

The Ark and the Tent: Temple Symbolism in the Story of Noah

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Figure 1. Title

Introduction

In my remarks today, I will focus on temple symbolism in the story of Noah, with a special focus on the Ark of Genesis 7-8 and the Tent of Genesis 9.¹ In doing so, I will draw parallels and contrasts with the accounts of the Creation, the Garden, and the Fall in the Bible and the book of Moses, as well as with the worldwide literature concerning flood heros.



Figure 2. Stephen T. Whitlock, 1951-: Noah Sees the Ark in Vision²

The Ark and the Tabernacle

It is significant that, apart from the Tabernacle of Moses³ and the Temple of Solomon,⁴ Noah's Ark is the only man-made structure mentioned in the Bible whose design was directly revealed by God.⁵ In this image, God shows the plans for the Ark to Noah just as He later revealed the plans for the Tabernacle to Moses. The hands of Deity hold the heavenly curtain as Noah, compass in his left hand, regards intently.



Figure 3. The Ark and Its Occupants, Silos Apocalypse, 1109⁶

Like the Tabernacle, Noah's Ark "was designed as a temple."⁷ The Ark's three decks suggest both the three divisions of the Tabernacle and the threefold layout of the Garden of Eden.⁸ Indeed, each of the three decks of Noah's Ark was exactly "the same height as the Tabernacle and three times the area of the Tabernacle court."⁹



Figure 4. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *The Ark of the Covenant*, ca. 1896-1902.¹⁰

Further strengthening the association between the Ark and the Tabernacle is the fact that the Hebrew term for Noah's Ark, *tevah*, later became the standard word for the Ark of the Covenant in Mishnaic Hebrew.¹¹ In addition, the *Septuagint* used the same Greek term, *kibotos*, for both Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant.¹² The ratio of the width to the height of both of these arks is 3:5.¹³

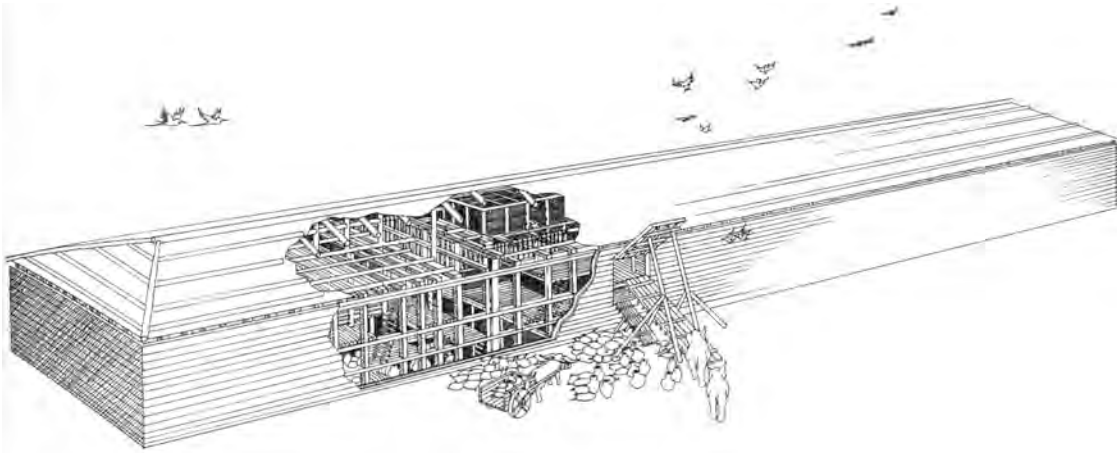


Figure 5. A Modern Depiction of the Ark¹⁴

Marking the similarities between the shape of the Ark of the Covenant and the chest-like form of Noah's Ark, Westermann describes Noah's Ark as "a huge, rectangular box, with a roof."¹⁵ The biblical account makes it clear that the Ark "was not shaped like a ship and it had no oars," "accentuating the fact that Noah's deliverance was not dependent on navigating skills, [but rather happened] entirely by God's will,"¹⁶ its movement solely determined by "the thrust of the water and wind."¹⁷



Figure 6. The Ark of Moses¹⁸

Consistent with the emphasis on deliverance by God rather than through human navigation, the Hebrew word for ark reappears for the only other time in the Bible in the story of the infant Moses, whose deliverance from death was also made possible by a free-floating watercraft—specifically, in this case, a reed basket.¹⁹ Reeds may have also been used as part of the construction materials for Noah’s Ark, as we will discuss below.



Figure 7. Jan Brueghel the Elder, 1568-1625: *The Entry of the Animals Into Noah's Ark*, 1613²⁰

Besides the resemblances in form between the Ark and the Tabernacle, there is also the manner by which it was entered and exited. For example, it has been noted by scholars that, in the Mesopotamian story of *Gilgamesh*, there is a similarity of the loading of the ship to the loading of goods into a temple.²¹ Morales discusses the centrality of the theme of entering and leaving the Ark as reason “to suspect an entrance liturgy ideal at work,”²² with all “‘entries’ as being via Noah,”²³ the righteous and unblemished priestly prototype.²⁴



Figure 8: Eugene Francis Savage, 1883-1978: *Cypress Trail*, 1945²⁵

With respect to the material out of which Noah's Ark was constructed, Genesis 6:14 reads:

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

The referent for the term “gopher wood”—unique in the Bible to Genesis 6:14—is uncertain.²⁶ Modern commentators often take it to mean cypress wood.²⁷ Because it is resistant to rot, the cypress tree was the main wood used in ancient times for the building of ships.²⁸



Figure 9. Adam and Eve Enthroned in Paradise, 16th-century²⁹

There is an extensive mythology about the cypress tree in cultures throughout the world. It is known for its fragrance and longevity³⁰—qualities that have naturally linked it with ancient literature describing the Garden of Eden.³¹ A cypress tree is pictured directly behind Adam and Eve in the center of this 16th-century Islamic depiction. Cypress trees were sometimes used to make temple doors—gateways to Paradise.³²

The possibility of conscious rhyming wordplay in the juxtaposition of *gopher* and *kopher* (“pitch”) within the same verse cannot be ruled out. As Harper notes, the word *kopher* might have evoked, for the ancient reader, “the rich cultic overtones of *kaphar* ‘ransom’ with its half-shekel temple atonement price,³³ *kapporeth* ‘mercy seat’ over the Ark of the Covenant,³⁴ and the verb *kipper* ‘to atone’ associated with so many priestly rituals.”³⁵ Some of these rituals involve the action of smearing or wiping, the same movements by which pitch is applied.³⁶ Just as God’s presence in the Tabernacle preserves the life of His people, so Noah’s Ark preserves a righteous remnant of humanity along with representatives of all its creatures.



Figure 10. "Marsh Arabs" in Southern Iraq Make Reed-Huts³⁷

In Mesopotamian flood stories, the construction materials for the building of a boat were obtained by tearing down a reed-hut. The basic construction idea of such huts is that poles of resinous wood would have framed and supported woven reed mats.³⁸ The reed mats would be stitched to the hull and covered with pitch to make them waterproof.³⁹ As seen in this photograph, these building techniques are still in use today.



Figure 11. Enki Seated in His Abzu Sanctuary⁴⁰

Although reed-huts may sometimes serve as secular enclosures, references to them in Mesopotamian flood stories clearly point to their ancient use as divine sanctuaries.⁴¹ In this figure we see Enki seated in his rectangular sanctuary, made of reeds. He presided both as the god of wisdom and of the freshwater ocean that existed under the land, called the *Abzu*.⁴² In some parts of the ancient Near East, mortal kings and priests would enter into reed sanctuaries in order to commune with the gods, just as Israelite high priests would enter into the their temples.



Figure 12. The Nkoya King Mwene Kabulwebulwe at the Kazanga Festival, Kaoma District, Zambia, 2003⁴³

In this photograph, we see the Nkoya king seated at the ceremonial architecture built of reeds during the Kazanga festival. Van Binsbergen,⁴⁴ “draws ...close comparison between the oral traditions of the [African] Nkoya [people]⁴⁵ and... Mesopotamian mythic accounts of the [God’s appearance to the flood hero Ziusudra] at the reed-hut temple.”⁴⁶

In one version of the story, Ziusudra enters into the “reed-hut... temple,”⁴⁷ where he stands “day after day” listening to the “conversation” of the divine assembly.⁴⁸ Eventually, Ziusudra hears the deadly oaths of the council of the gods following their decision to destroy mankind by a devastating flood. Regretting the decision of the divine assembly, the god Enki contrives a plan to warn Ziusudra and to instruct him on how to build a boat that will save him and his family. Evoking ancient Near East parallels where the gods whisper their secrets to mortals standing on the other side of temple partitions or screens separating the divine and human realms,⁴⁹ Enki conveys his warning message privately through the thin wall of Ziusudra’s reed sanctuary.⁵⁰ Related accounts tell us that Enki instructed Ziusudra to tear down the reed-hut temple and to use the materials to build a boat.⁵¹



Figure 13. Ron Bowles: *Long Hut of the Marsh Arabs*⁵²

Three kinds of boat-building materials are listed within the Mesopotamian flood stories—wood timbers, reeds, and pitch.⁵³ The biblical list is identical, except that the second item is given as “rooms” rather than “reeds.” Concluding “that the apparent lack of the reed-hut or primeval shrine in the Genesis flood account demands closer inspection,”⁵⁴ Jason McCann observes⁵⁵ that re-pointing the vowels would lead to an alternate translation signifying an ark that was “woven-of-reeds.” Thus, the *New Jerusalem Bible* translation of Genesis 6:14:⁵⁶

Make yourself an ark out of resinous wood. Make it with *reeds* and caulk it with pitch inside and out.

