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Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God

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Central to Israelite religion was its temple worship. Large sections of the Old Testament describe temple service, detailing the various sacrifices, the laws relating to purity, the rites and ceremonies of the priests, and their vestments. Many passages specify the precise dimensions of both the tabernacle and temple of Jerusalem. John Lundquist, in his paper "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," listed several types and motifs that are common among many ancient Near Eastern temples.¹ This paper demonstrates that Mount Sinai also served as a sanctuary – the first Israelite sanctuary – and that many of the motifs listed by Lundquist in his article are also found at Sinai. Such motifs as the cosmic mountain, the waters of life, the sacred repast, sacrificial ordinances, religious laws, divine revelation, and other features associated with Sinai will be examined. Indeed, in many ways, events at Mount Sinai were related to the temple worship later found at the tabernacle and the temple of Jerusalem.

Of course, Mount Sinai was not a temple built of marble or cedar, for it is not necessary for a sanctuary to be an edifice or structure.² Rather, Sinai was a sacred place built by Yahweh himself (Exodus 15:17) and, as such, was the precursor and prototype of later Israelite sanctuaries, the model from which later temples were copied. As Freedman has stated, Sinai was "the sanctuary which served as a

model for all the replicas, especially the tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem."³ To this Lundquist added, "the temple of Solomon would seem ultimately to be little more than the architectural realization and the ritual enlargement of the Sinai experience."⁴

None will deny that many vagaries and problems exist in the text of Exodus 19-33, which describes the experience of the Israelites at Sinai. Scholars cannot agree upon how many authors are involved,⁵ nor can they come to a consensus concerning the date of the composition of the material.⁶ But the current text gives convincing evidence that Mount Sinai was indeed the first sanctuary of Israel. With this in mind, we will proceed with Lundquist's first motif.

"*The temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.*"⁷ The mountain/temple imagery is found throughout the Old Testament. In the well-known "Song of the Sea," Moses and the Israelites rejoiced by singing: "Thou [Yahweh] will bring them [thy people] and plant them on the mountain that is thine own, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary [*miqdās*], O Lord, which thy hands have established" (Exodus 15:17). The Hebrew word for "sanctuary" is *miqdās*, the root of which denotes "apartness" or "sacredness."⁸ In this passage Mount Sinai is called the *miqdās*; elsewhere both the tabernacle (Exodus 25:8; Leviticus 16:33) and the Jerusalem temple (1 Chronicles 22:19; Isaiah 63:18) are referred to as the *miqdās*. However, unlike the man-made sanctuaries, Sinai was created by Yahweh—it was the temple established "not by human but by divine hands." It was "the sanctuary which served as a model for all replicas, especially the tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem."⁹

Other biblical passages treat "holy mountain" and "sanctuary" as analogous structures. In a chapter of Ezekiel, God requires "all the house of Israel" to serve him, to bring "offerings," "firstfruits," "oblations," and other

“holy [temple] things,” to his “holy mountain, the mountain of the height of Israel” (Ezekiel 20:40). Similarly, the Psalmist says: “Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy” (Psalm 99:9). Isaiah refers to “the house of the God of Jacob” as “the mountain of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:3), and Psalm 68:16 mentions “the mountain which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it forever.”

Also, in a parallelism attributed to King David, “tabernacle” and “holy mountain” are used synonymously.¹⁰ “Lord, who shall abide in thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy mountain?” (Psalm 15:1; cf. also Psalm 43:3-4). These passages demonstrate that during the Old Testament period, the word “mountain” (Heb. *har*) was often employed to describe the tabernacle *or* the temple of Jerusalem.

As noted above, the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon were but copies of the genuine mountain temple. Each structure became, in its time, the “architectural embodiment” of the cosmic mountain. They became small, man-made mountains designed to replace Sinai as the dwelling place of Yahweh. In the case of the tabernacle, it was a mobile mountain, so to speak, a moving dwelling place; and in the instance of the temple of Jerusalem, it also became a residence for Yahweh. Consequently, Sinai became known as the “mountain of God”; the tabernacle was called “the tent of God”; and the Jerusalem temple was referred to as “the house of God.”

