

# STANDING IN THE HOLY PLACE: ANCIENT AND MODERN REVERBERATIONS OF AN ENIGMATIC NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

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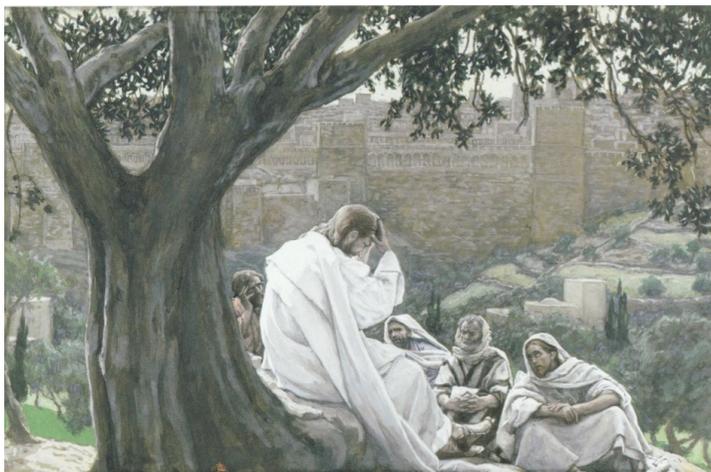


Figure 1: J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *The Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple, 1886-1894*

Immediately after His prophecy about the destruction of the temple, and just prior to the culminating events of the Passion week, Jesus “went upon the Mount of Olives.”<sup>2</sup> Here, in a setting associated with some of His most sacred teachings,<sup>3</sup> His apostles “came unto him privately” to question him about the “destruction of the temple, and the Jews,” and the “sign of [His] coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked.” Within this discourse, Jesus gave one of the most controversial prophecies of the New Testament:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation ...  
stand in the holy place ...

Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:<sup>4</sup>

The gospel of Mark is at variance with the wording of the gospel of Matthew, though the two accounts agree in general meaning. Instead of saying that the “abomination of desolation” will “stand in the holy place,”<sup>5</sup>

Mark asserts that it will be “standing where it ought not.”<sup>6</sup> Luke, writing to a Gentile audience that was not as familiar with the temple and its customs as were the Jews addressed by Matthew, describes the sign in a more general way, referring to how Jerusalem would be “compassed by armies.”<sup>7</sup> Though the interpretation of these verses has been contested, the sense of the Greek text underlying them is clear.

Comparing the verse in Matthew to its equivalent in the Joseph Smith Translation (JST), we see that the Prophet has rendered this passage in a way that radically changes its meaning. Rather than describing how the “*abomination of desolation*” will “stand in the holy place,”<sup>8</sup> the JST version enjoins the *apostles* to “stand in the holy place”<sup>9</sup> when the “*abomination of desolation*” appears. In these and related verses in the Doctrine and Covenants, the sense of this phrase in the synoptic gospels is turned upside down. Rather than describing how an *evil thing* would stand the holy place, thereby *profaning* it, modern scripture applies the phrase to the apostles and the saints, admonishing *them* to stand in holy places and thereby be *saved*.

Though several LDS scholars have offered interpretations and personal applications of the sense of these words as given in modern scripture, no one has yet, to my knowledge, seriously explored how this change in meaning could be explained and defended.<sup>10</sup> It is easy to see how, on the face of it, some might be (erroneously) led to conclude that Joseph Smith’s rendering of the verse in question was an obvious and embarrassing mistake, based on his admittedly rudimentary acquaintance with the Greek text of the New Testament. In this article, however, my purpose is to advance an alternative claim: namely, that in the scriptural word picture of the righteous standing in holy places, Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the prophecy — whether or not a consonant Greek reading is ever found — resonates with a potent metaphor from the heart of Judaism and early Christianity. Speaking more generally, I find this to be a powerful example of how, as expressed in the words of Yale professor Harold Bloom, elements of Mormon scripture “recapture ... crucial elements in the archaic Jewish religion. ... that had ceased to be available either to normative Judaism or to Christianity, and that survived only in esoteric traditions unlikely to have touched [Joseph] Smith directly.”<sup>11</sup>

Throughout this article, I will consciously, though not exclusively, use forms of argument that are encountered much more rarely today than they were in biblical times: specifically, midrash, allegory, and typology. About the unfortunate near abandonment of these ancient modes of biblical interpretation, Old Testament scholar James Kugel observes:<sup>12</sup>

What [modern exegetes] generally share (although there are, of course, exceptions) is a profound discomfort with the actual interpretations that the ancients came up with — these have little or no place in the way Scripture is to be expounded today. Midrash, allegory, typology — what [on earth] for? But the style of interpretation thus being rejected is precisely the one that characterizes the numerous interpretations of Old Testament texts by Jesus, Paul, and others in the New Testament, as well as by the succeeding generations of the founders of Christianity....

Ancient interpretive methods may sometimes appear artificial, but this hardly means that abandoning them guarantees unbiased interpretation ... At times, [modern] interpretations are scarcely less forced than those of ancient midrashists (and usually far less clever).

Apart from trying to make sense of obvious references to the book of Daniel, modern interpretations of the Olivet prophecy tend to focus more on pinpointing historical events that might have been seen as fulfilling Jesus’s words than on understanding the significance of these words and their meaning in a temple context.<sup>13</sup> Lacking an understanding of the temple context of these words, scholarly commentary typically rewards our efforts to understand the passage with unsatisfying surveys the journalistic dimensions of who, what, when, and where the “*abomination of desolation*” may have occurred while leaving us in ignorance about what seemed to be most important to those ancient readers. To premoderns, a “literal” interpretation was not one that laid out the bare facts of the matter in documentary fashion, but rather one that emphasized what the letters, i.e., the words, actually say. These are two very different modes of interpretation. As James Faulconer observed: “‘What *x says*’ [i.e., the premodern idea of “literal”] and ‘what *x describes accurately*’ [i.e., the modernist idea of “literal”] do not mean the same, even if the first is a description.”<sup>14</sup> What is missing from most modern commentaries, as excellent as they are in so many respects, is a consideration of how an interpretation of Matthew 24:15-16 might be informed by ancient perspectives on biblical passages that relate to the concept of something “standing in the holy place” — whether the reference is to an evil thing (i.e., the *abomination of desolation* as in the KJV) or to a righteous individual (i.e., a faithful disciple of Jesus, as in the JST).

I believe that careful examination of such passages in the Bible, in connection with the light shed by Jewish midrash and contemporary

scholarship, will show that the idea behind Joseph Smith's application of the concept of standing in the holy place in the JST and the additional concept of not being "moved" in the Doctrine and Covenants,<sup>15</sup> far from being a modern invention, reverberates throughout the religious thought of earlier times. Indeed, as Jewish scholar Avivah Zornberg has argued, the Hebrew Bible teaches that standing in the holy place — "hold[ing one's] ground," as it were, in sacred circumstances — is a powerful symbol of the central purpose of existence. This purpose can be expressed as follows: "being — *kiyyum*: to rise up (*la-koom*), to be tall (*koma zokufa*) in the presence of God."<sup>16</sup>

In the remainder of the article, I will explore how one's fitness to stand in holy places might be understood in a way that is consistent with Joseph Smith's reading of the prophecy of Matthew 24:15-16. I will show the importance of this idea in the Old and New Testament — and its particular relevance for our own time. I will begin by a selective survey of Old Testament references to patriarchs, priests, and prophets who stood in holy places.<sup>17</sup> I will also give some examples of the use of the biblical concept of "not being moved." Because the ideas of "standing in the holy place" and "not being moved" do not co-occur explicitly in the Bible, I will pursue the discussion by exploring three biblical accounts that are of particular significance because they contain both positive and negative instances of the fitness of individuals to stand in holy places coupled with the motif of significant "movement" of transgressors. In examining these three accounts, I will freely mix insights from ancient, medieval, and modern commentaries and expansions. In the realization that we live on the near side of a great divide that separates us from the religious, cultural, and philosophical perspectives of those who recorded ancient scripture,<sup>18</sup> the value of premodern interpretations of scripture should not be underestimated.<sup>19</sup>

Happily, the Prophet Joseph Smith was far closer to this lost world than we are — not only because of his personal involvement with the recovery and revelatory expansion of primeval religion, but also because in his time many archaic traditions were still embedded in the language and daily experience of the surrounding culture.<sup>20</sup> For this reason, there will be great value in exploring as a next step his revelatory insights from the Doctrine and Covenants are of great value.

To understand the significance of these admonitions from Joseph Smith's revelations on standing in holy places and not being moved in the last days, the theme of measurement will be introduced. The modern day implications of New Testament passages relating to the measurement

of Jesus's disciples individually and collectively, with reference to the dimensions and layout of the temple, will be outlined and discussed. Finally, I will share some personal and practical observations on the subject of standing and falling. A separate appendix examines the topic of the "abomination of desolation."

### Old Testament Patriarchs, Priests, and Prophets "Standing in Holy Places" and "Not Being Moved"

**Standing in Holy Places.** An implicit reference to standing in a holy place goes back to premortal scenes, when God "*stood in the midst*" of choice spirits, including Abraham and another "one among them that was like unto God,"<sup>21</sup> "and he saw that they were good."<sup>22</sup> In such contexts, the "midst" (center) is typically depicted as the *most* holy place, and the degree of holiness decreases in proportion to the distance from that point.<sup>23</sup> Later, the patriarch Enoch "*stood upon the place*" as he "cried unto the Lord."<sup>24</sup> Draper, Brown, and Rhodes point out that the term "the place" often "points to a special, even sacred locale."<sup>25</sup> Enoch recounts: "as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory; And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face."<sup>26</sup> Later, in vision, Enoch sees the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, "and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man."<sup>27</sup> Many of the spirits in prison also "came forth, and *stood on the right hand of God*."<sup>28</sup>

Moses demonstrated his personal fitness to stand in the presence of the Lord at the beginning of his ministry when he received his commission on Mount Horeb, significantly called "the mountain of God."<sup>29</sup> His vision of the burning bush brings together three prominent symbols of sacred space — the bush (or tree), the mountain, and the Lord Himself.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, in Exodus 3 we explicitly encounter the concept of standing in sacred space for the first time in the Bible.<sup>31</sup> As he approached the Lord, Moses was told to remove his sandals, "for the place whereon thou *standest is holy ground*."<sup>32</sup> Moses's experience on Horeb was later paralleled by Joshua who, in meeting the "captain of the host of the Lord ... fell on his face to the earth and did worship."<sup>33</sup> Though it is not said explicitly whether Joshua was subsequently told to stand,<sup>34</sup> we read this instruction in the next verse: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou *standest is holy*."<sup>35</sup> The practice of removing footwear in holy places is consistent with the practice of later generations of temple priests who officiated barefoot in the sanctuary.<sup>36</sup>

Sometime after the vision on Horeb<sup>37</sup> but prior to his return to Egypt to rescue the children of Israel,<sup>38</sup> “the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses *stood* in the *presence of God*, and talked with him face to face.”<sup>39</sup> In Exodus 33:21-23, the Lord commands Moses to “*stand* upon a rock” where the Lord will allow His “back parts” to be seen, while protecting him from the danger of seeing His face.

Later, in describing the appointment of seventy men to serve as elders and officers of the people, Moses was told to “bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may *stand there* with thee.”<sup>40</sup> In reprimanding to Korah and other rebels who were seeking priestly offices, Moses described their service as being: “to bring you near to himself [i.e., the God of Israel] to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them.”<sup>41</sup> This is similar to the language of Deuteronomy 10:8,<sup>42</sup> where the duties of the Levites were described as being “to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him,<sup>43</sup> and to bless in his name.”<sup>44</sup> According to Jacob Milgrom, the Hebrew term *amad lifnei* (stand before) “is language of subordination.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, their office was to stand and *serve* — and not to *be* served. An explicit reference to standing in the holy place is found in 2 Chronicles, in conjunction with Josiah’s keeping of the Passover. The Levites were instructed to “*stand in the holy place* according to the divisions of the families of your brethren the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites.”<sup>46</sup>

Among the prophets, Elijah and Elisha are notable for their self-description as part of their solemn declarations: “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.”<sup>47</sup> In an echo of the experience of Enoch, Elijah was commanded to “*stand* upon the mount *before the Lord*”<sup>48</sup> as he awaited the Lord’s manifestation in the form of a “still small voice.”<sup>49</sup>

Each of these references helps establish the scriptural precedent for the idea of standing in a holy place, and implicitly we understand that it is only those who are qualified by their righteousness that are able to do so. Psalm 24:3-4 addresses these qualifications directly: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall *stand* in his *holy place*? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” Elsewhere in the Psalms, we encounter negative examples: “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark *iniquities*, O Lord, who shall *stand*?”<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Ezra lamented: “O Lord God of Israel ... behold, we are before thee in our *trespasses*: for *we cannot stand before thee* because of this.”<sup>51</sup>

**Not Being Moved.** The idea of settling on a single Hebrew equivalent to the compound concept of disciples who “stand in holy places” and are “not ... moved”<sup>52</sup> as found in the Doctrine and Covenants is problematic because there are several Hebrew and Greek terms that are translated “moved” in the KJV. However, one particularly fitting Hebrew term is *mot*<sup>53</sup> (totter, shake, slip<sup>54</sup>). It is used frequently and consistently in the Psalms — considerably more frequently than any other book of the Bible — to convey the unshakability of the righteous, sometimes in contrast to the wicked and sometimes specifically mentioning the feet. For example:

- Psalm 15:5: He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall *never be moved*.
- Psalm 16:8: I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall *not be moved*.
- Psalm 21:7: For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall *not be moved*.
- Psalm 30:6: And in my prosperity I said, I shall *never be moved*.
- Psalm 46:4-6: There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall *not be moved*: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were *moved*: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.
- Psalm 55:22: Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be *moved*.
- Psalm 62:2: He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall *not be greatly moved*.
- Psalm 62:6: He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall *not be moved*.
- Psalm 66:9: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth *not our feet to be moved*.
- Psalm 93:1: The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it *cannot be moved*.
- Psalm 96:10: Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall *not be moved*: he shall judge the people righteously.