By a translation that recognizes “reeds,” not “rooms,” as the second element in the building materials for Noah’s Ark, a puzzling inconsistency with the Mesopotamian accounts is resolved, while, at the same time, further connecting the biblical Ark with the temple.

Let’s now turn our attention to Creation and temple themes in the story of the Flood, where we will find temple parallels not only to the *structure* of the Ark, but also in its *function*.



Figure 14. Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1775-1851: *Shade and Darkness: The Evening Before the Deluge*, 1843

Creation

In considering the role of Noah's Ark in the flood story, it should be noted that it was, specifically, a *mobile* sanctuary,⁵⁷ as were, of course, the Tabernacle and the ark made of reeds that saved the baby Moses. Arguably, each of these structures can be described as a traveling vehicle of rescue that was designed to parallel in function God's portable pavilion or chariot.

Scripture makes a clear distinction between the fixed heavenly temple and its portable counterparts. For example, in Psalm 18⁵⁸ and D&C 121:1, the "pavilion" of "God's hiding place" should not be equated with the celestial "temple" to which the prayers of the oppressed go up,⁵⁹ but rather as a representation of a movable "conveyance"⁶⁰ in which God could swiftly descend to rescue His people from mortal danger.⁶¹ The sense of the action is succinctly captured by Robert Alter: "The outcry of the beleaguered warrior ascends all the way to the highest heavens, thus launching a downward vertical movement"⁶² of God's own chariot.



Figure 15. Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1775-1851: *Light and Colour: The Morning After the Deluge*, 1843

Despite its ungainly shape as a buoyant temple, the Ark is portrayed as floating confidently above the chaos of the great deep. Significantly, the motion of the Ark “upon the face of the waters”⁶³ paralleled the movement of the Spirit of God “upon the face of the waters”⁶⁴ at the original creation of heaven and earth. The deliberate nature of this parallel is made clear when we consider that these are the only two verses in the Bible that contain the phrase “the face of the waters.” In short, we are made to understand that in the presence of the Ark there has been a return of the same spirit of God that had hovered over the waters at Creation—the spirit whose previous withdrawal had been presaged in Genesis 6:3.⁶⁵



Figure 16. A Mini Replica of Creation⁶⁶

The motion of the Ark “upon the face of the waters,”⁶⁷ like the Spirit of God “upon the face of the waters”⁶⁸ at Creation, was a portent of the appearance of light and life. Within the Ark, a “mini replica of Creation,”⁶⁹ were the last vestiges of the *original* Creation, “an alternative earth for all living creatures,”⁷⁰ “a colony of heaven”⁷¹ containing seedlings for the planting of a second Garden of Eden,⁷² the nucleus of a new world—all hidden within a vessel of rescue described in scripture, like the Tabernacle, as a likeness of God’s own traveling pavilion.

Just as the Spirit of God patiently brooded⁷³ over the great deep at Creation, and just as “the longsuffering of God waited... while the ark was a preparing,”⁷⁴ so the indefatigable Noah endured the long brooding of the Ark over the slowly receding waters of the Deluge.⁷⁵



Figure 17. Thomas Cole, 1801-1848: The Subsiding Waters of the Deluge, 1829

At last, the dry land appeared.⁷⁶

There are rich thematic connections between the emergence of the dry land at Creation, the settling of the Ark at the top of the first mountain to emerge from the Flood, New Year's Day, and the temple. In ancient Israel, the holiest spot on earth was believed to be the Foundation Stone in front of the Ark of the Covenant within the temple at Jerusalem:⁷⁷ "it was the first solid material to emerge from the waters of Creation,⁷⁸ and it was upon this stone that the Deity effected Creation." The depiction of the Ark-Temple of Noah perched upon Mount Ararat would have evoked similar temple imagery for the ancient reader of the Bible.

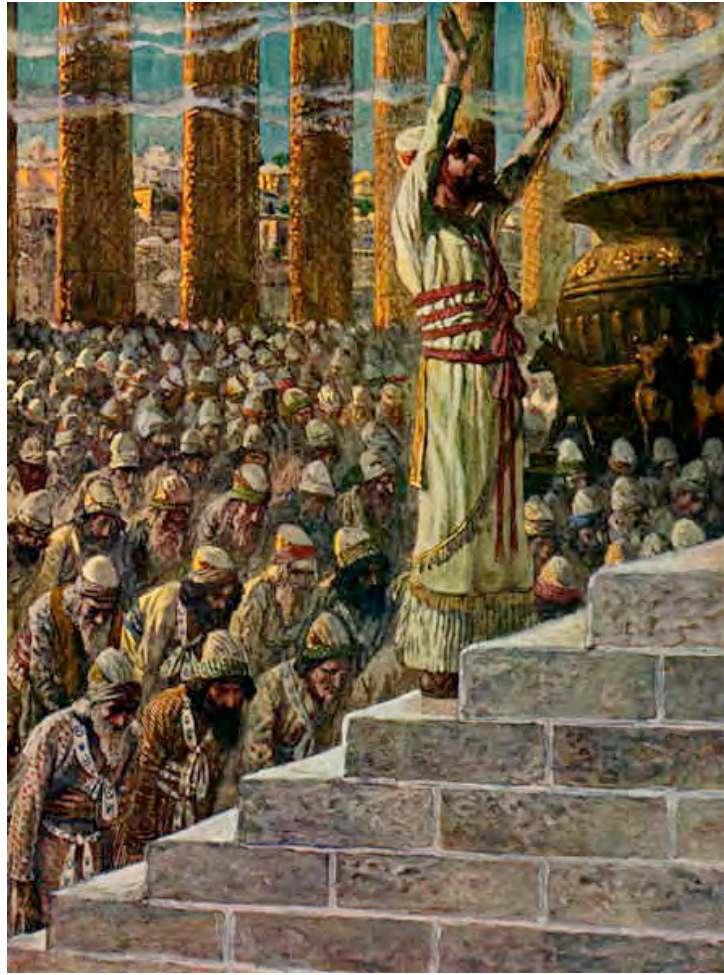


Figure 18. J. James Tissot, 1836–1902, *Dedication of the Temple*, ca. 1896-1902

Note that it was “in the six hundred and *first* year [of Noah’s life] in the *first* month, the *first* day of the month” that “the waters were dried up.”⁷⁹ The Hebrew wording of this verse would have been a hint to the ancient reader that there was special ritual significance to the date. Consider that it was also the “first day of the first month”⁸⁰ when the Tabernacle was dedicated, “while Solomon’s temple was dedicated at the New Year festival in the autumn.”⁸¹

We now leave the story of re-creation and enter the scene of a garden.



Figure 19. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *Noah's Sacrifice*, ca. 1896-1902

Garden

Nothing in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden can be understood without reference to the temple. Neither can the story of Noah and his family in the garden setting of a renewed earth be appreciated fully without taking the temple as its background.

Allusions to Garden of Eden and temple motifs begin as soon as Noah and his family leave the Ark. Just as the book of Moses highlights Adam's diligence in offering sacrifice as soon as he entered the fallen world,⁸² Genesis describes Noah's first action on the renewed earth as being the building of an altar for burnt offerings.⁸³ Likewise, in each account, God's blessing is followed by a commandment to multiply and replenish the earth.⁸⁴ Both stories contain instructions about what the protagonists are and are not to eat.⁸⁵ Notably, in each case, a covenant is established in a context of ordinances and signs or tokens.⁸⁶ More specifically, according to Pseudo-Philo,⁸⁷ the rainbow as a sign or token of a covenant of higher priesthood blessings was said by God to be as an analogue of Moses' staff, a symbol of kingship.⁸⁸ Both the story of Adam and Eve and the story of Noah will prominently feature the theme of nakedness being covered by a garment.⁸⁹ Noah, like Adam, is called the "lord of the whole earth."⁹⁰ Surely, it is no exaggeration to say that Noah is portrayed as a new Adam, "reversing the estrangement" between God and man by means of his atoning sacrifice.⁹¹

We now leave the discussion of Noah's garden, and come to the scene of a "fall" and consequent judgment. To make this passage understandable, it will need to be laid out sequentially, piece by piece.



Figure 20. Noah in His Vineyard, Holkham Bible

Fall and Judgment

In Genesis, the fall and judgment scenes are straightforwardly recited as follows:⁹²

20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

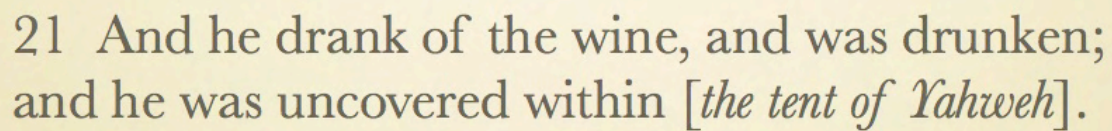
22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

Looking at the passage more closely, however, raises several questions. To begin with, what tent did Noah enter? Although the English translation says “*his* tent,” the Hebrew text features a feminine possessive that would normally mean “*her* tent.”⁹³ The *Midrash Rabbah* explains this as a reference to the tent of Noah’s wife,⁹⁴ and commentators, ancient and modern, have often seized upon this detail to infer that Ham intruded upon his father and mother during a moment of intimacy.⁹⁵



21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken;
and he was uncovered within [*the tent of Yahweh*].