It is possible that the temple of Jerusalem (and to some extent the tabernacle) had the very appearance of a mountain—lofty and towering above the ground, sturdy and unyielding to the elements of the earth, and immutable in its composition. Built upon a high mountain of Jerusalem, the size of this magnificent structure was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high (1 Kings 6:2). Its stone walls were six cubits thick.

The temple was built of raw material transported from the mountains. The foundation and outer walls consisted of white limestone, hewn by "fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains" surrounding Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:15). The interior of the building was made of the finest of mountain materials. The walls and ceiling were covered with cedar wainscoting, the floors with cyprus, and leading to the inner sanctum was a door made of olive wood. Much of the interior was overlaid with gold (1 Kings 6:15-22). Carved upon the walls were figures of flowers and palm trees (1 Kings 6:29).

There is some evidence that the walls of the sacred precinct contained a garden with living trees. Referring to Psalms 52:8 and 92:13, Widengren states that there are "many allusions to . . . trees growing within the area of the sanctuary."¹¹ This would give the appearance of a small grove or forest, which is often found on or near a mountain.¹²

Like the temple itself, Israelite sacrificial altars had the appearance of miniature mountains. The altar built by Moses was constructed either of unhewn stones or of the earth itself (Exodus 20:24-25), and Joshua built an "altar of unhewn stones upon which no man had lift up any iron" (Joshua 8:31), thus giving the impression of a natural mountainlike altar, both in form and substance. Concerning this altar, Robertson wrote that "the *mizbakh adama* was the natural beginning of a sanctuary. Where God had appeared in person was manifestly the place to continue to worship him. And what would seem more appropriate to the Hebrews than an altar of the material as it left the hands of the Creator?"¹³ Finally, the two tablets of the covenant, which were later kept in the ark of the covenant (1 Kings 8:9), were made from the mountain of God, showing that in a very real sense the law originated at the sanctuary.

"The temple is often associated with the waters of life which

flow forth from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring."¹⁴ In the Sinai pericope, the waters of life are found at a rock at Horeb-Sinai where thirsty Israel was miraculously filled. This event, which occurred in a place where there was "no water for the people to drink" (Exodus 17:1), enabled the Lord to demonstrate his power to the chosen people. The account states:

And the people thirsted there for water: and the people murmured against Moses. . . . And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? . . . And the Lord said unto Moses. . . . Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel (Exodus 17: 3-6).

The image of God, the rock, and the water in this passage is a reminder that both the rock and the water are symbols of Yahweh. He is like a rock, permanent, lofty, immovable, and steadfast. Yahweh is "the rock" (Deuteronomy 32:4), "the rock of his [Jeshurun's] salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15), "the rock of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:3), "my rock and my salvation" (Psalm 62:2, 6), and "the rock of my refuge" (Psalm 94:22). And Yahweh is the "fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 2:13; cf. also Isaiah 12:2-3; 33:21; 55:1). He provides both the actual water for Israel to invigorate and renew their souls in the dry desert of Horeb, and he is the representation of spiritual waters, or spiritual life. Later traditions recall this great occurrence at the rock (Psalm 78:15-16, 20; 105:41; 114:8; Isaiah 48:21).

