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## Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary

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The Garden of Eden pericope (Genesis 2–3) contains a number of powerful symbols that are related to and represent archetypal depictions of subsequent Israelite temple systems. In a cogent manner, the Garden of Eden, as it is referred to throughout the Bible, Pseudepigrapha, and rabbinic writings, served as the prototype, pattern, and/or originator of subsequent Israelite temples, “a type of archetypal sanctuary.”<sup>1</sup> The garden was not a sanctuary built of cedar or marble, for it is not necessary for a temple to possess an edifice or structure; but rather it was an area of sacred space made holy because God’s presence was found there. Mircea Eliade has stated that the Garden of Eden was the heavenly prototype of the temple,<sup>2</sup> and the *Book of Jubilees* 3:19 adds that “the garden of Eden is the Holy of Holies, and the dwelling of the Lord.” This essay will examine these claims.

Eleven prototypical aspects of the Garden of Eden will be examined. They are

(1) The tree of life was located both in the garden and in the temple.

(2) Both the garden and the temple were associated with sacred waters.

(3) Eastward orientations played a role in the garden story and in subsequent Israelite temples.

(4) The cosmic mountain was symbolically affiliated with the garden and temple.

(5) The account of the earth's creation is closely connected with the Garden of Eden pericope and the temple.

(6) Cherubim, or heavenly beings, function as guardians of the garden and the temple.

(7) Revelation was an essential part of the garden and the temple.

(8) Sacrifice existed in the garden and in subsequent temple systems.

(9) Similar religious language existed in both the garden and the temple.

(10) Sacred vestments were associated with Adam and Eve in the garden and with the priesthood in the Jerusalem temple.

(11) Abundance was associated with the garden and the temple.

### **(1) The Tree of Life**

Much attention is given to the tree of life by the author of Genesis 2–3. It is referred to on three occasions. The first citation to the tree is recorded in Genesis 2:9, where it is stated that God planted “the tree of life in the middle of the garden.”<sup>3</sup> In this account the tree is a definite tree (preceded by the definite article, hence called “the tree”), and it is located at the center of Eden's garden. The tree stands opposite the “tree of knowledge of good and evil,” or the tree of death.<sup>4</sup> It is found in the same context as the river of Eden. The second and third references to the tree of life are found in connection with God's desire to protect the tree from the hands of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:22–24). We learn that Adam and Eve, had they been permitted to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, would have lived forever.

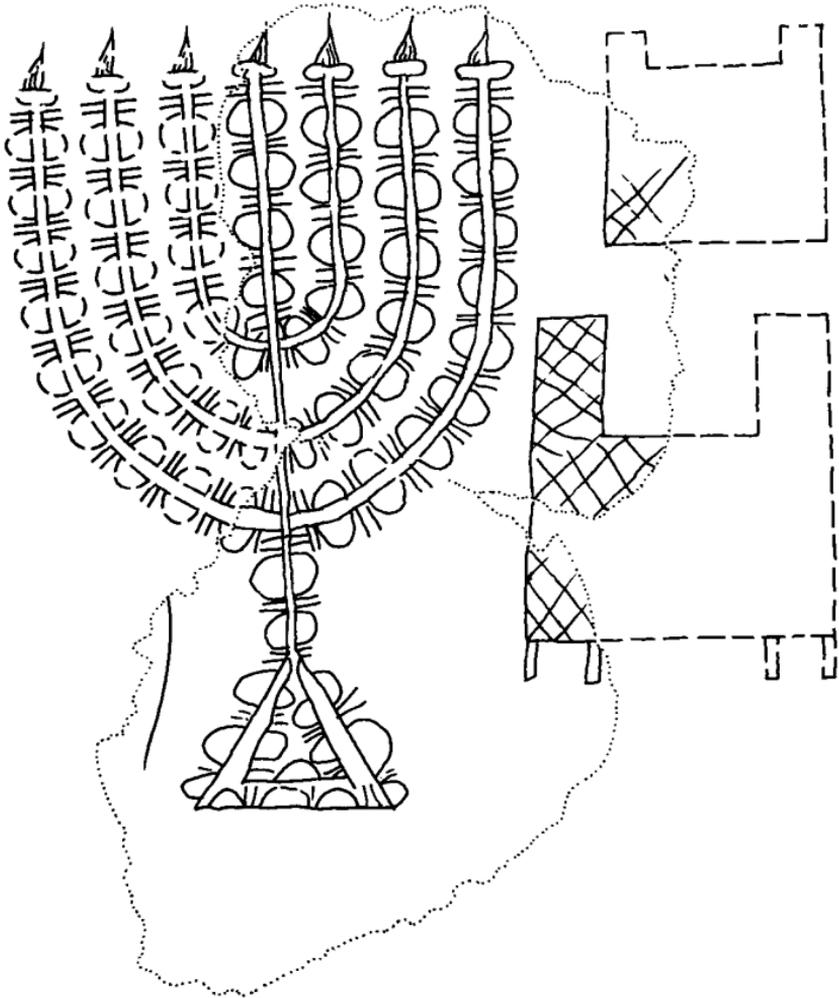


Figure 25. During the existence of the Temple of Herod, someone scratched this drawing into the wall plaster of a house in the Herodian quarter only five hundred meters away. Though crudely done, it shows the elaborate ornaments described as “knops and almond flowers” in Exodus 25:31–40. The objects on the right are thought to be stylized representations of the golden altar of incense that stood before the veil and the table of shew-bread.

To prevent access to the tree, God established cherubim and a flaming sword at the east entrance of the garden.