Figure 21. The Tent of Yahweh

A very intriguing alternative explanation, however, is offered by Rabbi Shim'on in the *Zohar*, who takes the *he* of the feminine possessive to mean "'the tent of that vineyard,' namely, the tent of *Shekhinah*,"⁹⁶ the term for "the divine feminine"⁹⁷ that was equated to the presence of Yahweh in Israelite temples. In a variant of the same theme, at least one set of modern commentators take the *he* as referring to *Yahweh*, hence reading the term as the "Tent of *Yahweh*,"⁹⁸ the divine sanctuary.



Figure 22. Tabernacle at the Foot of Mount Sinai⁹⁹

In view of the pervasive theme in ancient literature where the climax of the flood story is the founding of a temple over the source of the floodwaters, Blenkinsopp¹⁰⁰ finds it “safe to assume” that the biblical account of “the deluge served... as the Israelite version of the cosmogonic victory of the deity resulting in the building of a sanctuary for him.” Lucian reports that “the temple of Hierapolis on the Euphrates was founded over the flood waters by Deucalion, counterpart of Ziusudra, Utnapishtim, and Noah.”¹⁰¹ Consistent with this theme, Psalm 29:10 “speaks of Yahweh enthroned over the abyss.”¹⁰²

Given the many allusions in the story of Noah to the Tabernacle of Moses, it would have been natural for the ancient reader to have seen in Noah’s tent at the foot of the mount where the Ark-Temple rested, a parallel with the sacred “Tent of Meeting” at the foot of Mount Sinai, at whose top God’s heavenly tent had been spread.



*Figure 23. Grapes*¹⁰³

How are we to understand the mention that Noah “was drunken”?

Most rabbinical sources make no attempt at explanation or justification but instead roundly criticize Noah’s actions.¹⁰⁴ The difficulty with that explanation is the fact that the Scriptures offer no hint of condemnation for Noah’s supposed drunkenness.



Figure 24. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *Noah in Vision*, ca. 1896-1902

Is there a better explanation for Noah's unexpected behavior?¹⁰⁵ Yes. According to a statement attributed to Joseph Smith, Noah "was not drunk, but in a vision."¹⁰⁶ This agrees with the *Genesis Apocryphon* which, immediately after describing a ritual drinking of wine by Noah and his family, tells of a divine dream vision that revealed the fate of Noah's posterity.¹⁰⁷ Koler and Greenspahn¹⁰⁸ concur that Noah was enwrapped in a vision while in the tent, commenting that "This explains why Shem and [Japheth] refrained from looking at Noah even after they had covered him, significantly 'ahorannît [Heb. "backward"] occurs elsewhere with regard to avoidance of looking directly at God in the course of revelation."

Noah's fitness to enjoy the presence of God is explored in detail by Morales.¹⁰⁹ "In every sense," he writes, "Noah is defined as the one able 'to enter'"¹¹⁰ into the presence of the Lord. He concludes:¹¹¹

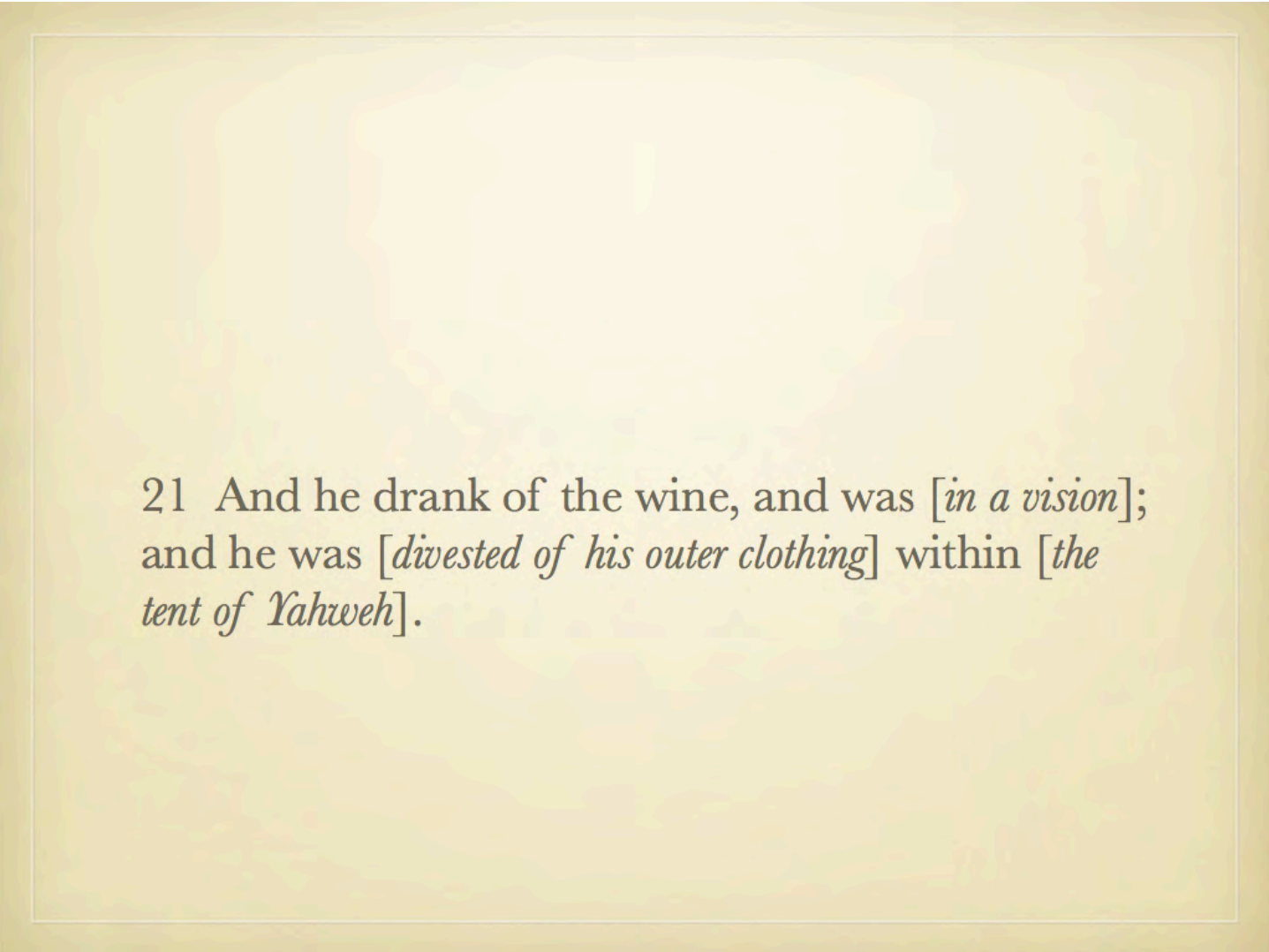
As the righteous man, Noah not only passes through the [door] of the Ark sanctuary,¹¹² but is able to approach the mount of Yahweh for worship.... Noah stands as a new Adam, the primordial man who dwells in the divine Presence... As such, he foreshadows the high priest of the Tabernacle cultus who alone will enter the paradisiacal holy of holies...



Figure 25. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *The Offerings of Melchizedek*, ca. 1896-1902¹¹³

How does wine play into the picture? It should be remembered that a sacramental libation was an element in the highest ordinances of the priesthood as much in ancient times as it is today. For example, five chapters after the end of the Flood story, we read that Melchizedek “brought forth bread and wine”¹¹⁴ to Abraham as part of the ordinance that was to make him a king and a priest after Melchizedek’s holy order.¹¹⁵ Just as Melchizedek then blessed the “most high God, which had delivered thine enemies into thine hand,”¹¹⁶ so Noah, after partaking of the wine with his family, blessed “the God Most High, who had delivered us from the destruction.”¹¹⁷ The book of *Jubilees* further confirms that Noah’s drinking of the wine should be seen in a ritual context, and not merely as a spontaneous indulgence that occurred at the end of a particularly wearying day. Indeed, we are specifically told that Noah “guarded” the wine until the time of the fifth New Year festival, the “first day on the first of the first month,” when he “made a feast with rejoicing. And he made a burnt offering to the Lord.”¹¹⁸

We find greater detail about an analogous event within the *Testament of Levi*.¹¹⁹ There we read that as Levi was being made a king and a priest, he was anointed, washed, and given “bread and holy wine” prior to his being arrayed in a “holy and glorious vestment.”



21 And he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*];
and he was [*divested of his outer clothing*] within [*the
tent of Yahweh*].

Figure 26. Divested of His Outer Clothing

How do we make sense of Noah's being "uncovered" during his vision? Perhaps the closest Old Testament parallel to this practice is when Saul, like the prophets who were with him, "stripped off his clothes... and prophesied before Samuel... and lay down naked all that day and all that night."¹²⁰ Jamieson¹²¹ clarifies that "lay down naked" in this instance meant only that he was "divested of his armor and outer robes." In a similar sense, when we read in John 21:7 that Peter "was naked" as he was fishing, it simply meant that "he had laid off his outer garment, and had on only his inner garment or tunic."¹²²

21 And he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*];
and he was [*divested of his outer clothing*] within [*the
tent of Yahweh*].

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the
nakedness of his father...

