



Type: Book Chapter

Temples - Bridges of Eternity

Author(s): LeGrande Davies

Source: *Mormonism and the Temple: Examining an Ancient Religious Tradition*

Editor(s): Gary N. Anderson

Published: Logan, UT; Academy for Temple Studies, 2013

Page(s): 131-140

Abstract: No abstract available.



BYU Studies is collaborating with Book of Mormon Central to preserve and extend access to BYU Studies and to scholarly research on The Book of Mormon. Archived by permission of BYU Studies.

<http://byustudies.byu.edu/>

Temples—Bridges of Eternity

LeGrande Davies

The Temple for both Ancient Israel and Modern Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormons) is the bridge between Heaven and Earth.¹ The Temple, for both Ancient Israel and Mormons, has always been where God meets Man and where they make covenants for both Eternity and Mortality. Temples are open to “priests,” both in Ancient Israel and to Mormons.² Temple building and temple architecture has profound import to these two cultures, so it is not surprising that the architecture of early Israelite temples and Mormon temples is strikingly similar. Analogous architectural features are present in both.

The Israelite temple, built in Jerusalem by Solomon, has long been recognized as “the crowning achievement of Israelite building in the tenth century” (Aharoni, 1982, p. 226). The Solomonic temple’s architectural design, building materials, procedures, and dedication rites are given in a general descriptive manner in 1 Kings chapters 6–9. But these descriptions were never intended to give complete and detailed information. Because they were not complete, further descriptions and detailed reconstructions have been postulated and debated literally for hundreds of years by various scholars.³ Some descriptions were based in physical fact and some were very imaginative. Each “reconstruction” relies heavily on aesthetics and is based on the assumption that the architecture of the temple of Solomon was copied from temples, houses, or palaces extant in other areas of the Middle East. Not that they were not influenced by the architecture of their day, but it is not to contemporary aesthetics that one should look to see the patterns found in the temple. One should look to Mount Sinai—the literal “Mountain of the LORD.”

In the Book of Exodus, the Children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai to become a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6) unto the LORD: “And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine” (Exodus 19:3–5).⁴

Moses returned to the Israelite camp, set the boundaries, cleansed the people (including washing themselves and their clothes), taught them the requirements to meet their God, and designated those who would ascend up the mountain into the presence of the LORD. Chapter 20 of Exodus records the basic laws and rules for a nation to become a nation of priests or an holy nation. It records the relationship of the Israelites to God.⁵ The LORD then showed His power, and the people were so struck with fear at the awesome experience that they plead with Moses, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:19–21).

The revelatory pattern was set for Israel. Israel goes to the “Mountain of the LORD” to meet God, to receive blessings, make covenants, and be sanctified. Eventually, Moses, with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Joshua, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ascend the mountain.⁶ Israel comes to the Holy Mountain, the Priests and Elders enter the Holy Mountain, but only the Prophet, the Great High Priest, the Son, ascends the Mountain into the Divine Presence. “And the

glory of the LORD abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:16–18).

Once Israel left the borders of Mount Sinai, they needed a way to carry the covenant and conversion narrative with them. Thus, the Tabernacle, Israel's bridge from the Mount to the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem at the time of Solomon, became a literal reflection and representation of Sinai.

As Milgrom states, "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 (Ex. 19:20) as from the inner shrine (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89). . . . 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 (Ex. 19:2; 24:15b ff. [P]; see 19:9, 16) just as the cloud overspreads the entirety of . . . [the] Tabernacle (Num. 9:15ff.). . . . Below the cloud is the third division, called 'the bottom of the mountain' (19:17; 24:4), a technical term for the lowest portion of the mountain. . . . It is the equivalent to the courtyard, the sacred enclosure of the tabernacle to which priests alone have access except for the forecourt 'entrance' where the layman brings his sacrifice, provided he is in a pure state . . . Thus the blazing summit, the cloud-covered slopes and visible bottom rim correspond to Tabernacle divisions" (Milgrom, 1970, pp. 45–46) and the architectural divisions of the "Israelite" sanctuaries or temples.⁷

When Israel constructed its Tabernacle, it was done by revelation from the LORD. Exodus chapters 25–40 describe the purpose, details, and construction of the Tabernacle, which was to be the sanctuary of the LORD. This "traveling" divine dwelling place had the power and glory of the original Mount Sinai, as a constant reminder of the God of Israel. Israel dwelt in tribes around it with the priestly orders in their appropriate places, and the altars, tables, and offerings showing and typifying

the principles and covenants made by the LORD and Israel. The Tabernacle was the tangible symbol in its intricate parts, form, and purpose of the covenant made on Sinai. And just like the Tabernacle, when Israel built her Sanctuaries, in Arad, Beer-Sheba, and Jerusalem, they used the pattern of the Sinai theophany and the Tabernacle to manifest the covenant.

