernacled upon Mount Sinai
\item[D] and the cloud covered it six days
\item[E] and he called to Moses on the seventh day
\item[D'] out of the midst of the cloud
\item[C'] And the sight of the glory of YHWH was like devouring fire on the top of the mount
\item[B'] And Moses went into the midst of the cloud
\item[A'] And he ascended into the mountain
\end{itemize}

"The majestic description of an event lasting six days and reaching the height of its grandeur on the seventh," writes Avishur, "is known to us from Akkadian, Ugaritic, and biblical literature,"\textsuperscript{198} namely, in creation/temple texts. Moses is portrayed not only as the one consistently able to ascend the mount of YHWH, but also able to be "planted" there, able to "abide" there, for "Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights" (v 18).\textsuperscript{199} Indeed, after reading through the Sinai narrative, and upon hearing the question of Pss 15 and 24 ("Who may ascend the mount of YHWH?"), how else but "Moses" could one answer? Significantly, Hauge also notes the centrality of the "who may ascend" motif, with Moses alone being qualified:

The theme of ascent is also reflected by the peculiar element in 19.13b centered around motifs of a special ascent to the mountain...Both theme of ascent and the formal ambiguities are continued in the story of implementation in 24.11-18...At the very least, these formal peculiarities attest the interest in a theme 'who may ascend the mountain.' This is expressed by 19.13, vv 20-25 added to by 20.18-21, 24.1-2 followed by vv 10-1 and the new invitation to Moses in v 12 followed by vv 13-18. The theme of ascent and the corresponding prohibition against the usurped "nearness" related to certain actors is repeated like some narrative refrain. Also, the uncertainties and ambiguities with regard to the "who" of those ascending are repeated rather consistently throughout this composition...At the very least, the repetitions underline the negative aspects of the unworthy ascent...In Exodus 19.1-24.2, with its aftermath in 24.3-8, seems to represent one set of interlinked events, centered around the theophanic episode introduced in 19.16 and dedicated to a theme of "who may ascend"...Repeated in all mountain scenes with Moses as subject, 'ala is

\textsuperscript{197} Cf. Y. Avishur, "Revelation at Sinai," 192-93. Avishur notes the alternation of emphasis on "mount" and "cloud": mount-cloud-mount-cloud-mount-cloud-mount (195). Further, and as will be discussed below, the seventh day is highlighted structurally in the next narrative unit, framing the Golden Calf idolatry in 31.12-17 and 35.1-3.

\textsuperscript{198} Y. Avishur, "Revelation at Sinai," 195.

\textsuperscript{199} M. Barker suggests that passing through the veil into the Holy of holies was passing beyond time into eternity (see her "Beyond the Veil of the Temple"). Given the correspondence between the Tabernacle/ Temple Holy of holies and the summit of the Cosmic Mountain, the same idea may be involved here with Moses' supernatural stay of forty days and nights. The Presence of YHWH being accessed at the summit, the supernatural subsistence of Moses is likely linked to the infinite being and abundant life of YHWH (cf. Exod 3.2, 14). J. Currid (\textit{Exodus}, vol. 2, 144) notes that the number forty is often used of a period of trial and test (Exod 16.35), purification (Gen 50.3), or simply a generic extended period of time (Num 13.25).
the central term for the human movement. In Exod 19.13, together with vv 21-24, the basic imagery of theophany and “ascent” is also retained for the other participants, connected with the prohibition against any usurped ascent (cf. also 34.3). The significance of “ascend” for the composition as a whole is reflected by the reapplication of this term with the people as subjects in chs. 32-34.200

“Moses’ unique status... is manifest in the fact that he apparently is the only one allowed to approach the top of the mountain, the area closest to the presence of God.”201 The one able to ascend is “Moses alone” (נִיטַעְנָה נַפְעָל, 24.2),202 as has been the pattern since the first encounter in Exod 3.203 One could multiply the examples of Moses as “the one able to ascend,” but we will restrict the pursuit to one more, the opening of chapter 34. YHWH tells Moses to “ascend (נִיטַעְנָה) in the morning to Mount Sinai, and stand before Me there (נִיטַעְנָה) on the top (נִיטַעְנָה) of the mountain” (v 2). The collocation of terms (“ascend,” “mountain,” “there,” and “top/head”) positions the text with the others already considered, and it also shares in like features:

1. God calls/commands Moses alone to ascend;
2. A prohibition immediately follows that others not presume to do the same (v 3: “And no man shall ascend (נִיטַעְנָה נַפְעָל) with you...”);
3. Moses’ actual ascent narrated (v 4: “Then Moses arose early in the morning and ascended (נִיטַעְנָה נַפְעָל) Mount Sinai just as YHWH had commanded him...”);
4. A description of YHWH’s presence atop the mount in the cloud (v 5: “Now YHWH descended in the cloud and stood with him there...”).

In relation to the tabernacle, then, there is a sense where Aaron’s role (who, incidentally, was not allowed to enter the top of the mount) was to portray in the drama204 of liturgy the role of Moses in relation to the cosmic mountain (and thus of Adam to Eden’s mount)—that is, via entering the

200 M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 47-49, 110. Hauge, in emphasizing the divine descent of the Glory cloud upon the Tabernacle at the end of Exod 40, believes the “who” question is changed to the question of “how” once the (sinful) people are cast as the “who” (320). This, however, fails to appreciate the true correspondence between the cosmic mountain summit and the tabernacle holy of holies—for even under the Tabernacle cultus, the “people” are not able to enter.
201 C. Meyers, Exodus, 156.
202 B.S. Childs notes that Moses’ special role adumbrated in ch. 19, made explicit in 20.18ff, is climaxed in 24.3ff as he seals the covenant (Exodus, 503).
203 D.K. Stuart, Exodus, 552.
204 This term “drama” is not used here loosely: “Drama and ritual were inseparable in the ancient world. The first plays were religious events. Ritual, and specifically sacrifice, can be understood as a drama intended to have some effect on the universe, but also on the participants and their society. Under the terms of this conceptual model, we may speak of the acts that make up a ceremony as its ‘ritual plot’” (R.D. Nelson, Raising Up a Faithful Priesthood, 71).
tabernacle holy of holies, the high priest as mediator\textsuperscript{205} represents the one “able to ascend” the summit of the cosmic mountain.\textsuperscript{206} To be sure, “ascending the mountain and entering the holy of holies amount to the same thing.”\textsuperscript{207} Given our consideration of “door” (נַחֲלָה) and its relation to the gate liturgy in previous chapters, it is significant that the ordination of Aaron and his sons as presented in Lev 8-9 indeed focuses particularly on the door of the tent of meeting.\textsuperscript{208} The tabernacle veil, the נַחֲלָה, “functions as an objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas.”\textsuperscript{209} Polak, who explains the apparent contradiction of Exod 19.13 as a ritual pertaining to the סְדַבָּה harām itself, suggestively states: “The connection to holy ritual is also indicated by the hymn concerning the ascent to the Temple Mount: ‘Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?’ (Ps 24.3).”\textsuperscript{210}

CONCLUSION

In the creation narrative, we saw that Adam, after his lapse, was barred by cherubim and flaming sword from ascending the glory-filled summit of Eden. In the deluge narrative, we noted how repeatedly Noah alone was able to enter the Ark, both his family and all the creatures entering

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\textsuperscript{205} Cf. C. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case,” pp 161-93 in \textit{SBL 1997 Seminar Papers} (SBLSP 36; Atlanta: SBL, 1998). He also notes that, in extra-biblical literature, Enoch’s heavenly ascent “looks most like the high priest’s annual visit to the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement” (180).

\textsuperscript{206} In this connection, C. Meyer’s observation is pertinent: “The central role of Moses in this enterprise [the erection and installation of the Tabernacle in ch. 40] means that on this occasion he washes in the laver (v 31), puts loaves on the offering table (v 23), arranges the lamps (v 25), offers incense (v 27), and makes sacrifices (v 29) – all acts otherwise relegated to Aaron and his sons. The consecration of the priests, which will allow them to perform these rites, is not included in Exodus (it comes in Leviticus 8). At this point only Moses is qualified, and he initiates the priestly service” (Exodus, 282-83).


\textsuperscript{208} F. Gorman, \textit{The Ideology of Ritual}, 49.

\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Ibid.}, 33. While Gorman here refers specifically to the נַחֲלָה within the Inner Sanctum, it is the veil that marks the separation.

\textsuperscript{210} F. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 128-29. The cultic interpretation is also suggested by Ps 47.6 and Josh 6.5 (129 fn 38).
“to/with-him.” In the Sinai narrative, it has become evident that Moses alone is able to ascend the mount, the people warned off even from touching the base, while the priests and elders qualified for the mid-section only via Moses. Polak is thus correct in singling out the privileged status of Moses who “as a messenger and mediator is not dependent on the performance of elaborate rituals enabling him to undertake a shaman-like journey to the divine abode. On the contrary, he is called upon to ascend to God, and by virtue of the divine invitation he is able to stay on the mountain in superhuman circumstances.”

Given its emphasis, the role of Moses communing with God on the mountain must be both important and vital to the meaning of Exod 19-40 as a whole. This privilege of ascent Polak, again, rightly attributes to Moses’ role as mediator: Moses’ ascent is precisely the “ascent of the mediator, who positions himself between the human world and the realm of the divine....”

This “unique role of Moses who alone can approach God himself,” further, may serve as a principle, thus manifesting parallels among, for example, Adam, Noah, Moses, the Levitical high priest, and, in the New Testament, the Christ.

211 F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 118.
212 M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 24.
213 F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 131. Further, “Moses’ frequent ascent and descent, far from leading to an absurd, is related to his function of mediator and ‘go-between’” (130 fn 49). The radiance of kabod illuminating his face upon the descent from the mountain is another reminder of Moses’ privileged role and access (Ex 34.29-35). “Moses’ role as mediator,” further, includes “both the legal and the mythical aspects of the covenant idea” (F. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 134). While Moses is indeed “set aside” for this role as Mediator, the narrative nonetheless portrays him, by likeness to Noah and by association with the Law, etc., as righteous –the qualifying prerequisite for ascent. Jewish legend even accounted each parent of Moses, Amram and Jochabed, righteous (Cf. A. Kensky, “Moses and Jesus: The Birth of the Savior,” Judaism 42 (1993) 43-49 (44-5).
214 B.S. Childs, Exodus, 502. It would of course be incorrect to interpret the creational aspects of the Sinai narrative as applying exclusively to Moses as mediator. Fretheim rightly points out: “As a newly redeemed community by and under God, Israel is in effect addressed as humanity was on the sixth day of creation. In the gift of the law, Israel is thereby given specific tasks in the tradition of Genesis 1.26-28. Israel now stands before God and hears anew the command of God to have dominion over the earth, to till and keep the land, and to be its brother’s keeper (the narratives subsequent to Gen 3 are also revealing of creational commands). Israel, by attending to its relationship with Yahweh and to the commands given at Sinai, grows toward God’s intention for the human, indeed the entire world, laid out in the creation...Sinai reiterates for those redeemed the demands of creation” (“Reclamation of Creation,” 362, 363). H.H. Schmid noted that even “Legal order belongs to the order of creation” (“Creation, Righteousness and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology” pp 102-17 in Creation in the Old Testament, B.W. Anderson, ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978] 104-05).
Finally, the significance of the altar within the Torah, and specifically within texts dealing with cosmic mountain ideology, has been noted in previous chapters and is worth underscoring here. After the summary statement of Exod 20.21 that rounds off the Sinai pericope begun in ch. 19, and whereby we read that “Moses drew near the dense darkness where God was,” YHWH immediately commands the building of an earthen altar (20.22-26). Similarly, Exod 24.4 states:

[Moses] arose early in the morning, and he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

1. ALTAR AS MOUNTAIN OF GOD

Albright’s suggestion that the altar may have been viewed as a model of the cosmic mountain, with הַרְאֶל har'el of Ezek 43.15 meaning “mountain of God,” is intriguing in as much as others have noted altars have the appearance of miniature mountains. Ezekiel’s altar (vv 13-17) is described as having three levels, ziggurat-like: the first called רֵאשׁ hēq hā'āřēs “the bosom...
of the earth” and the top, again, “mountain of God.” The argument for the altar’s signifying the holy mount would appear bolstered by Exod 24.4’s description of two building projects. There is, first, no ambiguity that the twelve pillars are built “for” or “according to” (הִזָּה) the twelve tribes of Israel. Secondly, the text itself indeed bears out that whereas the pillars are mentioned in relation to the tribes, so the altar is mentioned in relation to the mountain, built at its foot:

altar/mountain, twelve pillars/twelve tribes.

A third line of argument may be posed by considering the overall portrayal of the scene as a small-scale model of worship, something of a “play within a play.” Twelve pillars about an altar, the pillars representing the twelve tribes, already by implication seems to imply the altar represents the mountain about which the twelve tribes have gathered—Mount Sinai, dominating the literary and geographic space of the Sinai complex, alone qualifies. Note also the similar prohibition against ascending the altar (20.26):

And you shall not ascend by steps upon my altar...

While on the surface, the restriction may appear to be based upon mere modesty (“so as not to expose your nakedness”), yet it relates to holiness in the same manner that sexual relations are prohibited before approaching Sinai, in other words, the worship of YHWH is not to be equated with the ANE cults where exposure and sexual license were common place. But further, there may be an intentional lexical and thematic link to the Fall narrative where, upon the exposure of


220 It is not, perhaps, insignificant that the word chosen to establish the relation of the altar to the mountain, הִזָּה tahat, is also the stock word for substitution: “in place of,” “instead of,” “in exchange for,” “as if it was, like” (BDB, 1065). Indeed, it is because someone/thing stands under/at the place of another, that substitution can be made, such as when the high priest is anointed to “take the place of” his father: הָּעָּרַב הָּעָּרַב (Lev 16.32). Though such a reading here, to be sure, is unlikely, it would nonetheless not be unnatural to translate: “and he built an altar in place of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.” Syntactic considerations alone, Exod 24.4 is not very different from 21.23: הָּעָּרַב הָּעָּרַב הָּעָּרַב // הָּעָּרַב הָּעָּרַב (cf. also Exod 21.24, 25, 26, 27, 36, 37).

