

## EARTH'S FIRST SANCTUARY: GENESIS 1–3 AND PARALLEL CREATION ACCOUNTS

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There is an emerging consensus among biblical scholars that the pre-Fall Garden of Eden (and its surroundings) is to be regarded as the original sanctuary on earth, a copy of the sanctuary/temple in heaven. The biblical evidence for this conclusion has been documented by scores of biblical scholars,<sup>1</sup> but the full range of evidence has not yet been succinctly

<sup>1</sup>For a representative list of other scholars who have provided evidence for this conclusion, see the following: T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008), 20-31; Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London: SPCK, 1991), 68-103; G. K. Beale, "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse and its Implications for a Biblical Theology of the Temple," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and S. Gathercole (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 197-199; idem, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 66-80; idem, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *JETS* 48 (2005): 7-10; Eric Bolger, "The Compositional Role of the Eden Narrative in the Pentateuch" (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1993); Richard M. Davidson, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," *JATS* 11, nos. 1 & 2 (Spring–Autumn 2000): 108-111; and idem, *Song for the Sanctuary: SDA Graduate Textbook* (sponsored by the Biblical Research Institute, forthcoming), chap. 6; William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning* (Homebush, New South Wales: Lancer, 1985), 35-76; Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 12-13, 111-120; Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (South Hampton, MA: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1989), 31-32, 54-56; Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 142-145; idem, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 78-99; S. Dean McBride Jr., "Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1–2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch," in *God Who Creates*, ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2000), 11-15; Roberto Ouro, *Old Testament Theology: The Canonical Key*, vol. 1, *Pentateuch/Torah* (Zaragoza, Spain: Lusa, 2008), 38-61; Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret, 1994), 126-151; Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 77-108; Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature*, CBET 25 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 111-138; John H. Walton, "Eden, Garden of," in T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 202-207; idem, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 178-192; Moshe Weinfield, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1.1–2.3,"

summarized and synthesized in a single publication. This article will attempt such a comprehensive summary of biblical evidence, with some concluding suggestions for synthesizing the biblical data.<sup>2</sup>

In this study we examine how key terminology, literary structures, and themes of Genesis 1–3 (and parallel creation accounts, such as Psalm 104, Proverbs 8, and Job 38–41), viewed within the context of a canonical biblical theology, support the conclusion that the Garden of Eden (and its surroundings) constitutes Earth’s first sanctuary/temple. By tracing the descriptive “echoes” between the biblical creation accounts (esp. Genesis 1–3) and the depiction of other biblical sanctuaries/temples, utilizing the insights developed in the study of narrative theology, biblical theology, and intertextuality,<sup>3</sup> we find evidence not only that the later sanctuaries are to be recognized as a new creation, but conversely, that the Garden of Eden and its surroundings are to be considered as Earth’s first sanctuary. I begin with the evidence related to Genesis 2–3, where Eden is explicitly mentioned, and then move to wider intertextual connections between Genesis 1 and the sanctuary, before and after the Fall. I also include connections between creation and sanctuary in other creation passages. In the interest of completeness, I will include all the lines of biblical evidence that I have encountered thus far in my research, some more weighty than others. Since it is crucial to recognize the cumulative force of the various terminological and structural linkages in establishing the intertextuality between the creation passages and sanctuary passages, all of these linkages will be included in the main text, while some of the more general thematic linkages will be relegated to footnotes.

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in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor; AOAT 212 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 501-512; Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19-25; repr. in *“I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood”: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, eds., Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumara (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399-404; and Ross E. Winkle, “Creation and Tabernacle, Sabbath and Glory” (paper presented at the Sabbath in Text, Tradition, and Theology Consultation, Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, Boston, MA, Nov 24, 2008), 1-16.

<sup>2</sup>Inasmuch as many of these lines of evidence have been recognized by several scholars, I do not attempt to isolate which scholar first pointed to each piece of datum, except in the cases where scholars have made unique contributions that may be specifically attributed to them. In this article I do not focus upon the large amount of extra-biblical data that has been brought to bear upon this subject; such summary is called for in another study.

<sup>3</sup>For an introduction to the discipline of narrative theology, see, e.g., Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); and Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987). For intertextuality, see, e.g., George Wesley Buchanan, *Introduction to Intertextuality* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994); Richard Hays et al, eds., *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009).

*A. The Eden Garden and the Sanctuary: Genesis 2 (Before the Fall)*

## 1. The Eden Garden: earthly and heavenly

The most explicit indicator that the Garden of Eden is considered a sanctuary/temple, is the occurrence of the term “Eden” (*eden*, which probably means “land of bliss, happy land”<sup>4</sup>) and its identification as a garden (*gan*; Gen 2:8), viewed in comparison with identical terminology in Ezekiel 28. In Ezek 28:13 the same two crucial words found in Gen 2:8 are used together again: the Covering Cherub is described being “in Eden [*eden*], the Garden [*gan*] of God” while he was yet perfect.

In separate studies, building upon the landmark dissertation of José Bertoluci,<sup>5</sup> I have set forth numerous lines of evidence supporting the conclusion that Ezekiel 28 moves from an earthly setting in vv. 1-10 to a heavenly setting of the heavenly sanctuary/temple in vv. 11-19, and that the latter verses describe (1) the work of the Covering Cherub in the heavenly courts of Yahweh before the rise of evil, (2) the Fall of this Cherub, and (3) the rise of the cosmic conflict. This evidence, too voluminous to be summarized here, comes from ANE considerations, terminological shifts, thematic contrasts, parallels with Isaiah 14 and other biblical passages, apocryphal and pseudepigraphical parallels, typological connections, and literary micro- and macro-structures.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>HALOT, 792.

<sup>5</sup>José M. Bertoluci, “The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub in the Context of the Controversy between Good and Evil” (Th.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1985).

<sup>6</sup>See Richard M. Davidson, “The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel,” in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Institute of Archaeology/Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum, 1997), 71-93 (esp. 87-89); idem, “Satan’s Celestial Slander,” *Perspective Digest* 1, no. 1 (1996): 31-34; idem, “Ezekiel 28:11-19 and the Rise of the Cosmic Conflict,” in *The Great Controversy and the End of Evil: Biblical and Theological Studies in Honor of Ángel Manuel Rodríguez in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Gerhard Pfandl (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), 57-69.; and Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 160-162. For special attention to the evidence that Eze 28:11-19 depicts the heavenly sanctuary, see Elias Brasil de Souza, *The Heavenly Sanctuary/Temple Motif in the Hebrew Bible*, ATSDS 7 (Berrien Springs, MI: ATS Publications, 2005), 278-292. De Sousa (ibid., 287-289) points to strong terminological links with the sanctuary motif: the stones worn by the Covering Cherub (v. 13), recall the stones worn on the breast-plate by the high priest of the Mosaic sanctuary (Exod 28:17-20); the clause “you were an anointed covering cherub” (v. 14) echoes the cherubim which “covered” the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (Exod 25:20); the verb “walking around” (Hith. of *halak*, v. 14), which, as will be noted below, has sanctuary connotations; the reference to “holy mountain” and “mountain of God” (vv. 14 and 16), also link with the sanctuary motif (see below); and the verb *khalal*

In those same studies I have also shown that the Eden Garden described in Ezek 28:13 must be the heavenly, not the earthly Eden, because the Covering Cherub was present there *before* he sinned, before he was expelled from heaven to this earth (Ezek 28:16-17; cf. Rev 12:7-9). Ezekiel 28 thus takes us back to the existence of the heavenly Eden sanctuary before the planting of the Garden of Eden sanctuary on earth.

Since according to the canonical biblical text, the heavenly sanctuary-temple (heavenly Eden) pre-dates its earthly counterpart (earthly Garden of Eden), it would be entirely appropriate for the narrator of Genesis 2 to utilize sanctuary/temple language and describe the earthly Eden as a sanctuary. Affirming sanctuary language in Genesis 1–2 is not a matter of reading illegitimately back into the first chapters of Scripture later descriptions of the sanctuary/temple (as sometimes claimed), but rather acknowledging that according to the canonical biblical trajectory the first earthly sanctuary (Eden and its surroundings) was created as the counterpart of the heavenly sanctuary.<sup>7</sup>

Just as the later earthly tabernacle in the wilderness was built as a copy (Heb. *tabnit*; Gk. *typos*) of the heavenly original (Exod 25:9, 40; Heb 8:5),<sup>8</sup> so earth's first sanctuary, the earthly Garden of Eden, was created by God as a copy of the original heavenly sanctuary, and this is confirmed by the narrator of Genesis 2–3 by using the exact same phraseology "Garden of Eden" as employed by Ezekiel in describing the original heavenly sanctuary.