*"The temple is built on separate, sacral, set-apart space."*¹⁵ According to the biblical text, Sinai is first mentioned in the biblical text when the shepherd Moses received his prophetic call in the episode of the fiery bush (Exodus 3:1-14).¹⁶ It was at this moment that the inquisitive prophet,

when approaching the bush that would not be consumed with fire, learned that the immediate area was "separate, sacral, set-apart space." "Come no nearer," commanded Yahweh. "Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). At first glance, to remove one's shoes may seem to be an unusual order, but there are two possible hypotheses as to why Moses (and later Joshua; cf. Joshua 5:15) was told to remove his shoes. First, common ground or dirt must not fall from the shoe onto sacred ground, because common ground represents the flesh, mortality, and humanness. Second, by wearing shoes on holy ground, the person might carry away "the sacredness of the holy place."¹⁷

All of Mount Sinai was holy, but according to Milgrom there were "gradations of holiness"¹⁸ in the mountain area. That is to say, around the mountain were a series of concentric circles, with the most sacred area being found within the center circle, and the other circles declining in holiness as they extended outward from the focal point. These "gradations of holiness" found at Sinai are not unlike the distinguishable areas of sacred space known to exist at the tabernacle and temple of Jerusalem. Nachmanides and Milgrom have likened the tabernacle's "gradations of holiness" to those of Sinai, and Haran has demonstrated that within the temple of Solomon were certain hallowed areas.

First Nachmanides:

Hereafter the Tabernacle in the wilderness is zoned as Mount Sinai was zoned, since the Divine Glory was also thereon. And He commands: "the outsider shall be put to death" (Numbers 1:51) as He said there: "for he shall surely be stoned" (Exodus 19:13); and he commands "let not (the Kohathites) go inside and witness the dismantling of the sanctuary" (Numbers 4:20) as He warned there: "lest they break through to the Lord to gaze" (Exodus 19:21); and He commands: "you shall

guard over the sanctuary and the altar" (Numbers 18:5) as He said there: "The priests also, who come near the Lord, must purify themselves . . . let not the priests or the people break through to come up to the Lord" (Exodus 19:22, 24).¹⁹

Milgrom, while agreeing with the comments above, asserts that Nachmanides did "not exhaust the comparison" between the tabernacle and Sinai. Therefore, he adds:

Mount Sinai is the archetype of the Tabernacle, and is similarly divided into three gradations of holiness. Its summit is the Holy of Holies; God's voice issues forth from there (Exodus 19:20) as from the inner shrine (Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89); the mountaintop is off limits to priest and layman alike (Exodus 19:24) and its very sight is punishable by death (Exodus 19:21), and so with its Tabernacle counterpart (cf. Leviticus 16:2 and Numbers 4:20); finally, Moses alone is privileged to ascend to the top (Exodus 19:20; see 34:2) just as later, the high priest is permitted to enter the inner shrine under special safeguards (Leviticus 16:2-4). The second division of Sinai is the equivalent of the outer shrine, marked off from the rest of the mountain by being enveloped in a cloud (Exodus 20:21; 24:15-18) just as the cloud overspreads the entirety of the Tabernacle (Numbers 9:15-22). . . . Below the cloud is the third division. . . . Here is where the altar and stelae are erected (Exodus 24:4). It is equivalent to the courtyard, the sacred enclosure of the Tabernacle.²⁰

Both Nachmanides and Milgrom fail to mention the idea of "gradations of holiness" connected with the temple of Jerusalem. However, Haran wrote in his *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*: "the plans of both Solomon's temple and the tabernacle demonstrate [the pattern] of concentric circles of declining order the further they move away from the focal point of the cherubim in the inner sanctum."²¹

*"The tablets of destiny are consulted in the cosmic sense by the gods. . . . It is by this means that the will of the deity is communicated to the people through the king or the prophet for a given year."*²² The Israelite "tablets of destiny," variously called the "two tablets of stone" (Exodus 34:1, 4), "the two tablets of the pact" (Exodus 31:18; 32:15; 34:29), and "the tablets of the covenant" (Deuteronomy 9:9, 11, 15), are perhaps the focal point of the entire Sinai pericope. One scholar has claimed that the basic law of Israel (which was found on these tablets) is "the climax of the entire Book, the central and most exalted theme, all that came before being, as it were, a preparation for it, and all that follows, a result of, and supplement to it."²³

According to Widengren, "the tablets of the Law, as well as the Urim and Thummin, play the same role as the tablets of destiny in being the instrument by which the will of the deity is communicated to the leader of the people, be it Moses or the king."²⁴ That is, the destiny of the children of Israel was in some way tied up with subsequent obedience or disobedience to the laws of Yahweh as revealed to king Moses (Deuteronomy 33:4-5). Deuteronomy 28 and 29, which contain a lengthy list of blessings and curses, illustrate this concept beautifully.