Arad

Between 1962 and 1967, Yohanan Aharoni and Ruth Amiran conducted excavations at Tel Arad. Seven of those strata (XII–VI) were of "Israelite" origin. The temple at Arad started in Stratum XI, dated to Solomon's time, and ended in Stratum VII, during the reign of Josiah. The temple of Arad was a king's sanctuary oriented on an east-west axis. Incorporated into the new royal fortress at Arad, which had no preceding city or sanctuary, the sanctuary is thus shown to have been an authorized "royal" sanctuary in the 10th century BCE. Though the Arad temple does not follow the exact architectural dimensions of the courtyard, the inner court (vestibule, *ulam*), sanctuary (*hekal*), and Holy of Holies (*d^ebir*) of the Jerusalem temple, its structure contains each feature.⁸

The courtyard of the temple was quite large, with a Levitical-sized stone altar for "burnt offerings" standing in a corner. The altar measurements of a square of five cubits followed the measurements of the altar of the tabernacle, and the original altar of the Temple of Solomon. (Aharoni, 1971, p. 38). The size and shape of the Arad altar corresponds exactly to the measurements given in Exodus.⁹

Further, the Arad altar "was crowned with a large flint slab, surrounded by two plastered gutters, probably for the blood of the animal sacrifices. The altar was built of small unhewn stones, in contrast to the wall behind which has many dressed stones" (Aharoni, 1971, p. 35). Certainly the use of small unhewn stones followed the injunction given in Exodus 20:25 "And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." After its initial construction, the altar was destroyed and repaired a number of times. It is significant that each time the altar was repaired, it retained the

same dimensions and was never resized for convenience or fashion.¹⁰

Beyond the altar, in the inner court (*`ulam*) of the temple before the doorway of the vestibule (*hekal*), stood pillar bases that undoubtedly were for the *Jachin* and *Boaz* pillars. This placement varied from many of the reconstructions of the Temple of Solomon which would place them before the *`ulam* and not before the *hekal*. This placement gives an insight into the architecture of the Temple of Solomon, for it was between *Jachin* and *Boaz* that the veil of the temple hung. We see from the architecture of Arad that “priests” entering the *hekal* of the sanctuary “presented themselves in power,” so that they could enter into the presence of the LORD. For them, the “holy place” was the “second division of Sinai,” marked off by the cloud into which the Priests and the seventy elders were allowed to ascend (Milgrom, 1970, p. 45).

The *hekal* of Arad was a “broad room” instead of a “long room” as in the Solomonic Temple, but had exactly the same width as the Solomonic *hekal*, 20 cubits.¹¹ This room and the courtyard had ancillary rooms which were used to prepare for the rituals, etc. (Mazar, 1965, pp. 297–303; Aharoni, 1971, pp. 30–34, 40–42).¹²

Beyond that, the Holy of Holies (*d^hbir*) had three steps leading up to it. Two stone carved altars, with traces of incense, were found on the second step. Two stone pillars, *mazzeboth*, were found in the Holy of Holies.¹³ The size of the Holy of Holies never changed from the strata XI–VI. It would have served as the place of worship for the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Arad shows the patterns established by the Tabernacle.

Beer-Sheba

In 1973, a large building constructed on an east-west axis was excavated at Tel Beersheba. This palatial building revealed four main rooms, a very large courtyard, and two basements. It was surprising in size and workmanship. The building, designated building 32, was given the final locus number 32 is described as follows: “This structure, with its two deep basements, was built in Stratum II [8th century and was destroyed by Sennacherib 701 BCE]. . . . Its builders excavated a huge pit, about 12 x

17 m., going down three meters or more to bedrock and thereby obliterating all traces of the underlying strata. There is no other instance of such a building operation anywhere else in Beer-Sheba, nor in fact in any other contemporary site” (Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, 1977, pp. 56–57).

Building 32 became the center of a debate about the location and destruction of a temple at Tel Beersheba (Yadin, 1976). However, there was little doubt that the Israelite temple of Stratum III and earlier was situated where building 32 (Stratum II) was located. First, it occupied the only space large enough to house a sanctuary and was in the most prominent location on the western part of the tel. Second, the plans of Israelite Beer-Sheba, Stratum II, reveal building 32 is the only building in Beer-Sheba on an east-west axis.¹⁴

An important find *under* the courtyard added further evidence that Building 32 was located on an earlier Israelite temple site. The courtyard of building 32 was made of dust and ashes, the typical road material used in Beer-Sheba (Itzaki and Shinar, 1973; Rainey, 1974). But something was different about “the very impressive chalk floor under the courtyard of Building 32 [which] dates to Stratum III (unlike the rooms of Building 32, the courtyard did not obliterate all traces of previous strata and enough of this chalk paving remained to enable one to observe where it was cut by the walls of the Building 32 courtyard). This white chalk floor was not utilized by the builders of Building 32” (Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, 1977, p. 58). The white chalk floor “foundations” of the courtyard, where the altar of the earlier Israelite sanctuary stood, were dated to early Solomonic time.