- Psalm 99:1: The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be *moved*.
- Psalm 112:5-6: A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall *not be moved for ever*: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
- Psalm 121:2-3: My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will *not suffer thy foot to be moved*: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Being “moved” in the sense of shaking or trembling (or causing to shake or tremble) is a concept associated in scripture with the figure of Satan. Moses 1:21, for example, contains both elements: “Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook.” In this instance thunderous shaking of the ground echoes the emotional intensity of Satan’s rage in terrifying reverberations. Writes Nibley: “[Satan is] the *gaieokhon*, the earthshaker. It means ... both the earthshaker and the earthholder. If he holds it, he shakes it.”<sup>55</sup>

Other scriptural references linking Satan and trembling include James 2:19 (“the devils also believe, and tremble”<sup>56</sup>) and Isaiah 14:4, 7, 6 (“How hath the oppressor ceased! ... The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet ... Is this the man that made the earth to tremble,<sup>57</sup> that did shake<sup>58</sup> kingdoms”).<sup>59</sup> This latter verse is an interesting parallel to rabbinic commentary that also pictures Cain as someone who made the earth tremble.<sup>60</sup>

Like the concept of standing in holy places, the concept of the righteous not being moved is not uncommon in scripture. However, the conjunction of these two concepts, as found in the Doctrine and Covenants, is not found in the Bible explicitly.

To further enrich the picture of the scriptural idea of standing in holy places and not being moved, I will now look at three biblical accounts that are of particular significance because they contain both positive and negative instances of the fitness of individuals to stand in holy places connected to the idea that transgressors, unlike the righteous, are “moved”:

1. Adam and Eve’s standing in Eden, including a comparison with Daniel’s account of Nebuchadnezzar’s abasement;
2. Israel’s failure to stand at Sinai; and
3. The fall of the temple guards at Jesus’s arrest

## 1. Adam and Eve’s Standing in Eden

After the Fall, Adam and Eve were driven from the lush garden to live in the relative wilderness of the mortal world. The fall of the king of Tyre, in the lamentation of Ezekiel 28, is frequently interpreted as having been typed on Adam.<sup>61</sup> The kind is described as a “seal of perfection,”<sup>62</sup> in essence Yahweh’s signet ring, faithfully bearing in every detail “the likeness of Yahweh” and the righteous exercise of “divine authority in the world.”<sup>63</sup> The use of this term may also witness his perfection in the keeping of the covenant to which he is bound to his sovereign Lord.<sup>64</sup> Previously, the king had dwelled “upon the holy mountain of God,”<sup>65</sup> walking “up and down in the midst of stones of fire.”<sup>66</sup> Verse 13 explicitly identifies this mountain as Eden.<sup>67</sup> “Eden, as a luxuriant cosmic mountain becomes an archetype or symbol for the earthly temple,”<sup>68</sup> a place from which the protagonist is to be “cast ... out”<sup>69</sup> because of the “multitude of [his] iniquities.”<sup>70</sup> Significantly, God says that he is not only to be cast out, but also that he is to be “cast ... to the ground.”<sup>71</sup> The Hebrew term *eres* (ground) has a double sense: “[o]n the one hand, it evokes an iconoclastic picture of an idol being hurled down and lying in ruins on the ground (*eres*)”<sup>72</sup> rather than standing in the holy place of the sanctuary. On the other hand, it evokes the imagery of Adam being thrown out of Eden to live on the earth (*eres*).<sup>73</sup>

Adam and Eve’s expulsion is described twice in Genesis, with different terms used in each case.<sup>74</sup> The Hebrew word *shillah* (“send him forth”) in 3:23 is followed by the harsher term *geresh* (“drove out”), used in 3:24. Significantly, the same two terms are used in the same order in the book of Exodus to describe how Pharaoh would drive Israel away from their familiar comforts in Egypt — their erstwhile “Eden” — into the wilderness.<sup>75</sup> This deliberate parallel suggests that we are not meant to read Adam and Eve’s exit from Eden as depicting a unique event but rather as demonstrating a repeated type of mankind’s difficulty, in its fallen state, to “stand in holy places” and not be “moved.”<sup>76</sup> The importance of this recurring theme to the entire story of Adam and Eve will become clearer as we now begin to examine it in more detail.

The motif of standing in the holy place goes back to the moment of Adam’s creation. Of significance to our subject is the commentary on Genesis 2:7 by the revered Jewish exegete Rashi that connects the themes of creation and atonement to the idea of standing in God’s presence:

God took [Adam’s] dust from the place of [the temple altar, signifying His] wish that [Adam might] gain atonement, and that *he may be able to stand*.<sup>78</sup>



Figure 2: Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455): *Creation of Adam*, from *Gates of Paradise*, 1425-1452



Figure 3: *The Harrowing of Hell* from the Exultet Roll: *Codex Barberini Latinus 592*. (f. 4) , ca. 1087

In contrast to cattle, which Rashi said “do not stand to be judged”<sup>79</sup> (in other words, are not held accountable for their actions<sup>80</sup>), Jewish accounts of Adam’s creation specifically highlight his first experience after being filled with the breath of life:<sup>81</sup> namely, the moment when God “stood him on his legs”<sup>82</sup> (Figure 2). According to Zornberg,<sup>83</sup> it is in the ability to stand in the presence of God that one specifically demonstrates the attainment of full “majesty and strength.”

Medieval artistic convention makes it clear that Christ was imagined as raising the dead to eternal life by the same gesture that was used to create Adam and stand him on his feet<sup>84</sup> (Figure 3). Likewise, we note the Old Testament literary formula that nearly always follows descriptions of miraculous revivals of the dead with the observation that they “stood up upon their feet.”<sup>85</sup>

More generally, in Christian iconography this gesture is used in scenes representing a transition from one state or place to another. For example, a depiction at the Church of San Marco in Venice shows God taking Adam by the wrist to bring him through the door of Paradise and to introduce him into the Garden of Eden.<sup>86</sup> Another Christian scene shows God taking Adam by the wrist as he and Eve receive the commandment not to partake of the Tree of Knowledge.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, scripture and pseudepigrapha describe how prophets such as Enoch,<sup>88</sup> Abraham,<sup>89</sup> Daniel,<sup>90</sup> and John<sup>91</sup> are grasped by the hand of an angel and raised to a standing position in key moments of their heavenly visions.<sup>92</sup>

It is by being raised by the hand to the upright position that we are made ready to hear the word of the Lord. It is no mere coincidence that before heavenly messengers can perform their errands to Ezekiel,<sup>93</sup> Daniel,<sup>94</sup> Paul,<sup>95</sup> Alma the Younger,<sup>96</sup> and Nephi<sup>97</sup> they must first command these seers to stand on their feet.<sup>98</sup> As biblical scholar Robert Hayward has said: “You stand in the temple,<sup>99</sup> you stand before the Lord,<sup>100</sup> you pray standing up<sup>101</sup> — you can’t approach God on all fours like an animal. If you can stand, you can serve God in His temple.”<sup>102</sup> If you are stained with sin, you cannot stand in His presence.<sup>103</sup>

Jewish writings tell of how Adam lost the divine ability to stand through his taking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. For example, in an account that plays on the nuances of Hebrew terms for standing, we read:

Before the sin, Adam could “hear God speaking and *stand on his legs* ... he could *withstand* it.”<sup>104</sup> ... In another midrash, God says, “Woe Adam! Could you not *stand in your commandment* for even one hour?”

After the Fall, Adam and Eve sorrowed over the loss of the fruit trees of Eden as the source of mankind’s food (whether meant literally or figuratively) — leaving them nothing besides “the herb of the field” to eat. In connecting the king of Tyre to Adam, Ezekiel also alludes to the book of Daniel, explicitly calling him “wiser than Daniel”<sup>105</sup> and implicitly evoking “the theme of estrangement from one’s own essential human identity”



Figure 4: William Blake, 1757-1827: *Nebuchadnezzar*, 1795

in that book's depiction of the arrogance and subsequent abasement of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>106</sup> Building on these scriptural associations, Rabbinical and early Christian writings saw Adam and Eve's loss of their paradisiacal food as part of a humiliating penance, to a degree in the likeness of Nebuchadnezzar's transformation to a beastlike state.<sup>107</sup>

Regarding Nebuchadnezzar, we read in Daniel 4:31-33:

O king Nebuchadnezzar, ... The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: ... until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

Nebuchadnezzar's madness and self-exclusion from society ended only when he satisfactorily completed the process of penance.<sup>108</sup>

In presenting Adam and Eve as being temporarily reduced to eating the herb of the field like the animals,<sup>109</sup> the Jewish scholar Rashi played on the double meaning of the Hebrew term *veirdu* in Genesis 1:28. He commented that instead of man's "having dominion" over the beasts as God originally intended, he now would "fall down" below and be

with them.<sup>110</sup> The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* says that after hearing the consequences of his transgression, Adam pled that he might be spared:

I beseech by the mercy before you, O Lord, let me not be reckoned before you as cattle, that I should eat the grass of the surface of the field. I will arise [literally, "*I will stand up*"] and labor ... and I will eat the food of the earth; and thus let there be a distinction before you between the children of men and the offspring of cattle.<sup>111</sup>

Tradition records that God eventually answered Adam's prayer by showing him how to grow wheat for bread, making it clear that this curse was not meant as an arbitrary "punishment" but rather as a temporary ascetic "discipline for spiritual renewal."<sup>112</sup> Although to be banished from the Garden of Eden "is to lose a particular standing ground,"<sup>113</sup> it was always God's intention to restore Adam and Eve and their posterity to their former glory,<sup>114</sup> enabling their "confidence" to again "wax strong"<sup>115</sup> in His presence.<sup>116</sup>

The humiliation of the serpent is an important part of this story as well. Significantly, it is not only banished from holy places but also is reminded that it will never be able to stand at all: "upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."<sup>117</sup> Note that the Mosaic law will declare that what goes along on its belly is an abomination to Israel.<sup>118</sup> The metaphor of eating dust occurs several times in scripture in connection with the fate of conquered foes.<sup>119</sup>

In contrast to the temporary nature of Adam and Eve's estrangement from God, the book of *Jubilees* reports that the serpent "was not and never will be afforded any chance at repentance"<sup>120</sup> because of its role in the Fall. As a symbol of this consequence, we are told that the serpent permanently lost its legs<sup>121</sup> and, with that loss, the ability to stand.<sup>122</sup> "The loss of limbs and organs guarantees that the rebel will never rise anew in his full powers, which he will never possess again,"<sup>123</sup> being consigned to crawl on its belly and eat of the dust forever.<sup>124</sup>

## 2. Israel's Failure to Stand at Sinai

I have already mentioned the deliberate parallel between Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden and Israel's exodus from Egypt to their wilderness probation. As the path of exaltation was revealed through five covenants given to Adam and Eve after the Fall,<sup>125</sup> so Israel's salvation was also understood in rabbinical teaching to have been made contingent on its acceptance of the five parts of God's Law.<sup>126</sup>

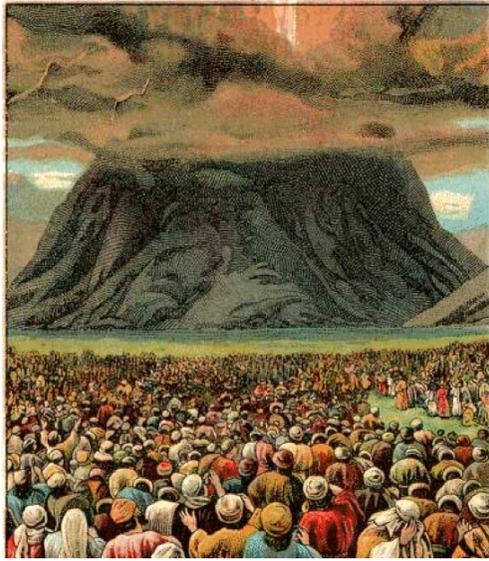


Figure 5: *The Children of Israel at Mount Sinai*

In contrast to Moses, Israel proved themselves unready to accept the fulness of God's law at Sinai.<sup>127</sup> They preferred that Moses go alone to ascend the holy mountain, while they stayed at its foot<sup>128</sup> (Figure 5). Painting a vivid word picture of how the Israelites were unable to stand in the divine presence, Rashi explains that when they heard the sound of the voice of God emanate from Sinai "they moved backwards and stood at a distance: they were repelled to the rear a distance of twelve miles — that is the whole length of the camp. Then the angels came and helped them forward again." Zornberg reasons: "If this happened at each of the Ten Commandments, the people are imagined as traveling 240 miles in order to stand in place!"<sup>129</sup> Though this imagery is, of course, figurative, it is highly instructive.

We see this same movement away from God and toward the regions of death at the incident of the Golden Calf.<sup>131</sup> Before their sin, the Israelites looked without fear upon the divine flames of God's presence at the top of the mountain, but as soon as they had sinned, they could not bear to see even the face of Moses, God's intermediary.<sup>132</sup> By way of contrast to the Israelites, Moses, like Jesus at the Transfiguration,<sup>133</sup> was covered by a glorious cloud<sup>134</sup> as he communed face-to-face with the Lord, having been made like God Himself.<sup>135</sup> Moses then stood to Israel as God stood to him and, having received the power of an eternal life, he became known in the Samaritan literature as "the Standing One."<sup>136</sup>

Comparing the sin of the Israelites to the transgression of Adam, midrash has God reproaching them:

Like Adam, the people were destined to live forever, but "when they [made the golden calf and] said, 'These are your gods, O Israel!,' death came upon them. God said, 'You have followed the system of Adam, who *did not stand*<sup>137</sup> the pressure of his testing for three hours. . . ." "I said, 'You are gods. . . ." But you went in the ways of Adam,' so 'indeed like Adam you shall die. And like one of the princes you shall fall'<sup>138</sup> — you have brought yourself low."<sup>139</sup>

The midrash uses the imagery of the Fall with a perfect consistency. The sin [of taking the forbidden fruit], as such, is not mentioned. Instead, what Adam, and again the Israelites, represents is a kind of spinelessness, a vapidness. The word that is used in *Sanhedrin* 38b to describe the sin is *sarah*, which implies exactly this aesthetic offensiveness: it holds nuances of evaporation, loss of substance, and the offensive odor of mortification. "O my offense is rank, it smells to heaven."<sup>140</sup> It signifies a failure to stand in the presence of God, to maintain the posture of eternal life. "You have brought yourselves low": man, the midrash boldly implies, does not really want full and eternal being. He chooses death, lessened being. What looks like defiance is an abandonment of a difficult posture.