Figure 27. Saw the Nakedness of His Father

Now to verse 22. How do we understand the statement that Ham “saw the nakedness of his father”? Reluctant to attribute the apparent gravity of Ham’s misdeed to the mere act of *seeing*, readers have often concluded that Ham, in addition, must have *done* something.¹²³ For example, a popular proposal is that Ham committed unspeakable crimes against his mother¹²⁴ or his father.¹²⁵



Figure 28. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *Noah's Drunkenness* (detail), ca. 1896-1902

Wenham, however, wisely observes that “these and other suggestions are disproved by the next verse” that recounts how Shem and Japheth covered their father: ¹²⁶

As Cassuto¹²⁷ points out: “If the covering was an adequate remedy, it follows that the misdemeanor was confined to seeing.” The elaborate efforts Shem and Japheth made to avoid looking at their father demonstrate that this was all Ham did in the tent.¹²⁸

All this is consistent with the proposal that the misdeed of Ham was in that he intrusively entered within the Tent of Yahweh and saw Noah in the presence of God while the latter was “in the course of revelation.”¹²⁹ While Noah, the righteous and blameless, as an exception to those in his generation,¹³⁰ was in a position to speak with God face-to-face, Ham was neither qualified nor authorized to see, let alone enter into, a place of divine glory.

A parallel to this incident might be seen by reading the story of the transgression of Adam and Eve in the context of its many temple allusions. Consistent with recent scholarship that sees the Garden as a temple prototype,¹³¹ Ephrem the Syrian, a fourth-century Christian, called the Tree of Knowledge “the veil for the sanctuary.”¹³² A Jewish tradition about the two special trees in the Garden of Eden holds that the foliage of the Tree of Knowledge, as an analogue to the temple veil, hid the Tree of Life from direct view: “God did not specifically prohibit eating from the Tree of Life because the Tree of Knowledge formed a hedge around it; only after one had partaken of the latter and cleared a path for himself could one come close to the Tree of Life.”¹³³

Temple	Eden	Ark	Sinai
Holy of Holies	Summit/Heights - God-Tree of Life - The Victorious	Upper Deck - Deity - Noah	Summit/Heights - The Glorious One - Moses
Veil	Tree of Knowledge		
Holy Place	Slopes - Adam and Eve - The Righteous	Middle Part - Birds	Halfway Up - Aaron Round About - Priests
Outer Courtyard	Lower Slopes - Animals - Penitent Sinners	Lower Part - Animals	Below - People

Figure 29. Ephrem the Syrian's Concept of Eden, the Ark, and Sinai¹³⁴

In describing his concept of Eden, Ephrem cited parallels with the division of the animals on Noah's Ark and the demarcations on Sinai separating Moses, Aaron, the priests, and the people, as shown here.¹³⁵ Ephrem pictured Paradise as a great mountain, with the Tree of Knowledge providing a boundary partway up the slopes. The Tree of Knowledge, Ephrem concluded, "acts as a sanctuary curtain [i.e., veil] hiding the Holy of Holies which is the Tree of Life higher up."¹³⁶

Recurring throughout the Old Testament are echoes of such a layout of sacred spaces and the accounts of dire consequences for those who attempt unauthorized entry through the veil into the innermost sanctuary. By way of analogy to the situation of Adam and Eve and its setting in the temple-like layout of the Garden of Eden, recall that service in Israelite temples under conditions of worthiness was intended to sanctify the participants. However, as taught in Levitical laws of purity, doing the same "while defiled by sin, was to court unnecessary danger, perhaps even death."¹³⁷

If this understanding of the situation in Eden is correct, the sin of Ham would be a striking parallel to the transgression of Adam and Eve.¹³⁸ Noah was positioned directly in front of, or perhaps even seated upon, a representation of the throne of God.¹³⁹ Without proper invitation, Ham approached the curtains of the "tent of Yaweh,"¹⁴⁰ and looked at the glory of God that was "uncovered within"¹⁴¹—literally, "in the midst of"¹⁴²—the tent, just as Eve, "cleared a path" for herself so she could "come close to the Tree of Life"¹⁴³ that was located "in the midst of"¹⁴⁴ the Garden. Emerging from the tent, Noah cursed Canaan,¹⁴⁵ who is likened in the *Zohar* to the "primordial serpent"¹⁴⁶ that was cursed by God in Eden.

By way of contrast to Ham and Canaan, *Targum Neofiti*, asserts that the specific blessing given by Noah to his birthright son Shem is to have the immediate presence of the Lord with him and with his posterity:¹⁴⁷ "[M]ay the Glory of his *Shekhinah* dwell in the midst of the tents of Shem."

21 And he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*];
and he was [*divested of his outer clothing*] within [*the*
tent of Yahweh].

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the [*skin*
garment] of his father...

Figure 30. Skin Garment

Continuing, we encounter the question of what is meant by the “nakedness” of Noah. As with Noah’s drinking of the wine, some readers see his “nakedness” as shameful. However, as an alternative, what has just been outlined about Ham’s having intrusively looked at the divine Presence within the sanctuary might be sufficient explanation for the description.

Going further, however, Nibley¹⁴⁸ argued from the interpretations of some ancient readers¹⁴⁹ that the Hebrew term for “nakedness” in this verse, *’erwat*, might be better rendered as “skins,” *’orot*—in other words, an animal skin garment corresponding, in this instance, to the “coats of skins”¹⁵⁰ [*kuttonet ’or*] given to Adam and Eve for their protection after the Fall. The two Hebrew words *’erwat* and *’orot* would have looked nearly identical in their original unpointed form. *Midrash Rabbah* specifically asserts that the garment of Adam had been handed down to Noah, who wore it when he offered sacrifice.¹⁵¹



Figure 31. Tabernacle Coverings and Curtains

In the current context, the possibility signaled by Morales¹⁵² that “the ‘covering [*mikseh*] of the Ark’¹⁵³ establishes a link to the [skin] ‘covering of the Tabernacle’”¹⁵⁴ is significant.¹⁵⁵ The idea that not only the Ark and the Tabernacle, but also Noah himself might have been covered in a priestly garment of skins is intriguing when we consider Philonenko’s observation that “the temple is [itself] considered as a person and the veil of the temple as a garment that is worn, as a personification of the sanctuary itself.”¹⁵⁶ Could it be that just as it is specifically pointed out in scripture that Noah “removed the [skin] covering of the Ark” in Genesis 8:13, he subsequently removed his own ritual covering of skins? This “garment of repentance,”¹⁵⁷ which, by the way, was worn in those times as outer rather than inner clothing, was taken off by Noah in preparation for his being “clothed upon with glory.”¹⁵⁸

21 And he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*];
and he was [*divested of his outer clothing*] within [*the
tent of Yahweh*].

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, [*took*] the [*skin
garment*] of his father...

Figure 32. Took the Skin Garment

Some ancient readers went further, stating that Ham not only *saw* but also *took* the “skin garment” of his father, intending to usurp his priesthood authority. In one of the earliest extant sources for this idea Rabbi Judah said:¹⁵⁹

The tunic that the Holy One, blessed be His Name, made for Adam and his wife was with Noah in the Ark; when they left the Ark, Ham, the son of Noah, took it, and left with it, then passed it on to Nimrod.



Figure 33. Stephen T. Whitlock, 1951-: *Noah Sees the Ark in Vision (detail)*¹⁶⁰

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, I have tried to demonstrate that the story of Noah not only repeats the stories of the Creation,¹⁶¹ the Garden,¹⁶² and the Fall of Adam and Eve,¹⁶³ but also replays the temple themes in those accounts. These themes are especially apparent in the stories of the Ark and the Tent.

While the evidence I have presented about temple symbolism in the story of Noah is surely suggestive, unequivocal confirming evidence of certain points remains elusive. Specifically, there are parts of the story of the tent as a sanctuary where I still feel all at sea. As to the resemblances of the Tabernacle to the Ark, however, I'm confident we're on solid ground.

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Endnotes

- 1 I am collaborating with David Larsen on a more extensive discussion of these and related matters as part of a detailed commentary that will include Moses 6:12-8:30 and Genesis 5:6-11:32 in J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *God's Image 2*.
- 2 Photograph IMGP1821, 24 April 2009, © Stephen T. Whitlock. Detail of Patriarchs Window, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, England.
- 3 Exodus 25:8-40.
- 4 1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19.
- 5 Genesis 6:14-16. Cf. E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, pp. 55-56; L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured* (pre-publication draft), pp. 155-156.
- 6 In N. Cohn, *Noah's Flood*, p. 39.
- 7 C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*, p. 41. See also Wyatt's discussion of the arks of Noah and Moses, the ark of the covenant, and the story of Utnapishtim in *Gilgamesh* (N. Wyatt, *Water*, pp. 214-216).
- 8 J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 77-87. Cf. Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 53; A. S.-M. Ri, *Caverne Syriaque*, p. 208. See the discussion in E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, p. 50 of readings of Genesis 6:16 in the Targums and the Septuagint, and for a description of parallels in 1 Kings 6:6 and Ezekiel 41:7.
- 9 J. D. G. Dunn *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 44. Following B. Jacob, Wenham further explains:

... that if each deck were further subdivided into three sections (cf. *Gilgamesh's* nine sections (A. George, *Gilgamesh*, 11:62, p. 90), the Ark would have had three decks the same height as the Tabernacle and three sections on each deck the same size as the Tabernacle courtyard.

