June 2003

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The Reconciliation of Adam and Israelite Temples

James L. Carroll

Modern researchers have shown that ancient temples were often associated with the creation, the Garden of Eden, and reconciliation. All three of these elements can be found in Genesis 1–3 if one assumes that Adam and Eve repented of their transgression in the Garden as many apocryphal elements attest. The methods of reconciliation that they record form a unifying principal for understanding the significance of the tripartite divisions found in Israelite temples which seem to have represented the heavenly throne of God, the Garden of Eden, and the fallen world where Adam and Eve worked out their reconciliation with God.

There are several elements that most temples of the ancient Near East have in common. These include such things as references to creation, secrecy, sacred ascent, waters of life, astral orientation, the dead, law and government, kingship, washing, anointing, clothing, feasts and communal meals, divination, fertility, and sacred marriage.1 It has been shown that many of these elements are also found in the biblical account of the Garden of Eden. Donald Parry and others have postulated that the Garden of Eden itself may have functioned as a prototype sanctuary that

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may have proved an inspiration for the later Israelite sanctuaries. Parry lists eleven main elements that the Garden shares with Israelite sanctuaries:

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.2

This list of similarities shows that there is a definite connection between the temples of the ancient world and the account of the Garden given in Genesis. However, numbers five and eight

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of Parry’s list took place either before the Garden of Eden was planted (Gen. 2:8), or after Adam was expelled from the Garden. There is no doubt that sacrifice could not have taken place within the Garden proper, as the Garden was a place specifically associated with the immortal status that Adam and Eve had before their fall. This means that because there was no death in the Garden, there could also have been no sacrifice in the Garden. Nevertheless both sacrifice and creation are closely associated with the account of the Garden of Eden even if they did not take place within the Garden itself. This implies that Israelite sanctuaries were meant to represent both the Garden of Eden, as Parry theorized, as well as those events that immediately preceded and immediately followed the Garden account.

That the Israelite temples are associated with the creation and Garden of Eden has already been clearly shown by others, but to connect the Israelite temples with Adam and Eve’s post-Edenic attempts at reconciliation with God requires that we first investigate the extra-biblical traditions regarding Adam and Eve’s reconciliation in general and then explore the possible connections with the Israelite sanctuaries. This information can then be used to create an overview of the general significance of the tripartite divisions found in Israelite sanctuaries, showing how they represented God’s heaven, the Garden of Eden, and the fallen world where Adam and Eve’s reconciliation took place.

Reconciliation

Israelite temples were primarily places of atonement and reconciliation. It was there that an Israelite went to offer sacrifices to be cleansed of his sins. It was there that, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest confessed the sins of Israel and transferred them to the heads of the scapegoat and the Lamb.

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Although it is clear that Israelite temples were associated with reconciliation, it remains to be seen whether this reconciliation was tied to Adam and Eve’s post-Edenic reconciliation. The penalties for Adam and Eve’s transgression as explained in Genesis are twofold: first, expulsion from God’s presence, and, second, physical death. These two penalties can be clearly seen in the Genesis account of Adam and Eve’s fall, in Genesis 3:24 and 2:17. In Romans 6:23 we read that “the wages of sin is death.” The Apocalypse of Elijah reads, “Now, as for the sinners, they will be shamed and they will not pass by the thrones, but the thrones of death will seize them and rule over them because the angels will not agree with them. They have alienated themselves from his dwellings.”

This clearly illustrates the two penalties for sin, they will “not pass by the thrones” but will be taken by death, and they cannot enter God’s presence because they have alienated themselves from his dwellings, i.e. the houses of God.

The rites of the temple were designed to symbolically reverse the penalties of physical death and separation from God that are found in Genesis 2 and 3. A lamb was slain as a substitute, dying instead of the sinner, like the lamb that was slain by Abraham instead of his son Isaac. Furthermore it was at the temple that once a year the High Priest reversed the second penalty and reversed Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the presence of the Lord. The scapegoat was cast out of the dwelling of the righteous, thereby being symbolically expelled from God’s presence in the place of Israel so that the High Priest, as a representative of Israel, could enter back into the presence of the Lord in the Holy of Holies. But did the rites of the Israelite temples mirror the path of restitution that Adam and Eve took?