221 Most commentators point out the distinction from Canaanite practices. Cf., e.g., J.K. Bruckner, Exodus, 195; J.D. Currid, Exodus, vol. 2, 61-62.
their nakedness (הָרְדָּם Gen 3.7; Exod 20.26), Adam and Eve are driven out of the garden summit, no longer able to ascend. Also of relevance, that the phrase in v 26, “to uncover (גָּלָה) nakedness (הֶרְדָּם ‘erwa‘),” constitutes fall language is seen by its usage to describe the fall of Babylon (Isa 47.3) as well as the exile of Israel (Jer 43.3; Ezek 39.28; 2 Kgs 25.11).²²² Scholars have acknowledged, further, that the investiture of the priests utilizes the same verb form (hiphil of לאבש lābas) and clothing term, “tunics” (העהנָה k’tōnet), as when God clothes Adam and his wife (Gen 3.21// Exod 28.41, 29.8, 40.14; Lev 8.13).²²³

2. THEOPHANIC PRESENCE ATOP THE ALTAR

The suggestion that the altar represents Sinai is further buttressed by comparing the fire of the altar (cf. “burnt offerings” in v 5) with the statement “like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain” in v 17, referring to “the sacramental presence of God as fire.”²²⁴ Avishur’s chiastic outline of the pericope exposes YHWH’s fiery Presence upon the Mount as the central point of the unit and pivot of the entire account:²²⁵

A 1 And Moses went up unto the Lord
2 And the Lord called to him out of the mountain saying
3 Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel
4 Ye have seen... (19.3-4)
5 And Moses came and called to the elders of the people
6 And laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him
7 And all the people answered together and said
8 All that the Lord hath spoken will we do (19.7-8)
B And the Lord said to Moses, Go unto the people
C And sanctify them today and tomorrow (19.10)
D And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying
E Take care not to go on the mountain (19.12)
F And Moses went down from the mountain to the people (19.14)
G And there were sounds... and the sound of the trumpet waxed very loud
H And all the people that were in the camp trembled (19.16)
I And mount Sinai was altogether in smoke

²²² T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 515. The exile, being from the Presence of God in the Promise Land, parallels the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden.
²²⁴ T.B. Dozeman, God on the Mountain, 102.
²²⁵ Y. Avishur, “Revelation at Sinai,” 174-76. Avishur further points out in the A-A’ parallel how המ gps “he went up” is synonymous with הָרְדָּם “he drew near” (177), an important comparison to understand later “drawing near” language as an “ascent” of worship.
Mount Sinai, within the complex of Exod 19-24, functions as a symbol for the Presence of God.\textsuperscript{226} Broadly and literarily, as already noted, Polak has shown that in the Exodus narrative, the Nile represents Egypt placed vis-à-vis the divine mountain, Sinai, which symbolizes YHWH.\textsuperscript{227} That Presence, more particularly, manifests itself via the fiery theophany atop the mount, in the “holy of holies,” as it were, and finds correspondence with the fire atop the earthen altar, and even—by metonymy—with the altar itself. Consequently, one might state that the “altar upon which the sacrifice was burned represented YHWH,”\textsuperscript{228} whose “unseen presence is interpreted as a fiery essence.”\textsuperscript{229} “Clearly,” writes Tigay, “the altar represents God.”\textsuperscript{230} Both the altar and Sinai, then, symbolized the Presence of YHWH. The general ANE understanding of a deity’s “consuming” of a sacrifice by flames upon the altar is also relevant.\textsuperscript{231} Van Seters,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{226} T.B. Dozeman, \textit{God on the Mountain}, 15: The mountain is a “signifier of divine cultic presence.”
  \item \textsuperscript{227} F. Polak, \textit{Water, Rock, and Wood}, 39.
  \item \textsuperscript{229} J.K. Kuntz, \textit{The Self-Revelation of God}, 98.
  \item \textsuperscript{230} J.H. Tigay, “The Presence of God and the Coherence of Exodus 20.22-26,” 205. Interestingly, J. Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), in a recent work takes for granted that this altar was the “symbol of God” (\textit{Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week} [San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011] 132).
\end{itemize}
from a source-critical perspective, notes how Deuteronomy lays great emphasis upon God speaking to the people “from the midst of the fire,” and how P develops the cloud and fire symbols of the Yahwist by identifying them with the “glory” (כבוד יהוה) of YHWH—both features being congruent with a symbolic identifying of God with fire. Indeed, Deut 5.4 emphasizes that YHWH’s speaking from the midst of the fire was “face to face” (fronved before the verb):

Face to face YHWH spoke with you on the Mountain from the midst of the fire.

The burning bush (Exod 3), represented later by the menorah, may also reflect the tradition of God’s speaking from the fire, of the divine Presence being symbolized by fire. The theophanic fire in Exod 3 thus offers a proleptic view of Exod 19-24, when the sons of Israel are brought back to “this mountain” (3.12):

The messenger of YHWH appeared to him in a flame of fire (ezek) from the midst of the bush (תנין). So he looked—and look!—the bush (תנין) was burning with fire (ezek), but the bush (תנין) was not consumed (שומם). Then Moses said, “Let me turn aside now and see this great sight—why is the bush (תנין) not burned up?”…The he [YHWH] said, “Do not draw near this place. Take you sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing upon—it is sacred ground” (3.2-5).

burning of the animal symbolized the deity consuming it as a meal (Lev 3.11). Thus the Lord would be considered present at the table” ("Theology of Worship in Exodus 24, “ 181 fn 19).

325 This is noted in the general commentaries, e.g., N.M. Sarna, Exploring Exodus, 132; P. Enns, Exodus, 385, 392, 493.
Throughout Exod 19 the people are warned repeatedly not to draw near the mountain, “Sinai” (סינָא sīnay) likely constituting a word-play with “bush” (הַסְּנָה hass’neh),\(^{236}\) although in contrast to Exod 3 where the bush is not consumed (לֶא יִזְרְעַל הַזֶּנֶה) by the fire, the appearing of YHWH atop Sinai is as “a consuming fire” (יִתְנָא בַשָּׁנֶה רֶקוקֶל 24.17).\(^{237}\) Then, between הַסְּנָה and רֶקֶק, there is the pillar of cloud/fire.\(^{238}\) That the Glory of YHWH is a divine fire may even be considered a fundamental aspect of the narrative’s theology,\(^{239}\) whereby theophany becomes the “experience of the impermanent presence of God as fire on the mountain.”\(^{240}\)

Exceptional here also is Exod 19.18, in its paralleling of YHWH’s descent (דָּםם) upon the mountain as/in fire with the smoke ascending () from the mount like the smoke of a great furnace. Stuart argues here for the beth in שְׁנֶה being a beth essentiae, translated “as,” so that YHWH did not descend “in fire” but rather “in the form of [or as] fire.”\(^{241}\) Furthermore, returning to Exod 19.22-26 and the so-called “law of the altar,” the making of the altar is evidently presented in contradistinction to the making of idols:

You shall not make (גֵּרֵשׁ) any gods of silver with me nor gods of gold shall you make (נֵעַרְבָּא) for yourselves. An altar of earth you shall make (נָבָּא) for me...And if you make (נָבָּא) me an altar of stone....

Thus the word שְׁנֶה is used four times, twice to prohibit the making of idols and twice to prescribe the making of altars, so that the “altar, then, rather than idols, is the locus and symbol

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\(^{236}\) See J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 20-1. Levenson remarks on Moses’ wonder at the outward manifestation of the divine Presence as the bush “burns and burns, but is never burnt up.”

\(^{237}\) Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 21-22. Cf. standard commentaries for the widely recognized play between “bush” and “Sinai.”

\(^{238}\) See T.W. Mann, “The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative.” M. Noth links the pillar cloud to the theophany of Sinai in Exod 19 as directly being derived by it (*Exodus*, 109). P. Enns also connects the burning bush, pillars of cloud and fire, and Mount Sinai, as theophanies of increasing intensity until unbearable at the Sinai climax (*Exodus*, 270).

\(^{239}\) See T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 766.

\(^{240}\) M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 22-23.

of God’s presence.' 242 This understanding is precisely at issue, then, in the Golden Calf narrative where God’s Presence (ה’ש) is mentioned some thirty times. 243 Further, the structure of vv 24–26 consists of two parts to the altar law (v 24a and vv 25–26), the first stated positively and the second negatively, that serve to frame a theology of divine cultic presence (v 24b), and in which to anchor the earthen altar law. 244 That the altar symbolized the Presence of Israel’s God is evident throughout the Hebrew canon, especially via the use parallelism, such as in Ps 43.4: 245

I will go to the altar of God
לַחְרָתָא אָנָי לֹא יִבְרָה
to God my exceeding great joy
לוֹא יִבְרָה אָנָי שָׁלֹם גֵּרָה

Although the relationship between the altar and YHWH represents, to be sure, “material aniconism,” a nonanthropomorphic, nontheriomorphic object similar to the ark in the sanctuary, 246 the symbolism yet remains significant. In a narrative pervaded by the theme of the Presence of God, developing the drama of its danger, Exod 24.17 forms a key statement: “Now the n: (glory/Presence) of YHWH appeared as a devouring fire in the eyes of the sons of

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242 Cf. J.H. Tigay, “The Presence of God,” 204-05. Tigay rightly relates this contrast to the instructions for the Tabernacle (Exod 25-31) and the Golden Calf episode (32-34) (211). Although he does not mention the Presence theme, Fretheim does link the idols and altar sections via “loyalty to God” (Exodus, 242-44), as does Childs (Exodus, 465-66) from a redactional perspective. C. Meyers rightly notes: “God’s presence will not be in images but rather in the altars made “for me,” probably an elliptical phrase indicating altars made for sacrificing to God, an act that brings people into God’s presence” (189). C. Dohmen points out how, by placing chs. 32-34 in between the tabernacle instructions (chs. 25-31) and construction (35-40), the author is placing before the reader the problem of divine Presence (Exodus 19-40, 282).

243 Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 31; C. Dohmen, Exodus 19-40, 282 also notes the literary context, the golden calf story placed at the center (32-34) of the tabernacle narrative (Exod 25-31/ 35-40), so that the problem of divine Presence is brought to the fore. He also suggests the “horns” of Moses, as he brings down the signs of the covenant of life, are meant to contrast ironically with the worship of the lifeless golden calf (374).

244 T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 511-12.

245 While not mentioning the parallelism of Ps 43.4 itself, J. Tigay states: “In Psalms 42-43, the psalmist’s longing to ‘come to appear before God’ (42.3) culminates in the hope that he ‘may come to the altar of God...’ (43.4)” (“The Presence of God,” 206). Tigay lists several more passages demonstrating the same conceptual identification of the altar with God’s Presence (206-07).

Israel. Indeed, the fear and trembling that seize the people seems to be precisely because they fear YHWH, the devouring fire, may devour them. Bringing together the various lines of consideration, in Leviticus 8-10 this “fiery majesty of God” in theophany is transferred from the mountain to the altar:

Moses and Aaron entered into the Tent of Meeting, and went out and blessed the people, and the Glory of YHWH appeared to all the people,

and a fire went out from the Presence of YHWH and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat. And when all the people saw, they shouted and fell down upon their faces.

and a fire went out from the Presence of YHWH and consumed them and they died before the Presence of YHWH.

Indeed, “YHWH your God,” declares Moses in Deut 4.24, “is a devouring fire” (יהוה הוא מיר ושר). Therefore in the covenant ritual we are likely to see the twelve pillars as representing “the twelve tribes of Israel as the second party to the covenant, alongside the altar representing YHWH (cf. 1 Kgs 18.31). That the altar and twelve pillars parallel the cosmic mountain Presence of YHWH amidst the twelve tribes of Israel is bolstered by another line of reasoning, the blood ritual performed by Moses in vv 6-8:

And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ...And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which YHWH has made with you according to all these words.”

There is general agreement that this blood rite, finding broad parallels in ANE and classical texts, entails the creation of a communio sacramentalis between the two parties of the covenant.

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247 See J. Lindblom, “Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion,” HUCA 32 (1961) 100 and fn 16: “Yahweh’s presence in the form of a devouring fire settled on the mountain, the -1»n is here “Yahweh in the form of His fiery radiance.”
250 Cf. T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 564. Dozeman further notes the correspondence of the names “Nadab and Abihu” between mountain (Ex 24.1) and altar (Lev 10.1).
YHWH and Israel, as partners being sprinkled with blood so that the altar, again, represents YHWH. The renewed communion may also be linked with blood’s “protective” (i.e., atoning) power, a theme that within the bounds of the book of Exodus begins with the enigmatic attack upon Moses in Exod 4.24-26 and continues with the blood-smeared door posts of the final plague of the first-born sons.

3. SACRIFICIAL ASCENT

Finally, the literary structure, to be considered briefly below, also emphasizes how the ritual at the base of the mountain finds its consummation at the theophany upon the mountain, the ritual itself being a fulfillment of commands from the summit (19.13b). The sacrifices, particularly, are highlighted significantly by the structure of the narrative:

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253 S. R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911) 253; M. Noth, *Exodus*, 198; E.W. Nicholson, “The Covenant Ritual in Exodus XXIV 3-8,” VT 32.1 (1982) 76. J.I. Durham states: “one half of it [the blood] he dashed upon the altar, the symbol of Yahweh’s Presence; the other half, he dashed upon the people” (Exodus, 343). While L. Perlitt hypothesizes that at an earlier stage in the tradition the blood would have been sprinkled on the pillars representing Israel (*Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* [WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969] 201), Noth, who definitively states the “altar here represents the divine partner in the covenant,” seems to suggest the pillars no longer have a role to play in the ceremony once the intervening covenant oath in v 7 takes place (198). Hilber (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 182) writes that “half the blood was dashed upon the altar (i.e. YHWH),” noting that in “both Exodus 24 and the Levitical rituals blood is applied to both the altar and to the worshiper, symbolizing renewed communion.” In the Christian canon, the Cross of Christ becomes the ultimate expression of God-altar metonymy.

254 F. Polak makes a similar connection between Exod 4 and the plague of the first-born (“Theophany and Mediator,” 125 and fn5 35, 36).


256 T.B. Dozeman brings out this vertical structuring (*God on the Mountain*, 25). “The result of this vertical structure is that the liturgical events that take place at the base of the cosmic mountain acquire the authority of being anchored in divine commands at the summit of the mountain” (29).

A Moses and elders instructed to ascend and worship (vv 1-2)
B Words of YHWH/ affirmation of the people (v 3: “All YHWH has spoken we will do”)
C Words written by Moses (v 4a)
D Sacrifices and blood ceremony (vv 4b-6)
C’ Words (book) read by Moses (v 7a)
B’ Words of YHWH/ affirmation of the people (vv 7b-8: “All YHWH has spoken we will do”)
A’ Moses and elders ascend and worship (vv 9-11)

The centrality of the sacrifice ritual is further reinforced by the pattern of the wayyiqtol subjects:

Summary Introduction: Moses to draw near; Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu; seventy elders of Israel; worship from afar (vv 1-2)

DIVINE SIDE
Moses came (v 3)
(Moses) recounted
All the people answered
Moses wrote (v 4)
(Moses) arose early
(Moses) built an altar
Moses sent the young men (v 5)
(Young men) offered up burnt offerings
(Young men) sacrificed
Moses took blood (v 6)
(Moses) put blood (and sprinkled [qatal] blood)
(Moses) took the scroll of the covenant (v 7)
(Moses) read
(All the people) said
Moses took blood (v 8)
(Moses) sprinkled blood
(Moses) said

Summary Consummation: Moses ascended; Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu; seventy elders of Israel;
DIVINE SIDE
they saw God, they ate, they drank (worship). (vv 9-11)

The great statement that YHWH “did not send (הנש) his hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel (יהוה שמה להמר ענ copyrighted by the University of California.  All rights reserved.


The Divine versus human side of the event is brought out by F. Polak as an inclusio (“Theophany and Mediator,” 138). J.W. Hilber offers the following pattern (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 179):

v 1 Moses (spoken to [object of verb put in emphatic position])
v 2 Moses (alone shall ascend)
v 3 Moses (came and recounted)
v 4 Moses (wrote words)
v 5 young men (offered sacrifices)
v 6 Moses (took blood)
v 7 Moses (took book)
v 8 Moses (took blood)
v 9 Moses (ascended et al.)
vv 10-11 “nobles” (beheld God, ate and drank; the consummation of sacrifice)
and eat and drink with him, is thematically and textually linked to v 5: “And (Moses) sent (רָאָתָה) the young men of the sons of Israel (חָלְלֵי), and they offered up burnt offerings and they sacrificed peace-sacrifices to YHWH.” Ritual sacrifice within the context of covenant, then, is the solution to the problem posed by the Presence of God. Israel may corporately (and representatively) draw near to YHWH via cultic sacrifice. The sacrifices, indeed, form the pivot of a triad based on the stem ᵇ south:

v 1: Now he said to Moses, “Ascend (רָאוֹת) to YHWH…”

v 5b: and they (the young men) offered up burnt offerings (רָאָתָה יִשְׂר processo)…

v 9: And Moses ascended (רָאוֹת)…

“Sacrifice ‘mediates’ the relationship between God and a sinful people. Sin alienates people from the presence of the holy God, and only through sacrifice can that relationship be restored.”