Regarding similarities in the Genesis 1 account of Creation, the Exodus 25ff. account of the building of the Tabernacle, and the account of the building of the ark, Sailhamer writes (J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 82, see also table on p. 84):

Each account has a discernible pattern: God speaks (*wayyo'mer/wayedabber*), an action is commanded (imperative/jussive), and the command is carried out (*wayya'as*) according to God's will (*wayehi ken/kaaser siwwah 'elohim*). The key to these similarities lies in the observation that each narrative concludes with a divine blessing (*wayebarek*, Genesis 1:28, 9:1; Exodus 39:43) and, in the case of the Tabernacle and Noah's Ark, a divinely ordained *covenant* (Genesis 6:8; Exodus 34:27; in this regard it is of some importance that later biblical tradition also associated the events of Genesis 1-3 with the making of a divine covenant; cf. Hosea 6:7). Noah, like Moses, followed closely the commands of God and in so doing found salvation and blessing in his *covenant*.
- 10 J. J. Tissot, *Old Testament*, 1:229. In the public domain.
- 11 V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 280. See Exodus 27. Cf. J. W. Wevers, *Notes*, Genesis 6:14, p. 83. In other words, the dimensions of the Tabernacle courtyard "has the same width [as the Ark] but one-third the length and height" (Hendel in H. W. Attridge *et al.*, *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 14 n. 6:14-16).
- 12 C. Dogniez *et al.*, *Pentateuque*, p. 150 n. Genesis 6:14, pp. 314-315 n. Exodus 2:3.
- 13 See Genesis 6:15 and Exodus 25:10.
- 14 Figure from B. T. Arnold, *Genesis*, p. 59.
- 15 C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, p. 418. Cassuto further observes (U. Cassuto, *Noah to Abraham*, p. 60):

The sentence "and the ark went on the face of the waters" (Genesis 8:18) is not suited to a boat, which is navigated by its mariners, but to something that floats on the surface of the waters and

moves in accordance with the thrust of the water and wind. Similarly, the subsequent statement (Genesis 8:4) “the ark came to rest... upon the mountains of Ararat” implies an object that can *rest* upon the ground; this is easy for an ark to do, since its bottom is straight and horizontal, but not for a ship.

- 16 R. M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, Bereishis, p. 230; cf. U. Cassuto, Noah to Abraham, pp. 60-61; L. M. Morales, The Tabernacle Pre-Figured (pre-publication draft), p. 155.
- 17 U. Cassuto, Noah to Abraham, p. 60. This recalls the ancient Sumerian story of *Enki's Journey to Nibru*, where the boat's movement is not directed by its captain, but rather it “departs of its own accord” (J. A. Black *et al.*, *Enki's Journey*, 83-92, p. 332).
- 18 From the Turner movie, *Moses*.
- 19 Exodus 2:3, 5. See U. Cassuto, Noah to Abraham, p. 59. Note, however, that the Greek *Septuagint* translates the Hebrew word (*tevah*) differently in Genesis 6:14 (*kibotos*) and Exodus 2:3 (*thibis*) (C. Dogniez *et al.*, *Pentateuque*, pp. 314-315 n. Exodus 2:3). See C. Cohen, Hebrew *TBH* for a discussion of the difficulties in explaining why the same Hebrew term *tevah* was used in the story of Noah's Ark and the ark of Moses.
- 20 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Janbrueghelark.jpg>, 26 August 2012.
- 21 N. Wyatt, *Water*, p. 215. Cf. S. W. Holloway, *What Ship*, p. 346. See A. George, *Gilgamesh*, 11:81-85, p. 91.
- 22 L. M. Morales, The Tabernacle Pre-Figured (pre-publication draft), p. 181.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 191-203.
- 25 <http://www.hamiltonauctiongalleries.com/6-CypressTrail13x21.JPG>, 26 June 2012.
- 26 See, e.g., U. Cassuto, Noah to Abraham, p. 61.
- 27 R. Alter, *Five Books*, Genesis 6:14, p. 41; K. L. Barker, *Zondervan*, Genesis 6:14, p. 14. Cf. A. Chouraqui, *Bible*, Genesis 6:14, p. 27: “Fais-toi une caisse en bois de cyprès [Make a coffer of cypress wood].” See also A. Kaplan, *La Torah Vivante*, p. 17 n. 6.14 cyprès.
- 28 J. Feliks, *Cypress*.
- 29 Photographic Services and Permissions, New York Public Library, Spencer, Pers. Ms. 46. In R. Milstein *et al.*, *Stories*, Plate 13.
- 30 For example, a 4500-year-old Cypress tree stands on the grounds of the Grand Mosque of Abarqu, near the village Shiraz in Iran's southeastern province of Yazd (Abarqu's cypress tree: After 4000 years still gracefully standing, Abarqu's cypress). This was formerly the site of a Zoroastrian temple. Indeed, Zoroaster himself is said to have planted a cypress at the temple of Khorasan (M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p. 158). Cf. A. V. W. Jackson, *Cypress of Kashmar*.
- 31 See, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Figure E25-2, p. 593, Endnote E-111, p. 729.
- 32 E.g., 1 Kings 6:34 (KJV mistranslates the wood as “fir”).
- 33 Exodus 30:11-13.
- 34 Exodus 25:17-22.
- 35 Exodus 29-30; Leviticus and Numbers *passim*.
- 36 See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Endnote 3-57, p. 211; E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, pp. 3-4. Of the meaning of *kpr*, Margaret Barker writes (M. Barker, *Atonement*):

Atonement translates the Hebrew *kpr*, but the meaning of *kpr* in a ritual context is not known. Investigations have uncovered only what actions were used in the rites of atonement, not what that action was believed to effect. The possibilities for its meaning are “cover” or “smear” or “wipe,” but these reveal no more than the exact meaning of “breaking bread” reveals about the Christian Eucharist.... I should like to quote here from an article by Mary Douglas published... in *Jewish Studies Quarterly* (M. Douglas, Atonement, p. 117. See also M. Douglas, Leviticus, p. 234: “Leviticus actually says less about the need to wash or purge than it says about ‘covering.’”):

Terms derived from cleansing, washing and purging have imported into biblical scholarship distractions which have occluded Leviticus’ own very specific and clear description of atonement. According to the illustrative cases from Leviticus, to atone means to cover or recover, cover again, to repair a hole, cure a sickness, mend a rift, make good a torn or broken covering. As a noun, what is translated atonement, expiation or purgation means integument made good; conversely, the examples in the book indicate that defilement means integument torn. Atonement does not mean covering a sin so as to hide it from the sight of God; it means making good an outer layer which has rotted or been pierced.

This sounds very like the cosmic covenant with its system of bonds maintaining the created order, broken by sin and repaired by “atonement.”

Nibley gives the following analysis (H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 16, p. 198):

The word... *kpr*, *kippur*... [is] cognate with our word cover; it’s pronounced *kfr*. So we have cover, but that is just the beginning of this very interesting word. It’s the same in Aramaic; it’s “to cover over your sins.” This is the way Jastrow’s big two-volume lexicon explains it: It means “to arch over; to bend over; to cover; to pass over with the hand, especially the palm of the hand.” The word for palm of the hand in all Semitic languages is *kap*. It means “to cover, hence to grasp by the hand; to wipe over, hence to cleanse, to expiate, to forgive, to renounce, to deny, to be found, to encircle.” All these in one word.

37 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/gallery/2009/07/23/GA2009072303612.html?sid=ST2009072303928>, 1 July 2012.

38 See discussion of the hypothesis that analogous structures in First Dynasty Egypt were adopted from Mesopotamian temple architecture in J. M. McCann, *Woven*, p. 3.

39 Cf. R. A. Carter, *Watercraft*, p. 364:

These boats are... best understood as composite wooden-framed vessels with reed-bundle hulls. Such a boat would have been cheaper to build than one with a fully planked hull and stronger than one without a wooden frame... The use of wooden frames with reed-bundle hulls conforms to the archaeological evidence...

Both wooden and composite boats were covered with bitumen. The RJ-2 slabs also suggest that matting was stitched onto the reed hull prior to coating.

See also D. T. Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, pp. 122-137.

40 <http://www.bibleorigins.net/ReedHutShrinesMesopotamian.html>, 1 July 2012.

41 A. L. Oppenheim, *Mesopotamian Temple*, p. 158.

42 J. A. Black *et al.*, *Literature of Ancient Sumer*, p. 330. Continuing, Black, *et al.* write that Enki’s:

... primary temple was... at Eridug deep in the marshes in the far south of Mesopotamia. Eridug was considered to be the oldest city, the first to be inhabited before the Flood... Excavations at Eridug have confirmed that ancient belief—and a small temple with burned offerings and fish bones was found in the lowest levels, dating to some time in the early fifth millennium BCE.”

Eridug or Eridu, now Tell abu Shahrain in southern Mesopotamia, is associated by some scholars (e.g., N. M. Sarna, Genesis, p. 36) with the name of the biblical character “Irād” (Genesis 4:18), and the city built by his father Enoch, son of Cain (Genesis 4:17).

43 In W. van Binsbergen, The continuity of African and Eurasian mythologies as seen from the perspective of the Nkoya people of Zambia, South Central Africa, p. 3.

44 Ibid.

45 J. M. McCann, Woven, p. 6 n. 22 writes: “These oral traditions were first collected and written down by the first Christian missionaries among the Nkoya. They were edited into their present format by Win van Binsbergen in 1988.”

46 Ibid., p. 6.

47 Ibid., p. 1.

48 T. Jacobsen, Eridu, 89-92, p. 158.

49 Cf. H. W. Nibley, Babylonian Background, p. 362: “The manner in which [Utnapishtim] received the revelation is interesting: the will of father Anu, the Lord of Heaven, was transmitted to the hero through a screen or partition made of matting, a *kikkisu*, such as was ritually used in temples.” See also J. M. Bradshaw, The tree of knowledge as the veil of the sanctuary.