It is of vital importance to emphasize that according to the canonical biblical record, before the entrance of sin in the universe the heavenly sanctuary did not function to solve the sin problem, but served primarily as a place of worship. Ezekiel 28 indicates the location of the heavenly

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"profane" (vv. 16, 18) refers to the profanation of the sanctuary (e.g., Lev 21:12, 23) and in v. 18 explicitly has the "sanctuary" as its object.

<sup>7</sup>Two recent studies which have rejected the conclusion that the Garden of Eden is earth's first sanctuary have reached that conclusion largely, in my view, because they have failed to recognize the link between the heavenly sanctuary in Ezekiel 28 and Genesis 2–3. See, Daniel I. Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale; ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 3-29; and Elias Brasil de Souza, "Sanctuary: Cosmos, Covenant, and Creation," *JATS* 24, no. 1 (2013): 25-41. The Achilles Heel of Block's argument, from my perspective, is his identification of the location of events describe in Ezekiel 28 as on earth and not in the heavenly sanctuary/temple (9-10). De Souza, while elsewhere in his published dissertation acknowledging that Ezek 18:11-19 is speaking of the heavenly sanctuary/temple (see de Souza, *The Heavenly Sanctuary/Temple Motif*, 278-292), does not bring this information to bear in his critique of Eden as a sanctuary (and actually appears to go against his own published conclusion that supports earthly Eden as a sanctuary, *ibid.*, 285-287, 292-293).

<sup>8</sup>See my dissertation, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Τύπος Structures*, Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Dissertation Series, vol. 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 367-388.

sanctuary/temple as “on the holy mountain of God” (vv. 14, 16), and the parallel passage in Isaiah 14 calls this mountain “the mountain of the assembly [*mo'ed*]” (v. 13). Before the rise of the sin problem in the universe, the heavenly sanctuary served as a place of assembly where unfallen beings gathered to worship and serve their Maker. This was the original function of the Heavenly Eden, the Garden of God.<sup>9</sup>

If the earthly Eden is a copy of the heavenly original Eden sanctuary, we may reasonably conclude that the earthly Eden also functioned as a sanctuary where Adam and Eve worshiped and communed with their Creator.

In light of this foundational insight from biblical theology, identifying the earthly Eden sanctuary with its heavenly Eden sanctuary-temple counterpart, we are able to recognize numerous other details of the earthly Eden sanctuary that correlate with the later biblical sanctuaries/temples (which were also made as copies of the heavenly sanctuary).<sup>10</sup> Details (especially distinctive sanctuary terms and clusters of terms) in the creation accounts that may not at first glance seem to be relevant, when viewed in light of the overarching sanctuary context, take on new significance as closely linking creation with sanctuary, and fill out our understanding of earth's first sanctuary.

## 2. Eastward orientation

Notice how the Garden of Eden was situated with an eastward orientation (Gen 2:8), as the later sanctuaries (Exod 27:13-16; 36:20-30; 38:13-18; implied in 1 Kgs 7:39 and 2 Chr 4:10;<sup>11</sup> Ezek 47:1).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The term for “sanctuary” (Heb. *miqdash*) is used in the OT to describe the heavenly sanctuary even before the entrance of sin (Jer 17:12; Ezek 28:18), and also is used to describe the worship function of the heavenly sanctuary after the rise of sin (Ps 96:6; 150:1), while the NT word *skēnē* (“tabernacle, tent sanctuary”) describes the “tabernacle of God” after the solution of the sin problem (Rev 21:3). Likewise, the Hebrew term for “temple” (*beikal*) is employed to describe the worship function of the heavenly sanctuary (Ps 29:9) and the Greek equivalent (*naos*) describes the temple of God after the end of the sin problem (Rev 7:15).

<sup>10</sup>Exod 25:9, 40; 1 Chr 28:10; for discussion, see Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 367-388.

<sup>11</sup>Five laver stands were placed on the “right” (NKJV) or “south” (ESV) side of the Temple, and five carts were placed on the “left” (NKJV) or “north” (ESV) side, and the Sea was placed on the right [south] side of the house, (lit.) “toward the east in front of the south,” i.e., “toward the southeast,” implying that the Temple front faced east. This is also implied in the placement of the two pillars in front of the vestibule of the Temple (1 Kgs 7:21); viewed from the rear of the building looking outward to its orientation, one is on the “left” (NKJV), i.e., “south” (ESV), and one on the “right” (NKJV), i.e. “north” (ESV), and thus the opening of the Temple faces to the east. Ezek 47:1 verifies that the perspective is looking from the rear of the temple outward: the “right” side of the Temple is explicitly stated to be to the south.

<sup>12</sup>For further discussion, see, e.g., Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 131-133.

### 3. Divine “planting”

God “plants” (*nata'*) the garden in Eden (Gen 2:8), just as he will “plant” (*nata'*) Israel on his holy mountain, the place of his sanctuary (Exod 15:17; cf. 1 Chr 17:9).<sup>13</sup>

### 4. A “garden/park/paradise” with plants and animals from the natural world

Thirteen times in Genesis 2–3 the space in Eden is called a “garden” (*gan*), which in context describes not a vegetable garden but a park, or even a [tropical] paradise (cf. the reference to this garden as “Paradise” in Rev 2:7), filled with lush vegetation and teeming with animal life (Gen 2:8-9, 19-20). The references to the portrayals of the natural world in the later sanctuaries seem to hark back to this Eden paradise. There is in the Mosaic tabernacle the seven-branched lampstand in the shape of an almond tree with flowers (Exod 25:33-34; 37:19-20; 1 Kgs 7:49; 2 Chron 4:7). Lily work appeared on the tops of the two free-standing pillars of Solomon’s temple, and representations of oxen, lions, and more lilies and palm trees in the laver (1 Kgs 7:26, 29, 36). Carved in the Solomonic architecture—on the walls round about, and on the doors—were palm trees and open flowers (1 Kgs 6:29, 32, 35). These artistic portrayals seem to be representative of the return to the lost Garden, the earth’s original sanctuary.<sup>14</sup>

### 5. The “tree of life” and the menorah

The tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:9) recalls the seven-branched menorah in the sanctuary, fashioned in the shape of a tree (Exod 25:31-36). Scholarly studies provide evidence that the temple menorah was a stylized tree of life.<sup>15</sup>

### 6. “In the midst”

The tree of life was “in the midst” (*betok*) of the garden (Gen 2:9), and this is the precise term for the living presence of God “in the midst” (*betok*) of his people in the sanctuary (Exod 25:8; Lev 26:12). In the Mosaic sanctuary and Solomonic Temple, the ark (symbolizing the presence of God on his throne,

<sup>13</sup>See, e.g., Ouro, *Old Testament Theology*, 49.

<sup>14</sup>See, e.g., Beale, *The Temple*, 71-72; Ouro, *Old Testament Theology*, 54-55; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 111-120. Cf. L. E. Stager, “Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden,” *Erlsr* 26 (1999): 183-194.

<sup>15</sup>Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*, ASORDS 2 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 169-172; cf. John D. Garr, *God’s Lamp, Man’s Light: Mysteries of the Menorah* (Atlanta: Restoration Foundation, 2001), 93-102; and Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 127-129.