The tablets became a symbol of the Sinai pact and an emblem of the Yahweh-Israel convention. As a constant reminder of the connection between the law of Yahweh and his holy house, the tablets were later stored in the Holy of Holies of Solomon's temple. "There was nothing in the ark save the two tablets of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel" (1 Kings 8:9). Furthermore, to demonstrate the importance of the Ten Commandments, the words of the law were written upon the stones of the sacrificial altar (Deuteronomy 27:8).

"Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often at the conclusion of or during a covenant

ceremony."²⁵ Exodus 24:9-11 describes a divine theophany unequalled in magnificence in Old Testament records. On this occasion more than sixty Israelite men were allowed to see God. Then followed a sacred meal *par excellence*. The covenantal ceremony of Exodus 19:1-24:10 was immediately followed by the eating and drinking of a sacrificial meal before God himself:

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink (Exodus 24:9-11).

Most contemporary scholars believe that this covenantal meal actually included "eating" and "drinking" real food. Nicholson, however, differs from the mainstream thought in that he argues that verse 11 should not read "they saw God, and did eat and drink," but, "they saw God, and lived (i.e., survived)."²⁶ Booij also doubts that there was an "actual sacrificial meal" upon the mountain, but argues that a later redactor added verses 9-11 to the text.²⁷ Nonetheless, the covenantal meal ties in remarkably well with the sacral meal at the time of the dedication of the temple of Solomon. At the mountain scene there are "burnt offerings" and "sacrificial peace offerings of oxen" upon the altar of Yahweh, followed by a meal of "that portion of the flesh of the offering which had not ascended to heaven in smoke."²⁸ Centuries later Solomon offered a dedicatory prayer of his newly built temple with his "hands spread up to heaven" (1 Kings 8:54). Immediately following his prayer, "he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings . . . and at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him . . . before the Lord" (1 Kings 8: 64-65).

"There is a close interrelationship between the temple and

law in the ancient Near East."²⁹ Clearly, the laws of ancient Israel were revealed to Moses during his many visits to the mountain height. The Lord had charged him: "Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments" (Exodus 24:12). Many times Moses ascended to the dwelling place of Yahweh to receive both temporal and spiritual laws. On one such occasion, following a rather extended period of preparation (forty days and forty nights), Yahweh revealed to the prophet numerous policies and regulations (Exodus 25-31). Later, as recorded in Exodus 34:1-2, Yahweh instructed Moses to "hew thee two tablets of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest." Following yet another divine theophany experience, Moses received further laws and instructions to assist him in regulating and governing the people.

The mountain sanctuary of Sinai and the law are related in three principal ways. First, as mentioned, it is obvious from the account that the laws were revealed to the prophet during his many engagements in the clouds of the mountain. The lawgiver was Yahweh, the mountain deity, and the recipient was Moses, who in turn became the lawgiver to his people.

Second, the tradition of the mutual relationship between law and temple continued when Moses and subsequent prophets and kings stored the two tablets of law in the ark of the covenant, which was kept in the most sacred precinct of all, the Holy of Holies. The tablets became the symbol of the law of Israel and were stored under the throne of the lawgiver – Yahweh.