### 3. The Fall of the Temple Guards at Jesus's Arrest

Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts highlight the perfidy of Judas as the one who identified his Master to the temple guards; the gospel of John emphasizes Christ's mastery of the situation. The kiss of Judas does not appear in John's narrative — in the words of Ridderbos, "Judas' task of identifying Jesus had been taken out of his hands."<sup>142</sup> Instead, at that moment, Jesus is shown in full control of the arresting party by His startling *self*-identification:<sup>143</sup>

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he* . . .

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.



Figure 6: J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *The Guards Falling Backwards*, 1886-1894

The King James translation of the Greek phrase *ego eimi* as “I am *he*” obscures an essential detail. In reality, Jesus has not said, “I am *he*,” but rather “I AM,” using a divine name that directly identifies Him as being Jehovah.<sup>145</sup> Thus, asserts Raymond E. Brown, it is clear that the fall of the temple guards is no mere slapstick scene that might be “explained away or trivialized. To know or use the divine name, as Jesus does [in replying with ‘I AM’], is an exercise of awesome power.”<sup>146</sup>

This event is nothing more nor less than a replay of the scene of the children of Israel at Sinai discussed earlier.<sup>147</sup> In effect, in the gospel of John, the narrative takes the form of an eyewitness report<sup>148</sup> of a solemn revelation to the band of arresting Jewish temple guards<sup>149</sup> that they were standing, as it were, in a “Holy of Holies” made sacred by the presence of the embodied Jehovah, and that they, with full comprehension of the irony of their pernicious intent, were about to do harm to the very Master of the Lord’s House, whose precincts they had been sworn to protect. As with the Israelites at Sinai who were unworthy and thus unable to stand in the holy place, “those of the dark world fell back, repelled by the presence of the Light of the world.”<sup>150</sup>

To delve further into the symbolism of the scene, note that the Jews were generally prohibited from pronouncing the divine name, Jehovah.<sup>151</sup> As an exception, that Name was solemnly pronounced by the High Priest

standing in the most holy place of the temple once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Upon the hearing of that Name, according to the *Mishnah*, all the people were to fall on their faces.<sup>152</sup> Was it any coincidence, then, that Jesus Christ, the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek,<sup>153</sup> boldly proclaimed His identity as the great “I AM” at the very place and on the very night He atoned for the sins of the world? Ironically, the temple guards who failed to fall on their faces at the sound of the divine Name were instead thrown on their backs in awestruck impotence.



Figure 7: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, ca. 1525-1569: *The Triumph of Death*, 1562

### Standing in Holy Places in the Last Days

Figure 7 depicts the landscape of hell. Sadly, it is also the landscape of much of the world we live in today, foreseen nearly a century ago by the poet William Butler Yeats:<sup>154</sup>

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
 Are full of passionate intensity ...  
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
 Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Though there are many references in modern scripture to the general idea of standing in righteousness, each of the three instances of specific instructions for the faithful to stand in holy places appear in apocalyptic descriptions of the latter-day gathering and the destruction that will precede the Savior's Second Coming.<sup>155</sup>

First, in Doctrine and Covenants 45, an overt expansion on the instructions and prophecies given to the apostles on the Mount of Olives, we are told:<sup>156</sup>

And there shall be men standing in that generation [i.e., in the last days], that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.

But my disciples shall *stand in holy places and shall not be moved*; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die. ...

And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore *we cannot stand*. ...

For when the Lord shall appear he shall be terrible unto them, that fear may seize upon them, and they shall *stand afar off and tremble*.

Note that modern scripture is perfectly consistent with the subtle imagery of the biblical examples cited earlier. A contrast is drawn between the disciples, who “stand in holy places” and are “not moved,” and the wicked, who “stand afar off and tremble.”<sup>157</sup> Another Doctrine and Covenants reference tells us that the earth itself will also tremble, and “men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand.”<sup>158</sup>

The second Doctrine and Covenants reference to standing in holy places is found in section 87, as part of the revelation and prophecy on the wars and disasters that will eventually “make a full end of all nations.”<sup>159</sup> Here, the Saints are told:<sup>160</sup>

Wherefore, *stand ye in holy places, and be not moved*, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen.

The final specific mention of this phrase is in section 101, in a revelation responding to the Saints being driven from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri. The following verses assure the Saints that, despite their forcible ejection from the place where they had begun to

build the city of New Jerusalem, it will not be moved, but rather will continue as the central gathering place from which Zion will eventually extend herself to fill the earth.<sup>161</sup>

Zion shall *not be moved* out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered ...

And behold, there is none other place appointed ... for the work of the gathering of my saints —

Until ... there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.

Behold it is my will, that all they who call on my name ... should gather together, and *stand in holy places*;

And prepare for the revelation ... when ... all flesh shall see me together.

The Saints in Joseph Smith's time would have understood the term “holy places” in section 101 as the current and future stakes to which they were being gathered both spiritually and physically. Each one of these stakes was originally intended to feature its own temple as a focal point for the community. Borrowing vivid word pictures from the book of Isaiah,<sup>162</sup> the Doctrine and Covenants describes the kingdom of God as a tent whose expanse increases continually outward from its “center place”<sup>163</sup> through the establishment of “stakes, for the curtains or strength of Zion.”<sup>164</sup>

At the time section 101 was received, the “center place” of the tent would have been understood as Jackson County, Missouri, the intended location of the New Jerusalem, and the ever expanding curtains of the tent would have represented the growing number of outlying stakes<sup>165</sup> that were eventually destined to span the whole earth — and, ultimately, to unite in perfect reflection with their counterparts in heaven. The revelations make it clear that it is “in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem” that are to be found “those places which [God has] appointed for refuge.”<sup>166</sup> God's whole purpose is to draw the people of the world to such places of safety, the express purpose of the Church being “for the gathering of his saints to *stand* upon Mount Zion.”<sup>167</sup>

Having considered what it means to “stand in holy places” in the last days with respect to the *New Jerusalem*, we return to Jesus's prophecies about *old Jerusalem*. In addition to the first “abomination

of desolation” that was to occur within the lifetime of the apostles, the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 24 predicts a *second* “abomination of desolation”:<sup>168</sup>

And *again, in the last days*, the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, will be fulfilled.

To understand the events associated with this verse, we must examine the theme of measurement — in this case the measurement of the disciple individually and collectively with reference to the dimensions and layout of the temple.



Figure 8: J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *Jesus Goes Up Alone unto a Mountain to Pray* (detail), 1886-1894

### “The Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ”

Connecting the idea of an individual disciple standing in the holy place to the size of the temple are scriptural references to the requirement of exact conformance of the disciple to the moral dimensions defined by divinity. Only those who are of a perfect spiritual stature are qualified to stand in the presence of God. In describing the essential qualities the youthful Jesus acquired as he grew to manhood, Luke states that He “increased in wisdom and *stature*.”<sup>170</sup> In their strivings to become like their Lord, Paul instructed his readers to attain such “a knowledge of the Son of God” that would enable them also to become as the “perfect man,”<sup>171</sup> thus attaining “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”<sup>172</sup> This supreme objective, of course, could not be accomplished without divine

help, for “[w]hich of you by taking thought,” Jesus rhetorically asked in the Sermon the Mount, “can add one cubit unto his stature?”<sup>173</sup>

The idea of the disciples adding cubit to cubit until they measured up to the perfection of Christ in stature would have been recognized by early Christians as an analogy to the process of temple building.<sup>175</sup> The temple, like the disciple, was required to conform to the exact measures revealed by God.<sup>176</sup> Recall, for example, how the dimensions of each aspect of the Israelite Tabernacle were described in minute detail to Moses;<sup>177</sup> and how Ezekiel<sup>179</sup> witnessed the careful measurement of his visionary temple. A similar motif of measurement of the temple precincts occurs in the book of Revelation,<sup>178</sup> as we will see below.



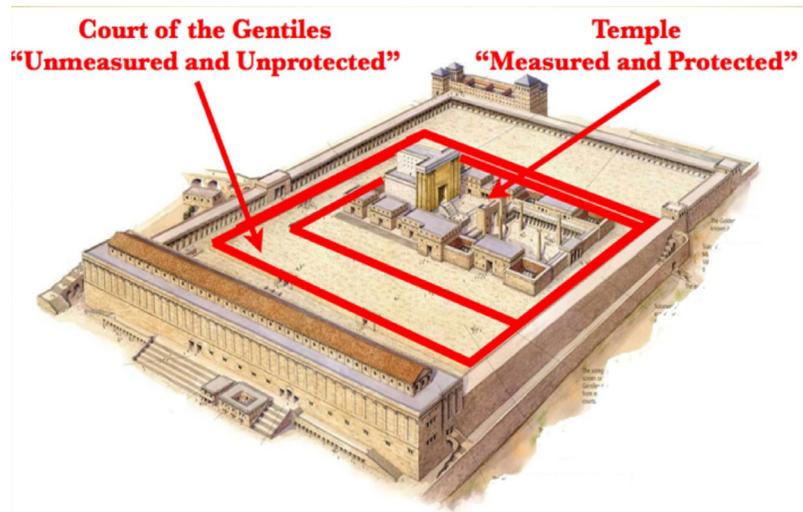
Figure 9: Investiture scene from the Ur-Nammu Stela, ca. 2100 BCE

Ronan James Head and I have made a study of the Investiture Panel at Mari,<sup>181</sup> where one is also struck by the significant role played by measurement in the planning and construction of temples and palaces. As emblems that symbolically conjoin the acts of measurement in laying the foundations of sacred buildings and the processes of cosmic creation, one sees the Mesopotamian rod and ring, shown here in the right hand of Ur-Nammu. These two instruments of the rod and ring functioned essentially as a “yardstick” and a “tape measure,”<sup>182</sup> and can be profitably compared to the “measuring reed” and “line of flax” of Ezekiel,<sup>183</sup> as well as to the analogous cosmic surveying instruments of the square and the compass.<sup>184</sup> Consistent with the general biblical symbolism, the

Mesopotamian measuring devices also served as visual metaphors for the personal righteousness of those who were made kings.<sup>185</sup> These kings, like the early Christians addressed by Jesus and Paul, were expected to “measure up” to their high and holy callings.

We return to Jesus’s question: “[w]hich of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”<sup>186</sup> “No one,” writes John W. Welch, “would be presumptuous enough to add a single cubit to any part of the temple.”<sup>187</sup> Neither, I would add, would individuals aspiring to conform to “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”<sup>188</sup> presume to improve upon the dimensions of His perfection.

Let us turn now to the idea of temple measurement as it relates to the community of disciples collectively.



**Figure 10:** According to the 11th chapter of Revelation, those standing within the temple complex are measured and protected

The 11th chapter of Revelation opens with the angel’s instruction to John to “measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.”<sup>189</sup> By way of contrast, John is told *not* to measure the areas lying outside the temple complex proper — in other words, the outer courtyard. In the context of the rest of the chapter, the meaning of the angel’s instructions is clear: only those who are standing *within* the scope of John’s measure — in other words, within the temple — will receive God’s protection<sup>190</sup> (Figure 10).

Of course, we are not speaking here of the measurement of a literal physical structure, but rather of measuring or judging the community of

disciples who have been called to form the living temple of God,<sup>191</sup> each individual in his or her differing degree of righteousness.<sup>192</sup> Spiritually speaking, the worshippers standing in the holy place are those who have kept their covenants.<sup>193</sup> These are they who, according to Revelation 14:1, will stand with the Lamb “on ... mount Sion.”

By way of contrast, all individuals standing in the outer courtyard, being unmeasured and unprotected, will be, in the words of the book of Revelation, “given unto the Gentiles” to be “tread under foot”<sup>194</sup> with the rest of the wicked in Jerusalem.

Ultimately, we read in section 101, “every corruptible thing ... that dwells upon all the face of the earth ... shall be consumed.”<sup>195</sup> By “every corruptible thing” the verse means every being that is of a *terrestrial* nature. Only those who can withstand dwelling in at least a *terrestrial* glory will remain on the earth during the millennial reign of Christ. In that day, only those who remain unmoved in the holy place will be able to “stand still, with the utmost assurance to see the salvation of God.”<sup>196</sup>

In summary, where are the “holy places” in which we are to stand? In light of everything discussed in this chapter, the frequently heard suggestion that such “holy places” include temples, stakes, chapels, and homes seems wholly appropriate.<sup>197</sup> However, it should be remembered that what makes these places holy — and secure — are the covenants kept by those standing within. According to midrash, Sodom itself could have been a place of safety had there been a circle of as few as ten righteous individuals in the city to “pray on behalf of all of them.”<sup>198</sup>

We have completed our selective survey of passages in biblical books from Genesis to Revelation, showing how the idea of “standing in holy places” in modern scripture reverberates throughout ancient religious thought. Now, in conclusion, a few personal observations.

### Personal and Practical Observations on Standing and Falling

Many years ago, when I learned how to ski, I was taught that the first thing I needed to know was how to fall. In skiing, as in life, falling is an unavoidable if unpleasant prologue to eventual mastery of the slopes. Zornberg insightfully summarizes this lesson from Jewish tradition:

The *Talmud* makes an extraordinary observation about the paradoxes of “standing”: “No man stands on [i.e., can rightly under-stand] the words of *Torah*, unless he has stumbled over them.”<sup>200</sup> To discover firm standing ground, it is necessary to explore, to stumble, even to fall ...<sup>199</sup>



Figure 11: *Yahoel Lifts the Fallen Abraham*,  
Codex Sylvester, 14th century

In our repeated falls, we should be reassured in the knowledge that, like the Israelites at Sinai, we can receive help from “angels” appointed to assist our journey from the foothills of the sacred mountain and back into God’s presence at the summit.<sup>200</sup> Such a scene is depicted above, where the fallen Abraham gratefully testified that the Angel Yahoel “took [him] by [his] right hand and stood [him] on [his] feet.”<sup>202</sup> Through the ordinances of the priesthood, each of us may be given the knowledge and power to rise from our falls and stand in safety in the holy place.