Ps 80:1), was located at the exact center of the quadrangle of holy space containing the sanctuary building proper.<sup>16</sup>

#### 7. Flowing river

There was a four-headed river (Heb. *nabar*) flowing from the Eden Garden (Gen 2:10), parallel to the river (*nabar*) of life which was to flow from the sanctuary shown to Ezekiel (Ezek 47:1-12) and other prophets (Zech 14:8-11; Joel 4:18, 20-21 [Eng. 3:18, 20-21]) and from the throne of God as shown to John (Rev 22:1).<sup>17</sup>

#### 8. The mountain of God

The Genesis 2 creation account implies that the Garden of Eden was placed on an elevated position, i.e., a mountain: the four rivers flow from a common source in four different directions (Gen 2:10-14), and this seems possible only if the rivers are flowing down from an elevated (mountain) location. This comports with the location of the heavenly sanctuary on “the mountain of God” (Ezek 28:14, 16; Isa 14:13), and the location of Solomon’s temple as “the Mountain of the Lord” (e.g., Isa 2:3; Joel 2:1; Mic 4:2; cf. Exod 15:17) on “Mt. Zion” (e.g., Ps 48:2; Isa 4:5; Mic 3:12).<sup>18</sup>

#### 9. Precious metals of the sanctuary

The precious metals mentioned in the Eden narrative (“good” gold, bdellium, and onyx, 2:11-12) are mentioned again in connection with the wilderness sanctuary: bdellium, Heb. *bedolakeb*, only elsewhere in the Old Testament in connection with the manna (Num 11:7), some of which was stored in or beside the ark (Exod 16:33, 34; Heb 9:4); onyx, Heb. *shoham*, upon the shoulder pieces and breastplate of the high priest [Exod 25:7, 28:9, 20; 35:9, 27; 39:6, 13]; and “pure” gold for the articles of furniture and the utensils in the sanctuary (Exod 25:11, 17, 24, 29, 31, 36, 38, 39, etc.; cf. 1 Kgs 6:20, 21; 7:49-50).<sup>19</sup>

#### 10. “Building” from a “side”

According to Gen 2:21-22, the Lord took one of the man’s “ribs” (Heb. *tsela’*, lit. “side”) and “built” (Heb. *banah*) the woman. It is noteworthy that the word *tsela’* appears most often in Scripture in connection with the construction

<sup>16</sup>See, e.g., Ouro, *Old Testament Theology*, 49.

<sup>17</sup>See, e.g., Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 402; Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 129-131.

<sup>18</sup>For further discussion, see, e.g., Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 133-137. For extensive bibliography of sources discussing the link between mountain and sanctuary, see Alexander, *Eden to New Jerusalem*, 23, n. 23.

<sup>19</sup>See, e.g., Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 402.

of the Mosaic tabernacle and Solomon's temple.<sup>20</sup> This sanctuary allusion is strengthened by its association in Genesis 2 with the verb *banah* "build, architecturally design," also a key term in references to the construction of the sanctuary (Ps 78:69) and the temple (at least 30 occurrences of the verb in 1 Kgs 6–10 where the building of the Temple is mentioned). Thus the "rib/side" used by the Lord as the basis for the "building" of Eve is another of the numerous hints or echoes of the tabernacle/Temple.

### 11. Priestly ministry

When viewed in light of their sanctuary context, the paired use of the two Hebrew terms *'abad* and *shamar* in Gen 2:15 to describe the work of Adam and Eve in the Eden garden becomes highly significant.<sup>21</sup> According to this verse, the first couple were put in the Garden to "tend" [*'abad*] and "keep" [*shamar*] it. These Hebrew terms literally mean to "serve" and "guard" respectively, but imply more than the fact that Adam and Eve were entrusted with a responsible stewardship of serving and protecting their environment. These two Hebrew words, when used together elsewhere in the Pentateuch, and elsewhere in the whole OT in the setting of the sanctuary, consistently function as a technical expression for the service of the priests and Levites in the sanctuary (see Num 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:3-7). Thus, the use of this paired terminology in the setting of the Eden Garden sanctuary clearly implies a priestly function for the first couple in the Garden of Eden.

That a worship setting is implied in Gen 2:15 is also emphasized by the choice of words for "put" in this verse. When Moses first states that God "put" the man in the Garden (v. 8), he uses the common Hebrew word for "put," *sim* (used over 800 times in the OT). But in v. 15, where he delineates the specific task of humans to "serve" and "guard" the Garden, Moses uses the less common verb *nuakh*, which (in the causative *hiphil* form) literally means "to cause to rest." This is the term used in connection with God's resting on the Sabbath and human worship of God on that day (Exod 20:11; 23:12; Deut 5:14), and in particular this verb (or its noun form *menukhab*) refers to God's "resting place" in His sanctuary in the setting of worship (Num 10:36; Ps 132:8, 14; Isa 66:1; 1 Chr 28:2). By shifting from *sim* to *nuakh* in Gen 2:15, Moses is setting the tone for the worship-oriented interpretation of this verse, with Adam and Eve as priests serving in the Eden sanctuary.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Of the thirty-nine occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, the word appears nineteen times in connection with the tabernacle (Exod 25:12; 26:20, 26-27; 27:7; 30:4; 36:31-32; 37:3, 5, 27; 38:7), and seven more times in connection with Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:5, 8, 15 [bis], 16, 34; 7:3).

<sup>21</sup>Even though Gen 2:15 only mentions the man (*ba'adam*, "the human"), because the woman was not yet created, it is clear from the context that as soon as the woman was created, this assignment applied to her as well as the man, just as the command not to eat of the forbidden tree applied to both (see the woman's clear recognition of this in Gen 3:2, 3, using the plural for "you" to refer to both her husband and herself).

<sup>22</sup>For further discussion of Gen 2:15 and its implications for Adam and Eve as



Adam and Eve are portrayed as creative co-participants, spiritual intimates, yes, priests, in the sacred worship service of the Eden sanctuary. This is in harmony with the original (pre-sin) worship function of the heavenly sanctuary ("Eden, the Garden of God," Ezek 28:13), where Lucifer, adorned with the same stones as the high priest in the later earthly sanctuary, apparently served a similar function as worship leader (Ezek 28:13-14). And it is also in harmony with the heavenly sanctuary's return to its primary worship function after the windup of the cosmic conflict, with the redeemed serving as priests in that temple (Rev 5:10; 7:15; 20:6; 21:3).

From the very beginning, woman, as well as man, is welcomed into the priestly function in the Eden sanctuary, to be a leader in worship and to serve in other priestly functions alongside her male counterpart.

#### 12. The tripartite (or four-part) structure (with spheres of ascending holiness)

On earth after creation there were several spheres of holy space, in ascending degrees of holiness ("set apartness for special use"): (1) the larger area of Eden, (2) the garden planted eastward in Eden, and (3) the "midst of the garden" (Gen 2:8-9). These three spheres are seen again at Sinai: (1) the camp of the Israelites, (2) the place where the seventy elders went on the mountain, and (3) the immediate presence of God where only Moses went at the very top of the mountain.<sup>23</sup> They are repeated in the court, the holy place, and the most holy place in the later sanctuaries (Mosaic tabernacle, Exodus 26-27; Solomonic Temple, 1 Kings 6-7; Ezekiel's temple, Ezekiel 40-43).<sup>24</sup> One may even add a fourth, initial sphere, which in creation was the space beyond Eden. In the Mosaic tabernacle layout this fourth "holy space" constituted the encampment of Israel (the "holy" camp, Deut 23:14), in the Israelite temple it was the "holy city" of Jerusalem (Ps 2:6; Joel 3:17 [Heb. 4:17]).

#### 13. Wafting mist and incense

In the pre-Fall creation the mist rose up (Heb. *'alab*) and wafted over the "face of the ground" in the Garden and beyond (Gen 2:6), just as the smoke of the incense altar rose up (*'alab*) and wafted over the sanctuary and beyond (Exod 30:1-10). In Psalm 104, the one psalm which poetically moves day-by-day

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priests in the Eden sanctuary, see esp. Beale, *The Temple*, 66-70; Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 104-108; Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 22-27; Walton, "Eden," 202-206; and Richard M. Davidson *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 47-48.

<sup>23</sup>See Ángel Rodríguez, "Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus," *AUSS* 24, no. 2 (1986): 131-137.

<sup>24</sup>See Beale, *The Temple*, 74-75; cf. Menachem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford: Clarendon/Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1978, 1985), 158-165.

through the seven days of creation week,<sup>25</sup> the description of the second day of creation (v. 3) refers to “clouds” (Heb. *‘anan*, which may have formed as a result of the rising mist<sup>26</sup>). This same word is used for the “cloud” (*‘anan*) of incense that filled the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:13), and also is employed to refer to the pillar of “cloud” that covered the Mosaic sanctuary and camp in the wilderness (Exod 40:34-38).

### B. *The Eden Garden and the Sanctuary: Genesis 3 (Post-Fall)*

When we move to Genesis 3, and the post-Fall depiction of the Garden of Eden, there is further evidence of its sanctuary identity.

#### 1. God “walking around” and Adam and Eve “in the presence of the Lord”

The expression used to describe God “walking around” (*Hithpael* of *halak*) in the Garden (Gen 3:8) is a technical term for God’s presence in the sanctuary (Lev 26:12; 2 Sam 7:6-7).<sup>27</sup> Also in Gen 3:8, the phrase *lipne Yahweh* “before the Lord” is a technical term indicating a temple setting.<sup>28</sup>

#### 2. Divine trial judgment

When God comes to the Garden after Adam and Eve sinned, he initiates an encounter that constitutes nothing less than “legal process,” a “trial punishment by God.”<sup>29</sup> God begins the legal proceedings with an interrogation of the

<sup>25</sup>See Richard M. Davidson, “Creation (Issues of Origins) in Psalm 104,” unpublished paper for the Faith and Science Council, October 2010, forthcoming as a chapter in the volume on Creation in the Old Testament, published by Andrews University Press for BRICOM.