Third, although Moses received a broad range of laws, many of them were rules and policies which governed the precincts of the temple. The laws received by Moses upon the mountain may be summarized as follows: The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-21); ritual ordinances (Ex-

odus 20:22-26); the social code, including civil and criminal laws pertaining to slavery, capital offenses, compensation for injuries, property loss, duties concerning foreigners, widows, orphans, sabbaths, and festivals (Exodus 21:1-23:33); laws concerning the ordinances; details concerning the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altar, the tabernacle, the tent, priestly garments and vestments, and the veil (Exodus 25:1-28:43); rules governing the consecration of the priests, the daily offerings and sacrifices, the poll tax, the holy oil, incense, and the tabernacle furniture (Exodus 29:1-31:18). Exodus 35:1-40:38 is largely a repetition of chapters 25-31 with some abridgments and elaborations.

*"God's word is revealed in the temple, usually in the holy of holies, to priests or prophets attached to the temple or to the religious system that it represents."*³⁰ Connected with the Sinai pericope were manifold divine communications between Deity and man. First of all, God "called" Moses up to the mountain (Exodus 19:3, 20; 24:15). According to Cassuto, the verb "called" [*wayyiqrā*] here, "does not mean 'summoned,' but 'spoke in a loud voice.'" After Moses ascended to the top of the mountain, God then "spoke" [*wadabbēr*] with him (Exodus 20:1; 25:1); also the Lord "said" [*wayyōmer*] things to Moses (Exodus 19:9, 10, 21, 24; 20:22; 24:1). This divine disclosure was not a one-way experience only, as is shown by Exodus 33:11, "And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," and Exodus 19:19, "Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice." Revelation culminated upon the mountain sanctuary when a group of Israelite males "saw the God of Israel" (Exodus 24:10).

Closely associated with the manifestations and communications between God and man was the incubation of Moses. Gnuse, who has made an extensive study of dream incubation in the ancient Near East, writes that "the basic components of the incubation process can be seen. The incubant spends the night in a sanctuary, perhaps a special

room for such activity. Sacrifices are offered to the deity. . . . Special preparatory rites, perhaps purification, are undertaken. The recipient does something to his clothing."³¹ All this was for the purpose of receiving revelation or some divine disclosure from the deity. Gnuse lists five "possible incubation texts" which are found in the Old Testament: Genesis 15; 28:10-19; 46:1-4; 1 Samuel 3; and 1 Kings 3.³² He fails to mention Psalm 3:4-5, which is a reference to the process of incubation, and Exodus 24:18; 34:28; and Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, which refer to the incubation of Moses.

Moses, as an incubant, spent the night in the sanctuary (Exodus 24:18), offered sacrifices to his deity (Exodus 24:4-8), purified himself (Exodus 19:10-15), and washed his clothing (Exodus 19:10-15), thus fulfilling the four "constitutive parts of the procedure"³³ of incubation. In return, Yahweh revealed his law to the prophet.

*"The temple is a place of sacrifice."*³⁴ The text is clear on this point; the Lord instructed Moses: "Make for me an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings of sheep and oxen" (Exodus 20:24). In accordance with this command, Moses set up an altar at the foot of the mountain, and "sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed bulls as offerings to the Lord" (Exodus 24:5).

It may seem almost superfluous to mention here the sacrifices connected with the tabernacle and the temple of Jerusalem. Several chapters of the Old Testament are devoted to the sacrificial ordinances, with all its associated regulations. Suffice it to say here that the sacrificial ordinances connected with Sinai were probably an archetype to those of the later temples. As Clements has commented, "It is probable . . . that the daily sacrifices came to be thought of as a renewal of the sacrifice on Mount Sinai, so that all the daily worship was linked to the idea of Yahweh's covenant with Israel."³⁵

"The plan and measurements of the temple are revealed by God to the king, and the plan must be carefully carried out."³⁶ While upon the mount, the Lord told Moses, "In making the tabernacle and its furnishings you must follow exactly the pattern I shall show you" (Exodus 25:9), and for emphasis this dictum was repeated three more times (Exodus 25:40; 26:30; 27:8). The blueprint given to the prophet was very specific in its details. He was given the precise dimensions and measurements of the tabernacle, the tent, the ark, the table, the altar, the veil, the courtyard, and more. He was shown precise details concerning the priestly robe, ephod, diadem, and other vestments of the priesthood. All this and more concerning the tabernacle was revealed to Moses while upon the mount.³⁷