The Beer-Sheba sanctuary was near a ritual bath or *mikvah*, a 2.5 x 5 m stone structure, covered with plaster, having a bench along one side and in the floor a sump. There were several pottery vessels found in the pool, including two fragments of a *kernos* with decoration (Aharoni, 1974a, pp. 35, 40, plates 7, 8).

Beyond chalk floors, the pool, and pottery, 1973 produced another incredible evidence for the temple at Beer-Sheba: a Levitical-proportioned stone sacrificial altar. A wall in a Stratum II storehouse, on the east of Tel Beersheba, had reused “well-smoothed

ashlar blocks of calcareous sandstone" (Aharoni, 1974c, p. 3). The stones formed a large "Levitical" horned altar.¹⁵

One of the altar's stones had a "deeply engraved decoration of a twisting snake" (Aharoni, 1974c, p. 4). The serpent, as the symbol of YHWH and his "healing" power, was venerated in Israel from Moses' times (Numbers 21:8–9).¹⁶ The stratigraphic proof for the destruction date of this large altar was confirmed when four stones of "well smoothed" calcareous sandstone were found in 1976 under the Stratum II *glacis*, "where they had been buried in the earthen rampart that had been laid down with the erection of Stratum II" (Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, 1977, p. 57–58).¹⁷ These four stones helped "reconstruct" the size and purpose of the altar. These stones were top-stones, and they had burnt plant and animal material on their upper surfaces. The size, shape, engraving, and burnt material confirmed that the altar was a Levitical altar like the altar at Arad.

In addition to the altar, a "bowl" found in locus 93 (a small front room of building 76, a house in the "western living" area located across the road from building 32) also sheds light upon the "sacred building" destroyed by Hezekiah. The vessel had the word קדש *kadosh* or "Holy" incised on its side.¹⁸ Aharoni concluded simply that "the meaning of the word holy, holiness, shows that the contents of the vessel were dedicated to a sanctuary" (Aharoni, 1973, p. 73, plate 42.4).

The destruction of the Beer-Sheba sanctuary by Hezekiah appears to have been politically motivated as well as for religious reasons. When Sennacherib, King of Assyria, sent his commander and two other high officials to Jerusalem, they spoke to Eliakim in Hebrew, adroitly asking whom the Judahites trust. They insist that the Judahites could not trust in the LORD, because Hezekiah had just destroyed the LORD's high places and altars.¹⁹

The Beer-Sheba excavation produced evidence for a functioning Israelite sanctuary until the time of Hezekiah's centralization of ritual in Jerusalem in 721 BCE and has given some reasons for its termination. It provided excellent information concerning altars and their use. It showed evidence of the location and necessity of water in temple ritual.

It did not give a great deal of information about the "exact" floor plans and the architecture of the temple.

Lachish

After the excavation at Arad, Professor Aharoni excavated for two seasons at Lachish. While searching excavation records for architectural parallels to Arad, he discovered similarities between the Arad temple and the "Solar Shrine" excavated by the Wellcome-Marston Expedition in the 1930s.²⁰ The evidences used by Starkey to demonstrate the "Solar Shrine" was a religious building were "its east-west axis, its raised position, a limestone altar located in the court, the wide flight of steps, and the plastered drain in the inner room which had evidently been intended for a libation altar" (Aharoni, 1975b, p. 1). Through careful examination Aharoni was able to show that the dating of this temple to the Persian period was not likely. The temple was post-exilic and possibly dated to the first half of the 2nd century BCE. Because of this, Aharoni changed the designation from the "Solar Shrine" to Temple 106 (Aharoni, 1975b, pp. 1–11). The architecture was very reminiscent of Arad. It was not of some "intrusive cult" or foreign architectural extraction; it is of Israelite origins and is oriented identically to Arad and Beer-Sheba. "Both [Arad and Lachish] have a large courtyard [no large stone altar exists in the Temple 106 as in the Arad temple], a *cella* (Holy Place) in the form of a distinct 'broad room,' and a central rectangular *adyton* (Holy of Holies) reached by three stairs. The court and the Temple were surrounded by rooms" (Aharoni, 1975b, p. 7). Its proportions are again remarkably like the Arad Temple.

