

The Temple in Heaven: Its Description and Significance

Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry

According to several old Jewish traditions, the earthly temple was a copy, counterpart, or mirror image of the heavenly temple. Victor Aptowitzer summarizes the Jewish point of view by writing that

[Jewish] literature avers that in heaven there is a temple that is the counterpart of the temple on earth. The same sacrifices are said to be offered there and the same hymns sung as in the earthly temple. Just as the temple below is located in terrestrial Jerusalem so the temple above is located in celestial Jerusalem.¹

Various collections of writings mention the existence of a heavenly temple, including the Old and New Testaments, the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Talmud, and a host of midrashic² materials. Some of the sources provide only a brief description of the temple, while others explain its significance. The goals of this chapter are twofold: First, we will attempt to provide a brief description of the temple in heaven. In this regard, the Revelation of John will prove to be of great assistance, but a number of roughly contemporary canonical and noncanonical sources will also be helpful. Second, and perhaps more importantly, we will attempt to determine what significance the heavenly temple holds for us.

Extracanonical References to the Temple in Heaven

A number of pseudepigraphic sources make reference to the celestial sanctuary. An explicit reference appears in *1 Enoch*, wherein the prophet Enoch ascends to heaven in a vision. The prophet views the magnificent heavenly temple made of crystal. He is permitted to approach an inner chamber of the temple (i.e., the Holy of Holies), where he beholds God seated upon his throne. Enoch's description of the heavenly Holy of Holies reveals the magnificence of the heavenly temple:

In every respect it so excelled in . . . glory and great honor—to the extent that it is impossible for me to recount to you concerning its glory and greatness. As for its floor, it was of fire and above it was lightning and the path of the stars; and as for the ceiling, it was flaming fire. And I observed and saw inside it a lofty throne—its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun; and [I heard?] the voice of the cherubim; and from beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire. It was difficult to look at it. And the Great Glory was sitting upon it—as for his gown, which was shining more brightly than the sun, it was whiter than any snow.³

In the *Testament of Levi* 5:1, an angel of heaven opens the gates and permits Levi to enter the celestial temple. Once inside, Levi sees the Most High seated upon a throne of glory. The *Testament of Levi* 18:6 continues the idea: “The heavens will be opened up, and from the temple of glory sanctification will come upon him.”⁴

Rabbinic literature⁵ contains a host of implicit and explicit statements regarding the heavenly sanctuary. TB *Sanhedrin* 94 declares the earthly temple the “earthly dwelling” of God, and the celestial temple he calls the “heavenly dwelling.” The author of *Genesis Rabbah* 69:7 calls

the two dwellings the "terrestrial temple" and the "celestial temple" and believes that the two temples are separated by a mere eighteen miles. A number of references indicate that the earthly temple was a replica or duplication of the heavenly temple. One midrash states that the Lord "created the earthly temple, and over against it the heavenly temple, the one being the counterpart of the other,"⁶ and another reads, "The earthly holy of holies is a counterpart of the heavenly holy of holies."⁷ Similarly, it is written that "the earthly throne is a counterpart of the heavenly throne."⁸ In connection with this, an old Jewish legend claims that as Moses and the Israelites were erecting the tabernacle upon the earth, ministering angels were erecting a second tabernacle in heaven.⁹ This recalls numerous claims in Jewish literature that the temple rituals of the earthly high priest coincided with the ritual performances of Michael the great prince, who presented his offerings in the heavenly temple.¹⁰ One major difference, however, existed between the two temple systems. Animal sacrifices were offered in the earthly temple, but in the celestial temple Michael offered up "the souls of the righteous."¹¹