The continuity of the tree of life icon in Israelite temple

society is evident when one considers the nature of the tabernacle menorah or seven-branched lampstand. The menorah, as an important religious symbol for the Israelite community, is given due consideration in the Pentateuch. Its construction (Exodus 25:31–40; 37:17–24), consecration (Exodus 30:27; 40:9), placement in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:37; Numbers 8:2–3), and the manner of transporting it (Numbers 3:31; 4:9) are items of discussion in the scriptures. The sacred object was also located in the Solomonic temple (1 Kings 7:49), wherein a total of ten menorahs were used, all made of pure gold, five standing on the north and five standing on the south side of the holy place of the temple. The second temple possessed a lampstand, although the sources regarding this situation are unclear and often contradictory.<sup>5</sup>

That the menorah was a stylized tree of life is made clear in the description produced in Exodus 25:31–40.<sup>6</sup> The menorah must have had the appearance of a tree, possessing seven branches (a number of symbolic significance to the Israelite community) and a number of flowers (almond blossoms?). It may be concluded that the actual, living tree of life was present in the garden, and symbolic representations of the tree of life, in the form of lampstands, were present in later Israelite temples.

## **(2) Sacred Waters**

Several analogous scriptural narratives employ imagistic descriptions of sacral waters originating and flowing from the temple. The prophet Joel explicitly asserts that “a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord” (Joel 3:18). After providing a lengthy description of the future temple of Jerusalem (see Ezekiel 40–46), Ezekiel presents a statement regarding a river that would flow from the

threshold of the temple, through the courtyard, and out of the city of Jerusalem, finally reaching the Dead Sea. The prophecy states that the temple river will heal the putrid waters of the Dead Sea, bless fishermen with an abundance of fish, and increase fruit-bearing vegetation in the deserts. In short, the temple river will bless mankind with a paradisiacal earth (see Ezekiel 47:1–12). John the Revelator beheld a vision that harkens back to the original paradisiacal state of the Garden of Eden. Speaking of the temple in heaven, the seer describes “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1–4). The throne of God, of course, is situated in the Holy of Holies of the temple.

The book of Daniel describes a different type of river, also issuing from a throne. After receiving an eschatological vision, Daniel provides a description of the Ancient of Days sitting upon his throne of “fiery flame.” Flowing from the throne was a “fiery stream” (Daniel 7:9–11). Two pseud-epigraphic passages recall Daniel’s statement. The first, *3 Enoch* 36:1–2, reads, “A river of fire . . . flows beneath the throne of glory”; and the second, *1 Enoch* 14:15, says, “Beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire.” Enoch, similar to John’s and Daniel’s portrayal, describes the waters as coming from the throne, suggesting that God is the source of the waters.

The rivers of Eden, described in Genesis 2–3, represent the quintessential sacred waters. Originating, according to *3 Enoch* 18:19, “opposite the throne of glory,” these pure waterways separate into four rivers and go forth from Eden to water the entire earth (see Genesis 2:10).<sup>7</sup> It is evident that Eden’s sacral waters served as a model for subsequent temple rivers.

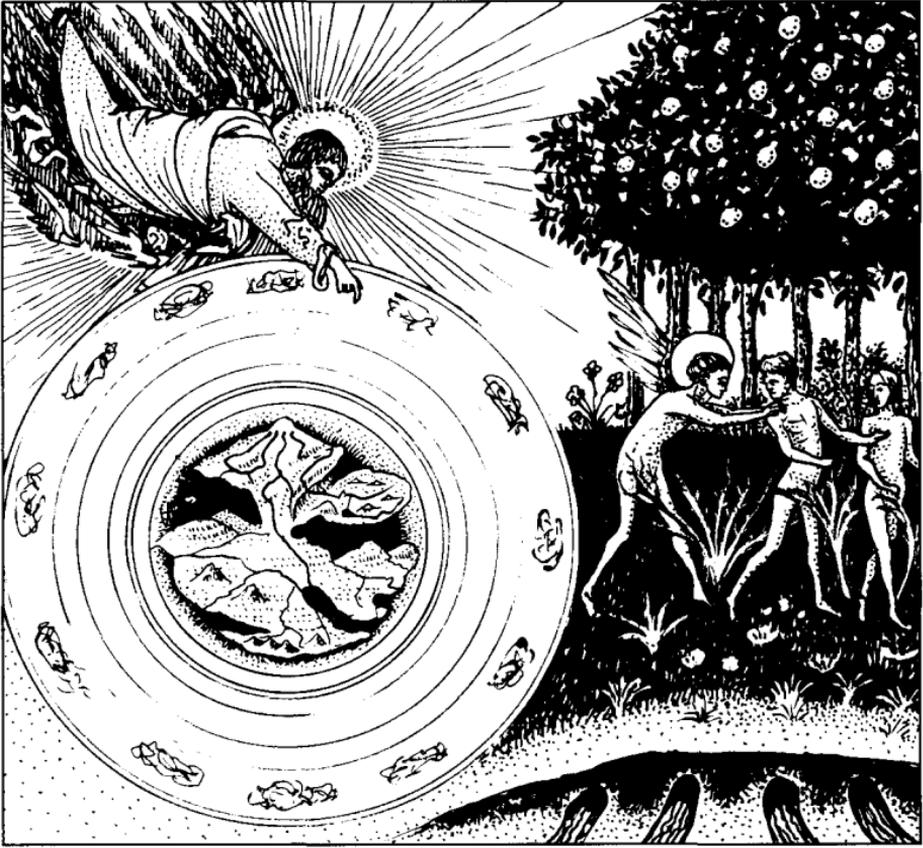


Figure 26. As late as 1450, artists like Giovanni di Paolo were still trying to reconcile biblical and classical models of the universe. On the left, God sets the rainbow-colored spheres with the Zodiac in gold spinning round the island earth with the mountain of God at the top. The four "heads" of the rivers of Paradise occur twice; once on the left at the mountaintop where they flow down to water the whole earth and again on the right under the feet of Adam and Eve as the angel firmly pushes them out of Eden.