Many "cultic" objects were found at Lachish similar to those of Arad, such as bronze lamps, decorated libation altars, etc. Some incense altars were also found. One altar inscription stated that it was "the incense (altar) of Iyosh son of Mahalyah from Lachish" (Aharoni, 1975b, p. 7). Another incense altar had a bearded man with upraised arms which "connotate a general posture of prayer" (Aharoni, 1975b, p. 5; cf. Sarna, 1975). Because of this evidence, it is clear that the Hellenistic Lachish Temple gives yet another example of what should be called Israelite Temple design even though it is post-exilic.

Further evidence of Israelite sanctuary architecture at Lachish is an Israelite-dated building (Building 10), which exists under part of Temple 106. It is badly damaged, but “the two buildings at Lachish have exactly the same orientation, i.e. their axis runs east-west, with a slight deviation of 13–16 degrees. This hardly is accidental, since the orientation of a sacral building evidently is of importance” (Aharoni, 1975b, p. 11). A limestone altar was found within what was the *Holy Place*. Building 10 differs slightly from both the Arad sanctuary and the Hellenistic Lachish sanctuary, in that the Holy of Holies extends the full width of the building, rather than the cubicle at Arad and Lachish Temple 106. The Holy of Holies contains a circular raised platform opposite the door and should be considered the *bamah* of the temple. This building was replaced by Temple 106 around the end of the 3rd century BCE. Aharoni states, “Evidently the same tradition of worship was maintained in Temple 106, which replaced the earlier structure with considerably superior construction. When the contents and plans of both temples are compared with Arad, and their probable connection with the inscribed altar is considered as well, all indications point towards a tradition of Jewish, Yahwistic worship” (Aharoni, 1975b, p. 11).

Josiah’s banishment of all temples except the temple at Jerusalem did not mean that the Israelite temple tradition was lost. There is extensive evidence that Jewish communities, after the exile, continued to build legitimate “Yahwistic sanctuaries” with a continuity of architectural design from the earliest Israelite times.²¹ The greatest was the temple at Jerusalem but it included other temples such as the Hellenistic temples at Lachish and Beersheba.

The 10th century BCE temples of Arad and Beersheba each seem to spring full blown architecturally about the same time as Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. The Yahweh temple at Arad functioned and was apparently held in high regard until the 8th century BCE time of Josiah’s “reformation.”

The Yahweh temple at Beer-Sheba was removed in 721 BCE and a large building with a basement was built in its place. The altar was dismantled, the horns defaced, and the stone used as common building stone, but the “Levitical” altar remains could

be reconstructed and give better understanding of size, shape, and use of altars in Israelite tradition. The location of the “Pool” at Beersheba corresponds with the water source at Arad, shedding light on the use of water in all the sanctuaries and temples of ancient and post-exilic Israel.

All of these architectural features and accoutrements show that these sanctuaries are bridges to the “Mount Sinai” theophany. The great theophany at Sinai became the focus for Israel thereafter. It set the pattern that all revelation and covenant making in Israel followed, “the experiences of the fathers foreshadow[ing] those of the descendants” (Cassuto, 1967, p. 14). Israel took “Mount Sinai,” in the form of the tabernacle, through the rest of their wanderings and into the Land of Promise, the covenant land. They made more permanent “Mount Sinais” by creating temples and sanctuaries of stone. They did not stray from the form. Each temple had an Holy of Holies, an Holy Place, and a courtyard. Each contained a source of water for ritual purposes, vestment areas, and places for worshipers and priests to prepare to meet God. They built with great care their “sacred mountain.”

LDS people feel they are “Modern Israel” and are fulfilling Isaiah’s famous words that “it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2–3; cf. Micah 4:1–4). This “mountain” imagery links the architecture of Ancient Israel and Modern Israel.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had its “Mount Sinai” at Kirtland, Ohio. The “Saints” built a Temple in the manner of the ancient temples because of divine revelation to their prophet, Joseph Smith Jr. There they had angelic, prophetic, and divine revelations as Moses, the seventy elders of Israel, and the congregation did at Mount Sinai.²² When they left Kirtland, they built a second temple at Nauvoo, where that prophetic pattern continued.

Early Latter-day Saints considered themselves as “Modern Israel,” a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6) with a royal priesthood in a new dispensation. They are worshippers of Jesus Christ led by prophets building and receiving revelation on their “Mount Sinai.” As Modern Israel set out for their wilderness journey which led to Utah, their prophet, Brigham Young, gave instruction to them, as Moses gave to Ancient Israel. They were to remember their God, their covenants, and their duties that they had received in their “Mount Sinai” at Kirtland and in their Nauvoo temple. Mormons were the “Camp of Israel” and as Moses led Ancient Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, so a living prophet led this “Modern Israel” out of bondage by the hand of their God: “I am he who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; and my arm is stretched out in the last days, to save my people Israel” (D & C 136:22).