Similar to the earthly temple, the heavenly sanctuary possesses implements, fixtures, and zones necessary for the temple officiants to perform their ordinance work. The Jewish *haggadah*, or nonlegal, homiletic texts, mention the "heavenly altar,"¹² "the heavenly throne,"¹³ the "heavenly holy of holies,"¹⁴ and heavenly priestly officiants.¹⁵ Yet in some important respects the earthly sanctuary was dissimilar to the heavenly temple. The earthly temple was built by the hands of man (although the measurements and plans for the temple were revealed by God), while the celestial temple was said to have been built by God himself (see Hebrews 8:2; Exodus 15:17).¹⁶ Furthermore, the earthly temple was built for

the temporal world, while the heavenly temple was built for the eternal world. It even possesses preexistent qualities. One haggadic source says of the preexistent nature of the heavenly temple: "Even before the world was created my temple existed on high."¹⁷ Similarly, in the Pseudepigrapha, *2 Baruch* declares that the temple was "prepared from the moment that [God] decided to create Paradise."¹⁸

The Heavenly Temple in the Bible

Intimations of a heavenly temple are scattered throughout the Bible. At least three Psalms hint at the idea of a heavenly temple. Psalm 11:4 states that "the Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven." Also, a chiastic verse in Psalm 102:19 states, "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth" (cf. Psalm 150:1). Victor Aptowitzer believes that Isaiah's vision of the Lord upon the high and lofty throne (see ch. 6) took place in the heavenly temple. His hypothesis is based upon a number of Jewish haggadic texts.¹⁹ It is also possible that Micaiah (see 1 Kings 22:19), Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 1, 10), and Lehi (see 1 Nephi 1:8) were permitted a view of the temple of heaven. John the Revelator also saw the temple in heaven in his great vision. We will examine his description shortly.

In the New Testament, the heavenly temple is spoken of by the Apostle Paul. Writing to the Hebrews, Paul contrasted the service in the earthly temple by an earthly high priest with the ministrations in the heavenly temple by the great high priest, Jesus Christ. Paul identifies the earthly temple as "a worldly sanctuary. . . . A tabernacle, . . . wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread" (Hebrews 9:1-2). The earthly temple possessed a Holy of Holies that housed "the golden censer, and the ark

of the covenant" (9:3–4). The earthly priests, writes Paul, "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" (8:5). The complement and fulfillment of the earthly temple is the heavenly temple, the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." Jesus himself served as "a minister" of the heavenly temple (8:2). Under the Mosaic law, the priests went into the "first tabernacle" to accomplish "the service of God. But into the second [tabernacle, i.e., the heavenly temple] went the high priest [Jesus] alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (9:6–7). Paul explains, "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, . . . by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. . . . For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (9:11–12, 24).

The Temple in Heaven according to the Book of Revelation

Our most definitive single source on the heavenly temple is recorded in the Revelation of John, where the backdrop for much of John's apocalyptic vision was the temple in heaven.²⁰ John's experience with the heavenly temple began with an ablutionary rite of approach (see Revelation 1:5–6), wherein the apostle was washed in the blood of Jesus and made a king and a priest. Then, while John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (1:10), he found himself standing before the seven-branched lampstand (see 1:12), which in the days of the Mosaic tabernacle was located in the "holy place" of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:33–35). John's observation of the seven-branched lampstand shifted into a divine vision of the glorified Jesus (see Revelation

1:13–18), and the symbol of the Lord (the lampstand) actually became that which was symbolized (the Lord).

In Revelation 4:1, John beholds an open door in heaven that led from the Holy Place to the celestial Holy of Holies, or the throne room of God. The temple in heaven, like its earthly counterpart, required an ascension from one sacral zone to another zone possessing a higher degree of sanctity. Hence the voice instructed John to “come up hither.” Once situated inside the temple’s Holy of Holies, John viewed a number of elements unique to the temple, which he refers to throughout the book of Revelation. For instance, John identified the glories of the celestial throne room, with God the Father sitting upon the throne (the throne is the center of activities in the book of Revelation, being mentioned forty times). He sees the heavenly beings (cherubim), the incense altar, the seven-branched lampstand, the altar of sacrifice, worshipers wearing sacred vestments, the four horns of the altar, the ark of the covenant, incense bowls, and the sacrificed Lamb of God (Jesus). These temple items, also found in the earthly temple, must have been familiar to the Seer, who was familiar with the Temple of Herod.