The continual challenges endemic in the life of a disciple should teach us something about the nature of “standing” itself: namely, that what might appear to the naïve as a “static position” will, with experience, eventually be better understood as “a point of equilibrium in the eye of a storm.”<sup>204</sup> Lest anyone think that living a life of continual standing in the presence of God is a “heavy, humdrum, and safe” affair, I close with the words of G. K. Chesterton, who understood that the essence of discipleship is to maintain:

... the equilibrium of a man behind madly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and to sway that, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic ... It is always simple to fall; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands.<sup>205</sup>

## Appendix: The Abomination of Desolation<sup>207</sup>

Though the Joseph Smith Translation and the Authorized Version differ about who or what will or should stand in the holy place, all scriptural accounts cite Daniel as the source for the prophecy about the “abomination of desolation.”<sup>207</sup> This term is sometimes rendered more precisely in modern translations as the “desolating sacrilege” or the “abomination that brings desolation.”<sup>208</sup>

While differing on the timeframe involved, most commentators agree that the “abomination of desolation” prophesied by Jesus, following the pattern of a presumed earlier fulfillment of the same prophecy by Daniel at the time of the Maccabees,<sup>209</sup> has something to do with the desecration of the Jerusalem temple.<sup>210</sup> For example, the key event is seen by some as when the Roman general Titus entered the most holy place in AD 70. The setting up of the Roman standards in the temple, or a comparable occurrence at a different time, has frequently been cited as the historical event corresponding to Matthew’s prediction that the “abomination of desolation” would “stand in the holy place.”<sup>211</sup>

In the body of the chapter, I have already discussed the fact that the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 24 replaces the plain sense of the Greek New Testament text predicting that an *evil thing* would desecrate the holy place, thereby *profaning* it, with the idea that the *righteous* would stand in the holy place and would thereby be *saved*. Throughout the chapter, I give examples of how the idea of the righteous standing in holy places in modern scripture finds a home in ancient religious thought. The previous analysis, however, leaves an important question unanswered: If the “abomination of desolation” is not some evil thing standing in the temple, what is it? In this appendix, I summarize and expand upon the view of New Testament scholar Peter G. Bolt whose interpretation provides one possible answer to this question.

By way of preface, it should be observed that scholars have found problems with the generally received view that the “abomination of desolation” referred to by Jesus involved the desecration of the Jerusalem temple. Note that the difficulty in interpretation is not about the desolation that was to come upon the Holy City — everyone agrees that this desolation refers to the Roman siege that ended in AD 70 — but rather about the nature of the “abomination” that was to be the proximal cause of this destruction. New Testament scholar R. T. France summarizes and critiques “the three main proposals of historical events which might have been recognized ... by those who had heard of Jesus’s prediction”<sup>212</sup> of this “abomination”:

1. In AD 40 the emperor Gaius gave orders for a statue of himself to be set up in the temple at Jerusalem; fortunately the order had still not been carried out when Gaius was assassinated in AD 41, thus averting what would have been a bloody uprising.
2. Probably during the winter of AD 67-68 the Zealots took over the temple as their headquarters, and Josephus speaks with horror of the way they “invaded the sanctuary with polluted feet” and mocked the temple ritual, while the sanctuary was defiled with blood as factional fighting broke out.<sup>213</sup>
3. When the Roman troops eventually broke into the temple, the presence of their (idolatrous) standards in the sacred precincts would inevitably remind Jews of Antiochus; Josephus even mentions Roman soldiers offering sacrifices to their standards in the temple courts.<sup>214</sup> Luke’s parallel to this verse<sup>215</sup> apparently understands the [“abomination of desolation”] in this sense.

However, France concludes that:

None of these three events quite fits what this verse says: the Gaius event was too early (and in fact never happened) and the Roman presence in the sanctuary too late to provide a signal for escape before the end came, while the Zealot occupation, which took place at the right time, was perhaps not quite the type of pagan defilement envisaged by Daniel.

In light of such difficulties in trying to make prophecy fit history, Peter Bolt has argued that Jesus’s words about the “abomination of desolation” did not concern the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem, but rather referred to the violent and ultimately fatal profanation of the temple of Jesus’s body — which the Savior Himself previously had said could be destroyed and raised up in three days.<sup>217</sup> Bolt asserts that in quoting the prophet Daniel, the Savior was using “apocalyptic language preparing the disciples for [His own] coming death. This fits with the rest of [the] story, for [there could be no] greater act of sacrilege than the destruction of God’s Son in such a horrendous way.”<sup>218</sup> Had not Jesus once referred to Himself as “one *greater than* the temple”?<sup>219</sup> Also of significance to the meaning of the prophecy is the fact that Daniel 9:26, in the words of New Testament scholar Craig Keener, “associates the [“abomination of desolation”] with the cutting off of an anointed ruler, close to the time of Jesus.”<sup>220</sup>

With respect to the scriptural association of the “abomination of desolation” with the theme of Gentile domination, Bolt explains:<sup>222</sup>

Israel’s leadership will welcome their long-awaited Messiah by handing Him over to the Gentiles; that is, by handing him over to the wrath of God. And if that were not sacrilegious enough, Pilate, the representative of the Gentiles, will receive the Messiah from Israel, and condemn Him to death by crucifixion . . . If the destruction of the temple of God by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC, or the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 169 BC, was an abomination committed by the Gentiles, how much more is the “temple of his body” desecrated when the Gentiles destroy the Son of God on their cross?



**Figure 12: J. James Tissot, 1836-1902:  
*The Apostles' Hiding Place*, 1886-1894**

What of Jesus’s instructions to His disciples: “let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains”?<sup>224</sup> According to the early church historian Eusebius, Jewish Christians knew of and heeded this warning by Jesus and, when the armies began to surround Jerusalem in AD 68-70, they fled beyond Jordan, congregating mostly at Pella. Thus, asserted Eusebius, “not one Christian perished in the awful siege.”<sup>225</sup>

However, Keener<sup>226</sup> points out at least one unsolved problem, namely that “Pella is not in the Judean mountains but in foothills and reached from the Jordan valley.”<sup>227</sup>

Alternatively, in Bolt's view,<sup>229</sup> the flight of the apostles shortly after Christ's death rather than the flight of Jewish Christians following the siege of Jerusalem is the primary reference of Jesus's instructions in Matthew 24:16-20. Once Jesus is arrested by the Romans, the disciples are being told to flee urgently, which they later do in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>230</sup>



**Figure 13: J. James Tissot, 1836-1902:**  
*The First Nail, 1886-1894*

Concerning the period of great tribulation that is also associated with the prophecy, Bolt explains:<sup>231</sup>

The great distress [mentioned in the Olivet discourse] is also a phrase drawn from Daniel. In the final chapter, Daniel learns that, just before the future day of resurrection,<sup>232</sup> there will be [a] time of terrible suffering.<sup>233</sup> Daniel promises that in that time of distress God's people will be delivered.

Jesus informs his disciples that this suffering will be "such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be . . ." <sup>234</sup> By pushing it back to creation itself, Jesus encompasses the entire period of human existence in order to indicate that this coming distress will exceed any suffering that has ever been experienced . . . Jesus adds a statement that broadens the scope of His comparison into the future. There "never will be" . . . such suffering again. The suffering He has in view will be worse than any that has been experienced before, and will be worse than anything else to follow.

There is nothing trivial about the suffering of Christ [during His Atonement. It] was the greatest suffering this world has ever known — or will ever know.

"Which suffering," the Lord Himself says in D&C 19:18, "caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit — and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink —"

The Latter-day Saint view, based on an unambiguous statement in the JST, is that a second "abomination of desolation" will occur "in the last days."<sup>235</sup> If one were to accept Bolt's arguments that the first "abomination of desolation" had to do with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, could an analogous event corresponding to a latter-day fulfillment of this prophecy be found?



**Figure 14: J. James Tissot, 1836-1902:**  
*Zacharias Killed Between the Temple and the Altar, 1886-1894*

Further probing the expected nature of the abomination, it should first be observed that, according to Keener,<sup>237</sup> the "Jewish people recognized that shedding innocent blood in the sanctuary would profane it,<sup>238</sup> and some even saw this defilement as a desolation.<sup>239</sup> Josephus indicated that the shedding of priestly blood in the sanctuary<sup>240</sup> was the desecration or 'abomination,' that invited the ultimate desolation of AD 70."<sup>241</sup> Note also that, in the chapter of Matthew just prior to the discourse on the Mount of Olives,<sup>242</sup> Jesus Himself had alluded to the "blood of the righteous Abel" whose death, in some ancient traditions, was erroneously believed to have atoned for the sins of others.<sup>243</sup> In the same verse, Jesus also mentioned the "blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar," as shown in Figure 14.

In the scriptures, there is a latter-day analogue to the shedding of the innocent blood of Jesus Christ. It is, of course, found in the ministry and martyrdom of the two witnesses described in chapter 11 of the book of

Revelation.<sup>244</sup> Using temple language, they are described as “the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”<sup>245</sup> Though no explicit location is given for their death,<sup>246</sup> their ministry, like that of the Savior, is described as corresponding to the prophet Daniel’s apocalyptic period of 1,260 days. Having carefully scrutinized the evidence, New Testament scholar Gregory Beale, concludes that these “two witnesses are identified with *the Witness*”:<sup>247</sup>

The pattern of the narrative of the witnesses’ career in 11:2-12 is intended as a replica of Christ’s career: proclamation and signs result in satanic opposition, persecution,<sup>248</sup> and violent death in the city where Christ was crucified, the world looks on its victim<sup>249</sup> and rejoices;<sup>250</sup> then the witnesses are raised and vindicated by ascension in a cloud.

In summary, these two events — the crucifixion of the Savior and the martyrdom of the two latter-day witnesses — provide a model for the “abomination of desolation” that is not dependent on the desecration of the Jerusalem temple as the cause of the ensuing desolation of the Holy City. Though Bolt’s hypothesis does not, of course, exhaust the possibilities for alternative explanations, it may provide a starting point for an interpretation of the past and future occurrences of the “abomination of desolation” that is consistent with the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 24:15.

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### Figure Credits

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## Notes

1. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 195.
2. Joseph Smith — Matthew 1:4.
3. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Excursus 53, p. 675.
4. Matthew 24:15.
5. Matthew 24:15.
6. Mark 13:14.
7. Luke 21:20.
8. Matthew 24:15.
9. Joseph Smith — Matthew 1:12-13.
10. The only significant mention of this change that I have found is by Richard Lloyd Anderson (Joseph Smith’s Insights, p. 61 n. 37):
 

The first word of the King James phrase, “stand in the holy place,” translates a Greek participle dependent on “abomination,” which is thus “standing in the holy place.” With historical meaning as a concept, the sentence was recast with “stand” as an imperative verb: at the coming of the abomination of desolation, “then you shall stand in the holy place” (Joseph Smith — Matthew 1:12). Incidentally, this adaptation also gave new meaning to “holy place.”
11. H. Bloom, *American Religion*, pp. 98, 99, 101.
12. J. L. Kugel, *How to Read*, pp. 674, 676; cf. M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 29-30.
13. See, e.g., J. Nolland, *Matthew*, pp. 968-972; S. T. Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, pp. 382-383; R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 911-913. C. S. Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 573-578 provides the most thorough discussion of the meaning of this prophecy in a temple context.
14. J. E. Faulconer, *Incarnation*, p. 44, emphasis added. See also J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, pp. 8-12. My views on this topic draw heavily on the insightful perspectives of Faulconer.
15. See D&C 45:32.
16. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 21.
17. I will not survey the many instances in scripture where standing is associated with ordinary prayer and praise, e.g., 1 Chronicles 23:30. For a classic source on the posture of prayer, see D. R. Ap-Thomas, *Notes*, especially pp. 225-230.
18. C. S. Lewis, *Descriptione*; G. d. Santillana et al., *Hamlet’s Mill*, p. 10.

Specifically regarding the ancient view of the temple, Mark Smith writes: “The idea of divine presence barely resonates in our culture. We stand at such a massive distance from the ancient traditions of the Jerusalem temple ... As the decades pass, our culture seems increasingly removed from the Christian and Jewish religious traditions that drew upon the experience of temple” (M. S. Smith, *Priestly Vision*, p. 36).

19. Benjamin McGuire offers a useful compendium of the pitfalls of the comparative approach, along with helpful guidelines (B. A. McGuire, Finding Parallels 1; B. A. McGuire, Finding Parallels 2). While I have not attempted to apply McGuire’s methodology rigorously to the comparisons made across the wide variety of scriptural passages and commentaries used in this article, I have tried to be sensitive to the relevant issues. In particular we have tried to avoid placing stress on mere language similarities in translations of texts and have tried to focus more on themes, especially where these themes are recognized by relevant scholarship. Though some revelatory passages in the Joseph Smith’s translations and revelations seem to have remarkable congruencies with ancient texts, we think it is fruitless to rely on them as a means for uncovering biblical *Urtex*ts. Likewise, when we present similarities between ancient sources and the modern scripture, the intent is not to show that they share identity in some way, but rather to engage the older sources to help us interpret modern revelation.
20. A. H. King, Joseph, pp. 287-288.
21. Abraham 3:24.
22. Abraham 3:23.
23. See J. M. Bradshaw, Tree of Knowledge, pp. 50-52.
24. Moses 7:2.
25. R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, p. 112, citing G. J. Botterweck et al., TDOT, 8:532-544 and G. Kittel et al., *Dictionary*, 8:195-199, 204-207. As an example, they cite the use of this term for Gethsemane in Luke 22:40 and John 18:2.
26. Moses 7:3-4.
27. Moses 7:56.
28. Moses 7:57.
29. Exodus 3:1.
30. Directly tying this symbolism to the Jerusalem Temple, Nicolas Wyatt concludes, “The Menorah is probably what Moses is understood to have seen as the burning bush in Exodus 3” (N. Wyatt, *Space*, 169). Thus we might see Jehovah as being represented to Moses as one who

dwells on the holy mountain of the Lord in the midst of the burning glory of the Tree of Life.