Mormons reached a promised land and built their “Mountain of the LORD.” They continue to build sanctuaries to the LORD their God and remember their ties to Ancient Israel. A key to understanding their temples can be found in the culture of the ancient temple, including three ancient temple sites: Arad, Beer-Sheba, and Lachish.

Notes

1. “The nexus between Israel and the Tabernacle is a perpetual extension of the bond that was forged at Sinai between the people and their God” (Cassuto, 1967, p. 319).

2. “This is not a house of prayer where the public was allowed to enter but rather a structure conceived as the house of the deity where the sacred presence might dwell. The public was not allowed to go into the temple building at all, but only the priests appointed for its service, so the building did not need to have large dimensions. The crowd assembled in the large open courtyard in front of the temple, where the great sacrificial altar for the burning of offerings was also stationed” (Aharoni, 1982, p. 226; cf. Milgrom, 1970, p. 45).

3. One of the most comprehensive is the multivolume work by Th. A. Busink, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem: von Salomo bis Herodes* (1970).

4. “And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day” (Exodus 19:14–15). Moses and the Elders of Israel set boundaries for the people, warning them not to encroach upon or even touch the Mountain. When the third day arrived, “there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the

mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled (Exodus 19:16).

“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them” (Exodus 19:17–25).

5. Exodus chapter 20 does not deal with how people are to deal with each other but with their moral behavior toward God. Two things are important to remember: 1) the people are preparing to meet with the LORD in three days, so chapter 20 emphasizes how one becomes fit to be with God; 2) each of these commandments are focused on the LORD/man relationship, consider for example Exodus 20:15 “Thou shalt not steal.” This verse is most often interpreted as stealing from one’s neighbor, but the book of Malachi suggests otherwise, “Will a man rob God? Yet, ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? **In tithes and offerings.** Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*” (Malachi 3:8–10, bold emphasis added). It appears that Israel was to make sure it had paid its tithes and offerings before approaching God on Mount Sinai to receive an endowment. Each commandment shows a similar paradigm.

6. “*And seventy of the elders of Israel*, a perfect representation of the people by a number that symbolizes perfection” (Cassuto, 1967, p. 310). “Seventy – commonly indicates the perfection of a family blessed with offspring, both in the pre-Israelitic and in the Israelitic traditions” (Cassuto, 1967, p. 8).

7. This is the complete quote from Milgrom. It is extraordinary in its scope: “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 (Ex. 19:20) as from the inner shrine (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89); the mountain top is off limits to priest and layman alike (Ex. 19:24*b*) and its very sight is punishable by death (Ex. 19:21*b*), and so with its Tabernacle counterpart (cf. Lev. 16:2 and Num. 4:20); finally, Moses alone is privileged to

ascend to the top (Ex. 19:20b; see 34:2b) just as later, the high priest is permitted entry to the inner shrine under special safeguards (Lev. 16:2ff.).

"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 (Ex. 19:21; 24:15bff. [P]; see 19:9, 16) just as the cloud overspreads the entirety of P's Tabernacle (Num. 9:15ff.). However, the entire mountain is not covered. Moses is able to ascend some distance with the priests and elders (24:1) and separately with Joshua (24:13) until the cloud perimeter, at which he probably leaves Joshua (see 32:17) when God calls him to enter the cloud. Thus, below the cloud is the third division, called 'the bottom of the mountain' (19:17; 24:4), a technical term for the lowest portion of the mountain. . . . It is the equivalent to the courtyard, the sacred enclosure of the Tabernacle to which priests alone have access except for the forecourt 'entrance' where the layman brings his sacrifice, provided he is in a pure state. Here too is where the people have the theophanies of the Tabernacle and Temple at their respective consecrations (Lev. 9:4f., 24 and 2 Chron. 7:3). Similarly, at Sinai: the nation is first purified (19:10f., 14f.) and then brought out of the camp to the viewing stand at the foot of the mountain.

"Thus the blazing summit, the cloud-covered slopes and visible bottom rim correspond to Tabernacle divisions, and the analogous tripartite holiness of Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle is confirmed" (Milgrom, 1970, pp. 45–46).