One ascends, then, via the ascension of sacrifice. Priestly duty being primarily about facilitating the crossing of boundaries from the profane to the sacred explains why the fundamental priestly role was not slaying the sacrificial animal (most often performed by the laity), but the burning of some or all of it upon the altar so as to transfer it from the profane realm

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260 However, D.J. McCarthy (*Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* [AnA Bib 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963] 161-64, 173), while recognizing the ritual at the foot of the mountain (24.3b-8) and the meal on the mountain (24.1, 9-11) as deriving from ancient traditions, nonetheless believes the emphasis to be cultic rather than covenantal/legal. These concepts are not, however, mutually exclusive. See F.H. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 121 (along with bibliography in fns 7-9).

261 J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185. T.E. Fretheim notes, further, that “the sacrificial system in Leviticus 1-9 must be seen as part of God’s response to Israel’s sin and God’s interaction with Moses, narrated in Exodus 32-34” (“Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 230).

262 An interesting thematically parallel idea is found in the birth narrative of Samson where the Angel of YHWH ascends to heaven via the flame of the altar (cf. Judges 13.16-20). It is the Angel’s identification with the flame, what’s more, that identifies him with YHWH so that they fall down prostrate—a point supporting the contention made earlier that the altar, or at least the flame upon the altar, is representative of YHWH.

263 R.D. Nelson (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*) says: “The Hebrew Bible, therefore, defined priesthood by the issue of ‘access’ (Lev 10.3; Ezek 44.15-16). Priests were those who could stand before Yahweh to serve (Deut 10.8), those who might approach Yahweh (Exod 19.22), enter Yahweh’s presence (Exod 28.35), or go up to the altar (1 Sam 2.28). This pivotal right of access was denied the blemished priest (Lev 21.23) and to laypeople and Levites (Num 16.40). Access was what distinguished the practicing priest from the rest of Israel: ‘I chose him from all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense’ (1 Sam 2.28)” (61-62).
of the earth to the heavenly realm and ownership of YHWH.\textsuperscript{264} Paralleling the mountain ascent into the theophanic cloud, and priestly entrance into the holy of holies via the cloud of incense, ascent via the altar smoke fits the general idea that clouds usher one into God’s Presence.\textsuperscript{265} Burning the sacrifice upon the altar, the exclusive right of priests, then, was primarily about \textit{transfer} via ascent, so that the altar with its fiery summit functioned as a cosmic mountain, as the intersection and transition between the profane and sacred, the earthly and the heavenly.\textsuperscript{266} As Moses entered into the cloud of the fiery Presence of God upon Sinai’s summit (Exod 24.17, 18), so the sacrificial victim ascended YHWH’s domain via the fire, ascending in smoke.

Thus the worship that began at the foot of the mountain with sacrifice finds consummation in the Presence of God upon the mountain\textsuperscript{267}—both aspects of worship, further, being representative: the young men (of the sons of Israel) below, and the elder nobles (of the sons of Israel) above. The above \textit{wayyiqtol} outline further demonstrates both the \textit{inclusio} frame and the dynamic between the events at the foot of the mountain and those upon it:

Table fellowship around the covenant meal climaxed their worship of God. This is highlighted by the chiastic parallelism between vv 9-11 and vv 1-2. In vv 1-2 they are commanded to ascend for worship. Parallel to this command, they ascend and celebrate by eating in God’s presence the peace offerings sacrificed at the foot of the mountain during covenant ratification.\textsuperscript{268}

\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 59: “In Israel it was the priest who facilitated these ritual ‘line-breaking’ movements across barriers. ... As we have seen, lay sacrifice was the norm in the earlier period of Israelite religion, either at an altar under priestly supervision (1 Sam 1.3-5, 24-25; 2.12-16) or with no priest present at all (Judg 6.25-26; 13.15-20; perhaps 1 Sam 9). Even in the Priestly Code, the lay offerer retained some responsibility for killing the animal (Lev 1.5; 3.2, 8; 4.24-25), as well as skinning and washing it (Lev 1.6, 9), although the fact is sometimes obscured in translations. The fundamental priestly role involved not the death of the victim, but the burning of some or all of it on the altar and the manipulation of the victim’s blood. In fact, the slaughter of the victim was by no means the most important moment in the ritual sacrifice. The essence of Israelite sacrifice was the transfer of the animal to the realm or ownership of God.”

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 60-1. Nelson states strikingly that the “altar fire was a pipeline into the other world, vaporizing a burnt offering, the fat of a communion sacrifice, some grain, or even wine (Num 15.7), up to Yahweh’s domain” (60).

\textsuperscript{266} Cf. J. W. Hilber, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 132. Hilber defines that worship helpfully as a “response to the covenant relationship, which is characterized by God’s [P]resence, defined by his word and mediated through sacrifice” (184). F. Polak (“The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 132) states that “the festive meal at Mount Sinai is held at the very home of the God of Israel, on the divine mountain. This meal, then, embodies a theophany....”


\textsuperscript{268} J. W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 184.
CONCLUSION

However the altar is understood, its cultic significance as an aspect of worship is yet useful to the pattern consistently found in the other narratives: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship. This pattern in mind, moreover, it is interesting that in the construct of the tabernacle, Aaron and his sons would wash themselves at the laver (cosmic waters?) upon every approach to the altar (cosmic mountain?). Furthermore, Sailhamer delineates several parallels between the altar of Noah and that of Moses, significant as each is found within the overall pattern we have been considering:

(1) The building of the altar in both accounts follows a major act of God’s salvation—God’s rescue of Noah from the Flood and God’s deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt;
(2) the altar and the offering in both accounts mark the establishment of a “covenant” with God (Gen 9.9; Exod 24.7);
(3) the outcome of both covenants is God’s “blessing” (Gen 9.1; Exod 23.25);
(4) the central provisions in both covenants are protection from “wild animals” (Gen 9.2; Exod 23.29) and human enemies (Gen 9.5-6; Exod 23.22);
(5) both accounts mention specifically that the “land” will be preserved from destruction (Gen 9.11; Exod 23.29);
(6) in Genesis the visible “sign” of the establishment of the covenant is the rainbow in the “clouds” (Gen 9.13-17), and in Exodus the conclusion of the covenant making is marked by the appearance of the glory of God in the “clouds” (Exod 24.15) that cover the mountain;
(7) both covenants give stipulations which the people must obey (Gen 9.4; Exod 24.3).

To summarize this section, we quote Hilber’s significant statement:

In Exodus 24, deity and humanity meet in communion on the cosmic mountain for a mutual act of worship and creation. The reward of this worship is theocratic rest and life in Yhwh’s presence (Gen 3.8; cf. Exod 33.14: “My presence shall go with you; I will give you rest”). Perhaps the manner of worship experienced in Exodus 24 reflects a pattern inherent in the divine ordering of creation. It reveals the framework of God’s design for the ideal universe...Contextually the worship of Exod 24.1-11 is linked with the creation of a new community after the pattern of creation of the cosmos (24.11-18).

Through the waters to the mountain of God for worship, we are suggesting, constitutes that pattern.

269 Cf. Ex 40.32. Furthermore, the approach to the altar was eastward (this is made explicit in Ezek 43.17).
271 J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 186. Hilber draws a further correspondence between Exod 24 and the eschatological banquet, not how “God’s people will spend eternity with Christ worshiping on the holy mountain (Rev 21.3, 10), where twelve stones stand for the representatives of God’s people (21.14) and pure gems pave the walkway for the sacrificial Lamb of God (21.21-22). This place of worship is the final ‘new creation’ of which the creation of the covenant community on Mount Sinai was only a foreshadowing” (188).
III. THE CULTUS OF ISRAEL: EXODUS 25-40

A. The Centrality of the Tabernacle Cultus

That the narratives leading up to the tabernacle have had its cultus in view as a major goal may be surmised by its centrality in the Torah. Unfolding through the events at Sinai recorded in Exodus 19 through Numbers 10, worship is the apex of the Torah's vision. The centrality of worship is manifest by the sheer amount of narrative dedicated to it:

Even these figures are misleading, moreover, in as much as—with the book of Genesis as our prime example—much of the literature outside Exod 19-Num 10 has also been demonstrated to be concerned with cultic matters and likely in such a way as to anticipate Israel's tabernacle/temple cultus. More narrowly, chs 19-40 of Exodus may be considered, formally, a meticulously composed, coherent story that culminates with the Glory-cloud's descent upon the

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274 This figure combines Balentine’s information (The Torah’s Vision of Worship, 67-8). Cf. E.G. Newing (“Rhetorical and Theological Analysis of the Hexateuch,” 7-11) for the divine Presence of Exod 33, within the Sinai Covenant (Exod 19-Num 10), being central to the Hexateuch.

completed tabernacle. Justifiably, then, Davies believes “worship” has a strong claim to be the central theological theme of Exodus, linking together salvation, covenant, and law—a theology, what’s more, going back as far as can be discerned in the history of the tradition. Now beyond all else to which the tabernacle/כֹּתֶל cultus and its rituals pertain, one must keep in view the fundamental understanding of it as the dwelling/ место of God (cf. Exod 25.8-9; 29.45-46), so that “worship” may be defined broadly as “dwelling in the divine Presence.”

The building of the tabernacle, then, with the establishment of its cult, may be seen as a major goal of the Exodus—a goal that includes the constitution of Israel as cultic community (הָעָדָה ‘edah) living in the divine Presence. This goal is evident not only by the centrality of worship in the Torah, but also by explicit statement. At the very outset of the tabernacle narrative, יְהוָה’s purpose is manifested: Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them (Exod 25.8). This narrative goal is repeated in 29.45-6:

I will dwell among the sons of Israel, and I will be their God. They shall know that I am יְהוָה their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am יְהוָה their God.

That these explicit lines are not merely incidental but programmatic is evident, further, by the lengthy description of the follow-through on the “let them make me a sanctuary” directive.

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276 M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 100. Hauge, who suggests that Ps 24 represents “in nuce a version of the reading of the Exodus story,” posits the coherent composition of what may be considered two separate blocks of material in Exodus, i.e., chs. 19-24 and 25-40, by showing their parallel in microcosm: vv 3-6 and 7-10 of Ps 24 (100-15, 143-51). He points out the comparable formal structure: as Ps 24 moves from the motif of human ascent in the context of mountain imagery to the motif of divine descent in the context of temple imagery, so the narrative of Exod 19-40 moves from the human ascent of Sinai to the divine Glory’s descent upon the tabernacle, both passages also sharing Torah motifs. He also notes how the role of Moses parallels the “worthy ascender” in Ps 24 who may expect to be met by the divine descender (107), and how the Torah motif appears to emphasize the unworthiness of the Israelites to ascend in the Sinai pericope (149).

277 G. Davies, “The Theology of Exodus,” 138, 149. Along with worship, Davies includes the ideas of divine Presence, encounter with God, and holiness. The theological concern with worship, high on the agenda of the final compiler/redactor, has been largely ignored, Davies suggests, because of the frequent tendency of Pentateuchal scholarship to sideline the theology of the cult (142).

278 B.W. Anderson, Contours of Old Testament Theology, 86, 107. G. von Rad similarly states that “P is utterly serious in wanting to show that the cult which entered history in the people of Israel is the goal of the origin and development of the world. Creation itself was designed to lead to this Israel” (Old Testament Theology, vol. 1 [1962; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 233-34). G. Davies notes how, after the covenant is renewed in 34.10-28, “it is with Israel specifically as a worship community” (“The Theology of Exodus,” 144 [emphasis added]).
While modern sensibilities find tedious the mass of repetitive material constituting thirteen of the remaining sixteen chapters of Exodus, yet from the ANE perspective this concentration manifestly brings one to the heart of the narrative.\textsuperscript{279} The overall movement from slavery to worship, from building for Pharaoh to building for YHWH\textsuperscript{280} is in line with parallel ANE literature, such as the Ugaritic epic of Baal and the Babylonian “Epic of Creation,” whereby the building of a victorious deity’s house/temple forms the epic’s climax.\textsuperscript{281} Thus, comparisons with other building narratives from the Bible (1 Kgs 5.15-9.25) and Mesopotamian and Ugaritic sources manifest, not only that the tabernacle story’s overall structure is deliberate and well ordered, following a standard literary pattern or building genre,\textsuperscript{282} but also the ideological weight of the tabernacle itself. The building section within the larger cycle, furthermore, is itself unified by the recurrent theme that Moses was shown the “pattern” (תַּבְנֵית tabnêît) of the tabernacle by God while he was on the mountain (25.9, 40, 26.30, 37.8),\textsuperscript{283} a theme functioning to underscore the importance of the cultus.\textsuperscript{284}

\textsuperscript{279} P. Enns, \textit{Exodus}, 506.

\textsuperscript{280} T.E. Fretheim, \textit{Exodus}, 263-64.


\textsuperscript{282} V.A. Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of the Building of the Tabernacle,” \textit{JAOS} 105.1 (1985) 21-30. This building genre also supports the coherence of the Tabernacle story, casting “serious doubts upon the opinion expressed by scholars such as Martin Noth that the material in Ex 35-36.7 was no more than the result of ‘making obvious narrative constructions,’” for the parallel stories never contain the command to build section in isolation but in fact often manifest just the reverse, containing only the fulfillment section (29).