Some might question this symbolism because the Menorah did not stand in the sacred center of the second temple. However, Margaret Barker argues that “there is reason to believe that the Menorah ... originally stood [in the Holy of Holies], and not in the great hall of the temple” (Barker, Margaret. *The Hidden Tradition of the Kingdom of God*. London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), 2007, 6). For more on the topic of the sacred center of the temple and its relationship to the placement of the two special trees in the Garden of Eden, see J. M. Bradshaw, Tree of Knowledge.

31. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 15.
32. Exodus 3:5.
33. Joshua 5:14.
34. See below for scriptural instances where prophets were explicitly told to stand on their feet prior to receiving a divine message, or were raised to their feet by the handclasp of a messenger.
35. Joshua 5:15.
36. “No footwear is mentioned in the prescriptions for priestly attire in Exodus 28, 39, and Leviticus 8; cf. H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Exodus, 2:13, p. 57” (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 240 n. 16).
37. Moses 1:17.
38. Moses 1:25-26.
39. Moses 1:31. For a discussion of the meaning and significance of this face-to-face encounter between God and Moses after his passing through the heavenly veil, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 29-48.
40. Numbers 11:16.
41. Numbers 16:9.
42. Cf. Deuteronomy 18:5: “For the Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for ever.” Rashi concluded from this verse “that there is no ministering but while standing” (Rashi, *Deuteronomy Commentary*, Deuteronomy 18:5, p. 196).
43. Tigay translates this phrase as “to stand in attendance upon the Lord,” i.e., “[t]o offer sacrifices” (J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p. 106). See Deuteronomy 21:5; 2 Chronicles 29:11; Ezekiel 44:15.
44. Rashi took this as referring to the Priestly Blessing (Leviticus 9:22; Numbers 6:22-27; Deuteronomy 21:5): “It is a reference to ‘raising of

- palms” (Rashi, *Deuteronomy Commentary*, 10:8, p. 101).
45. J. Milgrom, *Numbers*, Numbers 16:9, p. 132. Cf. Numbers 3:6; 1 Samuel 16:22; 1 Kings 1:2.
  46. 2 Chronicles 35:5.
  47. 1 Kings 17:1. See also 1 Kings 18:15; 2 Kings 3:14, 5:16. Cf. Jeremiah 15:1, 19.
  48. 1 Kings 19:11.
  49. 1 Kings 19:12.
  50. Psalm 130:3-4.
  51. Ezra 9:15.
  52. D&C 45:32. See also D&C 87:8, 124:45. Cf. references to Zion not being moved in D&C 97:19, 101:17.
  53. The term as used in Psalm 16:8 is translated with the Greek verb *saleuō* in the *Septuagint* and in Acts 2:25. The Greek verb *kineō* is used in Revelation 6:14 (“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were *moved out of their places*”).
  54. F. Brown et al., *Lexicon*, p. 556.
  55. H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 17, pp. 212-213.
  56. Greek *phrisso* = shudder or shiver. Cf. Matthew 8:29 where the trembling can be viewed as “indicating a cognizance of their appointed doom” (W. E. Vine et al., *Dictionary* (1996), s.v. shudder, p. 573). See also Genesis 27:33 (Isaac) and Alma 11:46 (Zeezrom). Cf. Jacob 4:18, 7:5.
  57. Hebrew *ragaz* = to be agitated, angry, to quiver or quake (F. Brown et al., *Lexicon*, p. 919b).
  58. Hebrew *rash* = quake, shake (ibid., p. 950b).
  59. Cf. Moses 7:13, S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 1:48, p. 53; G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch*, 88:2, p. 364.
  60. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Commentary 5:41-b, p. 388.
  61. See, e.g., M. Odell, *Ezekiel*, pp. 357-360.
  62. M. Odell, *Ezekiel*, pp. 361-363.
  63. M. Odell, *Ezekiel*, p. 363.
  64. Calabro convincingly describes the imagery of a sealed contract or covenant associated with both cylinder seals and signet rings in northwest Semitic languages (D. Calabro, *Rolling Out*, especially pp. 68-72).
  65. Note that the king sits “in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas,” the latter reference recalling the imagery of Eden as the source of the waters of the earth (Genesis 2:10).
  66. Ezekiel 28:14. The “stones of fire” may be an allusion to the coals on the altar of the temple (P. M. Joyce, *Ezekiel*, p. 180).
  67. Some readers object to the idea of Eden being located on a cosmic mountain, since this aspect is not mentioned explicitly in Genesis 2-3. See G. A. Anderson, *Cosmic Mountain*, 192-199 for careful readings that argue for just such a setting.
  68. Ibid., 199.
  69. Ezekiel 28:16, Hebrew *wa’abbedka*. The longer phrase containing this verb can be read one of two ways: 1. “The guardian cherub drove you out” (P. M. Joyce, *Ezekiel*, p. 180; cf. W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, p. 86, highlighting the parallel with Adam; cf. Genesis 3:24); or 2. “I drove you out, the guardian cherub” (P. M. Joyce, *Ezekiel*, p. 180; cf. W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, p. 94, identifying the king as the cherub). The use of the verb *hillēl* (to profane) in the description of banishment in the first verb of the verse (*wā’ēhallelēkā*, “I banished you”) alludes to the desecration of the holy place through the actions of the king (D. I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, p. 116).
  70. Ezekiel 28:18.
  71. Ezekiel 28:17.
  72. D. I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, p. 117. Cf. Lamentations 2:1; Ezekiel 19:12.
  73. Ezekiel 26:19-20 also uses *eres* in reference to the netherworld, perhaps in this context as a variant of *šahat*, “pit,” in verse 8 (D. I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, p. 117).
  74. Scholars have long puzzled over the significance of the double reference to Adam and Eve’s expulsion in vv. 23-24. Some ancient traditions see the couple’s exit from the Garden of Eden as having occurred in two stages. For example, the Qur’an explicitly records that Adam and Eve were twice told to go down (Qur’an, 2:36, 38), explaining that they “were removed first from the Garden to its courtyard and then from the courtyard to the earth” (A. a.-S. M. H. at-Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan*, 1:209). An idea consistent with Ephrem the Syrian’s idea of the Fall as an attempted intrusion in the holiest regions of the Garden is that Adam and Eve were first removed from the border of the celestial region to the terrestrial paradise, and then, in the second stage, were expelled from the terrestrial paradise to the telestial earth (Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 3:5, p. 92, 3:13-15, pp. 95-96).
  75. Exodus 6:1. See N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 30.
  76. See D&C 45:32.
  77. Thanks to Matthew B. Brown for pointing me to this image.

78. Zornberg's translation of Rashi, Genesis 2:7, in A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 16. Compare Rashi, *Genesis Commentary*, 2:7, p. 23; J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 1*, 14:8:1, p. 156.
79. Zornberg's translation of Rashi, Genesis 2:7, in A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 16. Compare Rashi, *Genesis Commentary*, 2:7, p. 23.
80. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 16.
81. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 22.
82. E.g., M.-A. Ouaknin et al., *Rabbi Éliézer*, 11, p. 78; J. Goldin, *Fathers*, 1, p. 11.
83. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 23.
84. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 471-473, 681-686; J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 38-39.
85. Ezekiel 37:10. Cf. 2 Kings 13:21. Alma the Younger experienced a fall and a figurative death when he and his companions were visited by an angel, and a rebirth three days later when his mouth was opened and he was again able to stand on his feet: "I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of three days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs . . . But behold my limbs did receive their strength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been born of God" (Alma 36:10, 23; cf. King Lamoni and his people in Alma 18:42-43, 19:1-34). Falling in weakness after a vision of God is a common motif in scripture. Daniel reported that he "fainted, and was sick certain days," and of a second occasion he wrote: "I was left alone . . . and there remained no strength in me . . . and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground" (Daniel 8:26; 10:8-9). Saul "fell to the earth" during his vision and remained blind until healed by Ananias (Acts 9:4, 17-18). Lehi "cast himself on his bed, being overcome with the Spirit" (1 Nephi 1:7). Of his weakness following the First Vision, Joseph Smith wrote: "When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength . . ." (JS-H 1:20). See also discussion of A. Kulik, *Retroverting Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:1-4, p. 17 below.
86. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 683 figure 53-11.
87. J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 228 figure 4-10.
88. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 1 Enoch 14:24, p. 267: "And one of the holy ones came to me and raised me up and stood me [on my feet]"; G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch*, 71:3, p. 93: "And the angel Michael . . . took me by my right hand and raised me up"; P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 1:5, p. 256: "He grasped me with his hand before their eyes and said to me, 'Come in peace into the presence of the high and exalted King'; P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 48A:2, p. 300: "I went with him, and, taking me by his hand, he bore me up on his wings."
89. J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 684 figure 53-13.
90. Daniel 8:18: "he touched me, and set me upright"; Daniel 10:9-10: "then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees."
91. Revelation 1:17: "I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me."
92. In Alma 19:29-30, the raising of two individuals who have fallen in rapturous vision is performed by mortal women.
93. Ezekiel 2:1-2: "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me."
94. Daniel 10:11: "O Daniel, . . . understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent."
95. Acts 26:16: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness."
96. Alma 36:7-8. 22: "7 And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did tremble beneath our feet; and we all fell to the earth, for the fear of the Lord came upon us. 8 But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel."
97. 3 Nephi 11:19-20: "And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself before the Lord and did kiss his feet. And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before him."
98. Nickelsburg explains (G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 14:24-15:1, p. 270): "The seer must be rehabilitated and accepted into the divine presence before he can receive his commission. Restoration by an angel becomes a typical feature in visions, where, however, it is the angel whose appearance causes the collapse."
- See also Joshua 7:6, 10-13:
- 6 ¶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads . . .
- 10 ¶ And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

99. E.g., Deuteronomy 10:8, 18:7; 2 Chronicles 29:11.

100. E.g., Luke 1:19.

101. See, e.g., Luke 18:13.

102. Notes taken by David J. Larsen on an unpublished talk by Robert Hayward (R. Hayward, Aramaic Paradise).

103. E.g., 1 Esdras 8:89-90.

104. Zornberg's translation. Compare H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Numbers 1, 11:3, 5:419.

105. Ezekiel 28:3.

106. For a more complete discussion, see M. Odell, Ezekiel, pp. 361-362.

107. See Daniel 4. The *Gospel of Philip* says: "There are two trees growing in Paradise. The one bears [animals], the other bears men. Adam [ate] from the tree which bore animals. [He] became an animal" (W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 71:21-72:4, p. 152). *Philip* uses, as Barker points out, "the usual apocalyptists' code of mortal = animal and angel = man. The text is broken, but the sense is clear enough" (M. Barker, June 11 2007. See M. Barker, *Hidden*, pp. 45-47; C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*, p. 33).

Ephrem the Syrian reasoned that since Adam "went astray through [an animal] he became like the [animals]: He ate, together with them as a result of the curse, grass and roots" (Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 13:5, p. 170). Nibley connects the story of Nebuchadnezzar's "fall" to the Egyptian story of Osiris who, like Adam, was said to have been freed from a split tree (H. W. Nibley, *Message* 2005, p. 289): "In the book of Daniel, the tree that was

split was the king himself (Daniel 4:13-15, 22); however the stump was not destroyed but preserved for a seven-year period (Daniel 4:23), during which time the king was ritually humiliated ... (Daniel 4:33; cf. *Apis-bull* and *Horus-hawk*), only to resume his throne with all his glory greatly enhanced at the end of the seven-year period (Daniel 4:25, 31-34). This is the Egyptian seven-year throne period of the king ... The splitting of the tree is plainly the substitute sacrifice, while its preservation against the time when the king shall be restored recalls the important role of the *ished-tree* in the coronation."

Although nothing like this episode can be associated directly with the historic King Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BCE), both Neo-Babylonian inscriptions and the *Prayer of Nabonidus* (4Q242) fragment of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* provide evidence of a pre-Danielic tradition associating a similar story with Nabonidus, the last ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (556-539 BCE) and father of Belsharur (biblical "King Belshazzar" — see Daniel 5:22, 7:1, 8:1; F. G. Martinez, *DSS Translated*, p. 289; L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Daniel*, pp. 104-106; J. A. Tvedtnes, *Nebuchadnezzar*; G. Vermes, *Complete*, p. 614; M. Wise et al., *DSS*, pp. 340-342). In his prayer, the king tells of his suffering with an "evil skin disease" for a period of seven years by the decree of God, and at least one scholar has proposed that a lacuna in the text "originally described Nabunay's state as comparable to that of a beast (see Daniel 4:25b), or that he was 'set apart from human beings'" (L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Daniel*, p. 105. See Daniel 4:25a). After appealing to gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, stone, and clay, his sins were forgiven by a Jewish healer after he finally prayed to the Most High God. A similar healing blessing performed by Abraham with the laying of hands upon the head is described in F. G. Martinez, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 20:28-29, p. 234.

108. To the scriptural example of Nebuchadnezzar, Doob (P. B. R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children*) compares the Arthurian knights Yvain, Lancelot, and Tristan, who were driven mad by disappointments in love. See, e.g., C. de Troyes, *Yvain*, p. 189, where Yvain "dwelt in the forest like a madman or a savage." Thanks to BYU Professor Jesse Hurlbut for this reference.

109. G. A. Anderson et al., *Synopsis*, 4:2, p. 5E; G. A. Anderson, *Penitence*, pp. 13-19; G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, pp. 141-147.