### (3) Eastward Orientation

Spatial orientation played a vital role in the architectural setting of ancient Near Eastern temples.<sup>8</sup> So too, the Mosaic tabernacle and the temples of Jerusalem were directionally situated so that the entrance of the tabernacle or temple faced eastward. The Garden of Eden, possessing a number

of templelike qualities, produced the prototypical pattern for subsequent Israelite temple orientation.<sup>9</sup> East appears to be *the* direction of import in Eden. Three biblical statements reveal a concern for orientation in Eden:<sup>10</sup>

(1) The fact that God planted the garden in the east section of Eden (see Genesis 2:8) suggests a primacy for the direction. Although the purpose for this location in Eden is not explicitly stated, it is generally accepted by scholars that east, possessing a number of symbolic meanings, is the sacred direction in Israelite religion.

(2) The second designation of “east” in the garden pericope is mentioned in connection with the four rivers of Eden. It is likely that the four rivers of Eden (see Genesis 2:10–14)<sup>11</sup> flowed outward from Eden toward the four cardinal directions—north, east, south, and west. Eden is depicted as being established at the center of the four rivers, perhaps providing the water source for the four rivers. The etymological meaning of the word *templum* (English “temple”)<sup>12</sup> has a direct connection with the four cardinal directions, a concept that has been well established by a number of authors.<sup>13</sup> Of special note in the narrative description of the rivers is that all four rivers are mentioned by name—Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, Euphrates—but only one of the four directions is mentioned by name. River number three flowed eastward, writes the author of Genesis. The directional flow of the other three rivers is unknown.

(3) Once more *east* takes a prominent position in the garden story. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, God placed cherubim and a flaming sword at “the east of the garden of Eden” (Genesis 3:24; Alma 12:21) to prevent the fallen couple from an unauthorized return to the garden. This celestial blockade suggests that there existed an entrance to the garden established at the east end

of the garden. If no such entrance existed, then why would a blockade be necessary? Or, if other entrances were found to the garden, then why did God not establish cherubim and swords at other locations around the garden? Once more the eastward orientation of the Garden of Eden parallels the eastward orientation of the Mosaic tabernacle and Jerusalem temples, having entrances at the east.

#### **(4) Cosmic Mountain**

Every Near Eastern temple symbolically recalls a mountain,<sup>14</sup> but the first temple complex (i.e., the Garden of Eden) possessed a mountain in actuality. The biblical Garden of Eden account alludes to the presence of a mountain. Be it remembered that a river originated in Eden that divided into four heads, and flowed outward (i.e., downward) into the four parts of the world. Assuming that the natural laws of gravitation were in effect during this primordial era, the rivers of Eden would have flowed downward, suggesting that Eden was located at an elevation higher (i.e., a mountain) than surrounding territories.

Placing assumptions aside, however, biblical evidence delineates a mountain in Eden. In Ezekiel 28:11–16 the king of Tyre is metaphorically compared to Adam. The king is told: “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God. . . . Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . Thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God” (vv. 13–16). The terms “garden of God,” “Eden,” and “cherub” and the concept of sin are express Edenic themes found in Genesis 2–3. Ezekiel employs Edenic typology, explaining that Tyre (Adam) was perfect while in the Garden of

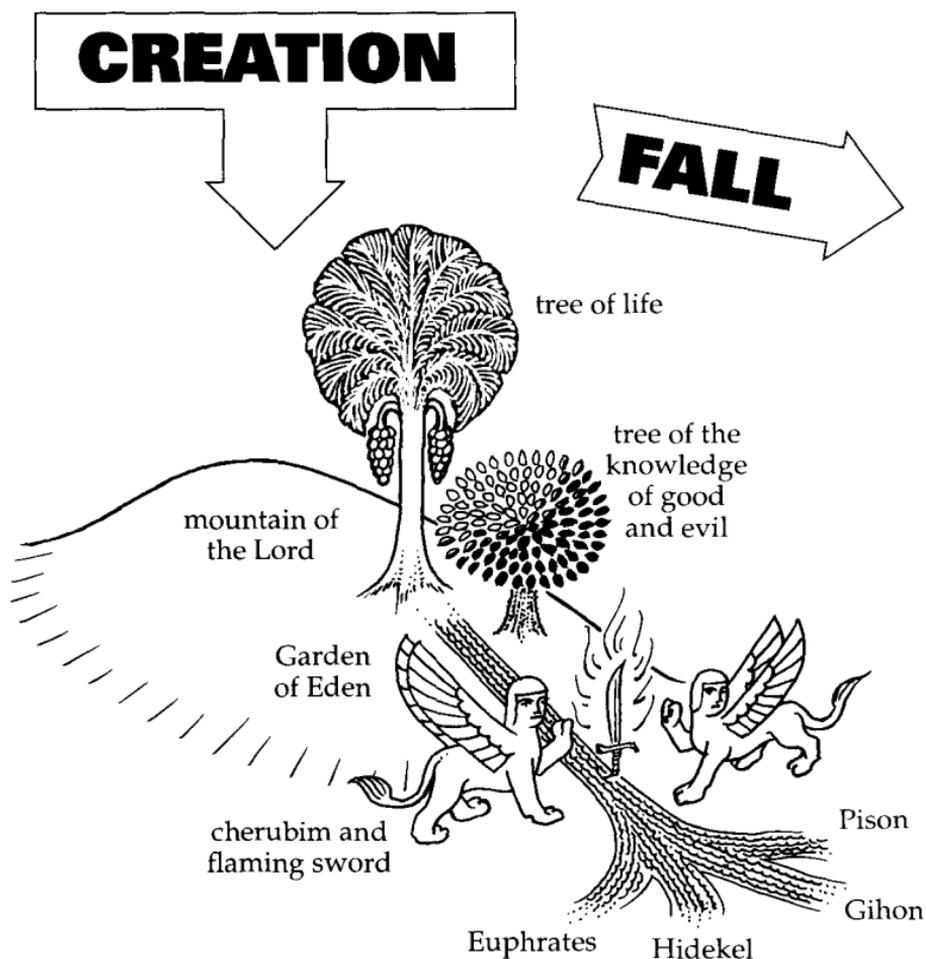
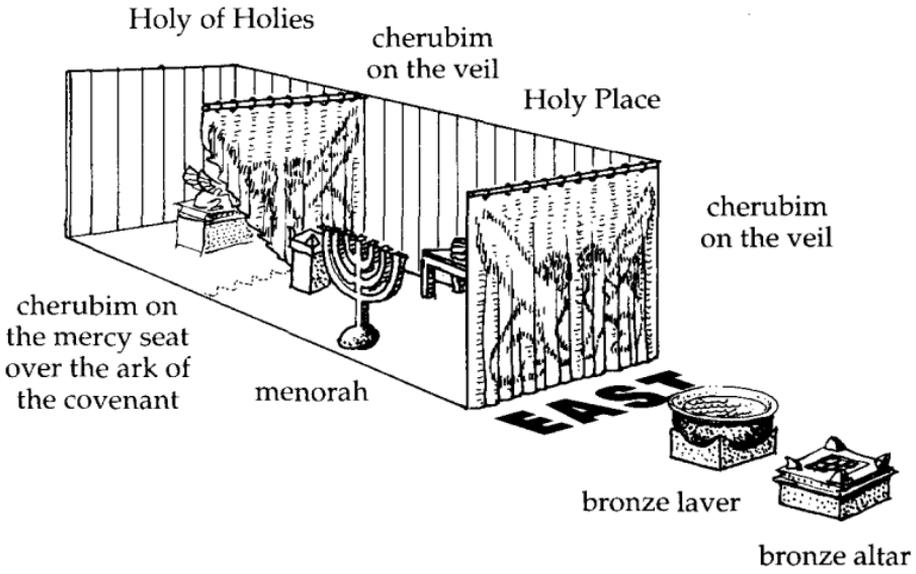