\textsuperscript{284} Indeed, what Kleinig expresses concerning Chronicles is no less true of Exodus: “The reason for this interest in the divine institution of the sacrificial cult is clear. Worship was effective and beneficial only as long as it was performed in accordance with divine law. In fact, its divine institution empowered it, so that, by its enactment, the Lord himself received his people, like a king his petitioners, and acted in their favor” (J.W. Kleinig, \textit{The Lord’s Song: The Basis, Function, and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles} [JSOTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 31).
tabernacle account necessarily results in a “superficial grasp” of the book’s significance,⁴⁸⁵ the literary weight of the tabernacle material must be balanced by its theological weight. The dramatic question—and tension—of how the prospect of a return to dwelling in the divine Presence will be made possible via a tabernacle constructed according to the divinely revealed heavenly “pattern,” and this prospect in light of the thunderous fury of the fiery Presence just experienced at Sinai—all this must be impressed upon the reader. The balance of the book of Exodus, to summarize, is devoted to the tabernacle, the establishment of which, far from being a subsidiary interpolation, is the climax of the epic, the denouement toward which that narrative has progressed.⁴⁸⁶

Glimpsing now a sketch of the tabernacle’s centrality within the narrative progression leading up to it, its function as denouement will appear more clearly. As the creation account of Gen 1-3 would surely have catechized its original audience, the high goal of worshiping the Creator in the glory of his Presence atop the holy mount had been frustrated by Adam’s transgression and the consequent exile from the divine Presence.⁴⁸⁷ The ensuing narrative, rather than normalizing life outside of Eden (so as to make the account merely a story about “lost innocence” or “why things are the way they are,” i.e., an etiology), intensifies the predicament and underscores the issue as crucial to the drama (i.e., eschatology). For example, the use of “to banish” שָׁבָע in the Cain narrative (4.14; cf. 3.24) suggests that “in some sense Cain’s exile is a repetition and intensification of Adam and Eve’s exile.”⁴⁸⁸ This intensification reaches an apex

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⁴⁸⁵ Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 16. T.E. Fretheim notes rightly that having nearly one-third of Exodus devoted to the Tabernacle at the least demonstrates the importance of worship to the narrator (Exodus, 263).


as the profanation of creation (as macro-temple) finally calls for an end/return to chaos, righteous
Noah, with his household and a remnant of creatures, being delivered via an ark whose plans are
divinely revealed, one of several features serving to portray it as a kind of typological temple.
The scattering from the Tower of Babel may be interpreted, via an “anti-gate liturgy” pattern, as
a further removal from the Presence of God whose own deliberate plan for allowing re-entrance
into the divine Presence begins with the call of Abraham and culminates in the divine in-filling
of the tabernacle, Babel and the tabernacle being antipodes in the narrative arc.289 New mediated
access to that Presence of life thus becomes, not merely a means of worship for the Israelite, but
the means by which the order and purpose of creation is reestablished—that is, creation and cult
are of a piece.290 Thus Hurowitz is correct in positing that the “crucial event around which all
the activities focus is God’s entry and manifestation within the newly built abode.”291 If, as we
have seen, the creation account is oriented toward the Sabbath, i.e., life in the divine Presence,
then it makes sense that the account of history itself should be like oriented. Understanding the
loss of the divine Presence as the central catastrophe of the biblical drama, then one begins to see
the tabernacle (mishkan), the locus of God’s Presence in the midst of his people,292 as the (at
least initial) denouement.293 This denouement is in accord with the general tenor of the

289 The “stairway” connecting heaven and earth is a theme running through the Tower of Babel (Gen 11.4), and
Jacob (Gen 28.12, 17) narratives, culminating at the end of Exodus. Cf. J.L. McKenzie, A Theology of the Old
Testament (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 51.
290 T.E. Fretheim, “Reclamation of Creation,” 364: “Israelite worship is a means by which the world is created and
re-created in every new ritual activity.” “At one level,” Fretheim continues, “commands regarding worship as a
creational reality are implicit in the story of Cain and Abel and the appropriateness of their offerings (cf. also Gen
worship represents an ongoing opportunity to participate in the work of Creation.”
Exodus, 499.
293 Cf. G. Davies’s point (“The Theology of Exodus,” 140, 150) that while Exod 40 is not the end of the story
(vv 36-38, e.g., being forward-looking), it does exhibit closure (vv 33-35). T.E. Fretheim captures well the
centrality of the divine Presence to the drama of the tabernacle section, dealing as it does with “the forms of worship
that are to provide the vehicle for the close divine presence with Israel on its journey. Fundamentally, it signals a
change in the way God is present with Israel: (1) The occasional appearance of God on the mountain... will become
Pentateuch in which numerous stories reflect points of priestly interest.\textsuperscript{294} The pattern of Exodus, then, offers a glimpse, a micro-narrative, of the entire biblical narrative itself, whether expanded to the Pentateuch or, indeed, to the Christian canon.\textsuperscript{295}

B. \textit{From Creation to the Tabernacle}

Creating the cosmos and building the tabernacle are literally linked, the latter being a microcosm of the former.\textsuperscript{296} Blenkinsopp identifies precisely these two accounts as the first two major “nodal points” of (P’s narrative in) the Pentateuch: the creation of the cosmos as a precondition for worship (Gen 1.1-2.4a), and the building and dedication of the wilderness

the \textit{ongoing} presence of God with Israel. (2) The \textit{distance} of the divine presence from the people will no longer be associated with the remote top of a mountain but with a dwelling place in the center of the camp. God comes down to be with the people at close, even intimate, range; they no longer need to ascend to God. (3) The divine dwelling will no longer be a \textit{fixed place}. God’s dwelling place will be portable, on the move with the people of God. Overall, these chapters represent a climax not only in Israel’s journey, but in God’s journey” (Exodus, 264 [emphasis original]). We are in agreement with the general tenor of Fretheim’s statement, although he does not appear to factor in adequately the Tabernacle’s being a model Sinai so that the continuities (e.g., the High Priest’s sole privilege of entering the Holy of holies—a kind of “ascent,” and the mountain’s no less being at the “center of the camp” amidst the people, etc.) appear unjustly understated. The main advantage of the movement from Sinai to Tabernacle, to our mind, involves the ability to continue the Sinai experience (Fretheim’s third point) and to “incarnate” God’s Presence. Fretheim rightly notes that the “sanctuary is not simply a symbol of the divine presence, it is \textit{an actual vehicle for divine immanence}” (315, emphasis original).

\textsuperscript{294} P. J. Budd, “Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel,” \textit{VT} 23.1 (1973) 6.

\textsuperscript{295} A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 255-56 (cf. 266-67, 257): “The entire biblical narrative, then, develops the problem of humanity’s refusal of divine instruction and the consequent exile from the presence of God and employs a sequence of events, complications, and conflicts that bring God’s people into his presence again, there to be instructed for life in that divine presence. Within this larger narrative, the Pentateuch develops a plot that depicts a particular community, Abraham’s descendents, on the way to the presence of God, i.e., the Promised Land and the place the Lord chose for his name to dwell….The narrative problem defined in Exodus 1-2, however, should also be read as an integral part of the narrative problem of the Pentateuch, defined in the opening chapters of Genesis. Briefly stated, Genesis defines the problem as humanity’s exile from the presence of God, an exile caused by Adam and Eve’s refusal of divine instruction and the consequent human defilement of the presence of God in the Garden of Eden. The narrative depicts God himself initiating the resolution of this problem by instructing Abram to leave his land and to go “to the land which I will show you” (Gen 12.1)...The narrative problem of Exodus, then, is rooted in the fundamental human problem as depicted in the opening chapters of Genesis.” Because this is so, any canonical view (of the Hebrew or Christian canon) must likely view the book of Exodus as providing something of a synopsis of or pattern for the macro-narrative.

sanctuary (Exod 40.1-33). While the creation may be understood legitimately in terms of a temple, it is also important to see that the tabernacle/temple constitutes something of a new creation within the old, a micro-cosmos within the macro, designed to mediate the paradisiacal Presence of the Creator. Thus one is not surprised to find the literary parallels between the creation and tabernacle narratives—already established in our study of the creation account.

While not rehearsing those parallels here, we merely recall how the אֹרֶץ הָרָעָב of סֶלֶדֶת is instrumental both in the building of the cosmic temple, the world (Gen 1.2), and in the micro-cosmic world, the tabernacle (Exod 31.1-11), the former amidst the chaos (חָaos) of water, the latter amidst the chaos of wilderness (חָוָה, Deut 32.10). This like source of wisdom/skill/power is matched by like method, both creation and tabernacle construction featuring “separation”/ bd³: whereas the firmament is created to “separate” (hiphil participle of הִפְשָׁט, bd³) the waters (Gen 1.6), so the

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297 J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Meaning,” 113; idem., “The Structure of P,” CBQ 38 (1976) 275-92. Therefore, if, as Propp states, “Creation is complete only when God’s reign on earth commences at Sinai” (Exodus 1-18, 561), then that reign must be understood as continuing via the two revealed gifts of Sinai’s summit: Torah and the tabernacle תֵּבָן. Or, as T.B. Dozeman has it, “the revelation of the law and the cult at the mountain of God” (Exodus, 349-50). For the relation of law to sacred mountains, see J.M. Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law,” 281-84. For the tabnît, see D.N. Freedman, “Temple without Hands,” 26; J.D. Levenson, Sinai & Zion, 140-41. As considered in our introductory chapter, the connection between the cosmic mountain of God, temple worship, and creation is firmly established for ANE culture. Cf. J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185, including his brief bibliography, fn 41. He cites Ezek 28.13-15 as another pericope with the same collocation of themes: worshiping cherub/ Eden, the garden of God/ mountain of God/ creation; and mentions the following other similarities between Ex 24 and creation: “God’s [P]resence and word are prominent themes from creation as he subdued and ordered chaos (hovering Spirit, Gen 1.2; “then God said,” 1.3). As a result of ordering chaos, Sabbath celebration (i.e. worship) is made possible (2.1-3)” (186). While the relation of the Temple to the Cosmic Mountain was commonplace throughout the ANE, F. Polak nonetheless highlights the uniqueness of the events of Exod 24: “But myth is transcended by some unique features. The leader of a human nation is said to ascend the divine mountain in order to receive a law code, all those present hear the deity speaking from heaven and a human delegation actually witnesses the divine presence while eating and drinking on the mountain....On the other hand, no ancient myth parallels the Sinai theophany. In the Homeric Hymns Apollo and Demeter reveal themselves in all their power, but in order to do so Apollo descends from Parnassus, and Demeter dwells among the people of Eleusis. Nobody has ascended Parnassus to meet the deity; no Greek polis has assembled at the foot of Olympus to hear Zeus’s voice or to see the mountain tremble” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 117). One wonders why, however, Polak did not consider more relevant ANE literature (Baal Cycle, Gilgamesh, etc.) where an argument may be made, perhaps, for at least some affinities. He is correct, to be sure, in pointing out the singular privilege of Moses (118).


299 This observation is noted in many commentaries, e.g., T.E. Fretheim notes the following correspondences between Creation and Tabernacle: (1) the spirit of God; (2) new year’s day; (3) seven divine speeches; (4) overall importance given to shape and design; (5) positive evaluation upon completion of work (Exodus, 269-71).
The tabernacle veil is to "separate" (יִקְרָב) the holy place from the holiest place (Ex 26.33). Finally, the chronology of the building projects are also linked: the consecration of the tabernacle lasted seven days, a heptadic pattern connected to the Sabbath ordinances. Perhaps above all other parallels, it is the Sabbath linking of the tabernacle to creation that generates the theological profundity and function of the cultus: via the mediation of the tabernacle cultus alone, the purpose of creation may be realized. The Sabbath, thus, forms a bridge, an inclusio, linking creation with cultus as its climax, the tabernacle manifestly created as a mini-cosmos oriented to the Sabbath.

301 J.L. Morrow, "Creation and Liturgy," 5. The Sabbath, in fact, appears to tie the creation (Gen 2.1-3), deluge (Gen 8.6-12), Sinai (Exod 24.16-18), and tabernacle accounts (Exod 35.1-3), the tabernacle not only being completed in seven speeches (with the seventh addressing the Sabbath) and by seven acts of Moses who did "just as YHWH commanded" (cf. Exod 40.19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32), but structurally forming something of an inner frame in the tabernacle pericope. Exod 40.16 is a general summary, serving as a frame with v 33. D. Janzen, summing up the parallels noted by J. Levenson and F. Gorman, also mentions the seven appearances of YHWH to Moses in the sacrificial instructions of Lev 1-7 ("Priestly Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible," 43).

Tabernacle Instructions: 25-30
Sabbath: 31.12-17
Idolatry: 32-34
Sabbath: 35.1-3
Tabernacle Construction: 35.4-40.16

A.C. Leder ("Reading Exodus to Learn," 26) also notes that the "thematic change in 35.1-3 takes the reader back to the subject of the Sabbath, treated immediately before the narrative of Israel's corruption of the Lord's presence (31.12-17)." Leder further notes: "Its [the Sabbath's] narrative location at the end of the instruction and the beginning of the construction account, however, is crucial because it argues for an intimate connection between Sabbath and the building of the tabernacle" ("Reading Exodus to Learn," 29). B.S. Childs calls the Sabbath and Tabernacle two sides of the same coin, both testifying to the reign of God over his creation (Exodus, 584-93). Cf. also N.M. Sarna, Exploring Exodus, 213-15; D.C. Timmer, Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath.

302 J.D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," JR 64.3 (1984) 288: "Thus, the account of the construction of the Tabernacle is punctuated by the injunction to observe the Sabbath in imitatione Dei (Ex 31.12-17, 35.1-3). The two institutions, each a memorial and, more than that, an actualization of the aboriginal creative act, are woven together not in a purposeless, mindless redaction but in a profound and unitive theological statement. Sabbath and sanctuary partake of the same reality; they proceed, pari passu, from the same foundational event, to which they testify and even provide access. In a cryptic apodictic pronouncement in Leviticus, they appear twice as if they were formulaic pairs: "My Sabbaths you are to observe/And my Sanctuary you are to revere: I am YHWH" (Lev 19.30, 26.2)." Cf. also Paul Elbert, "Genesis 1 and the Spirit: A Narrative-Rhetorical Ancient Near Eastern Reading in Light of Modern Science," Journal of Pentecostal Theology 15.1 (2006) 27ff.

304 The Sabbath, then, must be considered of a piece with temple theology, serves to link tabernacle construction with creation, a connection in which Rabbinic literature delights. See D.C. Timmer, Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath. "Tabernacle and sabbath are conceptually joined not only in the sabbath frame, but as early as the first creation account" (144). For Rabbinic literature, cf. P. Enns, Exodus, 507 and fn 2.
The cosmological parallels between creation and the tabernacle are in accord, further, with the cosmological import of several of the tabernacle appurtenances, as later explained within the temple system.  

The altar is called הָרָאָל (also referred to as הַרְאָל) “the mountain of God” (Ezek 43.15-16) with its base named צֵדָקָה הָאָרֶץ “the bosom of the earth” (Ezek 43.14). The Basin רָגֶּשׁ הָאָרֶץ as well is likely to be read with cosmic significance as “The Sea has been restrained!” It also appears evident that the menorah was a stylized tree of life (cf. Exod 25.31-40). The tabernacle, then, “is a microcosm of creation, the world order as God intended it writ small in Israel.” The parallels thus established, when YHWH fills the tabernacle, this is “a sign that the new ‘creation’ has been achieved.” Interestingly, the sixth century Egyptian Christian Cosmas, in his book *Christian Topography*, posited that the creation account of Genesis 1 was Moses’ description of the שָׁמַיִם הָאָרֶץ shown him atop Sinai, and that “the tabernacle prepared by Moses in the wilderness...was a type and copy of the whole world”:

Then when he [Moses] had come down from the Mountain he was ordered by God to make the tabernacle, which was a representation of what he had seen on the Mountain, namely, an impress of the world. ...Since therefore it had been shown him how God made the heaven and the earth, and how on the second day he made the firmament in the middle between them, and thus made the one place into two places, so Moses, in like manner, in accordance with the pattern which he had seen, made the tabernacle and placed the veil in the middle and by this division made the one tabernacle into two, the inner and the outer.