110. S. L. Della Torre, *Anxiety*, p. 7.

111. M. Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 3:18, p. 28. According to the *Targum*, God answers Adam's prayer as follows (ibid., 3:19, pp. 28-29): "By the labor of your hand you shall eat food until you return to the dust from which you were created, because dust you are, and to dust you will return; but from the dust you are destined to arise [literally "stand up"] to render an account and a reckoning of all you have done, on the day of great judgment."
112. G. A. Anderson, *Original Form*, p. 229. As part of this reading of Moses 4:24-25, the phrase "By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" was seen by some early interpreters as God's promise to provide a less humiliating form of sustenance once Adam's penance was complete. At its conclusion, "God rescinds [His] initial decree and offers [him] seed-bearing grain from which he can make bread ... [thus fulfilling] a prophecy made at the end of the sixth day of creation" (G. A. Anderson, *Penitence*, p. 19; see Moses 2:29).

A Coptic Christian tradition specifically mentions wheat (along with instructions for sowing and reaping) as having been divinely provided in answer to Adam's cries of hunger: "If Thou art moved with compassion for the man whom We have created, and who has rejected My commandment, go Thou and give him Thine own flesh and let him eat thereof, for it is Thou Who has made Thyself his advocate.' Then our Lord took a little piece of the flesh of His divine side, and rubbed it down into small pieces, and showed them to His Father. When God saw them He said to His Son, 'Wait and I will give Thee some of My own flesh, which is invisible.' Then God took a portion of His own body, and made it into a grain of wheat, and He sealed the grain in the middle with the seal wherewith He sealed the worlds of light, and then gave it to our Lord and told Him to give it to Michael, the archangel, who was to give it to Adam and teach him how to sow and reap it. Michael found Adam by the Jordan, who as he had eaten nothing for eight days was crying to God for food, and as soon as Adam received the grain of wheat, he ceased to cry out, and became strong, and his descendants have lived on wheat ever since. Water, wheat and the throne of God are the equals of the Son of God." (E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha*, cited in E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*, pp. 18-19 n. 1. See also M. i. A. A. al-Kisa'i, *Tales*, pp. 68-70; al-Tabari, *Creation*, 1:127-130, pp. 298-300; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 1:66-68, pp. 78-83; D&C 89:17). An Ethiopian source asserts that the Tree of Life "is the Body of Christ which none of the Seraphim touch

without reverent awe" (B. Mikael, *Mysteries*, p. 26). 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. The notion of wheat being divinely provided for Adam is also found in Islamic sources (G. Weil, *Legends*, pp. 31, 45. See also M. Ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar, *Making*, pp. 34, 37; cf. A. I. A. I. M. I. I. al-Tha'labi, *Lives*, pp. 63-65; B. M. Wheeler, *Prophets*, pp. 27-28). In addition, the Sumerian text *Ewe and Wheat* recounts how wool and wheat were divinely provided in primeval times: "The people in those distant days, They knew not bread to eat; They knew not cloth to wear; They went about with naked limbs in the Land, And like sheep they ate grass with their mouth ... Then Enki spoke to Enlil: 'Father Enlil, Ewe and Wheat ... Let us now send them down from the Holy Hill'" (R. J. Clifford, *Ewe, 20-24, 37-38, 40*, pp. 45-46). Linking the situations of Adam and Nebuchadnezzar to that of each penitent Christian, Ephrem the Syrian wrote that "only when [Nebuchadnezzar] repented did he return to his former abode and kingship. Blessed is He who has thus taught us to repent so that we too may return to Paradise" (Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 13:6, p. 171). The bread promised to Adam on conditions of repentance and baptism by water can be seen as a type of Christ, the "bread of life" (John 6:35). Christ's advent was, of course, preceded by John, dressed in the rough clothes of a penitent, eating what he could find in the wild, and baptizing "unto repentance" (Matthew 3:11. See T. G. Madsen, *Sacrament*, p. 85).

113. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 21.
114. "For these are those selected by God for an everlasting covenant and to them shall belong the glory of Adam." (Rule of the Community 4:22-23 in F. G. Martinez, *DSS Translated*, p. 7; H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 467).
115. D&C 121:45.
116. Succinctly expressing the hopelessness of Adam's predicament in the absence of God's "remedy" (M. Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 3:15, pp. 27-28. Cf. W. Shakespeare, *Measure*, 2:2:75, p. 560), midrash states: "If it were not for Your mercy, Adam would have had *no standing (amidah)*" (following Zornberg's literal translation — others read in terms of Adam's capacity to "exist" or "survive" [see, e.g., J. T. Townsend, *Tanhuma*, 10 (Mase'):8, Numbers 35:9ff, Part 1, 3:264; A. Davis et al., *The Metsudah Midrash Tanchuma*, Bamidbar 2, Masei, 11, p. 354; cf. H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Numbers 23:13,

- 6:877]). Zornberg explains: “The simplest reading of ‘standing’ would be ‘survival.’ But, implicitly, both Adam and the world are in need of some Archimedian point of stability, in a situation in which disintegration threatens” (A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 25).
117. Moses 4:20.
  118. Leviticus 11:42.
  119. See U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, p. 160. Cf., e.g., Psalm 72:9; Isaiah 49:23, 65:25; Micah 7:17.
  120. G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 138. Cf. *Jubilees*: “the Lord cursed the serpent and he was angry with it forever” (O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 3:23, p. 60).
  121. In the art of the ancient Near East, the serpent is often shown as originally walking erect, sometimes with legs (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 27). Moreover, Islamic, Jewish, and early Christian texts often speak of the serpent’s magnificent “camel-like” appearance before its cursing (e.g., al-Tabari, *Creation*, 1:104-110, pp. 275-281; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, p. 214 n. 20, p. 217, nn. 27-29).

In the *Tschemmin Book of the Dead* (also known as *Joseph Smith Papyrus V*) from third- or second-century BCE Egypt, a legged serpent appears in illustrated form, facing the staff-wielding initiate (M. D. Rhodes, *Books of the Dead*, Tschemmin Book of the Dead 74, Column X+3, p. 84; H. L. Andrus, *God*, p. 371; H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 318 figure 98; J. M. Todd, Fragment, p. 40E. Cf. the vignette of spell 87 in the *Papyrus of Ani*, which contains instructions for being transformed into a serpent who is capable of endless cycles of rebirth (R. O. Faulkner et al., *Book of the Dead 1994*, plate 27. See J. H. Taylor, *Spells*, p. 65)). Rhodes cites Mosher’s conjecture that this vignette, not directly mentioned in the text of the chapter itself but perhaps related to its mention of “hurrying the feet and going forth [on the earth],” is a representation of the “desire of the deceased to come forth from the earth (tomb) and walk the earth” (M. D. Rhodes, *Books of the Dead*, Tschemmin Book of the Dead 74, p. 43). Nibley, on the other hand, interprets the legged serpent in light of its punishment “for attempting to frustrate the progress of the god on his journey or the initiate on his way” (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 315). Apparently, the opposing serpent is here identified with the funerary god Sokar (“It is against me that you do the things you do, O Sokar, Sokar who is in his cave, my opponent in the god’s domain ... upon the shores of him who would seize their utterance in the god’s domain” [M. D. Rhodes,

*Books of the Dead*, Tschemmin Book of the Dead 74, p. 43]). According to the *Amduat*, within the cavern “filled with flames of fire from the mouth of Isis” and surrounded by sandy shores of the lake of fire-water (“fiery pain for the enemies of Re but cool water for the blessed souls”), Sokar (the name given to the dead corpse of Osiris, from at least the time of the Old Kingdom, after he was murdered by his brother Seth [G. Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 203] and based on a play on the words of his cry of mortal distress [J. P. Allen, *Pyramid Texts of Pepi I*, 480, p. 165, p. 205 n. 129]) and Re (the Sungod, who appears in the cavern in the form of a multi-headed serpent shaped like a barque) unite the opposites of death and life (T. Abt et al., *Knowledge*, pp. 71-72; cf. A. Schweizer, *Sungod’s Journey*, pp. 91-99), enabling, after the ultimate defeat of the evil serpent Apophis by the gods (E. Hornung, *Triumph of Magic*), the eventual regeneration and rebirth of the initiate.

In the next chapter, *Tschemmin Book of the Dead* 75, the staff-wielding candidate must face yet another test before entering the Holy Place. The opposing entity in the accompanying vignette is accurately but benignly described by Rhodes as “the hieroglyphic sign for Heliopolis” (M. D. Rhodes, *Books of the Dead*, p. 44). Nibley, however, explains that the sign originally represented the “sword and flame” that were instrumental in the defeat of the serpent (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 318 caption to figure 98, see also pp. 319-320). According to Nibley, the symbol was known as:

... the spear of Horus of Heliopolis with which he overcame the Adversary, the Serpent, when he took the rule ... As to the two columns flanking the spear, the Jews, according to W. Kornfeld, were quite aware that the two famous pillars, Boaz and Jachin and strength and capital righteousness, that stood at the entrance to the Temple of Solomon (2 Chronicles 3:17), “belonged to the solar cult of On” — referring to the biblical name for Heliopolis.

While the “keepers of the pylons, standing with swords in their hands before a gate from which flames shoot forth” admit the Sun God Re, they prevent any possibility of the evil serpent entering the realm of the blessed (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 320). Within the temple at Heliopolis, Egyptian priests reenacted the defeat of Apophis by ritually trampling images of the evil serpent underfoot (cf. Genesis 3:15; J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Moses 4:21d, pp.

266-267). Only after Adam and Eve “have been *first* purified by the hand of the cherubim” may they also enter within (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 320; cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Moses 4:31e, p. 282).

122. “Having arrogantly aggrandized itself in a challenge to God, it is now permanently doomed to a posture of abject humiliation” (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 27).
123. H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 1981*, p. 180; H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, pp. 317. Taylor asserts that the serpent’s human legs “indicated the power of swift movement” (J. H. Taylor, *Spells*, p. 65), while Nibley sees the loss of its limbs as representing the fact that it “may never more progress, being ‘bound by Aker, deprived of arms and legs, bound in one place’ — as Re ‘inflicts the blows decreed for him’” (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 317).
124. Genesis 3:14. In the story of the contest between Moses with Pharaoh’s magicians (cf. Genesis 41:1-7), the upright staff of authoritative rulership is in deliberate contrast to the prostrate posture of a serpent. After the magicians succeeded in transforming their rods into serpents as Aaron had done, the author of Exodus pointedly tells us that it was “Aaron’s *rod* [that] swallowed up their *rods*” (Exodus 7:12), not Aaron’s *serpent* that swallowed up their *serpents*. “The rod in ancient Egypt was a symbol of royal authority and power, while the snake, the uraeus, represented the patron cobra-goddess of Lower Egypt. Worn over the forehead on the headdress of the pharaohs, it was emblematic of divinely-protected sovereignty, and it served as a menacing symbol of death dealt to enemies of the crown” (N. M. Sarna, *Exodus*, 4:3, p. 20, see also 7:12-13, p. 37).

Also highlighting the fact that question of authority to rule rather than magical prowess was the issue at hand is the deliberate choice of the Hebrew term *tannin* (“large reptile,” e.g., crocodile, sea monster, leviathan) rather than *nachash* (“snake,” as in Exodus 4:3-4, 7:15) for the transformed staff (Exodus 7:9-10). *Tannin* was often “used metaphorically as a symbol of national empires and power” (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Exodus*, p. 347 n. 9. See Deuteronomy 32:33, Psalm 74:13, Ezekiel 29:3).

Incidentally, “[t]he use of magic in Egypt is well-documented in [Talc 2 of the] Westcar Papyrus (M.-J. Nederhof, Papyrus Westcar) where magicians are credited with changing wax crocodiles into real ones only to be turned back to wax again after seizing their

tails. Montet ... also refers to several Egyptian scarabs that depict a snake charmer holding a serpent made stiff as a staff up in the air before some observing deities (cf. J. B. Pritchard, *Charms Against Snakes*; J. P. Allen, *Pyramid Texts of Unis*, 3, p. 17, with a spell on a ‘spotted’ knife [representing a snake?] that ‘goes forth against its like’ and devours it)” (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Exodus*, 7:10-13, p. 347). See also L. Shalit, *How Moses*.

125. J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 338-350.
126. In the case of the rabbis, this was understood to be the five books of Moses, the *Torah*. Concerning the sixth day of Creation, Rashi commented: “*The sixth day*”: the definite article [*heh*] is added here to teach that God had made a condition with all the works of the beginning, depending on Israel’s acceptance of the Five [the numerical value of *heh*] Books of the *Torah*. (Zornberg’s translation in A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 27). Compare Rashi, *Genesis Commentary*, 1:31, p. 19.
- The idea of five sacred things is encountered in other forms of Jewish tradition. For example, Jewish authorities held that five things were lost when Solomon’s temple was destroyed. Both Margaret Barker and Hugh Nibley specifically connect these “five things” to lost ordinances of the High Priesthood (see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 658-660).
127. D&C 84:23-27; JST Exodus 34:1-2.
128. Exodus 20:18.
129. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, pp. 32-33. Zornberg’s comment is based on a midrash of Rashi on Exodus 20:15-16 (= KJV Exodus 20:18): “And all the people could see the sounds and the flames, the sound of the shofar and the smoking mountain; the people saw and they moved and they stood from afar. They said to Moses, ‘You speak to us and we shall hear; let God not speak to us lest we die’” (Rashi, *Exodus Commentary*, pp. 240-241). The “sounds” are read as coming from the “mouth of the Almighty.” The movement is one of trembling, not to be understood as the same one that led them to be standing “from afar.” Rashi says that the people “drew back twelve miles, the length of their camp, and the ministering angels would come and assist them to return, as it says ‘The kings of legions move about’ (Psalm 68:13)” (*ibid.*, p. 241). “The *Talmud* reads the word ‘kings’ as ‘angels,’ and the intransitive verb ‘move about’ as the transitive verb ‘move others’ (see *Mechilta; Shabbos* 88a)” (Editor’s note in Rashi, *Exodus Commentary*, p. 241).