8. Professor Aharoni uncovered a total of XII strata on the upper mound dating from 12th century BCE to 6th century BCE. "From the tenth century BCE, to about the destruction of the First Temple, i.e. during a period of about 350 years, we found six citadels built, destroyed, and built again and destroyed again. Such a large number of destruction levels fulfill the dream of any archaeologist. We were able to open room after room full of vessels, most of course broken, but some intact, buried under debris of the fallen roofs and burned levels of all six strata. It is hardly astonishing that a fortress guarding the border was always one of the first places to suffer in any period of political or military weakness of the kingdom. Thus, it is not our doing that these six clearly defined strata, with hundreds and hundreds of complete vessels (after their reconstruction) provide a dependable stratification. We can't be very inaccurate in dating these various strata between the periods of Solomon in the middle of the tenth century BCE and about the end of the first Temple period, a little after 600 BCE" (Aharoni, 1971, p. 29; cf. Aharoni, 1975a). Six of those strata (XI–VI) had a citadel dating to the Iron or Israelite age. Clearly defined, the six strata produced an abundance of datable architecture, vessels, ostraca, seals, etc. (Aharoni, 1971, pp. 28–44). The royal fortress also contained a temple or sanctuary, which was used in each successive stratum until the time of Josiah when he built a casemate wall through the middle of the main room of the sanctuary, the *hekal* (2 Kings 22–23; Aharoni 1971, p. 36). "Only toward the end of the seventh century was the building put out of commission. This event is surely associated with the cultic reform of Josiah, who concentrated the ritual in Jerusalem, bringing there the priests from the outlying towns" (Aharoni, 1982, p. 229).

9. "Thou shalt make an altar . . . five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof *shall be* three cubits" (Exodus 27:1). The size and shape of the Arad altar also confirms the Chronicles account of Solomon's altar: "And he [Solomon] stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands: For Solomon had made a brass scaffold, of **five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high**, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven" (2 Chronicles 6:12–13, bold emphasis added).

10. When each successive stratum of altars was excavated, it was thought that the dimensions of the first altar were different from the later altars. "The first altar was about one foot shorter than the later altars" (Aharoni, 1971, p. 35). This discrepancy was finally solved when it was discovered that a deliberate change occurred in Israel between the 10th and the 9th centuries BCE. The use of the "short cubit" (45 cm) gave way to the use of the "royal cubit" (52.5 cm). The actual measurements changed but the dimensions stayed the same.

11. The 10th century BCE *hekal*, like the altar, followed the "short cubit" measurement but, in the 9th century, was expanded to 20 cubits measured by the royal cubit.

12. Mazar and Aharoni make some very interesting proposals regarding the use of Arad as a temple controlled by Kenites, who were the descendants of Moses' father-in-law Hobab. They suggest that Reuel the Midianite, a priest of the Midianites, and Hobab would have had great influence upon the priestly ritual, including the use of *mazzeboth* in the Holy of Holies and vestment rooms. Certainly the inscriptions found in the temple at Arad lend credibility to this Kenite influence (see Aharoni, 1968; Mazar, 1965; cf. Cross, 1979).

13. The placing or raising of "stone pillars" or *masseboth* to Yahweh in sanctuaries occurs frequently in the Hebrew Bible. Just a few citations are noted. Jacob establishes a House of God by anointing and setting up a *massebah*: "And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28:22; cf. Genesis 35:1–15). The LORD prepared Moses to be in his presence by having him establish a rock to stand on. "And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by" (Exodus 33:21–22). Deuteronomy chapter 32 shows that the God of Israel is their rock, "*He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he" (Deuteronomy 32:4). Joshua set up a *massebah* at what became the sanctuary of Shechem as recorded in Joshua 24:22–27. Psalms 91 and 118 also portray the God of ancient Israel as a sacred stone. The sanctuary at Arad had a stone "remembrance" of the God of Israel in its Holy of Holies.

14. Israelite "Cultic buildings . . . were oriented towards the sunrise . . . such as the biblical tabernacle and the temples of Solomon and Ezekiel as well as the Israelite cult building at Arad, and the Hellenistic cult buildings at Lachish and Beer-Sheba" (Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, 1977, p. 53).

15. "The four altar horns were found arranged one beside the other in the wall, three intact and the fourth with its top knocked off" (Aharoni, 1974c, p. 3). Only about half of the altar's stones, with the exception of the four horns, were recovered. When the altar was reassembled there was a problem getting the exact width and depth dimensions, "but we were able to reconstruct its height with certainty" (Aharoni, 1974c, p. 3). The altar's height was "157 cm. (ca. 63 inches), measuring to the top of the horns. This is the measurement of exactly three large (royal) cubits, similar to the height of the altars at Arad, the Tabernacle (Exod. 27:1) and probably the original altar of the Solomonic temple (2 Chron. 6:13)" (Aharoni, 1974c, p.3).

16. The bronze serpent (נחש נחשת) held a prominent position in the Jerusalem temple until the days of Hezekiah, when he destroyed it and called it *Nahustan* (נחשתן) (2 Kings 18:4; Davies, 1986, pp. 74, 199–204).