Yahweh "tents" among his people. An important connection between the mountain of Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple of Jerusalem can be seen when examining the Hebrew trilateral root **skn*. This word plays a threefold role in the portrayal of the dwellings of Yahweh. First, the noun *miškān*, which is derived from this root, is defined as "dwelling place" or "tabernacle,"³⁸ and has special reference to the tabernacle built by Moses. Cross wrote, "In the Priestly strata, the term *mishkan* applies to the one Tent, the Mosaic sanctuary. The word has become a proper name."³⁹

Second, the word *šōkīnāh* is "very closely related with the Priestly use of *mishkan* and *shakan*."⁴⁰ *Šōkīnāh* was perceived as being the divine manifestation of Yahweh, whether at the burning bush, Mount Sinai, or any other theophanic appearance of the Israelite God. In the case of Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple of Solomon, the *Šōkīnāh* was always accompanied with a cloud, which was a visible sign of the glory of God.⁴¹

And third, from the trilateral root **skn* comes the verb *sākan*, which signifies, according to Davies, to "tabernacle, dwell among,"⁴² and according to Cross, "to tent," or "to

encamp."⁴³ In the Sinai pericope, *šakan* is used in connection with Yahweh "tenting" or "tabernacling" among his people, even before the idea of the tabernacle was revealed to Moses. Consequently, it is possible to translate Exodus 24:16, "and the glory of Yahweh tented on the mountain of Sinai," and Cross and Freedman translate Deuteronomy 33:16, "from the abundance of the earth and its fullness, and the favour of the one who tented on Sinai."⁴⁴ Later biblical writers employed the verb *šakan* when referring to the Mosaic tabernacle and the temple of Jerusalem. Therefore the God of Israel is found "tenting" in both the tabernacle (Numbers 5:3) and the temple (Joel 3:17, 21; Isaiah 8:18; Psalm 68:16-18; 135:21).

Such theological usage of this verb implies that Yahweh "tabernacles" or "tents" in his sanctuary, wherever it may be. Whether he temporarily camps on the mountain at Sinai, dwells in the mobile tabernacle, or chooses to *pro tempore* abide on the mount at Jerusalem, the notion was the same—God "tented" among his people. Even the seemingly permanent structure built at Jerusalem under the direction of Solomon "served only as a sort of temporary resting-place"⁴⁵ for the Ark of the Covenant, which was a symbol of the Divine Presence. According to Phythian-Aeams, "Solomon did not dare infringe the primary significance of the Ark. It might 'rest' in a house of cedar . . . but it must never cease to be the mobile vehicle of His presence, ready at any moment to resume its activity."⁴⁶

Thus Yahweh first tented on Sinai, then the Divine Presence (*Šākināh*) tabernacled in the mobile sanctuary for a period, and later, the Lord was known to have camped at the temple found on Moriah. Finally, in a day yet future, the God of Israel will tent in the eschatological temple (Ezekiel 43:9).

Notes

1. Lundquist was not unaware of the problems which exist when writing and composing such a list of types; therefore, he wrote

in his introduction, "the following list of motifs . . . does not purport to be a complete motif list (hence the word 'preliminary' in the title), nor to have identified all examples to which a given motif may apply. Nor is it my intention to claim that a common 'pattern' can be applied indiscriminately to all ancient Near Eastern temples without regard to time, space, and cultural uniqueness." John M. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," in H. B. Huffmon, F. A. Spina, and A. R. W. Green, eds., *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 206. For a larger work on this subject, see John Lundquist, "Studies on the Temple in the Ancient Near East," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1983.