<sup>26</sup>The presence of clouds does not necessarily imply that there was rain before the Flood. To the contrary, Gen 2:5 states that “God had not caused it to rain upon the earth,” and the next verse states that “a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” See Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913), 96: “The world before the Flood reasoned that for centuries the laws of nature had been fixed. The recurring seasons had come in their order. Heretofore rain had never fallen; the earth had been watered by a mist or dew.”

<sup>27</sup>See, e.g., Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 400-401; Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 144.

<sup>28</sup>See, e.g., *ibid.*, 144-145, citing Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 26: “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>29</sup>Claus Westermann, *Creation*, translated by John J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1974), 96. So also, Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 49: “The scene [Gen 3:8-24]

“defendants,” and the defensive and accusatory responses by Adam and Eve (vv. 9-14) indicate the rupture in interhuman (husband-wife) and divine-human relationships that has occurred as a result of sin. Following the legal interrogation and establishment of guilt, God pronounces the sentence in the form of curses (over the serpent and the ground, vv. 14, 17) and judgments (for the man and the woman, vv. 16-19). Judgment—investigative and executive—is clearly present in the narrative, echoing the legal proceedings at the earthly sanctuary (e.g. Deut 19:15-21), and end-time trial judgment from the heavenly sanctuary (Daniel 7:9-10; 8:14; Rev 14:6-7).

### 3. Substitutionary atonement

The chiasmic center of Genesis 3 is found v. 15, and contains what theologians have called the Protoevangelium—the first gospel promise. The middle part of Gen 3:15 goes to the heart of this promise and shows that it is centered in a person. God tells the serpent: “*He* shall crush your head, and you shall crush *His* heel.” In a penetrating doctoral dissertation, Afolarin Ojewole shows how in this central verse of the chapter the conflict narrows from many descendants (a collective “seed”, Heb. *zera*) in the first part of the verse to a masculine singular pronoun in the last part of the verse—“He”—fighting against the serpent. Elsewhere in Scripture whenever the term “seed” is modified by a singular pronoun, it is a single individual that is in view. Thus here God promises victory centered in a person. “He”—the ultimate representative Seed of the woman, later to be revealed as the Messiah, shall bruise your head, Satan, and you shall bruise his heel.<sup>30</sup>

Visualizing this verse leads us to recognize the prediction that the Messianic Seed would take off his sandal, as it were, bare his heel, and step voluntarily on the venomous viper. Christians have long viewed this as a picture of the Seed voluntarily giving up his life to slay the serpent, which Rev 12:9 identifies as Satan. The Messiah would volunteer to consciously step on the head of the most deadly viper in the universe, the serpent Satan himself, knowing full well that it would cost him his life. For many Christians, this is a powerful portrait of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on our behalf.<sup>31</sup>

That this passage of Gen 3:15 was understood by Adam and Eve as referring to the coming Messiah, is suggested by Eve’s statement when she gave birth to her first-born son (Gen 4:1): “Now Adam had relations with

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becomes a trial.” Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1978), 117, likewise comments on this scene: “God becomes the prosecutor in a court of law.” Cf. Rick R. Marrs, “In the Beginning: Male and Female (Gen 1-3),” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 2 vols., ed. Carroll D. Osburn (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 2: 27-28, who describes Gen 3:8-13 as a “trial” and “verdict” followed by a “judgment” in Gen 3:14-19.

<sup>30</sup>Afolarin Ojewole, “The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Theological Study” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2002), 190-207.

<sup>31</sup>For support of these conclusions, see Ojewole, “The Seed in Genesis 3:15,” 207-213.

his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have gotten a man, the Lord' (NASB, margin). The Hebrew original, after the word for "man", has the Hebrew particle *'eth*, which can mean either "with" or be the sign that the next word is the direct object of the sentence. The translation "with the Lord" does not seem to make sense in the context, and in the original Hebrew there is no "the help of" as supplied by most translations. Therefore, the preferred translation is to take "the Lord" as the direct object, as in the margin of the NASB. The verse then indicates that when Eve gave birth to her first-born son, she thought that he was the promised Messianic Seed—the Lord. And Eve understood that this Messiah was to be not only human ("man"), but divine ("the Lord [Yahweh]").<sup>32</sup> Imagine her surprise when her hoped-for Messiah became a murderer. When she gave birth to Seth (meaning "appointed, substitute") Eve exclaimed, "God has appointed me another seed [alluding back to Gen 3:15] in place of Abel" (v. 25). She now waited patiently for the Promised One to come in due time, in the line of Seth. The first gospel promise takes us to the heart of the sanctuary service, with the substitutionary death of the Messiah, foreshadowed by the sacrificial system (which we note next).

#### 4. The sacrificial system initiated

The prediction in Gen 3:15 must be seen in connection with the sanctuary ritual implied a few verses later. In v. 21, the record states that God clothed Adam and Eve with skins—implying the sacrifice of animals. Many evangelical Christians see here a typological reference to spiritual covering (the robe of righteousness) provided by the death of the coming Substitute, the Messianic Lamb of God.<sup>33</sup> Instead of the fig leaves of their own works with which they unsuccessfully tried to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7-10), God covered them with the robes of a substitute. The blood of an innocent victim is shed instead of theirs (in parallel with the sin offering of Lev 4:29, the human sinners probably slaughtered the sacrificial animal themselves). Here is intimated the Messiah's substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of man. God instructs Adam and Eve in the rudiments of the sacrificial system of the sanctuary.

#### 5. Post-Fall priesthood

Before Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden, God "clothed" (*labash*, *hiphil* causative) them with "tunics/coats" (*kotnot*, pl. of *ketonet*), Gen 3:21, and these are the very terms used to describe the clothing (*labash*, *hiphil*) of the

<sup>32</sup>For support of this interpretation, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 43.

<sup>33</sup>See, e.g., Parry, "Garden of Eden," 141-143; Ouro, *Old Testament Theology*, 53; cf. Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 105-106.

priests—Aaron and his sons—by Moses acting on behalf of God (Lev 8:7, 13; Num 20:28; cf. Exod 28:4; 29:5; 40:14). The combination of God's "clothing" (*labash*, *hiphil* [causative]) with "tunics/coats" (*ketnot*, pl. of *ketonet*)<sup>34</sup> describes a divine conferral of status.<sup>35</sup> "The rare occasions where God clothes humans in the OT always concerned the dressing of priests. . . . Adam and Eve were, indeed, dressed as priests."<sup>36</sup> The unmistakable and consistent linkage within the Hebrew Bible of this pair of terms—"to clothe" (*labash*, *hiphil*) and "tunics/coats" (*ketnot*)—with the clothing of Israel's priests, viewed in the larger setting of the Garden of Eden as a sanctuary, clearly points to Adam and Eve's inauguration as priests in the post-fall world. By highlighting God's clothing of Adam and Eve with the skins of sacrificial animals (instead of the fine linen of the later priests), the final canonical form of the text further emphasizes the divine confirmation that Adam and Eve are to be identified as priests, for the skin of the sacrificial animals belonged exclusively to the priests in the Mosaic cultus (Lev 7:8). "By bestowing on Adam and Eve the skin of the sin offering, a gift strictly reserved to priests, the Genesis story implicitly recognizes Eve as priest alongside Adam."<sup>37</sup>

#### 6. Cherubim outside Eden's eastern gate

After Adam and Eve are expelled, in their sinful state they are no longer able to continue to meet with God face to face in the Garden. But according to Gen 3:24, at the *eastern* entrance to the Garden (as with the eastern entrance to the later sanctuaries), God placed cherubim (Heb. *kethubim*)—the beings associated with God's throne in the heavenly sanctuary (Rev 4:5; Ezek 1:10; cf. 28:14), and represented by cherub statuary in the earthly sanctuary with

<sup>34</sup>Note that the significant intertextual linkage is made with the convergence of *both* of these terms in a single context, not just their isolated occurrence separately. It is also the convergence of the *hiphil* causative of *labash* "to clothe [someone else]" with the *ketnot* that is crucial, and not the word *labash* occurring in settings when the person is putting on his own clothes.