17. "Obviously, it is impossible that the altar existed during the life of Stratum II when some of its stones were already embedded in the rampart of that stratum and sealed by the covering glaxis" (Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, 1977, p. 58).

18. Two other archaeological sites, Arad and Hazor, besides Beersheba, have produced "sacred" Israelite period vessels incised with either קדש (*kadosh*) or the word קרבן (*korban*). Arad produced two vessels found by its altar with ק (*qof*) incised on them; it has not been determined whether *qof* was to represent קדש (*kadosh*) or the word קרבן (*korban*), but in either case the bowls were to be used for ritualistic purposes. The Hazor excavations also produced a bowl incised twice, once on the side and once on the rim, with קדש. Its location and the location of the Arad bowls indicate ritualistic use (Aharoni, 1973, p. 73).

"The script of the graffito [on the bowl from Tel Beersheba] is rather archaic," and dates earlier than the first half of the eighth century. The bowls from Arad and Hazor are "roughly contemporaneous" with the bowl of Beer-Sheba but no chronological conclusions are definite (Aharoni, 1973, p. 73).

The Beer-Sheba bowl did not occupy a position in any "House of God." It was found in a Stratum II "house." Did priests use the Beer-Sheba bowl as part of their inheritance or did they save it from the destruction? Whatever the reason for its appearance in a Stratum II "house" and not an earlier Israelite shrine, the Beer-Sheba קדש bowl indicates a sanctuary existed at Beer-Sheba. Priestly personal household use of "sacred" vessels dates to the earliest times of Israelite religion when Levitical families' "inheritance was the LORD" (Numbers 18:20–32; Joshua 13:33).

19. "Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?" (2 Kings 18:21–22).

Eliakim never denied that Hezekiah destroyed the high places and altars; he only asked that Rabshakeh address the people in Aramaic and not in the common language of Judah.

He did not want the people to understand the discussion. Eliakim's reticence to have the common people hear some of the discussion would surely show that Hezekiah's motivation had a component which he had not discussed with the people. It was common for countries to view their "God" as supreme in all ways. Israel and Judah originally placed sanctuaries at all of their borders, e.g. Dan, Bethel, Arad, Beer-Sheba, etc., so that all entering their countries would recognize the preeminent god of that country.

When it became obvious that Judah could be overrun and outlying districts conquered by invading forces, from either Egypt or Assyria who could convert all offerings or tithes into ready cash, food, or other supplies, Hezekiah successfully centralized the worship, rituals, and priestly powers in Jerusalem. The centralization of Priestly powers in Jerusalem removed the Judaic priests from serving the invading forces and compromising religious rituals. Hezekiah focused Judah's worship and allegiance upon an unseen God who could not be captured by outside "enemies" and would thus remain in the heart of Judah, even if the land was occupied by outside enemies. He insured the continuance of the Kingdom of Judah and her restoration, even if Judah was defeated in the upcoming battle with outside forces. He guaranteed obeisance to the LORD and made it impossible for a foreign King to put the God of Israel in bondage (Davies, 1986, pp. 202–204).

20. The information concerning the "Solar Temple" can be found in Olga Tufnell, *Lachish III, The Iron Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

21. "There are two later parallels to the Arad temple, one from Lachish and the other from Beer-sheba. At both places, temples were discovered from the Hellenistic period, resembling in their plans the temple at Arad. Both sites had been royal border centers like Arad, and at both of them there were found evidences of an earlier cultic tradition. . . . The Hellenistic temples at Lachish and Beer-sheba preserved the ancient Israelite cultic tradition on the spot while these two places were still outside the kingdom of Judah during the Second Temple period until the Hasmonaean conquest. Hence, there is further support for the conclusion that the Arad temple was not an isolated phenomenon but represents the Israelite royal border temple, reflecting in its plan an earlier building tradition" (Aharoni, 1982, pp. 233–234; cf. Aharoni, 1974b, pp. 270–271, plate 59; Aharoni, 1975c; Derfler, 1981; Derfler, 1993).

22. The Holy of Holies in the Kirtland Temple was constructed in much the same way as the Holy of Holies was in the Tabernacle, by lowering curtains to separate the altars from the "priests and elders" and congregation so that the Prophet or High Priest could approach the LORD and his throne or altar to receive revelation. "Verily I say unto you, it is expedient in me that the first elders of my church should receive their endowment from on high in my house, which I have commanded to be built unto my name in the land of Kirtland" (Doctrine and Covenants 105:33).

"That thy glory may rest down upon thy people, and upon this thy house, which we now dedicate to thee, that it may be sanctified and consecrated to be holy, and that thy holy presence may be continually in this house;

“And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord’s house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness.