Figure 27. This schematic drawing attempts to depict the sacred landscape of Genesis in simplified form. The first land to arise from the waters became the Mountain of the Lord, where the Lord created Adam. It is from this divine center that creation begins and extends out in all directions. The Hebrew for *east* means “faceward or frontward”; thus, driving Adam from before his face is part of the continuing eastward movement (see Alma 42:2).

# ← ATONEMENT



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.

Eden, was anointed, and for a period of time dwelt on the mountain of God. But he sinned and was thrown from the mountain, or cast from the temple, since no unclean thing was allowed in the temple. Important for our purposes is the notion that a mountain existed in Eden.

Pseudepigraphic *1 Enoch* 18:6–12, 24–25 provides a description of the mountains in Eden. During a panoramic vision of paradise, Enoch beheld several extraordinary mountains. All of them were “dignified and glorious” and made of precious and ethereal stones. And, more importantly, the mountains (which were in groups of three) were not arranged across the horizon as are the typical adjacent-type mountains. Rather, Enoch noticed that the mountains were stacked three high, one on top of the other, escalating heavenward. The mountains “were pressing into heaven like the throne of God” and reached skyward “where the heavens come together.” This idea of mountains one on top of the other, or three high, is the apotheosis of “successive ascension toward heaven.”<sup>15</sup>

These concepts hearken back to the ancient Near Eastern idea of the primordial mound<sup>16</sup> or the primordial hillock. According to the Babylonian tradition, for example, the Eninnu temple, which was built by Gudea, is representative of the primordial hillock that arose out of the chaotic waters (*apsu*).<sup>17</sup> Regarding the Egyptian view of the primordial mound, Lundquist writes that “in Egypt . . . all temples are seen as representing the primeval hillock.”<sup>18</sup> 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).<sup>19</sup> Identified as the consecrated

*topos*, the primordial mound represented order and definition amidst the unruly chaotic waters.<sup>20</sup>

From the rudimentary concept of the primordial hillock developed the idea of the cosmic mountain (i.e., the temple), with its careful delimitation, well-defined borders, and clear-cut spaces. The transition from a raw natural mountain to a synthetic physical temple edifice seems to have been quite natural. In the first place, temple buildings retained their distinct mountain character by being constructed of natural indigenous materials, many times coming from the mountains themselves. Persons who stood before the lofty components of the temple would naturally look heavenward, similar to one who stands before a striking mountain. In this regard the temple became "the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain."<sup>21</sup> More importantly, however, the temple building was constructed upon a mountain or hillock of known importance. The temples of Jerusalem (Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Herod's), all being constructed upon the identical mount, were part of a continuing tradition of sacred events that occurred there. What was once a sacred *topos* now became a sacred *topos* with sacral architecture superimposed upon it.

## **(5) Creation**

Significantly, the garden story immediately follows the creation pericope in the book of Genesis. As has been shown elsewhere in this volume, there is a direct connection between the creation of the cosmos and ancient Near Eastern ritual. Several scholars, including Weinfeld and Kearney, have noted the connection between the creation of the cosmos and the Israelite temple. Weinfeld juxtaposes the creation account (Genesis 1–2) with the chapters of Exodus that deal with the construction of the Tabernacle (see,

especially, Exodus 39–40), and then presents several points of comparison between the two accounts. He notes that after six days of divine creative activity, God rested on the seventh day. Similarly, after the construction of the Tabernacle, which also took six days, Deity rested.<sup>22</sup>

Carrying the point a step further, Fisher reveals that the temple of Solomon was built in seven years (see 1 Kings 6:38), precisely as the world was created in seven days. Fisher concludes that “one must speak of ordering the cosmos in terms of seven even as the construction of the microcosm must be according to the same pattern.”<sup>23</sup> Hence, it may be determined that the construction of the Mosaic tabernacle and Solomonic temple recall the formation of the earth. Just as chaos became organized and orderly, so the temple brings order and organization unto the world.