<sup>35</sup>Robert A. Oden, Jr., *The Bible Without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 92-105 (this is his ch. 3, entitled "Grace or Status? Yahweh's Clothing of the First Humans"). Oden examines the use of the two key Hebrew words "to clothe" (~) (*labash*, *hiphil*) and "tunic/coat" (*ketnot*), both in Scripture and in the ancient ANE literature, and shows how these terms are regularly employed in contexts of status marking. See, e.g., Isa 22:21, where God marks the status of Eliakim by clothing him.

<sup>36</sup>Jacques B. Doukhan, "Women Priests in Israel: A Case for their Absence," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 36. A full awareness of the nature of canonical intertextuality is needed to be sensitive to this identification.

<sup>37</sup>Doukhan, "Women Priests in Israel," 37.

their wings covering the ark/throne of God (Exod 25:18-22; 26:31; 37:7-9; cf. 1 Kgs 6:23-28).<sup>38</sup>

#### 7. Post-Fall sanctuary

The cherubim are “placed” (Hebrew *shakan*), the same specific Hebrew verb for God’s plan to “dwell” (*shakan*) among His people in the sanctuary (Exod 25:8), and from the same root as *mishkan*, the Hebrew word for the Mosaic “tabernacle” (Exod 25:9 plus more than ninety other times in the Pentateuch). The reference to the “flaming” sword recalls the later biblical references to fiery flames that proceed from the heavenly throne of God in his sanctuary (Dan 7:9), and to the visible presence of God’s glory in His sanctuary which in later Judaism is called the *Shekinah* (from the same verb *shakan* as mentioned above).<sup>39</sup> The eastern entrance of the Garden, guarded by the cherubim with flaming swords, thus becomes the post-Fall sanctuary, where the Shekinah glory is revealed.

#### 8. Post-Fall place of worship and sacrifice

In Genesis 4, just a few verses after the first sacrifice recorded in Gen 3:21, we have evidence that Cain and Abel were thoroughly instructed regarding the sacrificial system. Both Cain and Abel “brought” offerings to the Lord, but the narrative contrasts the two kinds of “gifts/offerings” (Heb. *minchah*) that were brought. Cain brought a bloodless offering from the fruit of the ground, while Abel brought an animal sacrifice (Gen 4:3-4). Although in the later Levitical system both first-fruit offerings and animal sacrifices were included (the *minchah* is actually the term used for the “grain offering”; Lev 2), the foundational offering was the bloody sacrifice. As Heb 9:22 summarizes, “without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin.”<sup>40</sup> The first fruits thank offerings were to be brought *in addition to* the foundational animal sacrifices.

Genesis 4:3-4 appears to highlight the fact that Cain only brought the first fruit offering, but did not see the need to offer in addition an animal sacrifice showing his dependence upon the blood of the substitute, as God had made clear in Eden to Adam and Eve. Abel, on the other hand, brought both. This nuance of the Hebrew original is captured in the NASB translation: “So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD

<sup>38</sup>For elaboration, see, e.g., Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 401; Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 139-140. Ouro, *Old Testament Theology*, 53, insightfully observes: “When Adam failed to guard the Eden-sanctuary by sinning and letting in a serpent to defile the sanctuary, he lost his priestly role [in Eden], and the cherubim took over the responsibility of guarding the Garden-sanctuary.”

<sup>39</sup>The name *Shekinah* does not appear in Scripture, but is a common term in the later Jewish literature.

<sup>40</sup>The only exception was for people too poor to bring even the least expensive animal sacrifice (two turtledoves or two young pigeons), who were allowed to offer a handful of fine flour instead (Lev 5:11-13).

of the fruit of the ground. Abel, *on his part also brought* of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering” (emphasis supplied).<sup>41</sup>

Genesis 4:3-4 does not indicate the location to which Cain and Abel brought their offerings, but this is probably implied in v. 7. Recent studies of this verse<sup>42</sup> provide evidence from the original Hebrew that the word *kbatta't* (which can either mean “sin” or “sin-offering”) should better be translated as “sin-offering” and not “sin” in this verse, and the word *petakh* (“door/opening”) here refers to the cherubim-guarded door/gate of Paradise, where sinful humans were to bring their sacrifices, paralleling the numerous uses of *petakh* in the Torah describing the door of the tabernacle (Exod 29:4, 11, 32, 42; 33:9-10; etc.). In this verse, God is encouraging Cain to offer up an animal sacrifice for his sin at the eastern “door” of the Garden where the post-Fall sanctuary was located.

<sup>41</sup>I suggest that modern commentators have not paid sufficient attention to the phrase *gam-bu'* (lit. “also-he”) in Gen 4:4: “Abel *also* [Heb. *gam-bu'*] brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat.” The word *gam*, or in its intensified form joined with a personal pronoun, as here, *gam-bu'*, means “also” in one of two senses: (1) “likewise, in the same way” or (2) “moreover, in addition [to].” The context, along with the syntactical placement of the phrase in the sentence, helps determine which sense is intended. The use of the preposition *gam* with a personal pronoun to mean “moreover, in addition [to]” is found a number of times elsewhere in the Pentateuch (e.g., Gen 20:6; Exod 1:10) and other parts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., 1 Kgs 4:15; 2 Chr 21:11; Jer 48:26). For evidence that this is the best reading here, see Richard M. Davidson, “Shame and Honor in the Beginning: A Study of Genesis 4,” in *Shame and Honor: Presenting Biblical Themes in Shame & Honor Contexts*, ed. Bruce Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Department of World Missions, 2014), 50. This interpretation allows for a consistent understanding of the *minkhab* offering in Gen 4:4-5. In v. 4 it clearly applies to the non-animal sacrifice of Cain, but in v. 5 it is applied to both the offering of Cain and Abel, and thus scholars have generally claimed that in v. 5 *minkhab* refers to both non-animal sacrifice (in the case of Cain) and bloody sacrifice (in the case of Abel). However, while the term *minkhab* is used occasionally outside the Pentateuch to encompass both grain offerings and animal sacrifices (e.g., 1 Sam 2:17, 29), in the Pentateuch the word *minkhab* (when referring to an offering to God and not in the more general meaning of “tribute, gift”) consistently (beyond this passage) denotes a non-bloody (vegetable/meal) offering and not an animal sacrifice. The term *minkhab* is the regular term used in Leviticus for the “grain/meal offering” (Lev 2). But even before the divine formalization of the various types of offering in Leviticus, God specified that when the altar of burnt offering was set up, Moses was to offer upon it the burnt offering (*'olah* = animal sacrifice) accompanied by the *minkhab* (= “fruit of the ground” offering) (Exod 29:39-41; 30:9; 40:29). With the interpretation proposed above, Gen 4:4-5 is consistent with elsewhere in the Pentateuch. For further discussion of Genesis 4, see *ibid.*, 43-76.

<sup>42</sup>Joachim Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4:7,” *Biblische Notizen* 100 (1999): 45-59; cf. Davidson, “Genesis 4,” *passim*.

Adam and Eve and their children came to the eastern gate of Eden to worship God, build their altars, and bring their sacrifices; here the Shekinah glory was manifested as God came down to hold communion with them. This arrangement no doubt lasted until the time of the global Flood. The reference to “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God,” in the promise to overcomers in Rev 2:7, may be seen to imply that the Garden of Eden was removed from the earth at the time of the Flood, and will be accessed by the redeemed in the New Earth.<sup>43</sup>

Based upon the numerous linkages between the Garden of Eden and the descriptions of the sanctuary elsewhere in Scripture, grounded in the fundamental link with the heavenly Garden of Eden sanctuary/temple before sin, I unhesitatingly conclude that the Garden of Eden (and its surroundings) was the earth’s original sanctuary.

### C. Genesis 1, Creation Week, and the Sanctuary

We now move to Genesis 1 (and parallel creation passages in Scripture), where we find additional intertextual linkages between creation and sanctuary, this time depicting the entire creation as a cosmic sanctuary.

#### 1. “The Heavens and the Earth”

A key passage for understanding “the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1) as Yahweh’s cosmic temple is Isa 66:1-2: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven *is* My throne, And earth *is* My footstool. Where *is* the house that you will build Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? <sup>2</sup> For all those *things* My hand has made, And all those *things* exist,’ Says the LORD.” According to this verse, heaven and the earth together constitutes Yahweh’s throne and footstool. A divine throne-room is, by definition, a temple. The heaven and earth are thus Yahweh’s cosmic temple. This conclusion is also supported in Ps 78:69, where the earthly sanctuary is compared with the cosmic temple: “He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever” (ESV). When viewed in light of these passages outside the creation narrative, the reference to “the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1) takes on cosmic sanctuary significance.