130. <http://dwellingintheword.wordpress.com/category/bible/uncategorized/page/6/>
131. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, pp. 23-24.
132. “R. Simeon b. Yohai observed: As long as a man refrains from sin he is an object of awe and fear. The moment he sins he is himself subject to awe and fear. Before Adam sinned he used to hear the voice of the divine communication while standing on his feet and without flinching. As soon as he sinned, he heard the voice of the divine communication and hid ... (Genesis 3:8). R. Abin said: Before Adam sinned, the Voice sounded to him gentle; after he had sinned it sounded to him harsh. Before Israel had sinned, *The appearance of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount* (Exodus 24:17). R. Abba b. Kahana observed: Seven partitions of fire were consuming one another and Israel looked on undaunted and undismayed. As soon as they had sinned, however, they could not even look at the face of the intermediary [i.e., Moses] (Exodus 34:30)” (H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Numbers (Naso), 11:3, p. 419).
133. Mark 9:2-13.
134. Exodus 24:18, 33:7-11.
135. C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Reflections*, pp. 299-301. I am indebted to David Larsen for pointing me to this article.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 303. Fletcher-Louis cites the following from Philo:  
 “Here I *stand* there before you, on the rock in Horeb” (Exodus 17:6), which means, “this I, the manifest, Who am here, am there also, am everywhere, for I have filled all things. I *stand* ever the same immutable, before you or anything that exists came into being, established on the topmost and most ancient source of power, whence showers forth the birth of all that is. ...” And Moses too gives his testimony to the unchangeableness of the deity when he says “they saw the place where the God of Israel stood” (Exodus 24:10), for by the *standing* or establishment he indicates his immutability. But indeed so vast in its excess is the stability of the Deity that He imparts to chosen natures a share of His steadfastness to be their richest possession. For instance, He says of His covenant filled with His bounties, the highest law and principle, that is, which rules existent things, that this god-like image shall be firmly planted with the righteous soul as its pedestal ... And it is the earnest desire of all the God-beloved to fly from the stormy waters of engrossing business

with its perpetual turmoil of surge and billow, and anchor in the calm safe shelter of virtue’s roadsteads. See what is said of wise Abraham, how he was “*standing* in front of God” (Genesis 18:22), for when should we expect a mind to *stand* and no longer sway as on the balance save when it is opposite God, seeing and being seen? ... To Moses, too, this divine command was given: “Stand here with me” (Deuteronomy 5:31), and this brings out both the points suggested above, namely the unswerving quality of the man of worth, and the absolute stability of Him that IS. (modified by Fletcher-Louis from Philo, *Dreams*, 2:32, 221-2:33, 227, pp. 543, 545).

Fletcher-Louis comments on parallels between Philo, 4Q377 from Qumran, and the Pentateuch:

Like Philo, 4Q377 is working with Deuteronomy 5:5, the giving of the Torah, and perhaps Exodus 17:6. Both texts think standing is a posture indicative of a transcendent identity in which the righteous can participate and of which Moses is the pre-eminent example. With the stability of standing is contrasted the corruptibility of motion, turmoil and storms, which is perhaps reflected in the tension between Israel’s “standing” (lines 4 and 10) and her “trembling” (line 9) before the Glory of God in the Qumran text. Whether this and other similar passages in Philo (cf. esp. *Sacr.* 8-10; *Post.* 27-29) are genetically related to 4Q377 is not certain, but remains a possibility. (C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Reflections*, p. 304)

137. Obviously a different sense of “stand” is used here.
138. Psalm 82:6-7.
139. Zornberg’s translation. Freedman’s translation is: “You have followed the course of Adam who did not withstand his trials for more than three hours, and at nine hours death was decreed upon him (H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Genesis, 18:6, p. 146). [Nine hours would be about three in the afternoon, the day being counted from 6 am to 6 pm]” (H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Exodus (Mishpatim), 32:1, p. 404).
140. W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3:3:36, p. 1166.
141. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 234.
142. H. N. Ridderbos, *John*, p. 576.
143. John 18:4-6.
144. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 215.
145. As Beale and Carson explain: Jesus’s self-identification in 18:5,

“I am,” probably has connotations of deity ... This is strongly suggested by the soldiers’ falling to the ground in 18:6, a common reaction to divine revelation (see Ezekiel 1:28, 44:4; Daniel 2:46, 8:18, 10:9; Acts 9:4, 22:7, 26:14; Revelation 1:17, 19:10, 22:8). This falling of the soldiers is reminiscent of certain passages in Psalms (see Psalms 27:2, 35:4; cf. 56:9; see also Elijah’s experience in 2 Kings 1:9-14). Jewish literature recounts the similar story of the attempted arrest of Simeon (Genesis Rabbah 91:6). The reaction also highlights Jesus’s messianic authority in keeping with texts such as Isaiah 11:4 (cf. 2 Esdras 13:3-4). (G. K. Beale *et al.*, *NT Use of the OT*, John 18-19, p. 499)

146. R. E. Brown, *Death*, 1:261. The entire passage from Raymond Brown is instructive (*Death*, 1:261-262):

OT antecedents for this reaction have been proposed, e.g., Psalm 56:10(9): “My enemies will be turned back ... in the day when I shall call upon you”; Psalm 27:2: “When evildoers come at me ... my foes and my enemies themselves stumble and fall ...”; Psalm 35:4: “Let those be turned back ... and confounded who plot evil against me.” Falling down (*piptein*) as a reaction to divine revelation is attested in Daniel 2:46, 8:18; Revelation 1:17; and that is how John would have the reader understand the reaction to Jesus’s pronouncement. *Piptein chamai* is combined with the verb “to worship” in Job 1:20. No matter what one thinks of the historicity of this scene, it should not be explained away or trivialized. To know or use the divine name, as Jesus does, is an exercise of awesome power. In Acts 3:6 Peter heals a lame man “in the name of Jesus of Nazareth,” i.e., by the power of the name that Jesus has been given by God; and “there is no other name under heaven among human beings by which we must be saved.” Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 9:27:24-26 in J. H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 2:901; GCS 43.522) attributes to Artapanus, who lived before the 1st century BC, the legend that when Moses uttered before Pharaoh the secret name of God, Pharaoh fell speechless to the ground (R. D. Bury, *ExpTim* 24 (1912-13), 233). That legend may or may not have been known when John wrote, but it illustrates an outlook that makes John’s account of the arrest intelligible. This same Jesus will say to Pilate, “You have no power over me at all except what was given to you from above” (John

19:11). Here he shows how powerless before him are the troops of the Roman cohort and the police attendants from the chief priests — the representatives of the two groups who will soon interrogate him and send him to the cross. Indeed, an even wider extension of Jesus’s power may be intended. Why does John suddenly, in the midst of this dramatic interchange, mention the otiose presence of Judas, “now standing there with them was also Judas, the one who was giving him over” (John 18:5)? John 17:12 calls Judas “the son of perdition,” a phrase used in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 to describe the antichrist who exalts himself to the level of God. Is the idea that the representative of the power of evil must also fall powerless before Jesus? I have already pointed out a close Johannine parallel to the Mark/Matthew saying about the coming near of the one who gives Jesus over, namely, John 14:30: “For the Prince of this world is coming.” In John 12:31, in the context of proclaiming the coming of the hour (John 12:23) and of praying about that hour (John 12:27), Jesus exclaims, “Now will the Prince of this world be driven out” (or “cast down,” a textual variant; see also 16:11).

Keener (*John*, p. 1082; p. 1082 n. 124) offers additional precedents for the “involuntary prostration” of Jesus’s enemies:

Other ancient texts report falling backward in terror — for instance, fearing that one has dishonored God (*Sipra Sh. M.D.* 99:5:12; cf. perhaps 1 Samuel 4:18) ....

Talbert, *John*, 233, adds later traditions in which priests fell on their faces when hearing the divine name (*b. Qidd.* 71a; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:11, S3).

Matthew Brown points out further parallels to Mount Sinai and the temple during the culminating scenes of the Atonement on the Mount of Olives (M. B. Brown, *Gate*, p. 176):

Shortly before his crucifixion, the Savior took the twelve apostles, and perhaps others, with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane, which is located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. When they had entered into the garden

- area, the Lord instructed the majority of His disciples to wait for Him while He took Peter, James, and John further into the Garden. Then, at some unspecified location, Christ told Peter, James, and John to stay where they were while He “went a little further” into Gethsemane by Himself (see Matthew 26:30-39; Mark 14:26-36). It was in this third area of the Garden that the Savior was visited and strengthened by an angel and where He shed His sacrificial blood (see JST Luke 22:43-44). This pattern is intriguing because it seems to match the tripartite division of the people during the Mount Sinai episode (Ground Level — Israelites, Half-Way — Seventy Elders, Top — Moses) and the tripartite division in the temple complex (Courtyard — Israelites, Holy Place — Priests, Holy of Holies — High Priest). It was, of course, in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement that the final rite was performed to purge the sins of the Israelites with sacrificial blood (see Leviticus 16:15).
147. See C. S. Keener, *John*, pp. 40-47 for an assessment of the evidence that John’s tradition was rooted in pre-70 Jewish Palestine. Among others, Keener cites James Charlesworth, who “suggests that today nearly all John scholars ‘have concluded that John may contain some of the oldest traditions in ... the Gospels’” (C. S. Keener, *John*, p. 47).
148. In viewing this detachment as composed of the temple guards, rather than a Roman cohort, I am following Ridderbos: “As in the Septuagint and Josephus, this guard is, like its captain (the ‘*chiliarch*’ in v. 12), given Roman military names. John calls these temple police ‘*the [speira]*’, that is, the only qualified armed group, under the circumstances, at the Sanhedrin’s disposal, along with the Sanhedrin’s own court officers” (H. N. Ridderbos, *John*, p. 575). For a more extensive discussion that reaches the same conclusion, see C. S. Keener, *John*, pp. 1078-1080.
149. S. K. Brown, *Arrest*, p. 201. See, e.g., D&C 88:49.
150. W. J. Hamblin, *John 17:6*, Name, pp. 4-5.
151. “And the priests and people standing in the courtyard [on the Day of Atonement], when they would hear the Expressed Name [of the Lord] come out of the mouth of the high priest, would kneel and bow down and fall upon on their faces” (J. Neusner, *Mishnah*, Yoma 6:2d, p. 275; cf. *Ibid.*, Yoma 3:8, p. 269, 4:2, pp. 270-271).
152. See Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 7.
153. W. B. Yeats, *Second Coming*, pp. 158-159.
154. D. A. Bednar, *Stand*. See also citations such as the following: “For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory ... and the wicked shall not *stand*” (D&C 29:11); Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can *stand* when he appeareth?” (D&C 128:24; cf. Malachi 3:2, 3 Nephi 24:2).
155. D&C 45:31-32, 70, 74.
156. Cf. Genesis 27:33, Alma 11:46.
157. D&C 88:89; cf. Alma 36:7. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 57-58 n. 1:21a, p. 388 n. 5:41b.
158. D&C 87:6.
159. D&C 87:8.
160. D&C 101:17, 20-23.
161. Isaiah 33:20, 54:2.
162. D&C 57:3. For a broader discussion of this topic, see S. L. Olsen, *Mormon Ideology*, pp. 19-41.
163. D&C 101:21.
164. See D&C 133:9.
165. D&C 124:36; cf. D&C 45:66, 115:6. Explicitly mentioning these two places of safety in a close parallel to the text of Matthew 24:15, D&C 133:12-13 reads:
- Let them, therefore, who are among the Gentiles flee unto Zion.
- And let them who be of Judah flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord’s house.
166. D&C 84:2, emphasis added; cf. Revelation 14:1.
167. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 204.
168. Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:32. Commenting on this verse, Ogden and Skinner write: “That is, as in the first century after Christ (v. 12), so in the last century before his second coming: Jerusalem will be besieged and suffer much destruction” (D. K. Ogden et al., *Gospels*, p. 518).
- Without the benefit of the light shed by Joseph Smith — Matthew, non-LDS scholars have sometimes concurred with the idea that the event is fulfilled twice: once shortly after Jesus’s death and again in the last days (e.g., J. B. Payne, *Imminent Appearing*, p. 152; L. T. Dennis et al., *ESV*, Matthew 24:15n., p. 1873). C. S. Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 577-578, while seeing “the whole

interim between the Temple's demise [in AD 70] and [Christ's] return as an extended tribulation period," also realizes that the tribulation of AD 66-70 is blended, in Matthew 24, "with the final one, which it prefigures":

Early Jewish texts also telescope the generations of history with the final generation (O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 23:11-32, pp. 100-102). As in Mark, the tribulation of 66-70 remains somehow connected with the future *parousia*, if only as a final prerequisite. Further, the context may suggest that Jesus employs his description eschatologically, as in some Jewish end-time texts; in this case, the disasters of 66-73 could not have exhausted the point of his words.

169. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 150.
170. Luke 2:52, emphasis mine. Cf. 1 Samuel 2:21, 26, where a similar description is given of the child Samuel. The Hebrew term *gadol* in v. 26 has to do with becoming great in size, maturity, or ability, not just growing older (see, e.g., F. Brown et al., *Lexicon*, 152d).
171. A. E. Harvey sees the first part of this phrase, which he translates with a definite article as "*the* perfect man," as "perhaps referring to ... the second Adam, who is Christ" (A. E. Harvey, *Companion 2004*, p. 620 n. 7).
172. Ephesians 4:13. The idea that the verse is referring to bodily stature seems fitting, since there is an explicit reference to the "body of Christ" in v. 12 and the metaphorical "body" of the Church in v. 16.
173. Matthew 6:27. I.e., "Who grows by worrying about one's height" (F. W. Danker et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 436). The use of the English word "stature" connects with the growth of the flowers in the next verse and "with the height of growth of the crops [in the previous one] ... In the LXX and the Sym. of Ezekiel 13:18, *helikia* is the translation of the Hebrew *qomah*, and perhaps there is a confusion between *qomah*, 'stature' or 'height,' and *quamah*, meaning 'standing corn' and the meaning that no one could, without God, add to the height of his crops" (S. T. Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, p. 132 n. 27). The Book of Mormon follows the KJV in rendering the key term as "stature" (3 Nephi 13:27).