P. J. Kearney also draws a number of comparisons between the creation account (Genesis 1–2) and the Tabernacle pericope (Exodus 25–31).<sup>24</sup> Both God and Aaron brought forth light—God brought forth light unto the world (see Genesis 1:2–3); Aaron produced light for the Tabernacle precinct (see Exodus 30:1–8). In Genesis, God created the seas and placed the *topos* within the waters; in the temple the bronze laver or molten sea was constructed according to God’s instructions and became part of the temple precinct (cf. Genesis 1:9–10 and 1 Kings 7:23). Kearney believes that temple building in the ancient world was a natural consequence of and built upon the creation of the world.<sup>25</sup>

One additional correspondence between the creation of the cosmos and the construction of the temple may be added to the list—Deity acted as overseer for both activities. At the completion of his creative work of the cosmos, God declared the work to be “good” (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25), and then God blessed and sanctified the seventh day (see Genesis 2:3).

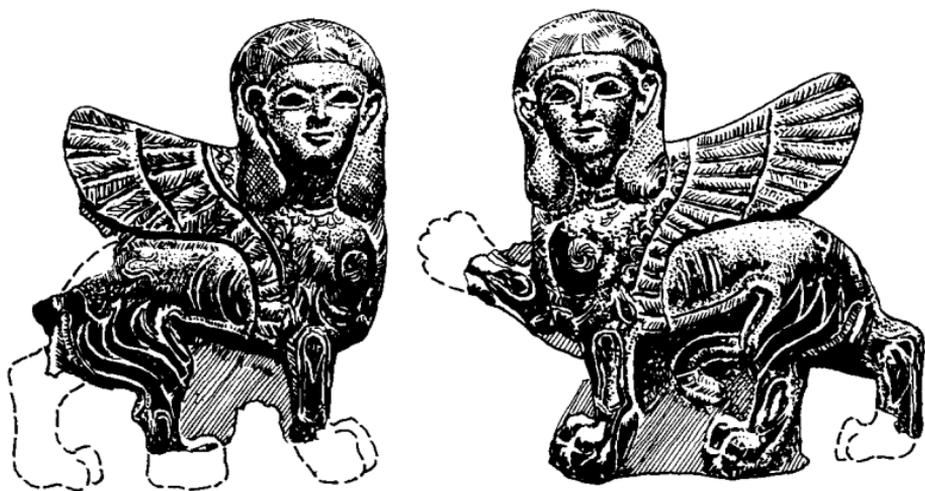
## (6) Cherubim

In the biblical writings the first mention of *cherubim* (Hebrew plural form of *cherub*) is found in the Edenic account. God “drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to [guard] the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24). Symbolic likenesses of the cherubim were later embroidered into the veil of the tabernacle (see Exodus 26:31) and carved into the walls, doors, and panels of the temple of Solomon (see 1 Kings 6:29–35; 7:29, 36).<sup>26</sup> In addition, two large cherubim were placed on either side of the throne of God in the Holy of Holies (see 1 Kings 6:23–28; Exodus 25:18–22; 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2). The cherubim were identical in size and possessed great wings that extended from one wall of the Holy of Holies to the other. Each cherub was made of olive wood, which was overlaid with gold. Ezekiel also mentions cherubim in his description of Jerusalem’s future temple (see 41:18–25).

A primary mission of the cherubim, together with the flaming sword, was to protect the tree of life so that man, in his unworthy state, would not partake of the fruit of the tree (cf. also Alma 42:2–3).<sup>27</sup> The locale of the representations of the cherubim in the temples held significance. They were located on either side of the throne of God (mercy seat), embroidered into the veil, and situated along the path that led to God’s presence. The cherubim functioned as divine sentinels, guarding the path leading to the presence of God, preventing the trespass by unauthorized persons.

## (7) Revelation

One of the many boons of the ancient temple setting was that direct communication between God and man was possible. The prophetic theological stance of the era was



A.



B.

Figure 28. These two bronze cherubim (A) from Northern Syria (c. 800 B.C.) were probably made for a divine or royal throne such as the one on this ivory fragment (B) from Megiddo. In Psalm 99:1, the Lord "sitteth between the cherubims." In traditional teachings, they represented the powerful servants of God, combining the intelligence of mankind with the strength of the lion's body and the freedom to move as an eagle (cf. D&C 77:4).

directional prayer, wherein temple worshipers directed their prayers toward the Jerusalem temple (see 1 Kings 8:42; Psalms 5:7; 138:2; Daniel 6:10; Jonah 2:4). Similarly, revelation was extant in the Garden of Eden, for "communication with Heaven was easy *in illo tempore*," and the meeting between the gods and man took place in actuality.<sup>28</sup> Communing with God was a simple matter for man, because man could climb the mountain of Eden, then the tree of life, and ascend to heaven.<sup>29</sup> 2 *Enoch* 31:2 states that in the beginning God gave Adam "open heavens" so that the first man could "look upon the angels."