We are used to thinking of Adam and Eve as representations of the first sin, but in Israelite and early Christian tradition they

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were also seen as a representation of the first repentance. From the biblical account alone it is unclear whether Adam and Eve repented after their transgression, but early Christian tradition supports the idea that they did. Irenaeus wrote: “[T]he Lord . . . made a recapitulation of a very comprehensive dispensation, and He sought after His own handiwork. Therefore, it was necessary for Him to save that very man who had been created after His image and likeness—that is, Adam.”5 There are four main elements of Adam’s reconciliation with the Lord that are found throughout the extra-biblical narrative:

1. Confession
2. Sacrifice
3. Ritual Washing
4. Resisting Further Temptation through obedience to heavenly instruction

These elements, especially numbers two and three, are clearly related to ancient Near Eastern temples. We will next examine each of these elements in turn.

Confession

The account of Adam and Eve’s confession of their transgression is found in the Bible itself:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the

garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. (Gen. 3:8–13)

Tertullian remarks that, “God did not actually curse Adam and Eve, because they were candidates for restoration. That is because they had been relieved by confession.”6 Thus Tertullian believed that God cursed the ground rather than Adam or Eve directly because of their confessions. These confessions formed the first step towards Adam and Eve’s “restoration” back into the paradise of God. It opened the way for the further process of reconciliation that followed.

The process of confession was also part of the rites of Israelite temples: “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness” (Lev. 16:21–22). Thus, in the Israelite temple rites, a method for bearing away the sins of Israel was provided through the confession of those sins by the High Priest, a proxy for the rest of the Israelites, over the scapegoat. This act symbolically transferred the sins of Israel to the goat, which then carried those sins away into the wilderness.

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6 Ibid., 6.
Sacrifice

Sacrifice is perhaps the most evident element of reconciliation with God in Israelite temples. Although the Bible records the sacrifices that two of Adam and Eve’s children offer, the Bible does not directly record Adam’s or Eve’s ever having offered sacrifice. There is, however, an indirect mention of what could have been a sacrifice by Adam and Eve, as well as ample extra-biblical traditions supporting the notion that the offering of sacrifice began with Adam and Eve.

One hint that the Bible gives concerning sacrifice and Adam and Eve is the coats of skins given to them by God. The coats of skins most likely came from a sacrifice that would have been offered immediately after, or as part of, their expulsion from the Garden. This sacrifice must have been offered either by Adam, or by the Lord himself.

In the apocryphal work *The Conflict of Adam and Eve*, Adam and Eve were so distraught after their expulsion from the garden that they attempted to commit suicide by jumping from a mountain. After God’s “Word” intervened by bringing Adam and Eve back to life, Adam took the blood from his attempted suicide and offered it upon the altar to the Lord. This was thought to represent Jesus’ eventual sacrifice by his own blood. According to this text, after their attempted suicide, Adam, Eve, and their sons offered sacrifice daily upon the altar.7

It is the Latter-day Saint Book of Moses, however, which provides the most direct account of Adam and Eve offering sacrifice after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden: “And he [God] gave unto them [Adam and Eve] commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was

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obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many
days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why doest
thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I
know not, save the Lord commanded me” (Moses 5:5–6).

In Israelite temple worship, various sacrifices were offered ac-
cording to a complex code. The details of this code are found
scattered throughout the Pentateuch. However the majority of the
requirements can be found in Leviticus. Sacrifices were offered to
 cleanse a leper (Lev. 14:2–32), after touching a corpse (Num. 19),
on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27–28), daily in the temple
(Exod. 29:38–42; Num. 28:24, 29:6; Dan. 8:11; Heb. 7:27), and for
various other ritual impurities and sins. The Pentateuch (known as
“The Law”) is so full of references to ritual sacrifice that Paul
wrote: “almost all things are by the law purged with blood” (Heb.
9:22).