At times John is explicit in his mention of the heavenly temple,²¹ employing such phraseology as “another angel came out of the *temple which is in heaven*” (14:17; italics added), and “there came a great voice out of the *temple of heaven*” (16:17; italics added; cf. 7:15; 14:15; 15:5–8). Additional references in Revelation describe various aspects of the heavenly temple (see 4:1–11; 5:1–14; 8:1–5; 11:16–19; 15:1–8; 19:1–6; etc.), and the letters addressed to the seven churches contain temple esoterica (see 2:7, 10, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), or words intended to be understood only by the initiated, the inner group of religious persuasion. Esoterica may include passwords or special religious expressions.

Table 1:
Elements common to the earthly and heavenly temples

Earthly Temple		Temple in Heaven	
Description	References	Description	References
called "worldly sanctuary"	Heb. 9:1-2	called "temple in heaven" or "true tabernacle"	Rev. 7:15; 14:17; 15:5; 16:17; Heb. 8:2
seven-branched lampstand	Ex. 26:35	seven-branched lampstand	Rev. 1:12
trumpet	Ex. 19:13, 16, 19	trumpet	Rev. 8:2, 6
altar of sacrifice	Ex. 27:1-2; 39:39	altar of sacrifice	Rev. 6:9
sacral vestments	Ex. 29, 39	sacral vestments	Rev. 4:4; 6:11; 15:6
altar of incense	Ex. 30:1-6; 39:38	altar of incense	Rev. 8:3-5
four horns of the altar	Ex. 30:10	four horns of the altar	Rev. 9:13
ark of the covenant	Ex. 25	ark of the covenant	Rev. 11:19
golden censer	1 Kgs. 7:50	golden censer	Rev. 8:3-5
incense	Ex. 30:34-36	incense	Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4
incense bowls	1 Kgs. 7:50; Num. 7:13, 19, 25, 31, 37	incense bowls	Rev. 5:8
throne (mercy seat)	Ex. 25:22; Lev. 16:2	throne	Ps. 11:4; Rev. 7:9; 16:17
Holy Place	1 Kgs. 7:50	Holy Place	Heb. 9:11-12, 24
Holy of Holies	Ex. 26:25-33	Holy of Holies	Rev. 4:1-10
high priest	Heb. 4:14	high priest	Heb. 9:6-7
priestly officiants	Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:17	priestly officiants ²²	Rev. 8:2-5
rites	passim	rites ²³	Rev. 4:8-11; 8:2-5; 15:1-8
24 priestly courses	1 Chr. 23:3-6	24 elders ²⁴	Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:8 D&C 77:5
cherubim	Ex. 25:18, 22; 1 Kgs. 6:23-28	four living creatures	Rev. 4:6-8; D&C 77: 2-3 (cf. Ezek. 1, 10)
worshippers	passim	worshippers ²⁵	Rev. 5:11; 7:9; 19:6
sacrifice of lambs	Ex. 29:39	slain Lamb of God	Rev. 5:6

Differences between the Earthly and the Heavenly Temple

While the above table demonstrates a number of similarities between the earthly and heavenly temples, it should be noted that several differences existed between the two temple systems. For instance, the earthly temple possessed man-made, lifeless cherubim. These were replicas of the real living creatures that exist in the temple of heaven (see Revelation 4:6–8; D&C 77:2–3; cf. Ezekiel 1, 10). The earthly temple was built by the hands of man, but the heavenly temple was erected through the workmanship of God himself (see Hebrews 8:2; Exodus 15:17). God visits his earthly temples (Hebrew *mishkânôṭ*, “tents,” “tabernacles”) for a time or a season, but he dwells eternally in his heavenly temple. The saints visit the earthly temple and worship God, having a hope for eternal life; but in the heavenly temple, exalted saints worship God forever. These are only a few of the differences, and others could also be listed. But the key is this: the heavenly temple is an eternal reality, while the earthly temple is temporary, designed to take us to the heavenly.

What Is the Significance of the Temple in Heaven?

Now that we have described the heavenly temple, it is appropriate to ask why it is significant. The following five categories help provide answers to this question: (1) The heavenly temple is the place of holiness par excellence, (2) the heavenly temple is the quintessential place of meditation, (3) the heavenly temple is the ultimate goal of the saints, (4) the heavenly temple is the place of ratification, and (5) the heavenly temple is the place from which revelation goes forth. Each of these categories will now be examined.