Examples of divine conversation (or direct revelation) between God and man in the Garden of Eden abound in Genesis 2 and 3:

2:16 "and the Lord God commanded the man, saying"

2:18 "and the Lord God said"

3:8 "and they heard the voice of the Lord God"

3:9 "and the Lord God called unto Adam"

3:11 "and he [God] said"

3:13 "and the Lord God said unto the woman"

3:16 "unto the woman he [God] said"

3:17 "and unto Adam he [God] said"

3:22 "and the Lord God said"

Both Adam and Eve received numerous personal communications from God in the garden setting. After the Fall, however, the couple prayed at an altar, and revelation became much less frequent, and it took place in different forms and at different places.

## **(8) Sacrifice**

It is well known that animal sacrifices formed a considerable portion of ancient Israelite temple ritual.<sup>30</sup> Entire sections of the Bible are dedicated to the various types of

sacrifices, outlining the rules and commandments regarding the sacrifices. The numerous laws of sacrifice as revealed to Moses were not known in the Garden of Eden. However, the biblical text implies that sacrifice did exist before Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden. After God cursed Adam and Eve, he made garments of animal skins for the couple and then "clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). It is significant that God used an animal skin to clothe Adam and Eve. To acquire the skin, an animal had to be slain, and perhaps the animal was slaughtered as part of a sacrificial ceremony.

Is it possible that God himself performed the sacrifice? And do we know what type of animal was sacrificed? If God did not perform the sacrifice on behalf of Adam and Eve, who did? And if a lamb (or bullock) were not used for the coats of skin, then what type of skins did Adam and Eve wear? Certainly, they would not have used the skin of a camel or swine or other animal considered to be unclean to the later Israelites. Inasmuch as lambs were slaughtered by the thousands as part of the law of Moses, the skin of a lamb was the logical choice. Conceivably, God sacrificed a lamb, typically pointing forward to the moment when the Lamb of God would be slaughtered as an atoning sacrifice on behalf of all mankind. It is also noteworthy that God himself "clothed" Adam and Eve with the garments. Such personal attention by Deity to the matter of the coats of skins underscores the liturgical import of the garments. Candlish, who believes that animal sacrifice originated in the garden, has noted that since God "concerned himself with the materials" of the garments, something "higher and holier" was intended, some spiritual meaning and purpose for the skins.<sup>31</sup>

Apparently the animal sacrifice conducted by God in the Garden of Eden represented only one type of sacrifice,

for extracanonical scriptures identify sacrificial concepts with the garden. A passage from the *Books of Adam and Eve* implies that Adam and Eve practiced a form of sacrifice before they were cast from the garden. After the fall of Adam, the first man pled with the angels: "Behold, ye cast me out. I pray you, allow me to take away fragrant herbs from paradise, so that I may offer an offering to God after I have gone out of paradise that he hear me."<sup>32</sup>

### (9) Esoteric Language

Frequently the descriptive language of the scriptures regarding the Israelite temples recalls the Garden of Eden experience. Three specific phrases, found in connection with the Garden of Eden, are also used by later biblical writers while describing the tabernacle or temple. Each of the three phrases will be examined.

1. *Adam was told to "dress it and keep [the garden]"*

God commanded Adam to "dress" (work) and "keep" the garden (Genesis 2:15). Two Hebrew terms utilized in this statement, *‘ābad* (work) and *šāmar* (keep), are also found in descriptive statements having reference to the later Israelite temple system. For instance, the Levites were instructed to "keep (*šāmar*) all the vessels of the tabernacle" and "to work (*‘ābad*) the work" of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:8; author's translation; see also Numbers 8:26; 18:5–6). Noting these parallels, Gordon Wenham has written that "if Eden is seen then as an ideal sanctuary, then perhaps Adam should be described as an archetypal Levite."<sup>33</sup> *Genesis Rabbah*, a rabbinic commentary on the book of Genesis, saw a parallel between the garden and the temple. According to *Genesis Rabbah* 16:5, the phrase "to work and keep it" (Genesis 2:15; author's translation) points to an early sacrificial order.<sup>34</sup>

Special attention should be paid to the Hebrew term *‘abad*. Its root meaning in Hebrew is connected with the concepts of service and labor, both secular and religious. In a religious sense, the term expressly points to constructing the tabernacle (see Exodus 35:24), repairing the temple (see 2 Chronicles 34:13), and working with fine linen (see 1 Chronicles 4:21).<sup>35</sup> According to one Hebrew lexicon, *‘abad* means “to worship” or “to perform a cultic rite.”<sup>36</sup> During the late Second Temple period, the term was also associated with temple worship, but often mentioned in connection with a sacred tree.<sup>37</sup> Whether or not this concept recalls the sacred tree of life of the Garden of Eden is a matter deserving further study.

### 2. *God walked about Eden and the temple*

The method by which God moved about in Eden (see Genesis 3:8) and the tabernacle (see 2 Samuel 7:6–7; Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 23:14) was identical. The biblical authors describe God’s movement in both sacred places using the Hebrew *hithpa’el*, a verbal form of *hālak*. The masculine singular participial form, found only eight times in the Hebrew Bible, may be translated as “walking about” or “walking himself.” Thus, God both “walked about” in the garden and “walked about” in the tabernacle. Inasmuch as the same rare verbal form is employed in several statements regarding the temple, a connection seems to be implied between the Garden of Eden and the temple.

### 3. *In the presence of the LORD*

Menachem Haran has argued that the phrase “before the Lord” (*lipnê Yahweh*) indicates a temple setting. He writes that “in general, any cultic activity to which the biblical text applies the formula ‘before the Lord’ can be considered an indication of the existence of a temple at the site, since this expression stems from the basic conception of

the temple as a divine dwelling-place and actually belongs to the temple's technical terminology."<sup>38</sup> The phrase is recorded in Genesis 3:8, where it is stated that "Adam and his wife hid themselves from [before] the LORD God [*mippōnē Yahweh*]."<sup>39</sup> Again, identical language is employed at both the Garden of Eden and the Jerusalem temple.