50 T. Jacobsen, Eridu, 93-96, p. 158.

51 E.g., S. Dalley, Atrahasis, 3:21-22, p. 29; A. George, Gilgamesh, 11:22-24, p. 89.

52 <http://fineartamerica.com/featured/long-hut-of-the-marsh-arabs-ron-bowles.html>, 1 July 2012.

53 S. Dalley, Atrahasis, 3:2, p. 30:

The carpenter [brought his axe,
The reed worker [brought his stone,
[A child brought] bitumen.

A. George, Gilgamesh, 11:53-55, p. 90:

The young men were ...,
the old men bearing ropes of palm-fibre
the rich man was carrying the pitch

54 J. M. McCann, Woven, p. 8.

55 See *ibid.*, pp. 9-17 for an extended discussion of this translation issue.

56 R. De Vaux, Bible, Genesis 6:14, p. 25:

Fais-toi une arche en bois résineux, tu la feras en roseaux et tu l’enduiras de bitume en dedans et en dehors.

57 Recognizing that even the most seemingly permanent temple complexes are best viewed only as way stations, Nibley generalized the concept of mobile sanctuaries to include all current earthly structures (H. W. Nibley, Tenting, pp. 42-43):

The most wonderful thing about Jerusalem the Holy City is its mobility: at one time it is taken up to heaven and at another it descends to earth or even makes a rendezvous with the earthly Jerusalem at some point in space halfway between. In this respect both the city and the temple are best thought of in terms of a tent, ... at least until the time comes when the saints “will no longer have to use a movable tent” [Origen, John, 10:23, p. 404. “The pitching of the tent outside the camp represents God’s remoteness from the impure world” (H. W. Nibley, Tenting, p. 79 n. 40)] according to the early Fathers, who get the idea from the New Testament... [E.g., “John 1:14 reads literally, ‘the *logos* was made flesh and pitched his tent [*eskenosen*] among us’; and after the

Resurrection the Lord ‘camps’ with his disciples, Acts 1:4. At the Transfiguration Peter prematurely proposed setting up three tents for taking possession (Matthew 17:4; Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33)” (ibid., p. 80 n. 41] It is now fairly certain, moreover, that the great temples of the ancients were not designed to be dwelling-houses of deity but rather stations or landing-places, fitted with inclined ramps, stairways, passageways, waiting-rooms, elaborate systems of gates, and so forth, for the convenience of traveling divinities, whose sacred boats and wagons stood ever ready to take them on their endless junkets from shrine to shrine and from festival to festival through the cosmic spaces. The Great Pyramid itself, we are now assured, is the symbol not of immovable stability but of constant migration and movement between the worlds; and the ziggurats of Mesopotamia, far from being immovable, are reproduced in the seven-stepped throne of the thundering sky-wagon.

58 Cf. 2 Samuel 22.

59 Psalm 18:6; D&C 121:2. J. F. McConkie *et al.*, Revelations, p. 945 mistakenly identifies the “pavilion” of D&C 121:1 as God’s heavenly residence, while S. E. Robinson *et al.*, D&C Commentary, 4:151 correctly identifies the “pavilion” as a “movable tent.”

60 Appropriately translated from the Greek as “Tabernacle” (J. N. Sparks *et al.*, Orthodox Study Bible, Psalm 17(18):12, p. 691). Eden surmises: “No doubt the historical model closest to this is the *apadâna* of the Persian sovereign, the pavilion of the royal palace in which the King of kings sat in his throne to receive his subjects. In some texts of the Jewish tradition, the link which ties the description of the divine audience room to the earthly royal one is clearly shown. For instance, in the *Pirkei De Rebbe Eliezer*, an early medieval Midrash, we can read (G. B. Eden, Mystical Architecture, p. 22; cf. M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, Rabbi Éliézer, 12, p. 82): ‘[God] let Adam into his *apadâna*, as it is written: And put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it’ (Genesis 2:15).”

61 K. L. Barker, Zondervan, p. 803 n. 18:7-15. Some Christians also came to view this Psalm as foreshadowing the Incarnation (J. N. Sparks *et al.*, Orthodox Study Bible, p. 691 n. 17). Noah’s Ark was sometimes seen in a similar fashion: “The ark was a type of the Mother of God with Christ and the Church in her womb (Akath). The flood-waters were a type of baptism, in which we are saved (1 Peter 3:18-22)” (ibid., Genesis 6:14-21, p. 12).

62 R. Alter, Psalms, p. 53 n. 8.

63 Genesis 7:18.

64 Genesis 1:2. The singular rather than the plural term for “water” appears in JST OT2, the source of Moses 2:2 (S. H. Faulring *et al.*, Original Manuscripts, p. 595). However “waters” (Hebrew *mayim*) the original term in Genesis, is used in JST OT1 as well as in the later translation of the book of Abraham. This raises the possibility that the change in OT2 was made erroneously or on John Whitmer’s initiative rather than the Prophet’s (see K. P. Jackson, Book of Moses, p. 10).

65 V. P. Hamilton, Genesis 1-17, p. 267. Though differing in detail, a number of Jewish sources describe the similar process of the removal of the *Shekhinah*—representing God’s presence—in various stages, and its return at the dedication of the Tabernacle. See, e.g., H. Schwartz, Tree, p. 51, see also pp. 55-56.

66 <http://www.creation-answers.com/flood.htm>, 27 June 2012.

67 Genesis 7:18.

68 Genesis 1:2.

69 E. A. Harper, You Shall Make, p. 54. Cf. L. M. Morales, The Tabernacle Pre-Figured (pre-publication draft), pp. 160-162. Morales argues that the “building and filling of the Ark... exhibit a correspondence with the ‘building’ and filling of the cosmos” at the time of Creation (ibid., p. 161).

70 E. A. Harper, You Shall Make, p. 54.

71 L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured* (pre-publication draft), p. 163.

72 Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Treasures*, p. 185, where he argues from Mandaean and Gnostic sources describing the process of creating new worlds through a “colonizing process called ‘planting.’” “[T]hose spirits that bring their treasures to a new world are called ‘Plants,’ more rarely ‘seeds,’ of their father or ‘Planter’ in another world [cf. Adam’s “planting” (E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, #378, pp. 283, 286, 290)]. Every planting goes out from a Treasure House, either as the essential material elements or as the colonizers themselves, who come from a sort of mustering-area called the “Treasure-house of Souls.”

73 The word describing the agent of divine movement is expressed in the beginning of the story of Creation and in the story of the Flood using the same Hebrew term, *ruach* (in Genesis 1:2, the KJV translates this as “spirit,” while in Genesis 8:1 it is rendered as “wind”). In the former, the *ruach* is described as “moving” using the Hebrew verb *merahepet*, which literally “denotes a physical activity of flight over water” (M. S. Smith, *Priestly Vision*, p. 55), however Walton has argued that the wider connotation in both the Creation and Flood accounts expresses “a state of preparedness” (J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1*, p. 149): “*ruach* is related to the presence of the deity, preparing to participate in Creation” (ibid., p. 149).

Consistent with this reading that understands this verse as a period of divine preparation, the creation story in the Joseph Smith’s book of Abraham employs the term “brooding” rather than “moving” as we find in the King James Version. Note that this change is consistent with the English translation given Hebrew grammar book that was studied by Joseph Smith in Kirtland (see J. Seixas, *Manual*, p. 31). John Milton (H. J. Hodges, *Dove*; J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1:19-22, p. 16; cf. Augustine, *Literal*, 18:36; E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*, p. 44) interpreted the passage similarly in *Paradise Lost*, drawing from images such as the dove sent out by Noah (Genesis 8:6-12), the dove at Jesus’ baptism (John 1:32), and a hen protectively covering her young with her wing (Luke 13:34):

[T]hou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dovelike satst brooding on the vast abyss
And mad’st it pregnant.”

“Brooding” enjoys rich connotations, including, as Nibley observes (H. W. Nibley, *Before Adam*, p. 69), not only “to sit or incubate [eggs] for the purpose of hatching” but also:

... “to dwell continuously on a subject.” Brooding is just the right word—a quite long quiet period of preparation in which apparently nothing was happening. Something was to come out of the water, incubating, waiting—a long, long time.

Some commentators emphatically deny any connection of the Hebrew term with the concept of brooding (e.g., U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, pp. 24-25). However, the “brooding” interpretation is not only attested by a Syriac cognate (F. Brown *et al.*, *Lexicon*, 7363, p. 934b) but also has a venerable history, going back at least to Rashi who spoke specifically of the relationship between the dove and its nest. In doing so, he referred to the Old French term *acoveter*, related both to the modern French *couver* (from Latin *cubare*—to brood and protect) and *couvrir* (from Latin *cooperire*—to cover completely). Intriguingly, this latter sense is related to the Hebrew term for the atonement, *kipper* (M. Barker, *Atonement*; A. Rey, *Dictionnaire*, 1:555).

Going further, Barker admits the possibility of a subtle wordplay in examining the reversal of consonantal sounds between “brood/hover” and “atone”: “The verb for ‘hover’ is *rchp*, the middle letter is *cheth*, and the verb for ‘atone’ is *kpr*, the initial letter being a *kaph*, which had a similar sound. The same three consonantal sounds could have been word play, *rchp/kpr*” (M. Barker, June 11 2007). “There is sound play like this in the temple style” (ibid.; see M. Barker, *Hidden*, pp. 15-17). In this admittedly speculative interpretation, one might see an image of God, prior to the first day of Creation, figuratively “hovering/atoning” [*rchp/kpr*] over the singularity of the inchoate universe,

just as the Ark smeared with pitch [*kaphar*] later moved over the face of the waters “when the waters cover[ed] over and atone[d] for the violence of the world” (E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, p. 4).