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306 *Ibid*.
307 *Ibid.*, 101-03. This would, to be sure, be a direct link to Genesis 1, the constraining of the Sea being a major expression of YHWH’s kingship (cf. Gen 1; 6-9; Ex 14-15; Ps 104.9; 33.7; Job 26.10; Jer 5.22). Il Kang ties the Basin to a possible New Year’s enthronement festival whereby YHWH’s kingship was declared (cf. Ps 89). Cf. Gen 1.9-10 and 1 Kings 7.23. D. Parry (“Garden of Eden,” 138) also makes this correlation. Cf. J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 52.
309 T.E. Fretheim, “Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 238. Fretheim further writes: “Generally, the worship of God at the tabernacle is a world-creating activity, a God-given way for the community of faith to participate in God’s work of recreating a new world, for Israel and for all” (238).
C. From the Ark of Noah to the Tabernacle

One might also recall the “striking parallels between the tabernacle and the ark of Noah,” the ark itself a micro-cosmos, as we have argued it in the previous chapter. Again, while not rehearsing the already delineated parallels here, we merely note the general correspondence that even as “Noah did according to all that God had commanded him, thus did he” (Gen 6.22) in relation to the Ark, so “according to all that YHWH had commanded Moses, thus did the Israelites all the work” (Exod 39.42) in relation to the tabernacle, both narratives emphasizing the New Year (Gen 8.13; Exod 40.2). When the tabernacle narrative is made to include the broader context of Exodus, then many more parallels are manifest: God “remembering” for the sake of deliverance (Gen 8.1; Exod 2.24); sending a “wind” (Gen 8.1; Exod 14.21); the appearing of “dry ground” (Gen 8.13-14; Exod 14.21-22). Ross, further, captures both the parallels and the pattern (through the waters → to the mountain → for worship) when he writes: “Just as God had judged the world in Noah’s day and brought Noah’s family through the Flood, compelling them to worship the Lord with a sacrifice, so he judged Egypt and brought Israel through the waters of

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312 T.E. Fretheim, “Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 238.
313 J. Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” 283. He further notes (“Structure and Meaning,” 113): “the vision on the mountain takes place on the seventh day (24.16), the creation of the sanctuary is followed by the solemn day of rest (31.12-17; 35.1-3), and worship can finally be initiated after the seven-day sacerdotal ordination ceremony (Lev 8.33; 9.1). The wilderness sanctuary is erected on the first day of the month, that is, New Year’s Day (40.1, 17), corresponding to the first New Year’s Day of creation and the date which the purified earth emerged from the waters of the deluge (Gen 8.13).” Cf. also W.W. Hallo, “Exodus and Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” 377.
314 J. Sailhamer, The Pentateuch as Narrative, 127. T.E. Fretheim offers a useful summary (Exodus, 268-69): “Both ark and tabernacle are commanded by God, whose precise directions are communicated to the human leader, who proceeds to carry out the directions in obedient detail....At the end of the building of each (39.42-43; Gen 6.22) it is said that they did just as God had commanded....It has even been suggested that the ark of Noah is a temple structure, similar in construction to those found in Mesopotamia. This is in tune with Christian symbolism of the ark through the ages, which commonly sees it in terms of a church afloat amid the waters of chaos. Floodwaters and wilderness are the two most prominent symbols for chaos in the Old Testament. Both “sanctuaries” are portable, one on sea, one on land; they are used to carry the people through the waters/ sands of chaos. Both are viewed as a means by which the people of God can move in a secure and ordered way through a world of disorder on their way to a new creation. It is on the first day of the new year that the floodwaters abate and the covering of the ark is taken off (Gen 8.13), the same day that the tabernacle is set up and dedicated (40.2). One is thereby invited to see the building of the tabernacle in chapters 35-40 in terms of re-creation, God’s beginning again with world/Israel on the far side of apostasy.”
the Red Sea to worship and serve him on the other side.”315 Scholars have also noted how the
salvation found in the ark during the forty-day period of rain parallels that amidst the presence of
the tabernacle during the forty-year period in the wilderness.316

As mentioned already with regard to creation parallels, so now with regard to deluge
parallels with the tabernacle: while it is legitimate to view the ark in terms of temple symbolism,
one has not satisfied the significance of those parallels until the tabernacle itself, as the narrative
goal, has subsumed something of the meaning of the ark. Likely, it is the redemptive aspect that
informs the parallels between ark and tabernacle, the tabernacle constituting the divinely
revealed means of refuge. Here, protology swirls into eschatology, and the cosmogonic pattern
proves to be mythic in the sense of being in *illo tempore.*317 From one perspective, it may said
that Adam’s transgression and expulsion “interrupted” the eschatological goal of the original
cosmogonic pattern.318 For our purposes, we simply note the deluge narrative, as with the
creation account, has been shaped with a view to the tabernacle cultus.

D. From Mount Sinai to the Tabernacle

On Mount Sinai, Clifford notes, YHWH has his tent, and the earthly copy of the tent will mediate
his Presence to his people.319 What we would like to consider now is the narrative transition
from the former to the latter. To be sure, the narrative accounts of each are linked together. For
example, the motifs in Exod 24.15b-18a of (1) Sabbath chronology, (2) the ḭb ẒRib YHWH, (3) use
of the term ḥq, and (4) the introduction speech formula ṣnq, serve to link the mountain of God

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316 J.H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,
317 Cf., e.g., M. Barker’s discussion, on the temple’s symbolizing the “eternal present,” *The Gate of Heaven*, 58-65.
318 This idea accords well with the theology developed by the author of Hebrews (chapter 4), that a Sabbath yet
remains.

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with the tabernacle pericope, essentially transforming the covenant ceremony into a preparation in worship for the establishment of the tabernacle cult. More specifically, we note first, and simply, that the tabernacle structure itself comes into existence within the sacred space established by the presence of the mountain of God. But further, and as early as the elders’ vision of God on Mount Sinai in Exod 24.10-11, we find a description of the heavenly sanctuary, its blue sapphire being a common feature of temples in the ancient Near East, so that already the theophany of the mountain “gives way to temple imagery,” to “the vision of God in the heavenly temple.” Then, of course, the רְוִיאוֹ for the tabernacle is revealed precisely from Sinai’s summit. Dozeman and Niccacci note, significantly, it is upon the seventh ascension that the tabernacle cultus is revealed, so that the “revelation and construction of the wilderness sanctuary participate fully in the mythology of the cosmic mountain.” This participation in mythology also includes a sharing of terminology. Indeed, the great statement of Exod 24.16 that would ever after symbolize Sinai, namely, that “the glory of YHWH dwelled upon Mount Sinai,” begins with the word יָשָׁפִּא, offering a preview of the following section’s subject, the work of the נְפִי, so that the tabernacle is a kind of miniature Sinai. Consistently, the cosmic mountain in Exod 15.17 (whether precisely identified with Sinai or not) the tabernacle (Exod

320 J. McCrory, “‘Up, Up, Up, and Up’: Exod 24.9-18 as the Narrative Context for the Tabernacle Instructions of Exod 25-31,” SBL Seminar Papers (1990) 570-82. D. Gowan also considers “glory” a key term which reappears at climactic points in chs. 25-31 and 35-40, signifying that God’s Presence on Sinai will now occupy the center of the camp via the Tabernacle (Theology in Exodus, 183).
322 T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 6, 563. Cf. also 567-75. He is correct, then, in stating the “vision of the heavenly temple in 24.9-11 signals the change in theme” (569), in the sense of the divine Presence being now anticipated within the context of an earthly counterpart to the heavenly Temple. Dozeman refers to the Exod 24 event as “a worship service on the cosmic mountain before the heavenly temple of God” (God on the Mountain, 113).
324 T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 574.
326 B.D. Russell convincingly does (The Song of the Sea, 54-55): noting “several descriptions are used for YHWH’s sanctuary at Sinai: מֵסֵלָה נִמְפָּע, מִזָּהָב תַּמָּנוֹד, מִזֶּהָב הֵמָּר, מִזֶּהָב נַמֵּשָׁה, מִזֶּהָב קֶרֶם, מִזֶּהָב נַפְרָד,” taking “the mountain of your habitation,” נֵס הֵמָּר, to be the mountain of God’s Presence.” In Exod 25-31 and 35-40, Israel receives instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its
25.8; Lev 16.33), and the Jerusalem temple (1 Chron 22.19; Isa 63.18) are each referred to as **מִיקְדָּשׁ**.\(^{327}\)

Now since a defining feature of any ANE temple is its being an “architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain,”\(^ {328}\) one would expect parallels between them in that embodiment—such is, in fact, the case. In the following ways the narrative brings out the tabernacle’s function as a portable Sinai:\(^{329}\)

(1) the three districts of holiness common to each;
(2) **YHWH** communicates with Moses from the mountaintop and the holy of holies;\(^{330}\)

cultic paraphernalia. Significantly, in 25.8, **מִיקְדָּשׁ** refers to the Tabernacle. Thus, in a sense, **YHWH**’s bringing and planting of his people on the sacred mountain in 15.17 point to the climax of the whole of Exodus. In 40.34-38, upon completion of the Tabernacle, the glory of **YHWH** fills the tent. **YHWH** brings the people to his holy place and then makes a tangible provision by which **YHWH**’s sanctuary can journey beyond Sinai.” Cf. C. Meyers, Exodus, 208.

\(^{327}\) D. Parry thus calls the tabernacle/temple a “mobile”/“man-made” mountain (“Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” pp 482-500 in *By Study and Also by Faith*, vol. 1 in *Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* [1990], accessed at: http://farms.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=63&print).


\(^{329}\) Cf. N.M. Sarna, Exploring *Exodus*, 203-04. He further notes (237) the “function of the Tabernacle was to create a portable Sinai, a means by which a continued avenue of communication with God could be maintained. As the people move away from the mount of revelation, they need a visible, tangible symbol of God’s ever-abiding Presence in their midst. It is not surprising, then, that the same phenomenon as occurred at Sinai, related in [Ex] 24.15-17, now repeats itself. It will recur at the dedication of Solomon’s Temple, as is narrated in 1 Kings 8.10-11.” P. Enns states: “This sanctity of the mountain is expressed in its tripartite division, which a number of commentators (going back at least to the Middle Ages) have compared to the tripartite structure of the tabernacle, hinted at more clearly in [Exod] 24.1-2….According to this division, the top of the mountain, to which Moses alone has access, corresponds to the Most Holy Place. Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders have access to the mountain but not its summit; this corresponds to the Holy Place. The rest of the people stay at the foot of the mountain, which corresponds to the outer court where the laity gather….It also highlights the fact that the tabernacle itself is an earthly reflection of God’s heavenly abode. In other words, the mountain does not mirror the tabernacle; the structure of the tabernacle is patterned after the mountain” (*Exodus* [TNAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000] 391). Cf. Edwin C. Kingsbury, “The Theophany Topos and the Mountain of God,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86.2 (Jun 1967) 205-10; J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 140. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 123: “In the Priestly account of the building of the Tabernacle (מִשְׁקָן) and its equipment, Moses is told to make it according to the pattern (מִשְׁפָּט or תָּבְנֵית) shown him on the mountain (Ex 26.30; cf. 25.9, 40; 27.8 and Num 8.4). The text is ambiguous as to whether Moses was presented with a plan of the tent or whether he actually saw and copied the heavenly tent. At any rate, it is clear that the tent that Moses had built is a copy of the heavenly tent in accordance with the ancient religious principle, ‘like is like.” M. Haran (“The Non-Priestly Image of the Tent of *MO’ED*,” pp 260-275 in *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School*, M. Haran [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985] 267) states: “In fact, the non-priestly *‘ohel mo‘ed* simply reproduces, in miniature of course, the basic features of the divine revelation on Mount Sinai.” O.Keel (*Symbolism*, 129-34) discusses the gradations of holiness related to tabernacle/temple structure. Cf. R.E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965) chs. 2, 5 (17-27, 63-78); M. Fishbane, “The ‘Eden’ Motif,” *Biblical Texts and Texture*, 114. The term “portable Sinai” is utilized by various commentators, such as, e.g., T.E. Fretheim (*Exodus*, 274), N.M. Sarna (*Exodus*, 237); P. Enns, *Exodus*, 493.

330
(3) the glory-cloud envelops both;
(4) the two tablets derived from Sinai’s summit are placed in the tabernacle’s parallel holy of holies;
(5) mediation of the divine Presence is via sacrifice.

To flesh out some of these points now, Rodriguez offers a helpful summary of (1) some of the architectural similarities between Sinai and the tabernacle, followed by his illustration:³³¹

The similarity of arrangement here [Sinai] with that of the subsequent tabernacle is striking. The fence around the mountain, with an altar at the foot of the mountain, would correspond to the court of the sanctuary with its altar of burnt offering; the limited group of people who could go up to a certain point on the mountain would correspond to the priests of the sanctuary, who could enter into the first apartment or “holy place”; and the fact that only Moses could go up to the very presence of Yahweh would correspond to the activity of the high priest, who alone could enter into the presence of Yahweh in the inner apartment of the sanctuary, or “most holy place.”

Knohl highlights the significance of the tabernacle as a locus of revelation:

Prior to the construction of the tabernacle, God said to Moses, “There I will meet with you, and I will impart to you—from above the cover, from between the two cherubim that are on top of the Ark of the Pact—all that I will command you concerning the Israelite people” (Exod 25.22). After it was set up, we read, “When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he would hear the voice addressing him from above the cover that was on top of the Ark of the Pact between the two cherubim: thus He spoke to him” (Num 7.89). God, who is seen above the cover (יהוה), meets Moses there and commands the children of Israel. 333

Continuing, Weinfeld provides evidence that (3) the building of the tabernacle is stylistically paralleled to Mount Sinai, specifically with reference to the glory cloud—an idea, he notes, is found already in Nachmanides: 334

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exodus 24.15-16</th>
<th>Exodus 40.34-Lev 1.1</th>
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<tr>
<td>When Moses had ascended the mountain, the cloud covered (הָעַל) the mountain. The Presence of יהוה (יהוה) abode on Mount Sinai and the cloud hid it for six days. On the seventh day He called to Moses (יהוה) from the midst of the cloud.</td>
<td>...the cloud covered (הָעַל) the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of יהוה (יהוה) filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter because the cloud had settled upon it (cf. 1 Kgs. 8.10-11). יהוה called to Moses (יהוה) from the Tent of Meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cassuto had already noted the poetic parallelism of 40.34 is entirely similar to 24.15-16: 335

332 Cf. M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 22. A.C. Leder (“The Coherence of Exodus,” 268) notes how whereas from Sinai, Israel receives the covenant binding them to יהוה, along with the נְחַבַּן, from the tabernacle, Israel “receives the holiness instructions that permit life in God’s consuming fire presence.”

333 I. Knohl, “Two Aspects of the ‘Tent of Meeting,’” pp 73-79 in Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg, M. Cogan, et. al., eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 73; T.E. Fretheim, Exodus, 277. Knohl posits that while the priestly stratum depicts the Tent primarily in terms of the divine Presence, the Torah yet preserves fragments which reflect the Tent of Meeting merely as the site of prophetic revelation. However, given the Cosmic Mountain ideology underpinning the conceptual framework of the Tabernacle, these two aspects, far from demanding variant traditions with a “profound theoretical and conceptual gap” (74), are seen rather as inseparable—even as the divine Presence/sanctity and revelation are correlative in the Sinai tradition. Admittedly, the tension between the Tent at the heart of the camp versus outside the camp remains.

334 M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 504-05: “This identification is confirmed in our opinion by a comparison of Lev 1.1 to Lev 7.38. Many critics have paid attention to the apparent contradiction which is said to exist between these two passages. According to Lev 1.1, the laws of sacrifices were proclaimed in the Tent of Meeting, whereas according to Lev 7.38 these were proclaimed on Mt. Sinai. In our view there is no contradiction here, since there is an identity between Mt. Sinai and the Tent of Meeting: the revelation on the mountain and the revelation in the Tent of Meeting are one and the same. The sanctuary of God on earth is patterned after the sanctuary of God in heaven which was shown to Moses on the Mount.” See also J.I. Durham, Exodus, 500; M. Oliva, “Interpretación teológica del culto en la pericopa del Sinai de la Historia Sacerdotal,” Bib 49 (1968) 345-54; V.P. Hamilton, “قضاء (bagh) dwell, tabernacle,” in TWOT 2:926.

335 U. Cassuto, Exodus, 484.
And the cloud covered the tent of meeting/
and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle (40.34)

And the cloud covered the mountain/
and the glory of YHWH dwelt upon Mount Sinai (24.15-16)

Briefly, with reference to (4) the tables of the Law, we simply point out that the places of their
origin (Sinai's summit) and keeping (holy of holies) correspond to each other typologically.