### **(10) Sacred Vestments**

The vesting of temple worshipers and officiants with sacral vestments was customary in the Israelite temple system.<sup>40</sup> Entire chapters, such as Exodus 28–29, describe the sacred vestments to be worn by Aaron and his sons while ministering in the temple. The ordinary priestly vestments consisted of four parts: breeches, a headpiece, a girdle, and a tunic. The high priestly vestments consisted of eight pieces: in addition to the four vestments belonging to the priest, the high priest wore an ephod, robe, breastplate, and frontplate.

Adam and Eve, while in the garden, possessed two items of clothing that apparently held ritual meaning: the apron (see Genesis 3:7) and the garment of skins (see Genesis 3:21). The apron, perhaps made from fig leaves of the same tree of which they had unlawfully eaten,<sup>41</sup> no doubt held some sort of ceremonial significance for the first couple. The garments of skins were made by God himself (see Genesis 3:21), a fact that adds to the significance and import of the sacral clothing. It is quite likely that these vestments, belonging to Adam and Eve and obtained while in the garden, served as archetypes for later sacral vestments belonging to the Israelite temple system.

### **(11) Abundance and Prosperity**

While creating a list of motifs common among ancient Near Eastern temples, John Lundquist has determined that

one conventional motif found among temple systems is that “the temple is associated with abundance and prosperity.”<sup>42</sup> So, too, with the situation at Eden—prosperity and abundance existed there as standard conditions.<sup>41</sup> The garden was planted by God himself (see Genesis 2:8), and perhaps for this reason Ezekiel called Eden the “garden of God” (28:13). Interestingly, the word *Eden* means “luxury” and “delight.”<sup>42</sup> Thus Eden connotes a situation of abundance. Noteworthy also is the idea that the garden was deemed a sacral place ritually fit and ceremonially clean (a prerequisite for Israelite temples), pure enough for God to walk about in (see Genesis 3:8–10).

Furthermore, God planted “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food” (Genesis 2:9). Apparently all or many of the trees of the garden bore fruit, for God told Adam that “of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it” (Genesis 2:16–17). Also, God gave “every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat” (Genesis 1:29–30). The garden was watered by a river (see Genesis 2:10).

For later biblical prophets, the Garden of Eden became a byword for prosperity and fruitfulness (see Isaiah 51:3; Ezekiel 36:35; Joel 2:3). Each of these elements—God’s hand in the planting of the garden, his divine presence there, the fruit and herbs designed as food for both man and beast, and the river of water that provided a source of life for the plants—denote a place of abundance and prosperity.

## Conclusion

First and foremost, the Garden of Eden became sacred space because it was created by Deity, and his presence was found there. It remained sacred (like temples) because God cast out those who had profaned it (i.e., Adam and Eve). The Garden of Eden, as described in the book of Genesis and elsewhere, contained a number of features present in subsequent Israelite temples. These features include symbolic representations of the primordial landscape: the tree of life, the sacred waters, and the cosmic mountain. In addition, the Garden of Eden and those who occupied it, similar in many respects to the Israelite temples, possessed an eastward orientation, cherubim, and sacred vestments, and it was associated with prosperity and abundance. The garden was associated with divine revelation, sacrificial ordinances, and the creation of the earth. Finally, similar religious language described both the Garden of Eden and subsequent temples.

## Notes

1. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 86.

2. See Kurt Sethe, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: New American Library, 1958), 282.

3. Here I read the Hebrew term *bḏtōk* as “middle,” rather than the traditional reading of “midst” (see Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. Edward Robison [Oxford: Clarendon, 1977], 1063). Other sources, both primary and secondary, place the tree at the center of paradise (see, for example, Esther C. Quinn, *The Penitence of Adam* [University of Mississippi: Romance Monographs, 1980], 113; and Mircea Eliade, “The Yearning for Paradise,” *Daedalus* 88 [1959]: 257–60). Eliade has written much about the mythical center of the universe and its relationship to religion and temples. He places the sacred tree at the center or navel of the world, which becomes the center pole or *axis mundi* of the universe. The sacred tree is always found on the top of a holy mountain, and the two landscape features,

mountain and tree, connect heaven and earth, enabling mankind to commune with the gods.

4. On the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" as the tree of death, see Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, "The Tree of Life and the Tree of Death," *Religion: Journal of Religion and Religions* 17 (Oct. 1987): 337–53.

5. See Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah* (Missoula: Scholars, 1976), 36–38.

6. See also *ibid.*, *passim*.

7. Cf. 3 *Enoch* 19:4.

8. On the subject of spatial orientation, see John D. Wilkinson, "Orientation, Jewish and Christian," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116 (1984): 16–30; L. A. Snijders, "L'orientation du temple de Jerusalem," *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 14 (1965): 214–34; Hans J. Klimkeit, "Spatial Orientation in Mythical Thinking as Exemplified in Ancient Egypt: Considerations toward a Geography of Religions," *History of Religions* 14 (1975): 266–81; B. Diebner, "Die Orientierung des Jerusalemer Tempels und die 'Sacred Direction' der frühchristlichen Kirchen," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 87 (1971): 153–66; and Bezalel Porten, "The Structure and Orientation of the Jewish Temple at Elephantine—A Revised Plan of the Jewish District," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 81 (1961): 38–42.

9. The word *orient* has etymological ties to the term *east*. F. Landsberger has explained that "etymologically, 'orientation' signifies a turning toward the east" ("The Sacred Direction in Synagogue and Church," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 28 [1957]: 181).

10. In addition to the biblical implications that deal with the eastward orientation of the garden, two passages from the pseudepigrapha make connections to the same (see *Sibylline Oracles* 3:24–26 and 2 *Enoch* 30:13–14).