126 M. Barker, 11 June 2007.

127 See M. Barker, *Hidden*, pp. 15-17.

128 M. Barker, 11 June 2007.

129 See H. J. Hodges, *Dove* for a cogent analysis of Milton’s sources and of general Hebrew-to-English translation

issues. See also *Commentary* 1:1-b, p. 42 and 4:5-b, p. 246.

130 JST Genesis 8:47 and Exodus 14:21. See N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*

74 1 Peter 3:20.

75 In the following chiasmic structuring of the account, Wenham demonstrates the pattern of “waiting” throughout the story, as well as the centrality of the theme of Genesis 8:1: “But God remembered Noah” (G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* 1-15, p. 157):

7 days of waiting for flood (7:4)

7 days of waiting for flood (7:10)

40 days of flood (7:17a)

150 days of water triumphing (7:24)

150 days of water waning (8:3)

40 days of waiting (8:6)

7 days of waiting (8:10)

7 days of waiting (8:12)

76 J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 89 observes:

The description of God’s rescue of Noah foreshadows God’s deliverance of Israel in the Exodus. Just as later “God remembered his covenant” (Exodus 2:24) and sent “a strong east wind” to dry up the waters before his people (Exodus 14:21) so that they “went through... on dry ground” (Exodus 14:22), so also in the story of the Flood we read that “God remembered” those in the ark and sent a “wind” over the waters (Genesis 8:1) so that his people might come out on “dry ground” (Genesis 8:14).

77 J. M. Lundquist, *Meeting Place*, p. 7. Ancient temples found in other cultures throughout the world also represent—and are often built upon—elevations that emulate the holy mountain at the starting point of Creation (see, e.g., E. A. S. Butterworth, *Tree*; R. J. Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*; R. J. Clifford, *Temple*). Nibley writes that the temple is (H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 48):

... the “hierocentric point,” the place where all time, space, and humanity come together. The word *templum* not only designates the template, the point of cutting between the *cardo* and *decumanus* from which the observer of the heavens makes his viewing, it is also the diminutive of the word *tempus*, denoting that it measures the divisions of time and space in a single pattern. There, all the records of the past are kept and all of the prophecies for the future are divined.”

78 E.g., Psalm 104:5-9.

79 Genesis 8:13.

80 Exodus 40:1.

81 N. Wyatt, *Water*, pp. 215-216. See 1 Kings 8:2. Wyatt remarks that the expression about the New Year festival comes from S. W. Holloway, *What Ship*, noting that “[m]any scholars regard the search for the New Year festival to be something of a futile exercise” (N. Wyatt, *Water*, p. 235 n. 129).

82 Moses 5:5-8.

83 Genesis 8:20.

84 See Moses 2:28; Genesis 9:1, 7.

85 See Moses 2:28-30, 3:9, 16-17; Genesis 9:2-4.

86 See Moses 5:5, 59; Genesis 9:9-17.

87 See Pseudo-Philo, *Biblical Antiquities*, 19:11, pp. 129-130.

88 See J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *Investiture Panel*, pp. 38-39 for a brief summary of the symbolism of the staff, and B. N. Fisk, *Remember*, pp. 276-281 for Pseudo-Philo's identification of the staff with the rainbow. Just prior to his equating of the rainbow and the staff as a "witness between me and my people," Pseudo-Philo, *Biblical Antiquities*, 19:12, pp. 130 has the Lord showing Moses "the measures of the sanctuary, and the number of the offerings, and the sign whereby men shall interpret (literally, begin to look upon) the heaven, and said: These are the things which were forbidden to the sons of men because they sinned" (cf. JST Exodus 34:1-2).

89 See Moses 4:27; Genesis 9:21-22.

90 G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* 1-15, p. 198.

91 L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured* (pre-publication draft), p. 197. Cf. O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 6:2, p. 66: "And he made atonement for the land. And he took the kid of a goat, and he made atonement with its blood for all the sins of the land because everything which was on it had been blotted out except those who were in the ark with Noah." See also F. G. Martinez, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 10:13, p. 231: "I atoned for the whole earth."

92 Genesis 9:20-25.

93 I.e.: "In the biblical text the final letter of *oholoh*, his tent, is a *he*, rather than the normal masculine possessive suffix (*vav*). The suffix *he* usually denotes the feminine possessive, *her*" (D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 1, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700).

94 J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* 2, 36:3, p. 30: "The word for 'his tent' is written as if it were to be read 'in her tent,' namely, in the tent of his wife."

95 For example, Cohen, having explored the "symbolic meaning of wine in ancient cultures," concludes that Noah's actions in this regard have been completely misunderstood, the result of "biblical scholarship's failure" in explaining the meaning of the enigmatic incident. Summarizing Cohen's view, Haynes writes (S. R. Haynes, *Curse*, pp. 188-189; see H. H. Cohen, *Drunkenness*, pp. 8, 12):

Cohen explores Israelite and other traditions to elucidate a complex relationship between alcohol, fire, and sexuality. Drawing on this connection, he surmises that Noah's drunkenness is indicative not of a deficiency in character but of a good-faith attempt to replenish the earth following the Flood. Indeed, Noah's "determination to maintain his procreative ability at full strength resulted in drinking himself into a state of helpless intoxication." How ironic, Cohen notes, that in acceding to the divine command to renew the earth's population, Noah suffered the opprobrium of drunkenness. In Cohen's view, he "deserves not censure but acclaim for having played so well the role of God's devoted servant."

96 D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 1, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700. Cf. related references in the *Zohar* to the same concept in the story of Abraham (*ibid.*, 1:80a, p. 18, 184a, p. 34).

97 D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 2, 1:84a, p. 34.

98 Koler and Greenspahn, as discussed in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, pp. 566-567. Cf., e.g., D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 2, 1:80a, p. 18 n. 128: "Rabbi Shim'on interprets the final *he*... as an allusion to the divine,

because *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the final *he* of the name *YHVH*, or because the letter *he* stands for *ha-shem*, “the [divine] name.” See also *ibid.*, 1:84a, p. 34.

99 <http://revelationclock.org/images/Picture1.png>.

100 J. Blenkinsopp, *The structure of P*, p. 285.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 285. See Pseudo-Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 13, p. 34.

102 J. Blenkinsopp, *The structure of P*, p. 285. See also S. W. Holloway, *What Ship*, p. 334-335, which cites Patai’s account of related rabbinic legends about the capping of the Deep with the foundation stone of the temple, on which was written the forty-two letters of the ineffable Name of God.

103 http://thewinehub.blogspot.com/2011_01_01_archive.html, 26 June 2012.

104 E.g., M. J. B. bin Gorion *et al.*, *Mimekor*, 1:24; J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* 1, 36:3, pp. 28-29.

105 Remarking on the odd inconsistency implied by the common understanding of Noah’s actions, G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* 1-15, p. 198 n. 21 writes:

So striking is the contrast between Noah the saint who survived the Flood and Noah the inebriated vintner that many commentators argue that the two traditions are completely incompatible and must be of independent origin.

106 Joseph Smith, Jr., as reported by William Allen to Charles Lowell Walker (C. L. Walker, *Diary*, 12 May 1881, 2:554).

107 J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 13:8-15:20, pp. 89-93.

108 Koler and Greenspahn, quoted in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 567 n. 31.

109 L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured* (pre-publication draft), pp. 171-203.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 185.

111 *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 203.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 185 writes:

Given the analogy between the Garden [of Eden] and the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle/temple, and that between the Ark and the Tabernacle/temple, Noah’s entrance may be understood as that of a high priest... ascending the cosmic mountain of Yahweh—an idea “fleshed out,” as it were, when Noah walks the summit of the Ararat mount. The veil separating off the Holy of Holies served as an “objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas,” a manifest function of the Ark door.

113 J. J. Tissot, *Old Testament*, 1:47. The Jewish Museum, No. 52-94. In the public domain. See *Genesis* 14:18-20.

114 *Genesis* 14:18.

115 JST *Genesis* 14:25-40. Cf. *Genesis* 14:17-24. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53-58.

116 *Genesis* 14:20.

117 J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 12:17, p. 87.

118 O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 7:2, p. 69. Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 12:13-17, p. 87. In the same scene, the *Genesis Apocryphon* has Noah saying: “I blessed the Lord of Heaven, God Most High, the Great Holy One, who had delivered us from the destruction” (*ibid.*, 12:17, p. 87). Ostensibly, Noah is referring to his preservation in the Flood (cf. O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 7:34, p. 71), but J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, p. 163 notes that there are multiple OT connotations to the Hebrew term used for “destruction.”

119 H. C. Kee, *Testaments*, Levi 8:4-6, p. 791.

120 1 Samuel 19:24.

121 R. Jamieson *et al.*, *Commentary*, pp. 219-220 n. 24. Cf. D. T. Tsumura, 1 Samuel, p. 499.

122 E. Robinson, *Dictionary*, p. 302 s.v. Naked.

123 Cf. G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 200: "Westerners who are strangers to a world where discretion and filial loyalty are supreme virtues have often felt that there must be something more to Ham's offense than appears on the surface."

124 I.e., maternal incest, drawing on the prohibition in Leviticus 18:7-8 that equates the act of uncovering "the nakedness of [one's] mother" with the idea of having uncovered the nakedness of one's father. See, e.g., J. S. Bergsma *et al.*, *Noah's Nakedness*. For related precedents for such actions, see the incident of Reuben with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22, 49:3-4), and Absalom's attempt "to secure his hold on the kingdom by going in to his father's concubines (2 Samuel 16:20-23)" (G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 200).