<sup>43</sup>See the comment by White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 62: “At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the divine glory was revealed. Hither came Adam and his sons to worship God. Here they renewed their vows of obedience to that law the transgression of which had banished them from Eden. When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be ‘a new heaven and a new earth.’ (Revelation 21:1), it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning.” Cf. *ibid.*, 83: “At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the glory of God was revealed, and hither came the first worshipers. Here their altars were reared, and their offerings presented. It was here that Cain and Abel had brought their sacrifices, and God had condescended to communicate with them.”



## 2. Back to the beginning

The reference in Gen 1:1 to creation “in the beginning” (Heb. *rešbit*, related to the nouns *rošb* “head, first” and *rišbon* “first”), may be echoed in the sanctuary festival calendar commencing in the “beginning [*rošb*] of months” (Exod 12:2). Likewise, the “first day” of creation week may be echoed in the erection of the Mosaic tabernacle on “the first day of the first month” (Exod 40:2, 17). Just as creation took place at the “beginning,” so the sanctuary festivals started at the “beginning” of months and the sanctuary was constructed in the “beginning” of the year. Jews still today celebrate the creation of the world at the time of *Rosh Hashanah* (“Head of the Year,” i.e., New Year, first day of the seventh Jewish month).<sup>44</sup>

## 3. Literary structure: “Raw materials” + Six + Sabbath

The creation account in Gen 1:1–2:3 unfolds in three major literary and thematic steps: (a) vv. 1–2 mention the “unformed” and “unfilled” (*tobu* and *bohu*) condition of the earth (i.e., the “raw materials” created by God) present at the beginning of creation week (Gen 1:1–3); (b) vv. 3–31 describe the creation (“forming and filling”) of the world, which is said to occupy six days (each introduced by the clause “And God said”); and (c) Gen 2:1–3 depicts the seventh day Sabbath. In striking parallel, the instructions concerning the building of the sanctuary develop according to the same “raw materials” + six + Sabbath pattern: (a) Exodus 25 first mentions the gathering of the materials for the construction of the sanctuary (vv. 2–7); (b) God’s detailed instruction to Moses regarding the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus 25–31 is divided into six sections (introduced by the phrase “The Lord said to Moses”); followed by (c) a concluding seventh section dealing with the Sabbath.<sup>45</sup> The striking parallel not only invites us to see the building of the sanctuary as a new creation, but to see the creation account as connected with the sanctuary.<sup>46</sup> This becomes more apparent as specific sanctuary terminology is utilized for describing creation, as set forth below.

## 4. Heptadic patterns

The heptadic pattern (reference to “seven” or multiples of seven) not only structures the creation account (Gen 1:3–2:4a) and the instructions given to Moses about building the sanctuary (Exodus 25–31), as noted above, but

<sup>44</sup>See Ouro, *Old Testament Theology*, 38–39.

<sup>45</sup>The seven divine speeches are: Exod 25:1–30; 30:11–16; 30:17–21; 30:22–33; 30:34–37; 31:1–11; and 31:12–17.

<sup>46</sup>For the 6 + Sabbath parallels, see esp. P. J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40,” *ZAW* 89 (1977): 375–387. I suggest the further aspect of “raw materials” which precedes the two series of six. For discussion of the pre-creation week “raw materials” of the earth, see Richard M. Davidson, “The Biblical Account of Origins,” *JATS* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 19–25.

saturates the biblical material related to both creation and the sanctuary. The Genesis 1 creation account has numerous heptadic features beyond the obvious seven days of creation week, of which only a few examples can be mentioned here: (a) the initial verse of the creation narrative (Gen 1:1) is composed of seven words, and the two sections of the verse are divided into two sections of fourteen (7x2) Hebrew letters each; (b) Gen 1:2 contains fourteen (7x2) words; (c) the key word for create (*bara'*) appears 7 times in Gen 1; (d) the key phrase "And God saw . . . that it was good" appears seven times; (e) the phrase "and it was so" appears seven times; (f) the word *'Elohim* "God" occurs 35 (7x5) times; and (g) the word *ha'arets* "the earth" occurs 21 (7x3) times.<sup>47</sup> This heptadic pattern is taken up again in the sanctuary details. A few examples, beyond the seven sections of Exod 25-31 mentioned above, will suffice: (a) 7 lamps of the lampstand (Exod 25:37; 37:23), (b) 7 days for the inauguration of the priests and altar (Exod 29:35, 37; Lev 8:33-35), (c) sprinkling of the blood 7 times (Lev 4:6, 17; 8:11; Num 19:4), (d) 7 days of unleavened bread (Exod 12:15, 19; Lev 23:6; Num 28:17; Deut 16:3), (e) 7 days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:24, 26, 39, 40, 42; Num 29:12; Deut 16:13), (f) sabbatical years every 7 years and jubilee after "seven Sabbaths of years" (7x7) (Lev 25:4, 8; Deut 15:1), and (g) 7 lambs (Num 28:19, 27; 29:36; etc.).

Just as the creation week consisted of seven days, so, as we have seen above, Solomon took seven years to build the temple (1 Kgs 6:38). Solomon dedicated the temple on the seventh month, during the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kgs 8:2, 56-66), and his dedication speech was structured around seven petitions (1 Kgs 8:31-55).<sup>48</sup>

### 5. The Spirit of God

Just as the "Spirit of God" (*ruakh 'elohim*) hovered over the face of the earth at creation (Gen 1:2), prepared to do the work of creation, likewise, in the next clear reference to "Spirit of God" in the Pentateuch, the Spirit was active in equipping the artisans who designed and constructed the Mosaic sanctuary (Exod 31:2-3). Scholars have recognized the intertextual echoes between these two passages.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup>For these and further examples of the "sevens" of the creation narratives, see Jacques Doukhan's forthcoming SDAIBC commentary on Genesis.

<sup>48</sup>For further discussion and bibliography, see Ouro, 39-40.

<sup>49</sup>For the parallel between creation and tabernacle using "Spirit," see Terence Fretheim, *Exodus, Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 269. See discussion of these passages in Richard M. Davidson, "The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch," paper presented at the IX Biblical-Theological Symposium, South America (Foz do Iguaçu, PR, Brazil, 20 May 2011). There is one intervening mention of the *ruakh 'elohim* between these two references, but it is pronounced by pharaoh concerning Joseph, and probably (at least in the mind of pharaoh "spirit of God") did not have reference to the Holy Spirit.

## 6. Separation: firmament and veil/curtains

The key Hebrew word *badal* “to divide/separate” is used to describe the way God created by separation (Gen 1:4, 6-7, 18), and after the creation account the next usage of the term *badal* in Scripture describes the veil in the Mosaic sanctuary which divides between the holy place and the most holy place (Exod 26:33). In the creation account *badal* is particularly utilized in connection with reference to the expanse (Heb. *raqia'*) of the atmospheric heavens, (Gen 1:6-7), and in the poetic re-telling of creation week in Psalm 104 (v. 3) this is compared to “stretching out heaven like a [tent] curtain.” The word for “curtain” (Heb. *yeri'ab*) in this verse about creation is the same which is used of the curtains of the Mosaic sanctuary (Exod 26:1-13; 26:8-17).

## 7. Sea/laver

On the second day of creation, God created the “Seas” (Heb. *yam* in the plural, Gen 1:10; described in the singular “Sea” [*yam*] in Exod 20:11), located on earth outside of the garden. Likewise, in the courtyard area outside the Solomonic temple was placed a stationary laver called the molten “Sea” (Heb. *yam*, 1 Kgs 7:23; 2 Chron 4:2). Solomon also constructed ten more portable lavers (1 Kings 7:27-30, 38-39). The reference to the heavenly “sea [Gk. *thalassa*] of glass” in Rev 15:2 may be an allusion to the “Sea” of the Solomonic temple (the LXX in these passages uses the same Greek term).

## 8. Trees (for food), the lampstand (as a nut tree), and the Table of the Bread of the Presence (for food)

Trees created by God during the third day of creation week were described as “good for food” (Gen 1:29; cf. 2:9), and this may be compared with the “food” in the sanctuary, represented by the bread of the presence in the holy place (Exod 25:30; 39:36; 40:23; Lev 24:5-9). The term “bread” in Scripture often refers to “food” in general (e.g., Deut 8:4). The trees of creation good for food also hint at the sanctuary lampstand, which as noted above, was a stylized almond tree (Exod 25:31-40; cf. 1 Kgs 7:49), as well as Aaron’s rod that budded and produced ripe almonds and was placed in the tabernacle of witness (Num 17:7-8; Heb 9:4).