11. Cf. 3 *Enoch* 18:19; 19:4.

12. On the meaning of *templum*, see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. T. F. Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 485; Henry Corbin, *Temple and Contemplation*, trans. Philip Sherrard (London: Islamic, 1986), 386, first published in 1980 under the title *Temple et contemplation*. See also the linguistic approach to the word *templum* by Palmira Cipriano, *Templum* (Roma: Prima Cattedra di Glottologia Universita, 1983). Further, on the etymological relationship between the words *tempus* and *templum*, see Hermann Usener, *Goettername* (Bonn: Cohen, 1929), 191–93; Albrecht Blumenthal, "Templum," *Klio* 27 (1934): 1–13; Kurt Latte, "Augur und Templum

in der Varronischen Augurformel," *Philologus: Zeitschrift für das klassische Altertum* 97 (1948):143–59.

13. Wilhelm Kroll's statement in "Mundus" in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 24 vols. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1893), 16:1.563, demonstrates the connection between the four cardinal directions and the temple, "hence where the four regions come together." The intersecting lines, *cardo* and *decumanus*, are discussed in Werner Müller, *Die heilige Stadt, Roma quadrata, himmlisches Jerusalem und die Myth vom Weltnabel* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961), 9–21; Ellis Hesselmeier, "Decumanus," *Klio* 28 (1935): 133–79; and Stefan Weinstock, "Templum," *Romisch Mittheilungen* 47 (1932): 100–103.

14. The publications dealing with the cosmic mountain in the ancient Near East are extensive. See, for example, Richard J. Clifford, "The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament," *Biblica* 55 (1974): 443–46; Robert L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* (Chico: Scholars, 1981); W. Gaerte, "Komische Vorstellungen im Bilde prähistorischer Zeit: Erdberg, Himmelsberg, Erdnabel und Weltenströme," *Anthropos* 9 (1913): 956–79.

15. John M. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," in this volume, *Temples of the Ancient World*, 93–94.

16. Many modern authors have investigated the different aspects of the primordial mound. Maurice A. Canney, "The Primordial Mound," *Journal of the Manchester University Egyptian and Oriental Society* 20 (1936): 25–40, investigates remnants of the primordial mound tradition throughout the ancient and postbiblical Near Eastern world, including the Egyptian, Babylonian, Samaritan, Jewish, and Christian cultures (see also E. A. E. Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple* [New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969], 46–47, 59, and 266; and Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 84–86).

17. See Canney, "The Primordial Mound," 25–40.

18. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 86.

19. See *ibid.*, 86–87. Lundquist's summary proposition is correct that "the cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place that first emerged from the waters covering the earth during the creative process" (86).

20. See *ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 85–86.

22. Moshe Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the 'Sitz im Leben' of Genesis 1:1–2:3," *Melanges Bibliques et Orientaux* (1981): 501–12.

23. Loren R. Fisher, "The Temple Quarter," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 8 (1963): 41.

24. See P. J. Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Exodus 25–40," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977): 375–87.

25. *Ibid.*, 384–87.

26. Ancient Assyrian religion had the equivalent of the Israelite cherubim. Menahem Haran, "The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Symbolic Significance in Biblical Ritual," *Israel Exploration Journal* 9 (1959): 30–38, 89–94, identifies the cherubic-type beings that belong to the Mesopotamian religions (92–94).

27. For various approaches to the status and nature of the cherubim, see R. H. Pfeiffer, "Cherubim," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 41 (1922): 249–50; Édouard (Paul) Dhorme, "Les Cherubins," *Revue biblique* 35 (1926): 328–58, 481–95; and William F. Albright, "What Were the Cherubim?" *Biblical Archaeologist* (1938): 1–3.

28. Mircea Eliade, "Yearning for Paradise," 1959: 260.

29. *Ibid.*, 256.

30. On the meaning and symbolism of sacrifice in the Bible, see Baruch A. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord* (Leiden: Brill, 1974); and N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987). On the social aspects of sacrifice, see Gary A. Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in their Social and Political Importance* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 27–55.

31. Robert S. Candlish, *Studies in Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Kregal, 1979), 82.

32. *Books of Adam and Eve* 9:3–4; cf. 29:4; *Jubilees* 3:27–28; Exodus 29:18; 30:34.

33. Gordon Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, August 4–12, 1985 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986): 21.

34. The rabbinic commentators saw other connections between the temple and the garden. For instance, *Genesis Rabbah* 21:8 likens the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden to the destruction of the temple.

35. R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:640.

36. *Lexicon in Veteris*, 670–71, citing Exodus 13:5. Cf. also the use of *‘ābād* in Zechariah 3:8, where the messianic title *Branch* is found. *‘Ābād*

is an "Arab root meaning to 'worship, obey' (God)" (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:639).

37. According to Jastrow, the term *avodah* (from *ʿābād*) has reference to "space required for attending to a plant" (Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [New York: Pardes, 1950], 1036). My thanks to Robert C. Robbins, one of my Hebrew students, for pointing this source out to me.

38. *TTS*, 26.

39. The reading of the King James Version is also correct: "from the presence of the LORD God."

40. One of Lundquist's typological motifs includes "inside the temple, . . . worshipers . . . are clothed" (Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 97).

41. See *Books of Adam and Eve* 20:5.

42. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 97.

43. According to pseudepigraphic materials, during the pristine state found in Eden, all animal life could talk (see *Book of Jubilees* 3:28) and all beings enjoyed communion with God (see *Testament of Adam* 1:10; 2:7). Darkness was not known to its inhabitants, for they had perpetual light (see *2 Enoch* 31:2). Neither did they know pain, sickness, disease, or death, for the fruit of the vegetation offered continuous life.

44. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 726.