Finally, another parallel between Sinai and the tabernacle cultus is found in how the problem of
the divine Presence amidst a sinful people is remedied—namely, by sacrifice:

The divine Presence in the midst of Israel necessitated sacrifice. This is implied in the connection between
the end of Exodus, where the glory fills the 'tent of meeting' (Exod 40.34-35), and the opening verse of
Leviticus where YHWH calls Moses to give him instruction regarding sacrifice. Leviticus 9 records the
occasion when the entire worship system commenced operation. The essence of the ceremony is summarized
in Lev 9.22-24. All elements of Exod 24.1-11 are repeated: (1) YHWH appears to the people (the central
benefit of the covenant), (2) the priests make sacrifice and peace offerings (a communal meal would follow
that celebrates covenant fellowship), and (3) Aaron speaks a word of blessing to the people (implying
benefits of the covenant, perhaps similar in content to the blessings defined in Lev 26.4-13). The Levitical
sacrifices functioned to maintain and celebrate covenant relationship, sanctifying the nation in service of the
holy God in her midst. 336

Summary of Recent Scholarship and a Narrative Reading,” Religion Compass 2.1 [2008] 38-52) summarizes
Milgrom’s position on sacrifices as necessitated by the holiness of God’s Presence: “When we read P’s account
of tabernacle and sacrifices in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, it becomes clear that God and the sanctuary are
associated with the holy—the interior of the sanctuary, in which P sees God’s presence, is referred to as ‘most holy,’
while the priests and the other parts of the sanctuary are ‘holy’—and this designation contrasts with the rest of Israel,
who belong to the common. God and all things and priests associated with the holy must be in a state of purity....
The realm of the holy in the sanctuary will only tolerate a finite amount of impurity before God will depart, and
therefore the sacrifices are necessary to purify it” (41). Janzen himself sees the necessity of sacrifice not as a
response to the threat of God’s departure, but to the threat of God’s making a sacrifice out of Israel through famine,
plague, and warfare (49). D.J.A. Clines (“A World Established on Water (Psalm 24): Reader-Response,
Deconstructio and Bespoke Interpretation,” pp 172-86 in Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of
the Hebrew Bible [JSOTSup 205; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995]) appears to miss the point, then, when he
possits the entrance liturgy as an indication of the threat to holiness/holy space by the unclean, rather than of the
threat to the unclean by the Presence of the holy God: “My question to myself, as a reader checking all the time on
my responses to texts, is: Can I tolerate a notion of holiness that sees it as contaminatable? If the world contains
relatively small pockets of holiness, like a hill of the Lord or a temple, surrounded by vast areas of unholliness, like
(possibly) everywhere else, and if the unholy has the power to contaminate the holy but the holy does not have
the power to infect the unholy, what future, I ask myself, is there for the holy? The holy is rather under threat, is it
not, if it has to be protected from the unholy by the exclusion of unrighteous people from visiting the sanctuary. For
if impure people are supposed to be kept out of the holy, or keep themselves out, in order to protect its holiness,
what happens if impure people are inadvertently allowed in? Does the holy thereby become unholy?” (3). T.E.
Fretheim’s comments on Exod 19.20-25 serve as an adequate response: “The issue is not a concern for God, as if the
divine transcendence or sovereignty is compromised or violated. The concern is explicitly for the sake of the
people, to preserve them alive....[T]oo direct a divine presence would annul human existence, as a flame kills a
butterfly” (Exodus, 218). So, too, B.S. Childs’s comments on these verses form a fitting description of Cline’s
Because of the cultic remedy for sin, “the fire that dwells in their midst” does not consume Israel (40.34-38; cf. 3.3, 24.17). 337

In conclusion, there appears to be a deliberate narratival catechesis regarding the transition from Sinai to the tabernacle cultus, so that one may understand with Childs that what happened at Sinai “is continued in the tabernacle.” 338 This however amounts to a fundamental understatement unless one first views Sinai as the culminating cosmic mountain, the fulfillment of the cosmogonic pattern: through the Sea (Exod 14) → to Mount Sinai (Exod 19) → for worship (Exod 24), and the summit from which the divine blueprint for the tabernacle, as with the ark of Noah, is revealed. In sum, when the glory cloud transitions from Sinai to the tabernacle holy of holies, what is continued in the tabernacle includes Sinai’s summation of creation (Gen 1-3) and deliverance (Gen 6-9).

E. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood

One is not finished with the tabernacle cultus, however, apart from considering its personnel, the priesthood. 339 The role of the priesthood must be understood in light of the overarching conceptual pattern of the tabernacle as a renewed cosmos. 340 Fletcher-Louis fills in a key piece

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337 A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 260. Leder again emphasizes here the point that if read in isolation from Genesis, Exodus provides no hint that the Lord’s dwelling amidst Israel is part of the narrative agenda (260 fn 28).

338 B.S. Childs, Exodus, 540. Cf. ibid., Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context, 163. R.E. Clements similarly writes that the Sinai theophany is “to be repeated in Israel’s cultic life” via the Tabernacle (God and Temple, 22). D. Gowan states that is “is significant that the priestly tradition clearly intends to transfer to the tabernacle what the older traditions said about God’s presence on Mount Sinai” (Theology in Exodus, 185). Cf. also N.M. Sarna (Exploring Exodus, 190-91, 203) who speaks of the Tabernacle “extending” the Sinai experience, and U. Cassuto, Exodus, 319.

339 R. de Vaux, thus, appropriately states: “it is impossible to imagine a sanctuary without any priest to look after it” (Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, J. McHugh, trans. [1961; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997] 348). M. Barker states: “one of the keys to any understanding of the temple cult is the realization that the rituals and personnel were also thought to be the visible manifestation of the heavenly reality” (The Gate of Heaven, 17). Cf. C. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator,” 188.

340 Thus J.A. Davies (A Royal Priesthood, 150) asks the key questions: “If the tabernacle had an overarching conceptual rationale along the lines sketched above, what role did the person of the priest play in that rationale?
when he notes that “the high priest was also believed to be the true or second Adam. This idea is probably present already in Ezekiel 28.12-16 and is otherwise clearly attested in Sirach 49.16-50.1 (Hebrew text).” He notes further that “the Adamic identity of Aaron is fundamental to the theology of P,” with the priest/new Adam “doing what Adam failed to do in the temple-as-restored-Eden.” That Adam was understood in priestly terms, even as a high priest, is evident from early sources of interpretation. In his Legends of the Jews, for example, Ginzberg notes: “On the sixth, the last day of creation, man had been created in the image of God to glorify his creator, and likewise was the high priest anointed to minister in the tabernacle before his Lord and creator.” It may even be precisely because he is an Adam-figure that the priest’s sin propagated guilt among the entire people (Lev 4.3). Even the terms for the priestly garments, הערמה (“glory”) and האמור (“honor”), forming an inclusio around the account of the vestments in Exod 28, are used of the glory theophany of YHWH, demonstrating that “the priest was appropriately attired to enter a renewed cosmos and stand in the presence of the divine resident


342 C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part I,” JSHJ 4.2 (2006) 159 and fn 8. Further: “In his Biblical Antiquities 26.6 Pseudo-Philo faithfully spells out the narrative logic of the intratextuality between Gen 2-3 and the vision of Aaron in the restored Eden of the Sinaitic Tabernacle. It is the priesthood that discerns between good and evil (Lev 27.12) as Adam and Even were supposed to do. The Levites guard and keep the sanctuary as Adam was called to (Gen 2.15; Num 3.8, 38). The fecundity of Eden is restored at the sanctuary, and so on” (159 fn 10).


345 Cf. R.D. Nelson, Raising Up a Faithful Priest, 73. This is also an aspect of their representing the people before YHWH (cf. 86f).
of this cosmic temple." Thus the priest in the representation or *drama* of the cultus, dressed in such glorious raiment, portrayed humanity in its newly created purity, no longer separated from the divine Presence through the rebellion and expulsion recounted in Genesis 3, but able—as the pre-eminent "holy" person—to ascend the mount, to enter the holy of holies. It is important to see, further, that the priests inherited Moses' role, discussed earlier, as mediator:

One might picture priests as mediating an ascending movement toward God in their installation rite of passage and their holy and clean life-styles and a concurrent descending movement of oracular messages from God, authoritative declarations, trustworthy torah, and effective blessings in Yahweh's name. The mediating and revelatory role of the priest, the one who by virtue of his office was "near" Yahweh (Ezek 42.13; 43.19; compare Exod 19.22), is well expressed in a popular saying about priests that has God declare: "Through those near me I will make myself holy, and before the entire people I will glorify myself" (Lev 10.3).

Indeed, as Fletcher-Louis remarks, in "the Pentateuch, Aaron, the chief priest, is the messiah."

The essence, then, of the priestly role was access to the Presence, as evident by the vocabulary used to describe such movement: שֶׁמֶר, בָּנָשׁ, כַּרְבוּ, לָבָנִי, אֶל-יְהוָה ("the ones who draw near to YHWH," Exod 19.22), along with phrases in relation to YHWH that utilize the prepositional form בְּ, בָּנָשׁ, כַּרְבוּ, לָבָנִי, אֶל-יְהוָה ("the ones who approach YHWH,"

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346 J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 158. For "glory" ascribed to YHWH, see Exod 24.16-17; Isa 4.5; Ps 57.6 [5]; for "honor," see Isa 46.13, 63.15; Pss 71.8; 96.6; I Chron 29.11. Fletcher-Louis, further, posits five lines of reasoning to argue that "within the cult at least, the high priest takes on some of God's identity in the victory over the forces of chaos," an argument that, if valid, strengthens the *Chaoskampf* parallel between creation and cult (C. Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator," 186-92). Cf. M. Carden, "Atonement Patterns in Biblical Narrative: Rebellious Sons, Scapegoats and Boy Substitutes," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 5.1 (2009) 6-5.

347 Ibid., 158-59, 166. Davies further notes: "The priesthood and tabernacle constitute a constant reminder of the goal and prospect of holiness and acceptability to God. In the cult the people have a visible representation of what it would mean were they all to live in priestly holiness. Similarly, the glory and honour which characterize the Aaronic priests serve as a visible reminder of the glory and honour to which God has called the whole people (Deut 26.19; Isa 17.3; 62.2; Jer 13.11)" (168). NOTE: Because, among other things, the high priest represented the people to God, it is important to see the nation of Israel, God's son (cf. Exod 4.22), as symbolizing a new Adam as well. C. Dohmen notes how via the covenantal agreement Israel in effect becomes a new entity, a cultic community (*Exodus* 19-40, 60f). J.H. Hayes, as one example of the general consensus, mentions the high priest "represented the community" in his "Atonement in the Book of Leviticus," *Int 52* (1998) 8. S.W. Hahn writes: "Israel is to be corporately what Adam was created to be individually—the firstborn of a new humanity, a liturgical people that will dwell with God in a relationship of filial obedience and worship. ...As Israel is given an "Adamic" vocation, it experiences an Adamic fall from grace" ("Worship in the Word," 111). Cf. J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 202.


349 C. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah," 161.
Thus, while uncertainty remains concerning the original meaning of the word translated “priest,” the suggestion, widely accepted by scholars, that כהן kohen derives from the verb קורא (to stand”), so that the priest is defined as one who stands before the divine Presence, appears plausible. This is, of course, especially the case with the high priest whose “special status emerges from the entire structure of the priestly cult according to which only the High Priest may minister inside the tent of meeting, before the ark, whereas ordinary priests may officiate only outside the tent,” that is, his special status emerges from his being the sole ascender to the (typological) Mount’s summit, the “who” in the question: “Who may ascend the mount of YHWH?” The focus of Israel’s cultic calendar was upon entering the holy of holies, after elaborate preparations (Lev 16.2-17), one day out of the year, the Day of Atonement, a privilege granted the high priest alone—his “most critical role.” Indeed, this annual ritual of penetrating into the divine Presence may be considered the archetypal priestly act, whereupon Adam-like he fulfills the cosmogonic pattern:

Once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Adam’s eastward expulsion from the Garden is reversed when the high priest travels west past the consuming fire of the sacrifice and the purifying water of the laver, through the veil woven with images of cherubim. Thus, he returns to the original point of creation, where he pours out the atoning blood of the sacrifice, reestablishing the covenant relationship with God.

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350 Cf. 43.19; Lev 10.3).


354 R.D. Nelson, Raising Up a Faithful Priest, 13. Nelson also notes that the Urim and Thummim became obsolete except for their use on the Day of Atonement, for the selection of goats (42).

355 Ibid., 148.

356 D. Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 135. S.W. Hahn notes that “the goal of the worship and Law of Israel becomes that of atonement” (“Worship in the Word,” 112). M. Barker also suggests that to pass through the veil into the Holy of holies was to pass into the first day of creation—cf. “Beyond the Veil of the Temple: The High Priestly Origin of the
Significantly, then, in the consecration of the priesthood, only Aaron is anointed (29.7).

"Priestly unction was a rite of passage to a new status and effected passage from the outer, profane world to the sanctity of the tabernacle precinct."357 The tabernacle, immediately dominating the literary landscape and encircled by the tribes of Israel, constituted sacred space, guarded by the Levites so that anyone who did not belong to the priestly families and who attempted entrance was subject to the death penalty: "any outsider who encroaches shall be put to the death" (Num 3.10, 38).358 Only those ordained may draw near to God (Num 16.5, 9, 10; 17.5; Lev 21.17).359 Significant to the gate liturgy theme already developed with reference to Moses and Mount Sinai, the presentation of the ordination of Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 8-9 "is focused spatially on the door of the tent of meeting (Lev 8.3, 33). Indeed, the entire seven day period of the priests' ordination is a time when Aaron and his sons are to remain at the door of the tent."360 The weight of this annual drama, and thus of the gate liturgy itself, is manifest by its literary centrality: Leviticus is the center of the Torah,361 and the Day of Atonement is the central


357 Cf. C. Meyers, Exodus, 246. Meyers further notes that the "[s]ymbolic unction under divine auspices was such an important part of accession to office that the term "anointed one" (mäššaḥ) is found in the Hebrew Bible as a designation for divinely appointed officials such as kings, prophets, and even patriarchs and foreign kings; eventually it refers to an eschatological figure or 'messiah'" (246). Cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 348; D. Fleming, "The Biblical Tradition of Anointing Priests," JBL 117.3 (1998) 401-14; S. Niditch, The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition (HSM, 30; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980) 110; J.A. Davies, A Royal Priesthood, 160-61.

358 I. Knohl, "Two Aspects of the 'Tent of Meeting,'” 73.

359 C. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," JSHJ 5.1 (2007) 78. M. Barker notes well: "The mediators who passed between the two worlds were vital to the cult" (Gate of Heaven, 62).

360 F. Gorman, The Ideology of Ritual, 49.

361 Cf., e.g., D.L. Christensen, "The Pentateuchal Principle within the Canonical Process," JETS 39.4 (1996) 537-48 (539). M. Carden highlights the importance of the Day of Atonement in other portions of the Hebrew Bible as well, noting, e.g., the sacral quality "of 1 & 2 Samuel highlights even more the centrality of the Day of Atonement and atonement rituals for biblical religion(s)" ("Atonement Patterns in Biblical Narrative," 04.11).
theme of Leviticus, with its own center, chapter 16, highlighting the Day of Atonement chiastically:

"And YHWH said to Moses..."

A. Aaron should not go into Holy of holies any time he wishes (16.2)
B. Aaron’s sacrificial victims, special vestment (16.3-4)
C. Sacrificial victims provide by people (16.5)
D. Aaron’s bull, goat for sin-offering, goat for Azazel (16.6-10)
E. Aaron sacrifices bull (16.11-14)
F. Goat sacrificed as sin-offering (16.15)
X. Atonement (16.16-20a)
G. Goat sent to wilderness (16.20b-22)
B. Numbers
A. Genesis
B. Exodus
X. Leviticus – ch. 16
A. Deuteronomy
B. “Numbers”
D. “Genesis”
E. “Exodus”
F. “Leviticus”

A. Genesis
B. Exodus
X. Leviticus – ch. 16
A. Deuteronomy
B. Numbers
D. “Genesis”
E. “Exodus”
F. “Leviticus”

"As YHWH commanded Moses..."