## 9. “Light” of the menorah

It is hardly accidental that the term for “light” (Heb *ma'or*, “lamp, luminary”) used to describe the appearance of the “greater light” (sun) and “lesser light” (moon) on the fourth day of creation week in Gen 1:14-16, is employed elsewhere in the Pentateuch *only* for the light of the menorah in the holy place of the sanctuary (Exod 25:6; 27:20; 35:8, 14, 28; 39:27; Lev 24:2; Num 4:9, 16). Moses not only engages in a polemic against the solar and lunar deities of the ANE by not using the common names for sun and moon in Hebrew are also the personal names for the ANE sun and moon gods; he also uses the

technical term for “sanctuary lamp” which he reserves later for the menorah in the Holy Place, to link creation with sanctuary.<sup>50</sup>

#### 10. The *mo'edim* (“fixed/sacred times”)

Gen 1:14 gives as one of the functions of the greater and lesser lights in creation that they would be for “seasons” (*mo'edim*, pl. of *mo'ed*). Although “seasons” is an accurate translation of this term in context, several modern versions have rightly recognized the sanctuary connotations of the term as well, and have thus translated the term in Gen 1:14 as “festivals” (HSB, NJB), in harmony with the other sanctuary-related terminology in Gen 1. While the term *mo'edim* sometimes carries the more general meaning of “seasons” (e.g., Jer 8:7), the dominant use of this term elsewhere in Scripture is in the context of the sanctuary, to refer to the cultic festivals (see esp. Lev 23:2, 4, 37, 44).<sup>51</sup>

#### 11. Series of precise verbal parallels in the conclusion formulae

A complex of precise terminological parallels in the same basic order may be noted between the two major “conclusion formulae” in the Torah—at the beginning of Genesis concluding the account of Creation in Gen 1:1–2:4 as a whole, and at the end of Exodus concluding the construction of the Mosaic sanctuary (Exodus 39–40). Note the series of key verbal parallels: Just as “God saw [*ra'ab*] everything that he had made/done [*'asab*], and behold [*hineb*] it was very good,” and he “finished [*kalab*] his work [*mela'kab*],” “blessed [*berek*] the seventh day and sanctified [*qdash*] it (Gen 1:31; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3), so “Moses saw [*ra'ab*] all the work” which the people “made/did [*'asab*]” in constructing the sanctuary” “and behold [*hineb*]” it was done, “and Moses finished [*kalab*] the work [*mela'kab*],” “blessed” [*qdash*] the people for their labors, and “consecrated/sanctified” [*qdash*] the tabernacle and its furnishings (Exod 39:32, 43; 40:9, 33). “The verbal parallels . . . are too striking, for coincidence.”<sup>52</sup> The repetition of the same basic terms in the same basic order in these two conclusion formulae—(1) see, (2) make/do, (3) behold, (4) finish, (5) work, (6) bless, and (7) sanctify/consecrate—clearly signifies the linkage between the creation week and the sanctuary in the Torah.

#### 12. God’s “rest” and temple inauguration

In the creation account of Gen 1:1–2:4a, the Sabbath is presented as the climax of the week, in which God sanctifies the seventh day as a “palace in

<sup>50</sup>See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 22.

<sup>51</sup>See also Exod 13:10; 23: 15; Num 10:10; 15:3; 29:39; 1 Chr 23:31; 2 Chr 2:4; 8:13; Ezra 3:5; Neh 10:34; Isa 1:14; Ezek 36:38; 45:17; 46:9, 11; Zech 8:9. The word *mo'ed* in the singular is regularly used in the phrase “tent of meeting [*mo'ed*]” throughout the Pentateuch (Exod 27:21; 28:43; etc.).

<sup>52</sup>Levinson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 85.

time” (Gen 2:1-3).<sup>53</sup> After his six days of creative activity, God “rested” on the seventh day (Heb. *shabat* in Gen 2:2; and *nuakh* in Exod 20:11). Elsewhere in the Old Testament God’s “rest” (or “resting-place”) [Heb. *menukhab*; related to the verb *nuakh*] is equated with Mt. Zion (the city of Jerusalem), and in particular, with the place of the sanctuary or temple (e.g., Isa 66:1-2). Note especially Ps 132:8, 13, 14: “Arise, O LORD, to your resting place [or ‘rest’; Heb. *menukhab*]; you, and the ark of your strength. . . . For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation. This is my resting place [or ‘rest’; Heb. *menukhab*] for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” Solomon quotes these words of Ps 132 almost verbatim in his prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron 6:41-42). The intertextual link between God’s “rest” on the seventh day of creation and his “rest” in later the sanctuary/Temple, suggests that God not only rested from his work on that first Sabbath, but entered into his “rest” (or “resting place”), i.e., was enthroned and dedicated the “cosmic sanctuary” which he had created.<sup>54</sup>

### 13. Sabbath/sanctuary sanctification by God’s presence/glory

According to Gen 2:2, God sanctified [*qadasb*] the Sabbath. Exod 29:43 indicates that God will sanctify His tabernacle. How does God sanctify his sanctuary? This passage provides the divine answer to this question: “the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.” This was fulfilled after the sanctuary was constructed and “the work was finished”: God’s glory filled the sanctuary (Exod 40:34-35). Just as God sanctified time after his creation work was finished, by filling the seventh day with his presence, so he sanctified space (the tabernacle) after its work of construction was finished, by filling it with his glory.<sup>55</sup>

### 14. “laying of foundations” (*yasad*) + celebration

There was celebration when the Creator laid the foundations of the earth: “When I laid the foundations [*yasad*] of the earth . . . the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:4, 7). Likewise, after the Exile under the direction of Zerubbabel, “When the builders laid the foundation [*yasad*] of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according

<sup>53</sup>For development of the concept of the Sabbath as a “palace in time,” see esp. Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York: Harper, 1966), 11-24.

<sup>54</sup>For development of these ideas, see especially Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 501-512; and Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 178-192. While I appreciate Walton’s insights regarding the link between creation and sanctuary, I do not accept his supposition that creation week only involved “functional” and not “material” creation. I see both functional and material creation occurring during creation week, according to Genesis 1.

<sup>55</sup>For further development of this parallel, see Winkle, “Creation and Tabernacle, Sabbath and Glory,” 1-16.

to the ordinance of David king of Israel. . . . Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid [*yasad*]" (Ezra 3:10, 11).

#### 15. Wisdom, Creation, and Temple

While Prov 8:22-31 does not follow the detailed order of the six days of creation as in Genesis 1, Psalm 104, and Job 38–41, nonetheless there is a general movement from the “beginning” (v. 22, using the same word as found in Gen 1:1), emphasizing creating of the foundations of the earth, to the end of creation week, when Wisdom rejoices with Yahweh and with human beings (v. 31).

Proverbs 9:1 continues the depiction of Wisdom: “Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars.” The reference to Wisdom’s building “denotes bringing something into existence through a particular type of craftsmanship.”<sup>56</sup> “Fundamentally, ‘building’ always has to do with ‘creating’ and ‘bringing into existence,’ and is connected with the idea of a functioning creative power.”<sup>57</sup> The “house of Wisdom,” in light of the preceding context of Wisdom’s creation of the world, probably is a reference to the creation mentioned in Proverbs 8. R.B.Y. Scott seems on the mark: “The house of Wisdom is the ‘habitable world’ (viii 31).”<sup>58</sup>

Although numerous suggestions have been given for the “seven pillars” of Wisdom’s house,<sup>59</sup> given the preceding immediate context of creation it seems best to interpret the seven pillars as the seven days of creation week. Duane Garrett concurs: “The nature of Wisdom’s house of seven pillars is uncertain. . . . The significance of ‘seven’ here is also not elucidated. Some have connected it to the seven planets, but a more reasonable explanation is that it refers to the seven days of creation (note Wisdom’s role in creation in 8:22-31).” If the “seven pillars” refer to the seven days of creation, then it is possible that feast described in vv. 2-6 may imply the celebration of rejoicing connected with the Sabbath after the completion of creation.

If the seven-pillared house of Wisdom refers to the seven days of creation week narrated in Gen 1:3–2:4, then it only remains to point out that inasmuch as Wisdom is a divine figure—the hypostasis of the pre-incarnate

<sup>56</sup>Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 431.