Ritual Washing

The extra-biblical accounts are full of references to Adam and
Eve’s ritual washings in the course of their quest for reconciliation.
In The Life of Adam and Eve, we read of Adam’s and Eve’s at-
tempted reconciliation by washing. Eve was to stand in the Tigris
River up to her neck, while Adam stood in the Jordan River up to
his neck. Eve was to stand in the Tigris for thirty-seven days, while
Adam stood in the Jordan for forty days. According to the narra-
tive, this attempt failed because Satan again appeared to Eve and
deceived her, telling her that the Lord had forgiven her, so she left
the river early.8

The Book of Moses records that “when the Lord had spoken
with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was
captured by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into
the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out

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8 See “The Life of Adam and Eve” in vol. 2 of OTP.
of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man” (Moses 6:64–65).

Ritual washings also played an important part in the rites of the Israelite temples. The laver of water stood just behind the altar of sacrifice in the Tabernacle of Moses and served for ritual washings of both the sacrifices⁹ and the priests¹⁰: “And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses” (Exod. 40:30–32).

In the Temple of Solomon, the tabernacle’s single laver was replaced with ten brazen lavers. A much larger “brazen sea” was also added which stood upon the backs of twelve oxen. The brazen sea seems to have served the same ritual purpose as the smaller lavers that surrounded it. Although it was large enough, it was most likely not used for immersion washings. The lavers were too small for such a purpose, and there is no indication of the rituals changing between the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon.

Isaiah made special mention of these ritual washings. He first condemned Israel’s hypocrisy saying:

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. (Isa. 1:12–14)

⁹ See Lev. 1:9,13; 8:21.
¹⁰ See Exod. 29:4; 30:19.
Isaiah rhetorically asked the Israelites why they were performing the rituals of sacrifice, burning incense, and washing at the temple. He said that the Lord is not pleased with them because they were performing these ordinances without doing the things that they were meant to symbolize. It is helpful to understand the Israelite rituals that Isaiah is referring to. First the priest would offer a sacrifice and then raise his hands over his head in order to call the attention of God to the sacrifice that he had made.\(^{11}\) Isaiah picks up the rituals at this point when he says: “And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood” (Isa. 1:15). To this, an Israelite that was familiar with the temple rites might respond, “Of course they are full of blood, I just killed a lamb!” The Dead Sea Scrolls version of this text adds an important phrase that fills out the parallelism, “your fingers with iniquity.”\(^{12}\) The type of blood on Israel’s hands was not the cleansing blood of the sacrifice but was, rather, the condemning blood of iniquity.

Isaiah then proposes a solution to this dilemma: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes” (Isa. 1:16). The next part of the temple rites was for the priest to wash the blood from the sacrifice and from his hands at the laver. To Isaiah, this action represented more than just a ritual washing. Isaiah proposes that such a washing implies a cessation of evil, and a beginning of good works: “[C]ease to do evil; Learn to do well” (Isa. 1:16–17).

Isaiah promises that, if Israel does this, their sins will be forgiven: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye

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be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 1:18–20).

Resisting Further Temptation and Receiving Heavenly Instruction

In most of the post-Edenic traditions Adam and Eve are approached by Satan on numerous occasions. Their reconciliation to God depended upon their ability and willingness to reject Satan’s further temptations.

According to The Life of Adam and Eve, while Eve was washing herself in the Tigris River, Satan appeared and tempted her to end her washing early: “Then Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of angels and went away to the Tigris River to Eve and found her weeping.” Satan then told Eve that God had forgiven her and that she should come out of the river. Another version of this story is told from the perspective of Eve and records, “But the devil, not having found an opportunity with Adam, came to the Tigris River to Eve. Taking the form of an angel, he stood before her weeping, and his tears fell on the ground and on his robe. And he said to me, ‘Come up out of the water and be done with weeping, for the LORD has heard your request and the angels and all his creatures have beseeched God about your prayer.’ Thus he deceived me, and I stepped out of the water.”13 In these traditions, Adam and Eve eventually learn to resist such temptations, usually through prayer: “Adam cried out with great weeping and said ‘O LORD, my God, my life is in your hands. Remove far from me this my opponent, who seeks to destroy my soul.’ . . . And immediately the devil disappeared from him.”14

14 Ibid., 264.
Another common post-Edenic tradition balances Satan’s repeated temptations of Adam and Eve with the appearance of heavenly messengers from God who attempt to teach Adam and Eve to withstand Satan’s temptations. According to *The Apocalypse of Adam*, three heavenly beings came to teach Adam and Eve. In *The Life of Adam and Eve*, Adam tells his son Seth that “after your mother and I had been driven out of Paradise, while we were praying, Michael the archangel and messenger of God came to me. And I saw a chariot like the wind and its wheels were fiery. I was carried off into the Paradise of righteousness.”