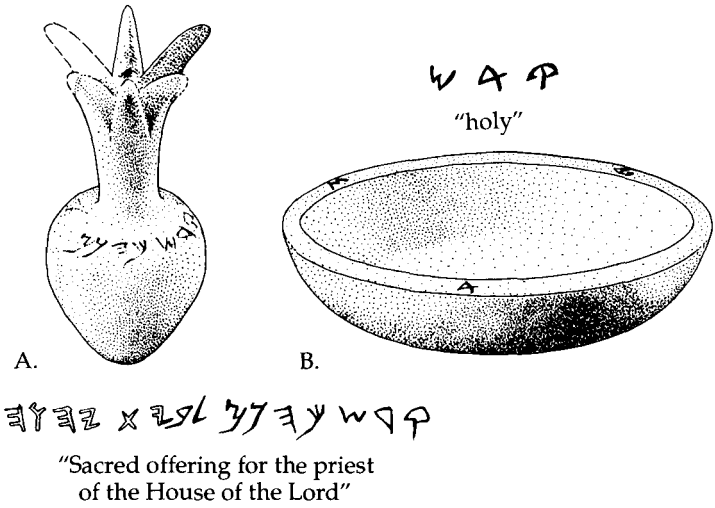


Figure 42. This small ivory pomegranate (A) from the time of Solomon’s Temple ornamented the top of a priest’s staff, possibly serving as a sign of office. The inscription proclaimed it as set apart for sacred use. The simple clay bowl (B) from Megiddo is also set apart by its inscription. Bowls of various materials were used in temple service (see Isaiah 22:24).

1. *The heavenly temple is the place of holiness par excellence.*

This is clearly seen in one of the principal roots from the Hebrew Bible that is translated with the English words *sanctuary* and *temple*—the word **QDŠ*, which has the basic meaning of “separation” or “withdrawal” of sacred entities from profane things.²⁶ In its different verbal forms, **QDŠ* denotes something that is “holy” or “withheld from profane use”; the idea of showing or proving “oneself holy”; the placing of a thing or person “into the state of holiness”; and the dedication or sanctification of a person or thing, making it sacred.²⁷ A nominal derivation of **QDŠ* is the masculine singular noun *qōdeš*. This labyrinthine term has reference to many aspects of the sacred,²⁸ all of which can be directly connected to its root meaning, the separation of the sacred from the profane.

A second biblical noun derived from *QDŠ is *miqdāš*, commonly translated in English as “sanctuary” or “temple.” The word is found seventy-three times in the Hebrew Bible.

The biblical scriptures leave no question that God requires his earthly dwelling places to possess a high degree of holiness, to be consecrated and set apart from the profanities of the world. If the earthly temple is holy, the heavenly temple serves as the very definition of holiness. Since God will not dwell in an unholy place (see Alma 7:21; 34:36; Helaman 4:24), one central purpose for a heavenly temple would be to serve as a holy place in which God and the saints will dwell forever.

2. The heavenly temple is the quintessential place of mediation.

The focus of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the Atonement, and the purpose of the Atonement is mediation between God and man. Many different aspects of the gospel in ancient times represented that Atonement—and the eventual oneness the saints would have with God in heaven—without actually being the Atonement. Thus, the law of Moses represented “a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things” (Hebrews 10:1); the Israelite high priest, who on the Day of Atonement administered the Mosaic law, served as a “shadow of heavenly things” (8:5); the earthly temple, as discussed above, represented a copy, image, or “figure” (9:9) of the true or real²⁹ temple in heaven. These three earthly elements of the gospel—the law of Moses, the high priest, and the temple—each pointed to the atonement of Jesus Christ and his subsequent ministry in the temple in heaven. The sacrificial ordinances of the law of Moses prefigured the sacrifice and crucifixion of Jesus, the office and ministries of the priestly

minister typified the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the earthly temple signified the heavenly temple.

As the earthly high priest entered the temple to make atonement for “the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins” (Leviticus 16:21; see also Hebrews 9:7), even so Jesus Christ, who is called the “high priest” (Hebrews 9:11), offered himself up for the sins of the world. Paul wrote, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others. . . . So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:24–25, 28).