“And do thou grant, Holy Father, that all those who shall worship in this house may be taught words of wisdom out of the best books, and that they may seek learning even by study, and also by faith, as thou hast said;

“And that they may grow up in thee, and receive a fullness of the Holy Ghost, and be organized according to thy laws, and be prepared to obtain every needful thing;

“And that this house may be a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God, even thy house;

“That all the incomings of thy people, into this house, may be in the name of the Lord;

“That all their outgoings from this house may be in the name of the Lord;

“And that all their salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with holy hands, uplifted to the Most High;

“And that no unclean thing shall be permitted to come into thy house to pollute it;

“And when thy people transgress, any of them, they may speedily repent and return unto thee, and find favor in thy sight, and be restored to the blessings which thou hast ordained to be poured out upon those who shall reverence thee in thy house.” (Doctrine and Covenants 109:12–21)

Compare: “The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

“We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.

“Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice.

“Let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name.

“For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.

“Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house.

“Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house.

“And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen.

“After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of

the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

“After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

“After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

“Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

“To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

“Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–16)

References

- Aharoni, Y. (1968). Arad: Its inscriptions and temple. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 1–32.
- Aharoni, Y. (1971). The Israelite sanctuary at Arad. In D. N. Freedman and J. C. Greenfield (Eds.), *New directions in biblical archaeology* (pp. 28–44). Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
- Aharoni, Y. (Ed.) (1973). *Beer-Sheba I: Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba—1969–1971 Seasons*. Givatayim-Ramat Gan: Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology.
- Aharoni, Y. (1974a). Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba: Preliminary report of the fourth season. *Tel Aviv*, 1 (1), 34–42.
- Aharoni, Y. (1974b). Tel Beersheba—Notes and news. *Israel Exploration Journal*, 24 (3/4), 270–272; Plate 59.
- Aharoni, Y. (1974c). The horned altar of Beer-Sheba. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 37, 2–6.
- Aharoni, Y. (1975a). Arad. In Michael Avi-Yonah (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land—Volume I* (pp. 74–89). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Aharoni, Y. (1975b). *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachish V)* (Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology). Tel Aviv: Gateway Publishers, Inc.
- Aharoni, Y. (1975c). Tel Beersheba - Notes and News. *Israel Exploration Journal*, 25(2/3), 169–171; Pl. 17.
- Aharoni, Y. (1982). *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel*. (Anson F. Rainey, Trans. from Hebrew 1978—הארכיאלוגיה של ארץ־ישראל). Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Busink, Th. A. (1970). *Der Tempel von Jerusalem: von Salomo bis Herodes*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Cassuto, U. (1967). *A commentary on the book of Exodus*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University.
- Cross, F. M. (1979). Two offering dishes with Phoenician inscriptions from the sanctuary of 'Arad. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Number 235), 75–78.
- Davies, L. (1986). *Serpent imagery in ancient Israel: The relationship between the literature and the physical remains*. Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah, Ph. D. Dissertation.

- Derfler, S. (1981). A terracotta figurine from the Hellenistic temple at Tel Beer-sheba. *Israel Exploration Journal*, 31(1/2), 97–99; plate 17.
- Derfler, S. (1993). *The Hellenistic temple at Tel Beersheva*. Lewiston: Mellen Press.
- Herzog, Z., A. F. Rainey, & S. Moshkovitz. (1977, February). The stratigraphy at Beer-sheba and the location of the sanctuary. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 225, 49–58.
- Itzaki, Y., & Mira Shinar. (1973). "Dust and ashes" as floor stabilizers in Iron Age Beer-sheba. In Y. Aharoni (Ed.), *Beer-sheba I. Excavations at Tel Beer-sheba, 1969–1971 Seasons*. Givatayim-Ramat Gan: Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology.
- Mazar, B. (1965, July). The sanctuary of Arad and the family of Hobab the Kenite. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 24 (3, Erich F. Schmidt Memorial Issue), 297–303.
- Milgrom, J. (1970). *Studies in Levitical terminology, I*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Rainey, A. F. (1974). Dust and ashes. *Tel Aviv*, 1 (2), 77–83.
- Sarna, N. M. (1975). The chirotonic motif on the Lachish altar. In Y. Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachish V)* (Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology) (pp. 44–46). Tel Aviv: Gateway Publishers, Inc.
- Tufnell, O., with contributions by M. A. Murray and D. Diringer, Wellcome-Marston Archaeological Research Expedition to the Near East. (1953). *Lachish III, The Iron Age* (Vols. Wellcome-Marston Archaeological Research Expedition to the Near East, 3). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Yadin, Y. (1976). Beer-sheba: The high place destroyed by King Josiah. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 222 (April), 5–17.