In the drama of liturgy, the Day of Atonement was the “most intimate of the representations of access” to the divine Presence. Indeed, the importance of this day to the theology of the cult cannot be overestimated:

The goal of the Torah is holiness, which can be symbolically achieved in the cult. This occurs properly through atonement. The act of dedication to God, by which the distance from what is holy is symbolically bridged by the substitutionary offering of blood, is so central for the cult of the Priestly Document, that not only is the great day of atonement the highest holy day, but also every sacrifice takes on the nature of atonement, for it is only atonement, not offering a gift, that can express the meaning of the cult.

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In the cultic worldview, “the God-intended humanity of Genesis 1 is thus recapitulated, and sacramentally reconstituted, in Israel’s priesthood, in the temple-as-microcosm.”

F. To Dwell in the Divine Presence

By way of summation, we turn now to consider the biblical-theological goal and denouement of the narrative arc from Genesis 1-3 to Exodus 40, as it may be surmised by the descent of the glory cloud upon the tabernacle. Justly does Rodriguez mark Exod 25.8 as a key text, the divine command forming a link between the first twenty-four chapters of Exodus and the final fifteen: “And let them make me [YHwH] a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.” The tabernacle cultus perpetuates the very purpose and goal of the exodus deliverance, first fulfilled at the foot of Sinai: worship, variously described as “sacrifice”/תּוֹרָה (Ex 3.18; 5.3; 8.27-29; 10.25); “celebrate a festival”/נָחַת (Ex 5.1; 8.20; 10.9); “serve,” “worship”/עָלֵיהֶם (3.12; 4.23; 7.16; 8.1, 20; 9.1, 13; 10.3, 7, 8, 11, 24, 26; 12.31). Indeed, this was the sign given Moses: “When you have brought forth the people from Egypt you [pl.] will worship God upon this mountain” (3.12). As the archetype of the tabernacle, Mount Sinai—the “eschatological” experience of being delivered and brought to the mountain of God for worship—would thus be prolonged and maintained via the tabernacle cultus. As cosmic mountain, furthermore, Sinai’s summit corresponds to Eden, paradisiacal features and symbolism also being subsumed by the tabernacle. The key link here is that the ذָכָרְךָ is “a model of the cosmic Tabernacle of Yahweh,” with “the earthly shrine as a microcosm of the cosmic shrine.” Thus returning to Exod 25.8,

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368 This is recognized in most commentaries. E. Carpenter sums up the position in stating: “The goal of Israel’s journey into the desert in chs. 5-17 was to worship Yahweh” (“Exodus 18,” 101-02 and fn 16).
we find the divine intention clearly expressed as “to dwell/ tabernacle” (בָּשָׂר) amidst his people. It is a sound suggestion, then, that the cultic mediation of the Presence of YHWH via the tabernacle has been in view in the Torah’s narrative ever since that Presence was lost with the exile out of Paradise in Gen 1-3, informing the tabernacle symbolism found therein.

The central plot of the story of Exod 19-40 being “dedicated to the divine movement from mountain to tent,” the book of Exodus thus ends with a climax that may serve as something of a bookend with the creation account in as much as it describes a completed temple-building project sanctified by the presence of YHWH (40.34-35):

\[
\text{לַאֲמָר}
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Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle.

The cloud and Presence of glory, that is, “the visible manifestation of the divine Presence, not a substitute for it,” having rested atop Mount Sinai now moves upon the tabernacle, the building project that is both a proclamation of YHWH’s cosmic rule and something of an “incarnation” of the triumphant King amidst his vassals. As Buber has it, the הקדש is that

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373 Cf. G. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” pp 399-404 in I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11, R.S. Hess, D.T. Tsumura, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994). M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998) 13: “The new beginning signified by the creation of the world is concluded by a symbolic renewal of that creation when the creator is built a dwelling on earth by His creatures. Divine lordship thus becomes an event on earth, and is not simply restricted to a primordial era or cosmic realm. At the same time, this ancient mythic structure, and the verbal correspondences already noted between Genesis 2.1-3 and Exodus 39-40, serve severally to valorize the Israelite institution of a priestly tabernacle by placing it within an order of signification whose very origin is the beginning of the world.”
374 M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 22. This connection, he suggests, is connected with the role of the human actors who may not ascend the mountain, making the divine descent to the Tabernacle necessary (99).
376 G. Davies, “The Theology of Exodus,” 141 (emphasis original). He further supports this understanding in fn 12 of the same page, noting that the LXX renders the phrase w'גאָקָהָן b'גאָקָם in 25.8 with κοι ὀρθήσομαι ἐν ὅλην.
In this great gesture, the God of the Patriarchs, El Shaddai, becomes the God of the sons of Israel, of the nation of Israel, to be worshiped corporately through the tabernacle cultus alone. This story of chs 19-40 as a whole, framed by 19.3 and Lev 1.1, “presents how the locus of theophany was changed from mountain to tabernacle.” This transference and transformation, it may be argued, moves literarily via three steps: (1) establishing the God of creation as the God of the Patriarchs through the narratives of Genesis; (2) establishing the God of the Patriarchs as the God who calls Moses (Exod 3.6, YHWH declares: “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”; Ex 15.2, Moses sings: “This is my God—I will praise him! the God of my father—I will exalt him”); (3) the glory cloud’s moving from the cosmic mountain (religion of the Patriarchs) to the tabernacle (cultus of

379 For a similar succession of the names for the deity, cf. B.W. Anderson, Contours of Old Testament Theology, 86. The “alone” here derives from our understanding of the function and role of Exod 32 set in the midst of Tabernacle instruction and construction. Indeed, A. Phillips (“A Fresh Look at the Sinai Pericope: Part 1,” 51) brings out the parallels between the covenant ratification of Exod 24 and the covenant breaking of Exod 32. At the core of the covenant matrix in both texts, moreover, is the issue of worship. F. Polak thus refers to the Golden Calf episode as “a reversion of the Sinai theophany” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 141). The verb “to make” (r יָכָה), so prominent for the making of the Tabernacle, occurs over a dozen times in the Golden Calf episode, portraying it as anti-sanctuary activity (T. Fretheim, Exodus, 280). Further, the making, breaking, and remaking of the covenant in Exod 19-34 corresponds with the overall pattern of Genesis 1-11, old creation, destruction, new beginning (J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Meaning,” 111; T.E. Fretheim, Exodus, 272), and even with the pattern discernible in the specific Creation and Deluge narratives: through the waters to the mountain for worship, sin/Fall, restoration. The chiastic literary structure of the Golden Calf narrative itself centers on v 26a where Moses, standing at the gate of the camp, says: “נהוָא יִהוּד אָדָם / whoever is for YHWH, come to me!” (R.E. Hendrix, “A Literary Structural Analysis of the Golden-Calf Episode in Exodus 32.1-33.6,” AUSS 28.3 [1990] 211-17). For a critical analysis of Exod 32-34, cf. R.W.L. Mohrley, At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34 (JSOTSup 22; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).
380 M.R. Hauge, The Descent from the Mountain, 62.
Israel). That there appears to be deliberate narrative intention to demonstrate continuity between the cosmic mountain religion of the forefathers and the tabernacle/temple cultus of the original audience seems beyond question—and our thesis, that the creation, deluge, and exodus narratives “pre-figure” the tabernacle cultus, thereby follows as well.

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After being tutored in Moses’ ability to ascend, the utterly unexpected statement in 40.35 that he is “not able (אָן-וֹלִכָּה...to enter (לַכְּבָר) it is indeed remarkable. In Exod 33.20, YHWH had prohibited Moses from entering his Presence too directly (“You are not able (אָנָהָני לָצָא) to see my face...”), so that the prohibition here would seem to imply that YHWH’s Presence via the tabernacle though mediated is nonetheless a real Presence not to be trifled with—the tabernacle, in other words, provides for YHWH’s immanence while safeguarding his transcendence, with the ritual divine Presence becoming “the highest form of religiosity.” The tabernacle thus

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383 This is not unlike M. Buber’s observation that while the deity remains the same from the patriarchal age to that of the Exodus tradition, it is the people (Israel as a nation) that changes. See, “Holy Event (Exodus 19-27),” pp 45-58 in Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), originally published in On the Bible: Eighteen Studies by Martin Buber (New York: Schocken, 1968). Cf. also Fretheim’s theological reflection on the shift in divine abode from Mountain to Tabernacle (Exodus, 272-73). We recall here also the points of transition noted earlier, namely, that the vision of God in Exod 24.10-11 already begins to give way to temple imagery, and the “pattern” for the Tabernacle was revealed specifically from the summit of Sinai.

becomes the one locus in all the earth for God’s Presence to dwell, and the intensity of this
glorious mystery is so powerful, Moses is not able to enter.\textsuperscript{385} Brisman expresses the sublimity
of the account well:

Here the sense of God as beyond human activity is troped as the presence of God before human activity:
Filling that Tabernacle, God prevents (“goes before” and thwarts) Moses from filling his duty. It is a happy
prevention, this dedicatory vision of the presence of God....For the Priestly writer to conclude Exodus with a
vision of God filling the Tabernacle, he needs to look beyond the priestly business of God’s work to a vision
of the Divine Presence that prevents and overpowers the priesthood—and even Moses himself.\textsuperscript{386}

As the cloud descends upon the tabernacle “with the deity entering his dwelling place”
and filling it with the ריבג, the book’s end not only forms a counterpart to the \textit{deus absconditus}
of the opening chapters of Exodus,\textsuperscript{387} although YHWH’s “filling” (נֵבָג) the tabernacle (40.34, 35)
forms an \textit{inclusio} with the sons of Israel “filling” (נֵבָג) the land of Egypt (1.7),\textsuperscript{388} but also a
bookend with the prologue to the Torah, the creation account of Genesis 1-2.3, where upon
completing the cosmic temple, God enters his dwelling place in the enthronement of the
Sabbath.\textsuperscript{389} It might even be said that the creation begun in Genesis 1 comes to fulfillment,
however partial, with the establishment of the tabernacle cultus.\textsuperscript{390} Moreover, the re-creation

\textsuperscript{385} C. Meyers, \textit{Exodus}, 283.
\textsuperscript{387} F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 147. T.B. Dozeman also notes the “absence of God” in the beginning of
Exodus (\textit{Exodus}, 44).
\textsuperscript{389} Parallaxes have already been discussed above, but a brief synopsis: “At the far end of the book of Exodus the
influence of Genesis, or, strictly, of the cosmic creation narrative therein, is again in evidence. As the tabernacle
construction is brought to its conclusion we read, “Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the
congregation finished” (Ex 39.32 // Gen 2.1), and then we are told that Moses looked on all that the Israelites had
done and blessed them (Ex 39.43 // Gen 1.28, 31)” (R.P. Gordon, \textit{Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions: Selected
Essays In Honor of Robert P. Gordon} [SOTS; Burlington; Ashgate, 2006] 29). The enthronement emphasis may
also be seen in the instructions for building the Tabernacle (ch. 25), as B.A. Levine is likely correct in seeing the
order of items in relation to relative importance with the ark, as “the central object of the cult” as well as YHWH’s
throne, coming first (“The Descriptive Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch,” \textit{JAOS} 85.3 [1965] 307). This priority, to
be sure, is organized by degree of holiness —see M. Haran, \textit{Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel} (Oxford:
relation to theology of Presence, the Ark “the supreme post-Sinai symbol of the Presence of Yahweh” (J.I. Durham,
\textsuperscript{390} Cf. F. Gorman, \textit{The Ideology of Ritual Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Ideology} (Sheffield: JSOT Press,
1990) 42, and Fretheim’s caveat regarding Gorman’s conclusion (230) that the Tabernacle cultus represents
account of the deluge is also fulfilled by the tabernacle climax of Exodus since the “arrival of the
Israelites at Sinai sets in motion acts of atonement, administered by a sanctified priesthood,
which will provide the antidote to the pollution, which causes the flood.” The tabernacle was
“raised” (נִשָּׁבָא), what’s more, on “the first day of the first month” (40.2, 17), the same day the
covering was removed from the ark for Noah to gaze upon a renewed creation (Gen 8.13), that is,
on New Year’s Day. This new beginning marks the creation (בראשית; Gen 1.1), deluge (בראשית
Gen 8.13), and tabernacle (בראשית 40.17) narratives. The undercurrent of these accounts, the
drama and telos of the biblical narrative, particularly as it culminates in the tabernacle story, is
the gaining of life in the Presence of the Creator:

[The tent located in the heart of the camp was first and foremost a place where the Glory of God was
constantly present. God appeared in the cloud above the cherub covering that rested on the ark of the Pact:
“for I appear in the cloud over the cover” (Lev 16.2). Consequently, the Tent of Meeting was called a
tabernacle (בֵּית נְסָיו) (from the root בֵּית ‘to dwell’), because it was the fixed dwelling place of the Divine Glory.
The constant presence of the Glory in the Tent is expressed in the cult of the fixed daily offering (燔祭), in
whose framework the priests offered the daily burnt offering, burned the incense, lit the eternal light, and
arranged the showbread on the table. Only the perpetual presence of God’s glory within the Tent of Meeting
can explain the complex of acts performed in the daily worship.]

The period from the expulsion from Paradise until Sinai had been marked by God’s dealings
with humanity “from afar.” Now, so the message of the tabernacle narrative, the divine
Presence is “not merely on an ethereal, cosmic plane” (lost via the expulsion), but is “historically
present to Israel.” The Presence of YHWH among his people, then, is a—perhaps, the—major
creation’s being “fully” finished (“Reclamation of Creation,” 364-65 fn 26). N.M. Sarna makes the interesting
correlation with Gen 1.2 when he closes his commentary by stating: “Israel is assured that, day and night, the Divine
Spirit hovers it, guiding and controlling its destiny” (Exodus, 237).

391 T.B. Dozeman, Exodus, 439.
393 I. Knohl, “Two Aspects of the ‘Tent of Meeting,’” 73. Further, “The priestly tradition emphasizes the immanence
of God. Religious certainty is attained by the fixed presence of God within Israel. The purpose of the complex cultic
system practiced within the Tent of Meeting is to facilitate God’s continued presence among His people” (76).
theme of Exodus, and indeed of the Hebrew and Christian canons.\textsuperscript{396} Thus Moshe Greenberg had already noted in 1969:

It is possible to epitomize the entire story of Exodus in the movement of the fiery manifestation of the divine presence. At first the fire burned momentarily in a bush on the sacred mountain, as God announced his plan to redeem Israel; later it appeared for months in the sight of all Israel as God descended on the mountain to conclude his covenant with the redeemed; finally it rested permanently on the tent-sanctuary, as God's presence settled there. The book thus recounts the stages in the descent of the divine presence to take up its abode for the first time among one of the peoples of the earth.\textsuperscript{397}

Ending where Genesis had begun,\textsuperscript{398} the book of Exodus marks the great cultic return to the lost Presence of the Creator, the tabernacle mediating Paradise to the exiled descendants of Adam.\textsuperscript{399}

Walton captures the point well when he writes:

As Exodus 40 describes the glory of the Lord filling the temple, the Israelites experience what is, in effect, a return to Eden—not in the sense of full restoration, but in the sense that God’s presence again takes up its residence among people, and access to God’s presence, however limited, is restored.\textsuperscript{400}

Thus Israel becomes a “microcosm of life in creation as God originally intended it,” lived worshipfully in the Presence of God dwelling in—or, perhaps, better: “incarnated” through—the tabernacle, “a kind of material 'body' for God.”\textsuperscript{401} Because this great crescendo at the end of

\textsuperscript{396} J.D. Currid refers to it being “a major theme of the book of Exodus” (Exodus, vol. 2, 143). F Gorman notes: “At the conclusion of the text narrating the construction of the tabernacle, the Priests state that the cloud cover the tent of meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle (Exod 40.34-38). Yahweh has descended from the mountain and taken up residence in the tabernacle. The tabernacle now reflects the realization of a goal—Yahweh dwelling in the midst of Israel” (The Ideology of Ritual, 48).