Of our four common elements in Adam and Eve’s reconciliation with God, the resisting of future temptation through the appearance of heavenly messengers is the element that is the most difficult to connect to the temples of ancient Israel. However, as we have shown above, Isaiah equated washing, the symbolic act of cleansing, with a return to obedience. “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil; Learn to do well” (Isa. 1:16–17). Thus, according to Isaiah, the washings of the Temple represented more than just becoming clean from past transgressions. They also represented a turning of future actions from evil to good. Further, Adam and Eve’s revelatory experiences after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden can be seen as relating to Israelite temples because the temple was seen as the place of revelation par-excellence. It was in the temple that one went to converse with divine messengers.

Thus in the post-Edenic traditions Adam and Eve offered sacrifice, were symbolically washed, and then resisted further temptations from Satan by means of prayer and obedience to heavenly beings who appeared to them.

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16 “The Life of Adam and Eve,” 266.
17 See Samuel 3, Luke 1:8–22. Even the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai can be thought of as a temple experience as mountains can often be used as temples.
The Temples of Ancient Israel

The fact that the Israelite temples are associated with the creation, Edenic Garden, and Adam and Eve’s post-Edenic attempts at reconciliation has interesting implications for our interpretation of the very layout of Israelite sanctuaries. Israelite temples were primarily tripartite in form. Many of the texts associated with temple worship also evidence these tripartite divisions. Noah’s ark had three stories, Joseph Smith taught that there were three principle divisions to Jacob’s ladder, and tripartite divisions were set up at Mt. Sinai during the giving of the law. As Ernest L. Martin has written, “If we wish to know what God’s heavenly abode is really like, then we must understand the significance of the three general compartments in the earthly sanctuary.”

18 This teaching is especially significant because Joseph Smith not only says that there were three principle divisions to Jacob’s ladder, but he identifies them as the three kingdoms: telestial, terrestrial and celestial. He calls them “rounds” of Jacob’s ladder, indicating that he thought of the ladder as a type of spiral staircase ascending upwards into heaven (See Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1972] 305). This will be increasingly significant in the arguments that will follow because Jacob’s ladder is clearly a temple text. Jacob even names the place Bethel, meaning “House of God.” The word celestial means “heavenly” and we know that the Garden of Eden was a terrestrial sphere (See Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine [Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966] 494). Terrestrial means “earthly” and therefore most likely refers to the earth as it was originally created, and as it existed before the fall. We also know that the world in which we now live is a telestial sphere, or a fallen world. If these ideas are overlaid upon Jacob’s ladder it then becomes an image of an ascension from a fallen earth, back to the paradisiacal Garden of Eden, and finally back into God’s very presence in heaven. This is the very progression that I propose for the Israelite temples.

19 Ernest L. Martin, “The Temple Symbolism in Genesis” Foundation for Biblical Research Exposition 142 (1977). Martin’s interpretation of the tripartite forms of the temple of Solomon is the same as mine, except that Martin has the holy of holies as the center or “midst” of the garden, rather than as a representation of heaven. This forces him to place the tree of life in the holy of holies, which he does through an association with Aaron’s rod, while avoiding discussion of the candlestick, a more obvious representation of the tree of life.
The innermost of the tripartite divisions was the throne room known as the “holy of holies” or “most holy place.” Before the most holy place was the “holy place” consisting of a candlestick that represented the tree of life, the table of showbread which contained food offerings that were eaten by the priests, and was decorated (in the Temple of Solomon version) with palm trees and guarded by cherubim depicted all along the walls. These areas were surrounded by an outer courtyard. This courtyard was dominated by two main features, the laver (or brazen sea in the later temples) and the altar of sacrifice.

We know that the temple is associated with the creation (Gen. 1–2) and Dr. Parry has shown that the temple is associated with the Garden (Gen. 2–3).20 We have here shown that the temple is also associated with the reconciliation of Adam and Eve after their expulsion from the Garden. One possible interpretation of the three rooms of the Israelite sanctuaries is therefore to take the most holy place as a depiction of God’s throne, and the creation of the world, with the holy place representing the Garden of Eden, and the courtyard representing the reconciliation of Adam and Eve.