125 I.e., castration or homosexual relations. On the former, see, e.g., M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, *Rabbi Éliézer*, 23, p. 142. On the latter, see, e.g., J. L. Kugel, *Traditions*, p. 222; D. Steinmetz, *Vineyard*, pp. 198-199.

126 G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 200.

127 U. Cassuto, *Noah to Abraham*, p. 151. Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, p. 488 n. 9:22: "All... conjectures [of a more grave sin] have missed the point. They have not seen that Ham's outrage consists in not covering his father."

128 After having reviewed the evidence for the various views, Embry vigorously argues against proponents of the idea that Ham committed a "sexually deviant act" and produces evidence for the assertion that the "voyeuristic position is the likely explanation for Noah's reaction against Ham: it was simply the act of seeing Noah uncovered that warranted the cursing from Noah" (B. Embry, *Naked Narrative*, p. 417). W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 568 likewise concludes that there is "nothing in the statement that Ham 'saw the nakedness of his father' that hints at a sexual act."

129 Koler and Greenspahn, quoted in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 567 n. 31.

130 See Genesis 7:1.

131 See, e.g., G. K. Beale, *Temple*, pp. 66-80; J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 146-49; R. N. Holzapfel *et al.*, *Father's House*, pp. 17-19; J. M. Lundquist, *Reality*; J. Morrow, *Creation*; D. W. Parry, *Garden*; D. W. Parry, *Cherubim*; J. A. Parry *et al.*, *Temple in Heaven*; T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 112-116, 308-309; G. J. Wenham, *Sanctuary Symbolism*.

132 Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 3:5, p. 92.

133 R. M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, *Bereishis*, p. 101, cf. p. 96. See also L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:70, 5:91 n. 50.

134 Brock in Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 53.

135 Brock in *ibid.*, p. 53. See Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 2:9-13, pp. 88-89, 3:1-5, pp. 90-92. See also C. Buck, *Paradise*, pp. 259-288; A. S.-M. Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne*, p. 208.

136 Brock in Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 52.

137 G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 129; cf. C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *Divine Names*, pp. 372-373. Morray-Jones, following Chernus, notes however that, at least in some cases, "underlying these traditions is a theme of 'initiatory death,' ... leading to rebirth" (C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *Transformational*, p. 23).

138 J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *Mormonism's Satan*, pp. 18-19.

139 By analogy to the layout of the Garden of Eden. For those who take the Tree of Life to be a representation within the Holy of Holies, it is natural to see the tree itself as the locus of God's throne

(Revelation 22:1-3, G. A. Anderson *et al.*, Synopsis, Greek 22:4, p. 62E). “[T]he Garden, at the center of which stands the throne of glory, is the royal audience room, which only those admitted to the sovereign’s presence can enter” (G. B. Eden, *Mystical Architecture*, p. 22).

140 Koler and Greenspahn, as discussed in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, pp. 566-567. Cf., e.g., D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 1, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700: “the tent of the vineyard,’ namely the tent of *Shekhinah*.”

141 Genesis 9:21.

142 Compare Moses 3:9; 4:9, 14.

143 R. M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, *Bereishis*, p. 101, cf. p. 96. See also L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:70, 5:91 n. 50.

144 Genesis 3:9.

145 T. L. Brodie, *Dialogue*, p. 192.

146 D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 1, 1:73a, p. 431. A. J. Tomasino, *History*, p. 130 elaborates on the role of the “serpent” in the Garden of Eden and in Noah’s garden:

When he saw his father’s nakedness, Ham went and told (*wayyagged*) his brothers about it (Genesis 9:22). When Adam and Eve told Yahweh God that they had hidden because they were naked, God asked, “Who told (*higgid*) you that you were naked?” (Genesis 3:1). The source of this information turned out to be the serpent. Furthermore, when Ham told his brothers about their father’s nudity, he was undoubtedly tempting them with forbidden knowledge (the opportunity to see their father’s nakedness). Finally, for his part in the Fall, the serpent was cursed (*‘arur*) more than any of the other creatures (Genesis 3:14). His offspring were doomed to be subject to the woman’s offspring (Genesis 3:15). Ham’s offspring, too, became cursed (*‘arur*), doomed to subjugation to the offspring of his brothers (Genesis 9:25).

147 M. McNamara, *Targum Neofiti*, 9:27, pp. 80-81.

148 H. W. Nibley, *Twilight World*, pp. 169-170.

149 E.g., M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, *Rabbi Éliézer*, 24, pp. 145-146.

150 Genesis 3:21.

151 H. Freedman *et al.*, *Midrash*, 4:8 (Numbers 3:45), pp. 101-102. The Mandaean *Book of John* asserts that the garment of Adam was passed down to Noah, and eventually came down to John the Baptist so that he might make his ascent (M. Lidzbarski, *Johannesbuch*, John-Jonah, p. 83).

152 L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured* (pre-publication draft), p. 157.

153 Genesis 8:13.

154 Exodus 40:19.

155 L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured* (pre-publication draft), p. 157 notes that “the Ark [is] the only exception to the term’s otherwise exclusive usage in reference to the tent of meeting.”

156 Quoted in H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 81.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

158 Moses 7:3. Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Vestments*, pp. 118-119:

Why the insistence on [the idea of being “clothed upon with glory”]? Enoch says, “I was clothed upon with glory. Therefore I could stand in the presence of God” (cf. Moses 1:2, 31). Otherwise he could not. It is the garment that gives confidence in the presence of God; one does not feel too exposed (2 Nephi 9:14). That garment is the garment... of divinity. So as Enoch says, “I was clothed upon with glory, and I saw the Lord” (Moses 7:3-4), just as Moses saw Him “face to face, ... and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence (Moses 1:2). In 2 *Enoch*,

discovered in 1892, we read, “The Lord spoke to me with his own mouth: ... ‘Take Enoch and remove his earthly garments and anoint him with holy oil and clothe him in his garment of glory.’ ... And I looked at myself, and I looked like one of the glorious ones” (see F. I. Andersen, 2 Enoch, 22:5, 8, 10, pp. 137, 139). Being no different from him in appearance, he is qualified now, in the manner of initiation. He can go back and join them because he has received a particular garment of glory.

It appears that the ritual garment of skins was needed only for a protection during one’s probation on earth. Ephrem the Syrian asserted that when Adam “returned to his former glory, ... [he] no longer had any need of [fig] leaves or garments of skin” (*Commentary on the Diatessaron*, cited in M. Barker, Hidden, p. 34). Note also Joseph Smith’s careful description of the angel Moroni (JS-H 1:31): “I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.” We infer that Moroni had forever laid aside his “garment of repentance,” since he was now permanently clothed with glory. The protection provided by the garment was accompanied by a promise of heavenly assistance. In this connection, Nibley paraphrases a passage from the Mandaean *Ginza*: “... when Adam stood praying for light and knowledge a helper came to him, gave him a garment, and told him, ‘Those men who gave you the garment will assist you throughout your life until you are ready to leave earth’” (H. W. Nibley, Apocryphal, p. 299. The German reads: “*Wie Adam dasteht und sich aufzuklären sucht, kam der Mann, sein Helfer. Der hohe Helfer kam zu ihm, der ihn in ein Stück reichen Glanzes hineinrug. Er sprach zu ihm: ‘Ziehe dein Gewand an... Die Männer, die dein Gewand geschaffen, dienen dir, bis du abscheidest’*” (M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, GL 2:19, p. 488)).

When this time of probation ended, the garment of light or glory that was previously had in the heavenly realms was to be returned to the righteous. As Nibley explained (H. W. Nibley, *Message* 2005, p. 489. See also E. Hennecke *et al.*, *Acts of Thomas*, 108.9-15, pp. 498-499; B. T. Ostler, *Clothed*, p. 4):

The garment [of light] represents the preexistent glory of the candidate... When he leaves on his earthly mission, it is laid up for him in heaven to await his return. It thus serves as security and lends urgency and weight to the need for following righteous ways on earth. For if one fails here, one loses not only one’s glorious future in the eternities to come, but also the whole accumulation of past deeds and accomplishments in the long ages of preexistence.

While Noah had not yet finished his probation when he spoke with Deity in the tent, he and others of the prophets experienced a temporary transfiguration that clothed them with glory and allowed them to endure God’s presence (see, e.g., *Moses* 1:12-14, 31; 7:3). A conjecture consistent with this view is that Ham took the garment of skins that Noah had laid temporarily aside during his transfiguration.

159 M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, *Rabbi Éliézer*, 24, pp. 145-146. Cf. M. M. Noah, *Jasher*, 7:27, p. 15, which, according to Ginzberg, derived its version of the story from Rabbi Eliezer (L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:199 n. 78). See also M. J. bin Gorion (Berdichevsky), *Die Sagen*, p. 211: “*Doch in der Zeit, da er die Arche verliess, stahl Ham seinem Vater jenes Kleid weg und verwahrte es vor seinen Brüdern* [After he left the Ark, Ham stole his father’s garment and hid it from his brothers].”

160 Photograph IMGP1821, 24 April 2009, © Stephen T. Whitlock. Detail of Patriarchs Window, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

161 See, e.g., J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 94 n. 8:20-9:17.

162 See, e.g., A. J. Tomasino, *History*, p. 129.

163 See, e.g., J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 80; A. J. Tomasino, *History*, pp. 129-130.