<sup>57</sup>S. Wagner, *TDOT*, 2:168, s.v. *bānāh*.

<sup>58</sup>R.B.Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes*, Anchor Bible, vol. 18 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 76. See also Allen P. Ross, “Proverbs,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 947-948: “She [wisdom] has prepared a house and established it on seven pillars. This is probably a reference to the inhabitable world (8:31), which is spacious and enduring. For the equation of a house with the world, see 8:29; Job 38:6; and Psalm 104:5.”

<sup>59</sup>For the range of suggestions, see, e.g., R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs*, New Century Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 142-144.

Christ,<sup>60</sup> it follows that her house, by definition, is a temple (“the house of a deity”). Thus in this passage creation and temple are integrally connected: the inhabited world of creation is Wisdom’s temple.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup>In a separate study I have provided evidence that the figure of Wisdom in Proverbs 8:21-31 moves beyond personification to a hypostasis of the pre-incarnate Son of God, “Master-craftsman” or Co-Creator with Yahweh, who at the beginning of creation, is installed into the office of “Mediator” between Yahweh and “His inhabited world . . . the sons of men” (v. 30-31). See Richard M. Davidson, “Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17 (2006): 33-54.

<sup>61</sup>Several other thematic links between the OT creation passages and the sanctuary/temple motif may be mentioned:

1. *Creation-Fall-Creation motif.* Gen 1-11 depicts a flow of history, from (1) creation (Genesis 1–2), to (2) the Fall and its ensuing un-creation in the judgment by Flood (Genesis 3–7), and (3) the new creation marked initially by the drying up of the flood waters on the first day of the first month of the year (Gen 8:13). So with regard to the sanctuary, (1) Exodus 25–31 contains instructions for the creation/construction of the sanctuary, (2) Exodus 32–34 describes the “Fall” in the worship of the golden calf, and its ensuing consequences in the breaking of the tables of the Decalogue and judgment upon the people, and (3) Exodus 35–50 describes the creation/construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings. See Fretheim, *Exodus*, 271-272.

2. *“Firmament” paralleling “sanctuary.”* The Heb. term *raqia* “firmament/expanse/sky” in Genesis 1 (vv. 6, 7 [3x] 8, 14, 15, 17, 20) is found in synonymous parallelism with the term *qodesh* “sanctuary” in Ps 150:1, describing the heavenly sanctuary: “Hallelujah. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the sky, His stronghold” (NJPS).

3. *Animals of the sixth day.* The creation of the cattle and the “beasts of the earth” on the sixth day (Gen 1:24-25) are echoed by representations of oxen and lions in the laver of Solomon’s Temple (1 Kgs 7:26, 29, 36).

4. *Imago Dei.* On the sixth day of creation God created humans “in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Gen 1:27). As the “image” of the god was placed in ANE temples. Adam and Eve were God’s “image” representing the deity in his cosmic temple, but whereas the “image” of the god in other ANE temples was a lifeless statue, God’s image was comprised of living human beings, made in his likeness. So Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 104: “All ancient temples and sanctuaries had images of the deities that had dominion over them. Likewise the garden sanctuary of the Lord had images, but they were very different from what the pagan world later developed. . . . These images were made by God, not by people, for humans themselves were the image of God—living, breathing, thinking human beings.”

5. *Genesis 1–3 and Worship.* John Rankin summarizes the growing conviction among biblical scholars: “whether one is evangelical or liberal, it is clear that Gen 1–3 is the interpretive foundation of all Scripture” (“Power and Gender at the Divinity School,” in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians*, ed. Kelly Monroe [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996], 203). Or, as Wenham (“Sanctuary Symbolism,” 404) puts it, “the opening chapters of Genesis describe what human

*D. Summary: Creation and Sanctuary*

From the above parallels, we find counterparts (or at least echoes) of all the basic furnishings and functionaries of later earthly sanctuaries/temples:

| Sanctuary  | Creation  |
|--|---|
| 1. Lavers ( <i>yam</i> )   | 1. Seas ( <i>yam</i> )  |
| 2. Veils, curtains ( <i>badal</i> )  | 2. Separating Firmament (and other separations, <i>badal</i> )  |
| 3. Menorah Lamps ( <i>ma'or</i> )  | 3. Heavenly Luminaries ( <i>ma'or</i> )   |
| 4. Table(s) with Bread (for food)  | 4. Trees of the Garden (for food)   |
| 5. Golden altar's incense cloud ( <i>'anan</i> )   | 5. Mist wafting on face of ground/ clouds ( <i>'anan</i> )  |
| 6. God's Presence (the Ark, containing the almond tree branch that budded) in the midst of the sanctuary precincts quadrangle                              | 6. Tree of Life and God "walking around" in the midst of the Garden   |
| 7. The altar of burnt offering   | 7. The place of sacrifice at the door/ gate of the Garden (after the Fall)  |
| 8. Cherubim covering the Ark in the Most Holy Place  | 8. Cherubim at the Gate of the Garden (after the Fall)  |
| 9. Priests "serve" and "guard" ( <i>'abad, shamar</i> ) the sanctuary and are inaugurated by being clothed ( <i>labash</i> ) with tunics ( <i>kutnot</i> ) | 9. Adam and Eve as priests "serve and guard" ( <i>'abad, shamar</i> ) the Garden before sin and are "clothed" ( <i>labash</i> ) by God with tunics ( <i>kutnot</i> ) after the Fall |
| 10. The "sin offering" ( <i>khattat</i> ) of the sanctuary services  | 10. The "sin offering" ( <i>khatt'at</i> ) available at the door of the Garden (after the Fall)   |

In Genesis 2–3 (paralleling Ezek 28 and other biblical passages), the focus is upon the Garden of Eden as the earthly counterpart of the heavenly temple, while in Gen 1:1–2:4a (and other parallel creation passages) the entire creation (at least this earth and its immediate surrounding heavenly

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life should be like." Wenham then suggests the implication that follows from this recognition: "According to the rest of the Pentateuch worship is of the greatest importance (consider the great bulk of cultic legislation), so it is not surprising to find such interests reflected in Genesis 2–3" (*ibid.*).



spheres) seems to be depicted as a cosmic temple. This may be confusing at first glance, but it accords with many other passages in the OT where such a dual picture of God's temple occurs. For example, in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, he exclaims: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!" (1 Kgs 8:27). Similarly, as we have already seen above, Isaiah records Yahweh's words in Isa 66:1: "Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven *is* My throne, And earth *is* My footstool. Where *is* the house that you will build Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?'" Yet a few verses later, Isaiah refers to "A voice from the temple! The voice of the Lord" (Isa 66:6). Again, in Ps 78:69, the Psalmist Asaph declares, "He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever" (ESV). Yet in the first verse of the very next psalm, Asaph mentions "Your holy temple," referring to the temple in Jerusalem (Ps 79:1). I conclude that in the wider sense, the whole creation is God's temple, for He is the omnipotent and omnipresent and transcendent God, *'Elohim*, as depicted in Genesis 1. Yet, he also has a localized temple on this earth, a replica of the heavenly original, where he intimately relates with his creatures, in his character of Yahweh, as described in Genesis 2–3. We need both of these pictures of God, revealed in the sanctuary/temple imagery of Scripture, to see his full character as both transcendent and immanent.

In conclusion, there are more than forty lines of biblical evidence that point toward the conclusion that the Garden of Eden (and its surroundings) constituted earth's original sanctuary/temple. The foundational connection between the earthly Garden of Eden (Genesis 2–3) and the heavenly Garden of Eden sanctuary/temple (Ezek 28) makes evident that the earthly Garden, like its heavenly counterpart, was created to function as a sanctuary/temple where created beings could worship and commune with their Maker. Viewed from within this overarching sanctuary/temple context, numerous terminological, structural and thematic links between Genesis 1–3 and later sanctuaries/temples in Scripture provide further evidence that Eden (and its surroundings) functioned as a sanctuary/temple, both before sin and (at its eastern gate) after sin. Some connections are stronger than others, but even seemingly-insignificant links—especially terminological and structural—are significant in establishing this intertextual identity. The intertextual links are too many to be only coincidental. I conclude from the cumulative weight of evidence that not only do the later sanctuaries/temples of Israel recall the original creation, but also, and even more fundamentally, the original creation, especially centered in the Garden of Eden, is to be regarded as earth's first sanctuary, the counterpart of the heavenly Eden sanctuary/temple.