**Courtyard**

Of those elements of reconciliation that can be seen in architectural form in the Israelite temple, all the parallels are contained in one of the tripartite divisions, namely the courtyard. It was in the courtyard that sacrifice was offered, and it was in the courtyard that the high priest confessed the sins of Israel over the head of the scapegoat (Lev. 16:21–22), and it was in the courtyard that ritual washings were performed. It thus seems that the courtyard repre-

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20 See Ricks, 118–125, and Lundquist, 83–117.
sent the fallen world in which Adam and Eve found themselves after their expulsion from paradise, and their attempted reconciliation that took place just eastwards of the Garden of Eden, as the altar and laver were eastward of the holy place.

The courtyard was primarily a place of reconciliation between God and Israel, and a place of ritual purification before entrance into the temple proper, which represented the Edenic state that was found in the Garden of Eden. Ritual purification before entrance into the presence of any honored personage, especially of a king or of a god, is quite common in the ancient Near East. For example, in the Egyptian tale of *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, the sailor warns his captain to purify himself before his audience with the pharaoh. “Wash yourself, place water upon your fingers so that you can answer what is asked of you so that you can speak to the king with your heart in your hand, so that you can answer without stammering.”

The temple liturgy at Karnak is unique in that we have a papyrus text describing the rituals to be performed by the priest in his daily service. The ritual at Abydos, on the other hand, is reconstructed from the texts carved on the walls of the temple itself. The first few rites in the Karnak version are not found on the walls of the temple at Abydos. One possible explanation for this is that these rites were all performed before one enters the temple, and since what is on the walls parallels what was done in that room of the temple, it would make sense that the Abydos version would have no mention of the rites that were performed before entering into the temple itself. These first rituals include liturgies for lighting a lamp that would be used to light the

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21 *The Shipwrecked Sailor*. This and all subsequent Egyptian translations are results of NE LG 511R from fall and winter semesters of the 2002-2003 school year. For an interesting translation of this text, see John L. Foster in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2001), 9.
priest’s way into the temple, and for purification by burning incense, and for sacred washings that were performed before the priest’s entrance into the temple proper.\(^{22}\) Further evidence for ritual washings before entrance into the temple is supplied by the two wells for water that are located in the first court of the temple at Abydos.

Like the two wells that were located in the first courtyard of the temple at Abydos, the Israelite laver represented sacred waters and was used for sacred washings. The Garden of Eden was also associated with sacred rivers of water (Gen. 2:10–14). Upon first inspection this similarity tends to associate the courtyard with the Garden of Eden rather than with the fallen world. However, although these rivers flowed from the Garden itself, they also flowed forth from the Garden to water the whole earth. It was Adam and Eve’s ritual use of these rivers for washing after their expulsion from the Garden that interests us in our evaluation of the symbolism of the tripartite divisions. It is in the courtyard that sacred waters are used for washing, and it was after Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden that ritual washings in rivers took place.

The offering of sacrifice is one of the most common practices

\(^{22}\) That the incense was meant to purify the priest is obvious from the text: “I am pure by means of the Eye of Horus [the offering of incense] so that I can perform ordinances (with you) which are pure for Amun Ra, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands and his Ennead. . . . I, even I, am pure” (There is no published translation of this papyrus in English). See *Hieratische Papyrus Aus Den Königlichen Museen Zu Berlin*, ed. Wolfgang Müller, (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1901). However, the reference to washing is more subtle. The priest talks about receiving life, stability and dominion from two jars as protection before entering the temple: “[T]he Two Jars of Atum for protection for my flesh. Give (to) me, Sehmet the Great, Beloved of Ptah, Life, Stability, and Dominion about my whole body As Thoth Lives” (my translation). Many washing scenes depict an individual having water pored over his head from two jars. In these washing scenes the water is often drawn as signs for life and dominion. It is therefore extremely likely that this text is describing a ritual washing.

of ancient temple worship. According to the post-Edenic traditions, Adam and Eve offered sacrifice upon an altar after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The laver and the altar are placed to the east of the temple proper, just as Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden toward the east. That they were cast out to the east of the Garden's location can be seen by the fact that the entrance to the Garden was on its eastward side (Gen. 3:24). According to Joseph Smith, the Garden of Eden was located in Independence, Jackson County Missouri, while the location where Adam and Eve offered their sacrifice and called upon the Lord is in Adam-ondi-Ahman, approximately fifty miles northeast of Independence. In the Temple of Solomon version of the Israelite temple, the altar of sacrifice was placed to the north of the laver, and thus to the northeast of the Holy Place.