In a unique and special sense, the Israelite high priest, while performing his duties on the Day of Atonement, acted as a mediator between God and Israel. Similarly, but in a complete sense, Christ the high priest entered heaven and made intercession for all of mankind (see Hebrews 7:25). Paul, in his lengthy comparison of the earthly and heavenly temples, declared that Jesus is the “mediator of a better covenant” (Hebrews 8:6), and “the mediator of the new covenant” (JST, Hebrews 9:15). Hence, when the earthly high priest acted as mediator, the earthly temple served as a place of mediation between God and man, while the heavenly temple serves as the true mediation place, with Jesus the high priest serving as mediator.

3. The heavenly temple represents the ultimate goal of the Saints.

The earthly temple is a microcosmic representation of the celestial temple. It is a miniature model, a preparatory edifice where worshipers practice and rehearse rites, looking forward to the moment when they will be permitted

entrance into the heavenly temple. In a most wonderful way, the spirit felt in the earthly temple—with its harmony and unity, its joy and peace, its purity and power—will be magnified a thousandfold in the celestial realms, where the throne of God is found. The Utopian setting of the earthly temple, where persons make consummate efforts to see eye to eye and to consecrate their lives unto a Godlike life, anticipates or prefigures the heavenly environment, where harmony and integrity are the rule.

4. *The heavenly temple is the place of ratification.*

The fact that earthly temples provide a sacred place for holy ordinances is well known. Conceivably, the rites and ordinances performed in the earthly temple will be ratified and sealed in the heavenly temple. Several scriptures suggest this possibility (see Matthew 16:19; 18:18; Helaman 10:7; D&C 1:8; 124:93). The following example illustrates the connection between heaven and earth. Note the relationship between the terms *earth* and *heaven*:

And verily, verily, I say unto you,
that whatsoever you seal on *earth*
shall be sealed in *heaven*;
and whatsoever you bind on *earth*,
in my name and by my word, saith the Lord,
it shall be eternally bound in the *heavens*;
and whosoever sins you remit on *earth*
shall be remitted eternally in the *heavens*;
and whosoever sins you retain on *earth*
shall be retained in *heaven*.
(D&C 132:46; italics added.)

5. *The heavenly temple is the place from which revelation goes forth.*

The scriptures make clear that the earthly temple is a

place where revelation is received. "Let this house [Nauvoo Temple] be built unto my name," the Lord said, "that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people; for I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world" (D&C 124:40–41). The Lord's people have typically received the word of the Lord while in the temple. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were the recipients of manifold revelations while in the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 110). King David's song of praise included a testimony of having a prayer answered in the temple: "In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple" (Psalm 18:6, cf. 3:4; D&C 109:77; 1 Kings 8:49). Directly related to this, the prophet Jeremiah revealed God's word unto the cities of Judah while standing in the temple courtyard (see Jeremiah 26:2).

Other prophets received important instructions from the Lord while in the temple. As mentioned above, the lengthy vision received by John the Revelator was received in the heavenly temple. Other examples include the experiences of Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Micaiah (1 Kings 22:19), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1, 10), Lehi (1 Nephi 1:8), and the seventy elders (Exodus 24:9). In addition, the so-called biblical incubation texts, or texts in which an individual makes ritual preparation in a sanctuary setting with the intent of receiving revelation,³⁰ disclose additional revelatory experiences in a temple setting. The texts include Jacob (Genesis 28:10–19; 46:1–4), Samuel (1 Samuel 3), Solomon (1 Kings 3), and Moses (Exodus 24:18; 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9, 18).

It is clear that revelation is often received in the earthly temple—and it is equally clear that the revelation originates in the heavenly temple, since that is the dwelling place of God. Once again we have the imperfection of the earthly

temple (where only some revelations are received) standing against the perfection of the heavenly temple (where all revelations originate).