2. Lundquist explained: "It should be noted that the Greek root *temno*, from which *temenos* derives, [is] 'a piece of land marked off from common uses and dedicated to a god, precinct,'" "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 205. Furthermore, the Hebrew root **qdš*, from which the word *miqdaš*, "sanctuary," is derived, denotes "apartness" or "sacredness," with no connotations of edifice or building whatsoever. Also, W. B. Kristensen deals with the term "temple" in his *Meaning of Religion* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 369-71.

3. Freedman, David N., "Temple without Hands," in *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times* (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981), 28-29.

4. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 207.

5. Concerning the authorship of the Sinai pericope, Cassuto, for one, argues that "there is no reason to regard it as a collection of fragments derived from various sources, as many commentators have supposed." Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 235. Others, such as Childs, Beegle, Haran, Davies, and Noth see two or more authors represented in these chapters. For example, see Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 344-48; Dewey M. Beegle, *Moses, the Servant of Yahweh* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 237-78; Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Servitude in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 74-71; G. Henton Davies, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 153-97; Martin Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), 36-41. In spite of this disagreement among scholars, I agree with Sklba's outlook. He wrote, "A critical reading of the

account of Israel's primal experience of Yahweh has often suggested the presence of pericopes apparently inserted into the narrative by later redactors. These must be momentarily set aside if one is to attain a fuller appreciation of the theological affirmations inherent in the original experience of Sinai." Richard J. Sklba, "The Redeemer of Israel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (January 1972): 1-18. In other words, one should not miss the theological significance of the Sinai pericope while dealing with the problems of authorship, dating, and so on.

6. Concerning the dating of this material, see Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 22; E. W. Nicholson, "The Antiquity of the Tradition in Exodus 24:9-11," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975): 69-79; E. W. Nicholson, "The Origin of the Tradition in Exodus 24:9-11," *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976): 148-60; and Anthony Phillips, "A Fresh Look at the Sinai Pericope," *Vetus Testamentum* 34 (1984): 282-94.

7. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 207; others have written about the mountain/temple motif. See Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), esp. 98-181; Richard J. Clifford, "The Temple and the Holy Mountain," in Truman G. Madsen, ed., *The Temple in Antiquity* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1984), 47-71; Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, tr. Timothy J. Hallett (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 111-19.

8. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, tr. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951).

9. Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 28-29.

10. For a very interesting discussion on Psalm 15:1 as referring to the temple, see Moshe Weinfeld, "Instructions for Temple Visitors in the Bible and in Ancient Egypt," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 28 (1984): 224-50. Weinfeld translates this passage: "Lord, who may dwell in your tent, who may reside on your holy mountain?" (224). Another Psalm discussed by Weinfeld pertains to temple/mountains. He translates Psalm 24:3: "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord, who may stand in his holy place?" (225).

11. Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala: Otto Harrassowitz, 1951), 31.

12. Perhaps connected with this was the so-called "house of the Forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings 7:1-4), which housed several rows of cedar wood pillars. The actual purpose of this structure is unknown to the scholars of today.

13. Edward Robertson, "The Altar of Earth," *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 1 (1948): 21.

14. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 208.

15. *Ibid.*, 209. For a rather general section on sacred space in ancient Israel, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, tr. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 274-88.

16. Concerning Moses' commission (received at the burning bush) to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, see George W. Coats, "Moses in Midian," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (March 1973): 3-10.

17. J. A. MacCulloch, "Shoes and Sandals," in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 13 vols. (New York: Scribners, 1951), 11:474.

18. This phrase is used frequently by Jacob Milgrom. For instance, see Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 44.

19. Nachmanides, quoted in Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 44.

20. Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology*, 44-45.

21. Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*, 190. In the sanctuary of Yahweh, there were "gradations of holiness" of three types. First, there was graded sanctity of sacred space, as was noted above. Second, the actual materials employed in the building of the tabernacle and temple were "similarly graded. Its most precious components were made of gold, the least sacred, of copper. There were three degrees of workmanship, according to their sacredness"; W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), 601. And third, three types of sins were represented in each of the three parts of the tripartite sanctuary, "individual inadvertent misdemeanors" were purged upon the outer altar. "Communal inadvertent" transgressions were expiated for in the holy place, and "wanton, unrepented" sins were atoned for in the Holy of Holies by the High Priest. Milgrom, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology*, 78-79. See also Jacob Milgrom, *Cult and Conscience* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 17-18, 36-37. For a different approach to the same concept, see David P. Wright, "The Disposal of Impurity in the Priestly Writings of the Bible with Reference to Similar Phenomena in Hittite and Mesopotamian Cultures," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1984, 217-29.

22. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 216.

23. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 235.
24. Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1950), 27. In this case Moses was the king (Deuteronomy 33:4-5). For an exhaustive work concerning Moses as king, see Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).
25. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 215.
26. In 1974, Nicholson argued that the phrase " 'they ate and drank' is best understood, as in other cultic contexts in the Old Testament, as meaning that those who experienced this remarkable manifestation of God 'rejoiced' or 'worshipped' in the presence of God," E. W. Nicholson, "The Interpretation of Exodus 24:9-11," *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974): 94. However, two years later he altered his opinion: "I wish to revise my opinion on the meaning of the phrase 'they ate and drank' which I discussed in the first article mentioned above. . . . My proposal for the interpretation of that phrase [now is] that the representatives of Israel on the mountain in spite of having seen God 'lived' (i.e., survived)," Nicholson, "The Origin of the Tradition in Exodus 24:9-11," 148-49.
27. Th. Booij, "Mountain and Theophany in the Sinai Narrative," *Biblica* 65 (1984): 8.
28. Martin Buber, *Moses* (London: Phaidon Press, 1946), 115.
29. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 216.
30. *Ibid.*, 217. Concerning the idea of revelation in ancient Israel, one scholar has written, "Revelation, Covenant, and Law are the three pillars upon which the structure of the people's history is reared. Without them, Israel would have been a nation like other nations; with them, it became a focal point of human destiny," Plaut, *The Torah*, 516.
31. Robert K. Gnuse, *The Dream Theophany of Samuel* (Nashville: n.p., 1980), 62. For an excellent work on dream incubation in ancient Ugarit, see Julian Obermann, "How Daniel Was Blessed with a Son: An Incubation Scene in Ugarit," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Supplement VI (April-June 1946): 1-30. See also Robert K. Gnuse, *The Dream Motif in the Theology of the Elohist* (Chicago: n.p., 1975), 35-37.
32. Gnuse, *The Dream Theophany of Samuel*, 63.
33. *Ibid.*, 62.
34. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 217.

35. R. E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), 72.
36. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," 211.
37. Not only were the dimensions of the tabernacle given to Moses, but as the king he was authorized to build it. For the king as temple builder, see A. S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," *Orientalia* 32 (1963): 56-62; and Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 269-79.
38. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1015-16.
39. Frank M. Cross, "The Tabernacle," *Biblical Archaeologist* 10 (Sept. 1947): 66.
40. *Ibid.*, 68. Although this Hebrew word was first attested in the intertestamental writings, Cross believes that the word "sākīnāh" predates this period.
41. For the cloud at Sinai, see Exodus 19:16; 24:15-18; for the cloud accompanying the tabernacle during the desert wanderings, cf. Exodus 33:9; 40:34-35; Numbers 12:4-10; and for the cloud found at Jerusalem's temple, see 1 Kings 8:10.
42. Davies, *Exodus*, 197.
43. Cross, "The Tabernacle," 66.
44. Frank M. Cross and David N. Freedman, "The Blessing of Moses," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67 (1948): 194, 206. Cf. also Clements, *God and Temple*, 19.
45. Hugh Nibley, "Tenting, Toll, and Taxing," *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966): 605. See also H. G. May, "The Ark – A Miniature Temple," *American Journal of Semitic Language and Literature* 3 (1936): 215-34, where May argues that the temple of Solomon was no more permanent than was the tabernacle.
46. W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The People and the Presence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 16.