The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies

If the courtyard represented ritual purifications and reconciliation with the Lord in order to return to the Edenic state, then it follows that the Holy Place represented that Edenic state. This presumption seems justified, as nearly all of Parry’s elements of similarity between the Garden of Eden and the temple can be applied to the holy place directly rather than to the temple in general. The holy place was decorated as a garden, with its palm tree decorations and open flowers (1 Kings 6:29), which represented the abundance of a garden. The candlestick represented the tree of life that was in the Garden. The entrances to both the holy place and the Garden of Eden were on the east side. Cherubim guarded the holy place, and surrounded it, protecting the Tree of Life. Another similarity between the holy place, and the Garden of Eden is that the showbread was eaten within the holy place. This

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may have been seen as a representation of the fruit of the tree of life, and may have taken place within the holy place in order to parallel the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that took place within the Garden of Eden.

It is true that several elements from Parry’s comparison are not evident in the holy place. These include the sacred waters, sacrifice, sacred vestments, revelation, the cosmic mountain, and the creation. As we have shown, both the sacred waters and sacrifice were more strongly associated with the post-Edenic events than they were with the Garden of Eden proper. The sacred vestments of Adam and Eve were given to Adam and Eve after their fall and are associated more with post-Edenic sacrifice than with the Garden itself. The element of revelation took place in both pre, and post-Edenic accounts as well as within the Garden of Eden itself.

There are still two elements from Parry’s typology that have not been discussed, namely the cosmic mountain and the creation. These elements seem to be tied to the pre-Edenic account rather than to the Garden of Eden. They seem to have their parallels in the Israelite holy of holies rather than in the holy place. The holy of holies represented God’s throne room, with the Ark of the Covenant representing his throne. In Egyptian temples, “each temple was the continuation and reflection of the earliest mythic temple which came into existence at the beginning of the world, as the god’s seat on the First Occasion.” God’s seat was his throne, and it was around God’s throne that the angels sang and shouted at the creation of the world (Job 38:6–7). The holy of holies of Egyptian temples was “always higher than those rooms and halls in front of it, and the floor level drops again behind it. . . . But perhaps the basic reason for both the pedestal-type construction, and the changing floor level was a deliberate attempt to


26 Ibid.
reproduce architecturally the original ‘Island of Creation.’”26 The Island of Creation was the cosmic mound that first rose from the primordial waters of creation. The temple liturgy at Karnak repeatedly refers to the holy of holies as the heavens, or as the sky, the dwelling place of the God, where the statue of the deity sat upon its throne. In the chapter for breaking the seal that closed the door to the holy of holies we read, “[R]ecite: break the seal, open the sky. . . . I have not come to drive out the god from upon his throne, rather I have come to place the god upon his throne.” In the chapter for opening the doors to the holy of holies we read, “[R]ecite: open the doors of heaven.” Thus the cosmic mountain seems tied to the creation and to God’s throne in heaven, which is represented by the Israelite holy of holies.

Conclusion

The traditions surrounding Adam and Eve’s post-Edenic experiences revolve around their repentance and attempted reconciliation with God. Their reconciliation included confession, sacrifice, washing, and the avoidance of further temptation. These elements were woven into the architectural symbols of the Israelite Sanctuaries, where the Israelites sought reconciliation with their God. Sacrifice, confession, and ritual washing took place in the courtyard, while the holy place represented a return to the Edenic state before the fall. There the fruit of the tree of life could be had, and the effects of sin (death and separation from God) could be reversed. In the ultimate reversal of these effects, the High Priest, once a year, entered the Holy of Holies, reaching back to the very moment of creation, and communed with the Lord directly before his throne.