God as a Temple

The heavenly sanctuary, like its earthly counterpart, possesses a number of significant features. It is a place of holiness par excellence, it is a place of mediation, it represents the ultimate goal of those who worship at the earthly temple, it is the place of ratification, and it is the place from which revelation goes forth. More important than this list of significant features, however, is the fact that God himself is a temple. A number of scriptures so testify. The Lord told Ezekiel that Jehovah would be "as a little sanctuary" to the scattered tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 11:16). The Psalmist wrote, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations" (Psalm 90:1; cf. Psalm 91:2). Isaiah stated that the Lord was as a "sanctuary" unto the righteous, "a stone of stumbling and . . . a rock of offence" unto the wicked (Isaiah 8:14). Similarly, in the New Testament, Jesus told the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:19–21). John, after describing the New Jerusalem, declared, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22).

How is it that God is a temple? As the temple of heaven is a place that serves the divine and eternal purposes of God, so does God himself have the attributes of that temple—his body and presence represent the ultimate place of holiness, he is the mediator, his godly status represents the ultimate goal of temple worshipers, he is the divine

ratifier, and finally, he represents the embodiment of truth and revelation.

We also are temples when we yield ourselves to the Holy Ghost and let him dwell within us (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; D&C 93:35). As we become pure and holy through Christ, we eventually join with the Godhead in a blissful union in the celestial world. There, dwelling in the heavenly temple, we join with God as a temple in perfect oneness. We then will receive unto ourselves the attributes of the heavenly temple: We will be holy through the mediation of Christ; we will be at one with God; we will have reached our goal of dwelling with God; all our righteous acts will have been ratified; and, as we live on a great Urim and Thummim (see D&C 130:8–9), we will have access to all light and truth. When we become inhabitants of God's heavenly temple we will more completely fulfill Christ's great intercessory prayer, wherein he asked the Father, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). Surely that is the final great purpose of a temple in heaven.

Notes

1. Victor Aptowitz, *The Celestial Temple as Viewed in the Aggadah* (Jerusalem: International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, 1980), 1.

2. A *midrash* is an ancient Jewish exposition of a scriptural passage.

3. 1 Enoch 14:16–18, 20, in E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 1:21.

4. H. C. Kee, "Testament of Levi," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:795.

5. The belief in a celestial temple was widespread among the Jews. Aptowitz, *Celestial Temple*, 1, states, "We find the concept among the ancient Babylonians and later among Christians and Moslems. The aggadic legends on the theme are scattered far and wide; they are found in both early and later sources."

6. *Tanhuma Vayakehel* 7, in Aptowitzer, *Celestial Temple*, 10.
7. TY *Berakhot* 4.
8. *Mekhilta, Song at the Sea*, 10:26–27, in Aptowitzer, *Celestial Temple*, 10.
9. See *Numbers Rabbah* 112:12.
10. See *The Lord by Wisdom*, quoted in Aptowitzer, *Celestial Temple*, 23 (additional references, pp. 21–22).
11. *Ein Ya'akov on Hagiga* 12b, in Aptowitzer, *Celestial Temple*, 21.
12. *Pesikta Rabbati* 33:150.
13. *Mekhilta, Song at the Sea*, 10:26–27, in Aptowitzer, *Celestial Temple*, 10.
14. TY *Berakhot* 4.
15. See TB *Hagigah* 12b; TB *Menahot* 110a.
16. See *Genesis Rabbati* 9.
17. *Tanhuma Naso* 19, commenting upon Jeremiah 17:12; Habakkuk 2:20; Isaiah 6:1; and Exodus 25:8.
18. 2 *Baruch* 4:3–4.
19. See Aptowitzer, *Celestial Temple*, 4–6.
20. “That the Book of Revelation is especially concerned with the Temple can be observed from a brief vocabulary count: John the Seer gives *naos* no less than a third of its forty-five New Testament uses; *hieron*, restricted in its New Testament use to the physical edifice, does not occur in the Apocalypse” (William Riley, “Temple Imagery and the Book of Revelation,” *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 6 [1982]: 88).
21. George B. Gray also believes that John plainly identifies the heavenly temple. He states that “the belief in a temple within heaven is expressed with all clearness” in the Revelation of John (*Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* [New York: KTAV, 1971], 164).
22. R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 164–65, discusses the priesthood in the setting of the heavenly temple:

The heavenly priesthood is an interesting feature of the Apocalypse. We have met the conception already in Revelation 7:14–15. That is to say, the faithful in heaven are in the posture of priests; compare the statement in v. 9 that they are “standing.” Although John is thinking primarily of the martyrs (7:14a), it is clear that he thinks of the new priesthood as including all Christians (1:5–6; cf. 5:9). This priestly service begun on earth is continued in heaven, and, as we shall see presently, in a profounder way. Its basis is

the priestly work of Christ on the cross; it is this that makes the faithful priests (1:5–6; 7:14). Ideally all Israelites were priests. . . . Those represented as priests in the heavenly temple are “from every nation” (7:9; cf. 5:9). Admission to the new priesthood depends no longer upon racial descent, but upon the blood of the Lamb (7:14f). Furthermore, those who comprise it are not simply priests, but high priests: they stand before the throne of God (7:9, 15), i.e., inside the holy of holies (cf. 22:3–4). In a similar vein possibly is the description of the faithful as dressed in white robes: white was the colour worn by the high priest when serving in the holy of holies (M. Yoma 3:6; 7:4), and John’s priest-angels are similarly dressed (15:6).

23. On ritual in the heavenly temple, see Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 160–64.

24. Regarding the connection between the twenty-four priestly courses and the twenty-four elders, Riley has written that the “number [24] especially is reminiscent of the twenty-four courses of priests who rotated Temple service and whose presence in the Temple had a certain representative dimension” (“Temple Imagery and the Book of Revelation,” 92).

25. The temple worshipers in John’s Revelation number in the millions. This is similar to an old Jewish work which states, “1,018 camps stand before the Shekinah in the temple in heaven to chant before him ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’ each day. In each camp there are 10,180,000 ministering angels, for they stand before the Shekinah in the temple in heaven” (*Sefer Raziel* 24a; cited in Aptowitz, *Celestial Temple*, 28).

26. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 871. Compare also the definitions of *temple* provided by Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 13–15; and G. R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 1:225–26.

27. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 825–26.

28. In addition to the temple, other aspects of the sacred connected with the Hebrew *QDŠ include God, his name, and his divine actions (see Exodus 15:11; Leviticus 20:3); holy places outside of the temple, including the city of Jerusalem (see Isaiah 48:2) and the land of Israel (see Zechariah 2:12); things directly associated with sacred places, such as the temple furniture (see Exodus 30:29; 2 Chronicles 35:3), the

altar (see Exodus 29:37; Deuteronomy 9:24), anointing oil (see Exodus 30:25), incense (see Exodus 30:35), priestly vestments (see Leviticus 16:4), and the bread of the presence (see 1 Samuel 21:5); persons directly associated with sacred places, such as the priests (see Leviticus 21:6) and the people of Israel (see Jeremiah 2:3; Psalms 114:2); and holy days and festivals (see Isaiah 58:13; Exodus 35:2). Of course, Deity is always the ultimate source of holiness in a temple setting—"The holy or the Holy One are simultaneously that which awakens fear and that which draws to itself"—as Sigmund Mowinckel has shown, *Religion and Cult*, trans. John F. X. Sheehan (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1981), 54–55. The work was originally written under the title *Religion og Kultus* (Oslo: Land og Kirke, 1950). For a scholarly definition and treatment of the concept of holy, see Rudolph Otto's classic work, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); and Roger Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, trans. Meyer Barash (Westport: Greenwood, 1980), 20.

29. On the definition of *real* in a temple setting, see John Lundquist, "What Is Reality?" in this volume.

30. For instance, "Moses, as an incubant, spent the night in the sanctuary (Exodus 24:18), offered sacrifices (Exodus 24:4–8), purified himself (Exodus 19:10–15), and washed his clothing (Exodus 19:10–15), thus fulfilling the four 'constitutive parts of the procedure' of incubation. In return, Yahweh revealed his law to the prophet" (Donald W. Parry, "Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God," in *BSAF*, 1:493). For an extensive study of dream incubation in the ancient Near East, see Robert K. Gnuse, *The Dream Theophany of Samuel* (Nashville: n.p., 1980).