

An Ethiopian source asserts that the Tree of Life “is the Body of Christ which none of the Seraphim touch without reverent awe.”¹¹⁰⁶ Note that the Egyptian Osiris was thought to have introduced wheat and the vine to mankind, and also saw wheat grains as having been formed from his body.

- 5-45 The book of Moses draws comparisons between natural birth and spiritual rebirth in the context of Enoch’s sermon describing the forgiveness and baptism of Adam. However the later reference to “the words of eternal life”¹¹⁰⁷ implies that additional ordinances were necessary to complete the process of sanctification: “inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory.”¹¹⁰⁸
- 5-46 Vladimir Lossky, an Orthodox theologian, expressed a similar thought when he wrote: “In effect, the revealed truth is not a dead letter but a living Word; it can be attained only in the church, through initiation by the ‘mysteries’ or sacraments into the ‘mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.’”¹¹⁰⁹
- 5-47 The Prophet Joseph Smith made this remark in the context of his description of giving the fulness of temple ordinances for the first time to a select few in Nauvoo:

... instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments, and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fulness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days. And the communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritual minded: and there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them...¹¹¹⁰

- 5-48 An Islamic source describes how the earthly temple, in direct communication with the throne of God, was given to Adam and Eve to restore the access to the presence of God that they had lost upon their expulsion from Eden:

And when Allāh was now about to withdraw his presence for the whole of this life from Adam, the latter uttered so loud a cry, that the whole earth shook to its foundations: the All-merciful thereupon extended his clemency, and said, “Follow yonder cloud; it shall lead thee to the place which lies directly opposite my heavenly throne; build me a temple there, and when thou walkest around it, I shall be as near to thee as to the angels which encompass my throne!”¹¹¹¹

Lundquist explains “the intimate relationship” between “the role of covenant and law in ancient Israel” and the temple:

[O]rder cannot exist, the earth cannot be made cosmic, society cannot function properly, law cannot be decreed, except in a temple established on earth that is the authentic and divinely revealed counterpart of a heavenly prototype.¹¹¹² As J. Z. Smith has written so cogently for the *Enuma Elish*, it is “not so much a cosmogony as it is the myth of the creation of a temple.” It is the creation of the temple, with its cosmic overtones, that founds and legitimizes the state or the society, which, in turn, makes possible the promulgation of law. Once promulgated in the ritual manner described, the law serves as the text of a covenant process carried out in front of the temple’s pillars [representing “the ubiquitous trees of life that flank temple entrances and that border scenes of temple ritual,”¹¹¹³] accompanied by animal sacrifice and a communal meal. All these features,

168, 4:25-a, p. 272, 5:2-a, p. 354, and *Excursus 42: Nebuchadnezzar’s “Fall,”* p. 632. Cf. D&C 89:17.

1106 B. Mikaël, *Book*, p. 26.

1107 Cf. John 6:68, 17:8. See also book of Abraham, Facsimile 2, Figure 7.

1108 Moses 6:59.

1109 L. Ouspensky, *et al.*, *Icons*, p. 13; see Colossians 1:26.

1110 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 4 May 1842, p. 237.

1111 G. Weil, *Legends*, pp. 40-41.

1112 E.g., Isaiah 2:3.

1113 J. M. Lundquist, *Temple, Covenant, and Law*, p. 300; cf. T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 120-122.