The operative word for measurement is the Greek *pēchus* (forearm), hence the translation of "cubit" in the KJV. Nevertheless, some well-respected scholars take *pēchus* figuratively as "span" and translate the contextually sensitive Greek term *hēlikia* in terms of adding to the length of one's life rather than to one's height (e.g.,

C. S. Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 237; R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 268-269; H. D. Betz et al., *Sermon*, p. 476). See also F. W. Danker et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 435-436 who describe "age" as a first meaning of the term, but then admit that some scholars hold Matthew 6:27 and Luke 12:25 as referring to bodily stature (as in some non-biblical sources), noting also that "many would prefer 'stature' [in this sense] for Luke 2:52; Ephesians 4:13."

In any case, whether we take age or height as the metaphor, the theme in all these verses is "maturity, as opposed to remaining children (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; 13:11; 14:20; Philemon 3:15; Colossians 1:28)" (A.-J. Levine et al., *Jewish Annotated*, p. 350 n. 13-14). After examining the alternatives, J. Nolland, *Matthew*, p. 311 also highlights the "obvious links with the idea of maturity" in Matthew 6:27. "Standing alone it can refer to the requisite age(-range) for some activity or state of affairs (to be physically mature, be of age to take responsibility, etc.). The physical sense 'stature' is also derived from the idea of growing up and thus becoming bigger over time."

174. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 202.
175. Cf. Ephesians 4:16.
176. On the role of revelation in providing the specifications for temple building, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 561-563.
177. Exodus chapters 25-31.
178. Ezekiel chapters 40-48.
179. Revelation 11:1-2. See also Zechariah chapter 2.
180. Image from J. V. Canby, *Ur-Nammu*, Plate 33.
181. J. M. Bradshaw et al., Investiture Panel.
182. Thorkild Jacobsen, cited in K. E. Slanski, *Rod and Ring*, p. 45.
183. Ezekiel 40:3. See D. I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, pp. 512, 515. Thanks to Matthew B. Brown for this reference.
184. H. W. Nibley, *Circle*. See also, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, *passim*.
185. K. E. Slanski, *Rod and Ring*, p. 51. Black agrees with Slanski's interpretation, stating that the "rod and ring" are "thought to depict a pair of measuring instruments, a rule and a tape, taken as symbolic of divine justice" (J. A. Black et al., *Gods*, p. 156).
186. Matthew 6:27.
187. J. W. Welch, *Light*, p. 160.
188. Ephesians 4:13.
189. Revelation 11:1; cf. Ezekiel 40-42, Zechariah 1:16. Jay and Donald

- Parry, citing Kenneth Strand, note that these three elements of the temple — temple, altar, and worshippers — are the same three entities that are to be purified on the Day of Atonement, as recorded in Leviticus 16 (J. A. Parry et al., *Book of Revelation*, p. 135. See vv. 6, 11, 16-18).
190. “In the Old Testament generally, ‘measuring’ was metaphorical for a decree of protection” (G. K. Beale, *Temple*, p. 314). See 2 Samuel 8:2; Isaiah 28:16-17; Jeremiah 31:38-40; Zechariah 1:16. For ‘measuring’ as judgment, see 2 Samuel 8:2; 2 Kings 21:13; Lamentations 2:8; Amos 7:7-9.
  191. See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5. This is also, for example, the view of Metzger (B. M. Metzger, *Breaking*, pp. 68-69).
  192. See D&C 88:28-31.
  193. Psalm 24:3-4.
  194. Revelation 11:2.
  195. D&C 101:24.
  196. D&C 123:17, emphasis added. Compare Exodus 14:13.
  197. E. T. Benson, *Teachings* 1988, p. 106.
  198. M. Zlotowitz et al., *Bereishis*, 18:32, 1:673. Note that a *minyān*, the Jewish prayer circle, requires a minimum of ten men. Tvedtnes also notes: “The angels of the presence ‘stand’ in God’s presence (e.g., Luke 1:19 and numerous pseudepigrapha). In Judaism, the *amidah* (standing prayer) brings one into God’s presence. In the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, the first couple stand inside the cave of treasures to pray. After being cast out of the garden, this was their only way of approaching the presence of God” (J. A. Tvedtnes, 8 March 2010; see J. A. Tvedtnes, *Temple Prayer*, p. 80).
  199. B. Gittin 43a, as cited in A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 385 n. 83.
  200. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
  201. Rashi, *Exodus Commentary*, p. 241.
  202. A. Kulik, *Retroverting Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:1-4, p. 17. The translation of the caption to this image reads: “I heard a voice saying, Here Oilu, sanctify this man and strengthen (him) from his trembling and the angel took me by the right hand and stood me on my feet and said to me, stand up, o friend of God who has loved you.” Kulik’s translation of the corresponding text in the *Apocalypse* reads: “And when I was still face down on the earth, I heard the voice of the Holy One, saying, ‘Go, Yahoel, the namesake of the mediation of my ineffable name, sanctify this man and strengthen him from his trembling!’ And the angel whom he sent to me in the likeness of a man came, and he took me by my right hand and stood me on my feet. And he said to me, ‘Stand up, <Abraham>, the friend of God who has loved you, let human trembling not enfold you. For behold I am sent to you to strengthen you and to bless you in the name of God.’” (*ibid.*, 10:3-6, pp. 17-18). Compare Daniel 8:17-18; 10:9-11. For parallels between this ancient text and the book of Moses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 694-696.
  203. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 342.
  204. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, p. 32.
  205. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, pp. 102-103.
  206. <http://www.edmundcamacho.com/2009/07/shivah-asar-btammuz.html>.
  207. Hebrew (transliterated): *šiqqūš šōmēm*; Greek: βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρήμωσις.
  208. Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11.
  209. R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 911 takes the primary reference of the prophecy of Daniel to be “the events of 167 BC, when Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem and prohibited Jewish sacrificial worship, setting up an altar for pagan sacrifices (including the slaughter of pigs) on top of the altar of burnt offering (F. Josephus, *The Antiquities* (New), 12:5:253, p. 404); it stood in the temple for three years until Judas Maccabeus regained control of Jerusalem, purified the temple, and restored its true worship.”
  210. J. N. Sparks et al., *Orthodox Study Bible*, Matthew 24:15n., p. 1315. Beale elaborates:
 

The “desolating sacrilege” in 24:15 clearly alludes to the horror prophesied in Daniel 9:27 and repeated in 11:31; and 12:11, with Jesus explicitly mentioning the prophet’s name. In the OT it occurs first in the context of Daniel’s famous but notoriously difficult prophecy about seventy “weeks of years” (i.e., 490 years [9:24-27]). Seven times seven times ten almost certainly represents a symbolic number for a perfect period of time, and the abomination of desolation is related to something “set up on a wing,” presumably of the temple, since Jerusalem and its sanctuary are said to be destroyed (Daniel 9:26 ...). First Maccabees 1:54 understood this prophecy to have been fulfilled in the desecration of the temple sanctuary by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid ruler who sacrificed swine on the Jewish altar and ransacked

the capital city, leading to the Maccabean revolt of 167-164 BC [see also 2 Maccabees 8:17]. Jesus is envisioning a similarly horrifying event accompanying the destruction of the temple in the first century ... The disciples comment on the temple that they can see from the Mount of Olives. Jesus then predicts *its* destruction. Luke explicitly takes it this way. Nothing in the context supports the notion that a temple rebuilt centuries later, only to be destroyed again, is in view ... Foretelling the destruction of the temple, of course, places Jesus in a long line of prophets (cf. Micah 3:2; Jeremiah 7:8-15; 9:10-11; 26:6, 18 ... ) (G. K. Beale et al., *NT Use of the OT*, Matthew 24:1-31, p. 86).

211. Matthew 24:15.
212. R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 913; cf. P. G. Bolt, *Cross*, pp. 100-101 n. 36.
213. F. Josephus, *Wars (New)*, 4:3:6-8 (150-157), pp. 812-813, 4:3:12 (196-207), p. 815.
214. *Ibid.*, 6:6:1 (316), p. 900.
215. Luke 21:20: "Jerusalem surrounded by armies."
216. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 248.
217. See Matthew 26:61; Mark 14:58; John 2:19.
218. P. G. Bolt, *Cross*, p. 101.
219. Matthew 12:6.
220. C. S. Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 575, referring to Daniel 9:26. Writes Payne (J. B. Payne, *Imminent Appearing*, pp. 147-148):

The subject of [Daniel 9:25-26] is stated to be the Messiah ... ; and the purpose of the action described is six-fold: "to restrain transgression, and to seal up sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (v. 24). The applicability of the first four to Christ is clear (Hebrews 9:26). The "sealing of vision," then, seems to refer to the termination of that anticipatory mode of prophetic revelation which reached its climax in John the Baptist (Matthew 11:13), and not, as sometimes asserted, to the fulfilling of all prophecies. Finally, the anointing of the "most holy," in the light of the messianic prophecy that follows, can refer to none other than Christ's anointing by the Holy Spirit (John 3:34).

He then accomplishes this mission by causing a covenant (the newer testament; Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:6-9, 22) to prevail with many (Daniel 9:27). That is, He makes the testament efficacious with His elect (cf. Isaiah 53:11). Such testamentary action brings to an end the anticipatory sacrificial system of the older testament (Daniel 9:27), a termination that was demonstrated historically when the veil of the temple was symbolically rent in twain at Christ's crucifixion (Matthew 27:51; cf. Hebrews 9:8). But it meant too that the ultimate death would have to take place: Messiah Himself would be cut off (Daniel 9:26). "For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth" (Hebrews 9:17)."

On the timing for the fulfillment of the prophecy, Payne writes (*Imminent Appearing*, pp. 148-149):

The most noteworthy feature of Daniel's prophecy is the inspired prophetic calendar that accompanies it. Daniel predicted a lapse of "seventy weeks [of years]," or 490 years, for the accomplishing of the redemptive work (Daniel 9:24). The beginning point would be indicated by the commandment to restore Jerusalem (v. 25), an event that was accomplished, a century after Daniel, in the reign of the Persian, Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC), under Nehemiah (444 BC). But there had been an earlier attempt, in the same reign, to restore the city's walls, which had been thwarted by the Samaritans (Ezra 4:11-12, 23). This attempt seems to have been made under Ezra (458 BC; cf. 9:9), on the basis of the extended powers granted him in Artaxerxes' decree (7:18, 25, even though nothing explicit is said about his restoring Jerusalem). Daniel then went on to predict that from this commandment, to the Messiah, would be "seven weeks, and three score and two weeks" (9:25), or 69 weeks of years, equaling 483 years. From 458 BC this brings one to AD 26, the very time which many would accept for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus Christ and the commencement of His incarnate ministry. Verses 26 and 27 then describe how, in the midst of the final week (that is, of the last seven year period, and therefore in the spring of AD 30), He would

- bring to an end the Old Testament economy by His death. There could hardly have been a more miraculously accurate prediction than was this! The 490 years then conclude with the three and a half years that remained, during which period the testament was to be confirmed to Israel (cf. Acts 2:38).
221. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 249.
222. P. G. Bolt, *Cross*, p. 101.
223. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 217.
224. Matthew 24:16.
225. J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 545 n. 1; cf. Eusebius, *History*, 3:5, p. 68. Josephus, on the other hand, reports that false prophets had told Jerusalemites that they would be delivered if they stood firm (F. Josephus, *Wars (New)*, 6:5:2 (285-286), p. 898).
226. C. S. Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 579.
227. On the other hand, Keener observes (*Gospel of Matthew*, p. 579):
- Palestine's central mountain range provided a natural place to flee (e.g., 1 Samuel 23:14; Ezekiel 7:15-16; F. Josephus, *Wars (New)*, 2:18:9 (504), p. 764; cf. Pseudo-Philo, *Biblical Antiquities*, 6:11, 18, pp. 92-93, 94, 27:11, p. 161), as mountainous areas with caves often did (Diod. Sic. 34/35.2.22; Dion. Hal. 7:10:3; Appian C. W. 4:17:130; Arrian Ales. 4:24:2). Although the exhortation is too general to be sure, the language might even allude to the familiar 1 Maccabees 2:28.
228. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 226.
229. P. G. Bolt, *Cross*, pp. 101-102.
230. Mark 14:50.
231. P. G. Bolt, *Cross*, pp. 102-103.
232. Daniel 12:2.
233. Daniel 12:1.
234. Mark 13:19 NRSV. Here, as in Matthew, the context implies that this suffering will be experienced by those in Jerusalem. To apply this prophecy to the sufferings of Christ during His Atonement would require the conjecture that the evangelists — or later editors — had misunderstood the overall meaning of the statement of Jesus in this verse, as they apparently misunderstood His earlier statement about “stand[ing] in the holy place.”
235. Joseph Smith — Matthew 1:32.
236. From J. F. Dolkart, *James Tissot*, p. 162.
237. C. S. Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 576.
238. 1 Maccabees 1:37; F. Josephus, *The Antiquities (New)*, 9:7:3 (152), p. 321; cf. 2 Chronicles 23:14; cf. perhaps 1 Chronicles 22:8; 28:3.
239. 1 Maccabees 1:39, 2:12.
240. F. Josephus, *Wars (New)*, 4:3:6-12 (147-201), pp. 812-815, 4:5:4 (343), p. 823, 5:1:3 (17-18), p. 844, cf. 2:17:5 (424), p. 759.
241. F. Josephus, *Wars (New)*, 5:1:3 (17-19), p. 844.
242. Matthew 23:35.
243. JST Genesis 17:7. For more on this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Excursus 37, pp. 617-621.
244. According to D&C 77:15, these witnesses “are two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers.”
245. Revelation 11:4. Cf. Zechariah 4:11-14.
246. It is written only that, after they are killed, “their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, Revelation 11:8 where also our Lord was crucified” — i.e., Jerusalem (Revelation 11:8). It is possible that the sanctuary imagery also should be read “spiritually” as encompassing all or some part of Jerusalem.
247. G. K. Beale, *Book of Revelation*, p. 567, emphasis added. With respect to the prior identification of Christ as a true and faithful witness, see Revelation 1:5, 3:14.
248. John 15:20.
249. Revelation 1:7.
250. Cf. John 16:20.

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