\textsuperscript{397} M. Greenberg, Understanding Exodus, 16-17.


\textsuperscript{399} A.C. Leder states: “Remarkably, Exodus ends where Genesis begins. Or, to put it another way: The end of Exodus picks up where Adam’s and Eve’s sin created a disjunction between the presence of God and human history” (“Reading Exodus to Learn,” 30). P. Enns refers to the exile of Adam and Even from Eden as the “first and paradigmatic exile,” and, while not contending that it is the biblical theme under which all others are subsumed, nonetheless states that in “one sense the Bible as a whole can be summarized as the story of God's intervening to bring his chosen people out of a foreign, hostile place and back to the chosen land, back to Eden” (Exodus, 285).

\textsuperscript{400} J.H. Walton, “Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of the Book of Leviticus,” BBR 11.2 (2001) 296. Walton’s further comments on the same page remind one of Noah’s Ark: “The sanctuary of Israel represented a small, idealized island of order in a world of threatened chaos. It was a place that preserved equilibrium for God’s presence, which in turn was an anchor against disorder.”

\textsuperscript{401} T.E. Fretheim, Exodus, 240-41, 315 (emphasis original). C. Meyers (Exodus, 222-23) notes the divine Presence as the substance of the eschatological hope of the postexilic community, anchored in the promise that God would dwell in their midst (Zech 2.10-11). Cf. John 1.14-16. Bruckner states that YHWH’s Presence constituted the true “anointing” of the Tabernacle (Exodus, 327); this is also in accord with YHWH’s Anointed being named “Immanuel.” Thus J.D. Currid calls the dwelling Presence of YHWH the “Immanuel principle” (Exodus, vol. 2, 369).
Exodus also provides the denouement for the beginning of the Exodus narrative,\(^ {402}\) the theme of slavery and liberation is taken up into the understanding of the cultus: true “freedom” is the life of worship where YHWH is in the midst of his people. The “encounter with God at Sinai represents the beginning of legitimate cultic worship,”\(^ {403}\) the beginning of humanity’s return through the gates of YHWH’s holy Mount, and thus a “foretaste of the final joys of life in the Presence of God.”\(^ {404}\) Timmer’s summation serves well to position the tabernacle cultus within the unfolding drama of the biblical narrative:

> God’s unobstructed communion and presence with humanity was the goal of creation, but the entrance of sin meant that this goal could not be achieved apart from the resolution of sin and its consequences. The tabernacle is an *intermediate point on the spectrum of God’s presence with humanity*, partially because the problem of sin is not fully resolved by the mechanisms of [the] Sinai covenant of which it is a part. Its association with the Sabbath accentuates the expectation that God will act eschatologically to resolve his people’s insurmountable lack of full sanctification and bring those whom he forgives and sanctifies into the full enjoyment of his rest.\(^ {405}\)

**CONCLUSION**

We have considered the deliverance at sea in Exod 14 as a judicial water ordeal, leading either to destruction/Sheol (for the Egyptians) or to the mountain of God (for the Israelites). Completing the pattern through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, Exod 19-24 portrays the arrival of the Israelites to Mount Sinai and their subsequent worship. Beyond intertextual parallels with the creation and deluge narratives, the Sinai pericope also appears to be informed by the question of the gate liturgy, with Moses (as something of a new Adam) depicted as the only one able to ascend the mountain of God. Finally, within the bounds of the book of Exodus itself the cosmic mountain pattern gives way to the tabernacle cultus informed by it: the קְבֵרָה

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\(^{402}\) See M. Greenberg’s assessment for the book of Exodus as a literary unit within the Torah, having its own prologue and epilogue, etc., *Understanding Exodus*, 2-3.

\(^{403}\) M. Noth, *Exodus*, 200.

\(^{404}\) B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 239. Similarly, P. Enns writes that the Tabernacle “is constructed in such a way that brings to mind God’s first earthly dwelling with his people, Eden—the first ‘temple.’ And Eden itself represents God’s heavenly throne room, where God’s presence is most full….It [the Tabernacle] is a piece of heaven on earth” (*Exodus*, 301, 506). See also the Eden – temple parallels in M. Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T & T Clark, 2003) 47.

moves from Sinai to the tabernacle, the three part structure of the tabernacle corresponding to the
three parts of the mount with the holy of holies representing the clouded summit. As the peaks
of Sinai and the Ararat mount echoed Eden in their respective narratives, so the holy of holies
responds to Eden and the blessing of the divine Presence. Thus the narrative arc from Gen 1-
3 to Exod 40 may be traced from the expulsion from the divine Presence to the gained access to
the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus, from the profound descent of Adam to the dramatic
“ascent” of the high priest into the Holy of holies (particularly on the Day of Atonement).

Having thus considered cosmic mountain ideology (via the pattern of going through the waters
→ to the mountain of God → for worship) in the sea crossing/Sinai narratives of the exodus
account, it has become apparent this narrative prefigures the tabernacle cultus—the cultus itself
informed by cosmic mountain ideology.
Conclusion

THESIS SUMMARY

In this thesis we have examined the creation, deluge, and exodus accounts of Genesis and Exodus in light of cosmic mountain ideology, seeking to demonstrate in each narrative the significant cosmogonic/cultic pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain → for worship. As temples are the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, we have argued that these narratives function to explain the logic and necessity of the tabernacle cultus, primarily in its function as mediating the divine Presence. The cosmic mountain, we have sought to show, serves as a symbol for approaching God. Therefore, the idea of a “gate liturgy,” encapsulated by a fundamental question of the cultus of Israel, namely that of Psalms 15 and 24: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” was highlighted in each narrative. Thus, Adam and Eve must descend the mount upon their transgression, making the return ascent in worship a key feature in the drama leading up to the tabernacle account; Noah, being found just and blameless in his generation (the very qualifications for ascending the mount of YHWH listed in Ps 15.2), is thus allowed entrance into the ark, something of a “prototype” of the tabernacle/temple; and Moses alone is permitted ascent to the summit of Mount Sinai, a role later mimicked in the instructions for the high priest’s annual entrance into the holy of holies. To dwell in the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus thus presents something of a full-circle, albeit mediated, return to the original intent of creation.
CONTRIBUTION

While there have been notable studies on the cosmic mountain in biblical literature by R.J. Clifford, J.D. Levenson, and G.A. Anderson, the significance of their work has yet to be exploited for its exegetical and hermeneutical possibilities. This we have sought to do by synthesizing their efforts into a more comprehensive cosmological portrait that includes the cosmic waters and the judicial river ordeal, and by unfolding the cosmogonic pattern which, while plainly repeated throughout the Hexateuch, has not to our knowledge been treated.

Furthermore, while recognition of temple symbolism in the creation account(s) of Gen 1-3 has nearly become commonplace in scholarship, the so-called Fall narrative has not as yet been incorporated adequately. Indeed, there has been something of a stigma over the (unjust?) theological weight given this narrative in Christian dogma which appears, by contrast, relatively neglected in the rest of the Hebrew canon. Reading the expulsion narrative via the lens of cosmic mountain ideology, and the gate liturgy in particular, however, makes the exile and descent from the divine Presence the very wellspring of cultic concern: “Who [now] shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” so that Gen 3, far from having an insignificant place throughout the rest of the Hebrew canon, becomes something of the foundation story for the religion of Israel (in as much as it explains the purpose of the cultus) and can be seen to initiate a motif that runs like an undercurrent through the biblical literature—certainly through the other narratives we have considered.

Turning to the deluge narrative, it was noted that while temple symbolism has been widely recognized in the creation accounts(s) there has as yet been no significant study of temple symbolism in the deluge narrative—and this in spite of the general scholarly consensus that lexical and thematic intertextuality link these narratives together. Not only did we note the
cosmogonic pattern evident in this narrative, but we also argued that the ark of Noah functions symbolically in the narrative as something of an archetypal tabernacle/temple, the entrance to that ark being subject to a gate liturgy so that Noah, specifically as “the righteous man,” was therefore able to enter. That entrance led to the eschatological deliverance of his household and a remnant of the creatures of the earth, later to spread out from the Ararat mountain to fill the earth, thereby portraying the mount as cosmic (*omphalos*). While some scholars had previously noted parallels between the ark and the tabernacle, this cultic reading encompassing as it does the whole narrative appears almost entirely fresh.

In the book of Exodus the cosmogonic pattern occurs no less than three times: first, in the early narrative of Moses' life where we find him delivered through the Nile waters and brought to Horeb (Exod 2-3); this deliverance, secondly, foreshadows that of Israel through the Sea to Sinai (Exod 14, 19-24); thirdly, the Song of the Sea (Exod 15) portrays the entire movement of the book—and perhaps even of the Christian canon (cf. v 17)—as well. While, due to space limitations, we only considered the second instance as the broad narrative of the book, it was sufficient to portray plainly Israel’s deliverance as a new creation. Once more, we noted the underlying gate liturgy as the narrative—oft to the point of confusion—portrays Moses as the only one able to ascend the mountain to God. The prominent fact of Moses' sole prerogative of ascent had, to be sure, been duly noted by scholars in the past but neither understood nor developed within the context of the gate liturgy. That this motif is an underlying concern may even perhaps serve as a key to explaining some of the confusion of ascent in the narrative, such as in 24.13 whereby both Moses and Joshua set out but only Moses ascends, an apparent incongruity which we noted was corrected in the Septuagint by changing the third masculine

1 While many years go by historically between Moses’ deliverance as a babe and the removal of his sandals before the bush aflame with divine glory, yet literarily the narrative accomplishes this pattern within several verses.
singular verb of ascent into plural. Finally, with the culmination of the narrative when the glory cloud of YHWH descends from the summit of Sinai to rest upon the tabernacle holy of holies, the narrative arc from the expulsion of Gen 3 comes to an at least partial denouement, and the basic thesis that the mountain pre-figured the tabernacle cultus is manifest. Although the high priest’s symbolizing the righteous man, even Adam himself, within this cultus is not a new insight, the depths of the cultic drama, particularly in viewing the Day of Atonement as the high priest’s ascent into the summit of YHWH’s mount and standing as it were where Adam (/Noah/Moses) stood before him, this had not been so fully developed as in our thesis. It is to be hoped that, in the absence of greater historical and archaeological evidence to explain the tabernacle/temple, its symbolism and rituals, the biblical literature itself will continue to unveil, even through narratives previously thought unrelated, something of the drama and beauty of entering the divine Presence via the ordained means of Israel’s cult.

**FUTURE WORK BASED ON THIS THESIS**

While areas of scholarship possibly served by our thesis were mentioned at the close of the introductory chapter, here we merely suggest an outline for the work that would be necessary to grow this thesis into a full-blown biblical theology of the Christian canon based on cosmic mountain ideology. The programmatic verses of Exodus (3.12; 19.4; 25.8) as well as the Song of the Sea (Exod 15.13, 17), summarizing as they do not merely the movement of the book of Exodus but of salvation history *in nuce* (via the cosmogonic pattern), underscore that to dwell in the divine Presence (“worship”) is indeed the supreme goal of *Heilsgeschichte*, the bedrock and litmus for a true biblical theology. We will thus trace here the bare pathway of dwelling in the divine Presence thematically, without consideration for the necessary corollary of incorporating
the themes of creation/redemption, kingship, covenant, etc., within the cosmic mountain paradigm.

It will be noted first that, however the pattern may have been utilized in the cultus of Israel, going through the waters → to the mountain → for worship functions in narrative history as an epochal event. While this fact is worked out in the chart below, the basic point may be deduced simply from the nature of the pattern as a cosmogonic pattern, the passage through the waters representing creation. The history of the world (macro-temple) begins through the waters to the Eden mount, and re-begins through the waters to the Ararat mount; the history of Israel (micro-temple) begins through the waters to Mount Sinai and, if the Sea waters are joined to those of the Jordan (collapsing the wilderness), eventually to Mount Zion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 1 (Eden mount)</th>
<th>Genesis 7 (Ararat mount)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>Conflict of Seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 8 (Ararat mount)</td>
<td>Revelation 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Creation</strong></td>
<td><strong>New Fall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah, New Adam</td>
<td>Renewed Seed Conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus one may justly deal with the biblical literature and history (in a canonical approach) by moving from mountain to mountain: Eden to the deluge (Gen 1-7) as the “world that was”; Ararat until the end of the age (Gen 8-Revelation 20) as the “world that now is”; the new Jerusalem/Zion ad infinitum (Rev 21-22) as the “world that will be”; and the cultus of Israel as

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2 This chart, utilizing the historical framework provided in 2 Peter 3.5-7, is taken (with modifications) after W.A. Gage’s The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2001) pp 16, 72. The reader is referred to this work for scriptural justification of these categories, manifesting their parallels. NOTE: our concern here is only with the first column—to which the mountains have been added.

3 Again, while not working out the precise nature for linking themes of redemption, covenants, etc., to their mount of origin, one can appreciate already that the covenants related to the macro-temple, for example, should not be flatly paralleled to those related to the micro-temple.
micro-temple—followed by the body of Christ—mediating the divine Presence between Sinai and the New Jerusalem. Having examined cosmic mountain ideology with respect to the Eden, Ararat, and Sinai narratives, work yet remains to study the cosmogonic pattern/cosmic mountain ideology in the Moses birth narrative (Exod 2-3) and in the Song of the Sea (Exod 15).

Completing the Hebrew canon, we note that work obviously is required to synthesize (earthly) Zion/Jerusalem. This effort needs to incorporate the nuances of the prophetic material whereby hope appears steadily to shift toward an idealized or heavenly Zion/Jerusalem, a concept already latent—arguably—within the idea of the “pattern” (תָּבְנָא tabnā) of Exod 25.9, 40. The ministry of Christ in the New Testament can be discerned, then, as culminating in the judgment upon the earthly Zion/temple, and the consequent paradigmatic shift toward the heavenly Zion/new Jerusalem, eventually to descend upon the new earth. The movement, briefly sketched, would progress through Christ’s announcement that worship will no longer take place on any earthly mount (cf. John 4.21) to the great declaration by the author of Hebrews (12.22-24) that, in the new covenant, God’s people have:

come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

How this shift has taken place, a burden of argument in Hebrews, would require addressing the cosmic nature of Christ’s atonement, and should be positioned within the concept of the gate liturgy and Day of Atonement (cf. Heb 10, esp. vv 19-20)—demanding greater emphasis upon the priestly/Adamic nature of Christ (incorporating, e.g., Dan 7.13, the “Son of Man” sayings,

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4 So, e.g., the Incarnation via the Spirit’s hovering over the womb, viewed through a cultic lens, will be portrayed in terms of a new temple (cf. Gen 1.2, etc.).

5 For both of which we have done extensive work yet, due to space limitations, could not include in this thesis, but hope to publish elsewhere.
etc.). Thus, rather than abolishing the beauty and drama of approaching the mountain of God in worship, the work of Christ will be seen to have enabled this cultic approach across the earth, as by faith the nations stream to the heavenly Mount Zion each LORD’s Day—until the heavenly Zion/Jerusalem finally descends upon the new earth (Rev 21.1-2) and faith becomes sight. This outline thus provides a pathway for utilizing the present study toward a biblical theology of the Christian canon—one which moves from creation to new creation, while incorporating the heart of priestly theology and the work of Christ via the atonement, and which relies upon the budding (and already fruitful) area of biblical studies focused upon the temple.

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