

Pentateuch 16

Tabernacle, life with God Part 2: Exodus 25-40

The Tabernacle as a Return to Eden

- I. Before, we observed the transition from Mount Sinai to the tabernacle. However, a transition from one mountain to the tabernacle does not explain all the detail.
- II. In fact, based on our reading of the prologue of Genesis as a temple scene, we should expect the tabernacle to reenact that first mountain—Mt. Eden.
- III. Let's review a few points which we learned in Genesis.
 - A. First, there is a homology between the cosmos and the tabernacle. Throughout the Hebrew Bible the cosmos is described as a tabernacle pitched by God, often employing the architectural features of a house
 1. (cf. Pss 78:23, 69; 104;
 2. Gen. 7:11;
 3. Job 9:8; 26:11).
 - B. We also considered the narrative parallels between the completion of creation (Gen. 1:31–2:3) and the tabernacle (Exod. 39–40), along with their Sabbath end and function, and the similar language utilized for each ('Wind of God', 'lamps', etc.). God's house: parallels between the cosmos and the tabernacle
 - a) In the ANE the analogy between cosmos and temple was commonplace. The cosmos was understood as a large temple and the temple as a small cosmos. Approaching the biblical account of creation, there are various indications that such a parallel between cosmos and temple (or tabernacle) is in view.
 - (1) For example, the Spirit or 'Wind of God' (rûah 'ēlōhîm) as a phrase appears in Genesis 1:2 for the construction of the cosmos and in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 for the construction of the tabernacle.
 - (2) Moreover, the Spirit's endowment of Bezalel, the chief artisan of the tabernacle, is described in terms of wisdom, understanding and knowledge (Exod. 31:3), the same attributes by which God is said to have fashioned the cosmos: (Prov.3:19–20)
 - (3) Other creation terminology shared with the tabernacle includes the word mā'ôr (light, lamp) in Genesis 1:14–15, which always in the Pentateuch designates the lamps of the tabernacle. Vogels makes the same observation, adding, 'The sun and moon are like sacred lamps in the sanctuary of the universe. A better translation would be: "Let there be lamps ...", or "luminaries." This word confirms the liturgical character of the narrative.
 - (4) Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, creation is likened to a tabernacle pitched by God (Ps. 104; Job 9:8; Isa. 40:22) or to a house God has established, with pillars, windows and doors (Job

26:11; Gen. 7:11; Ps. 78:23), the cosmos being thought of as a three-decked house of heavens, earth and sea.

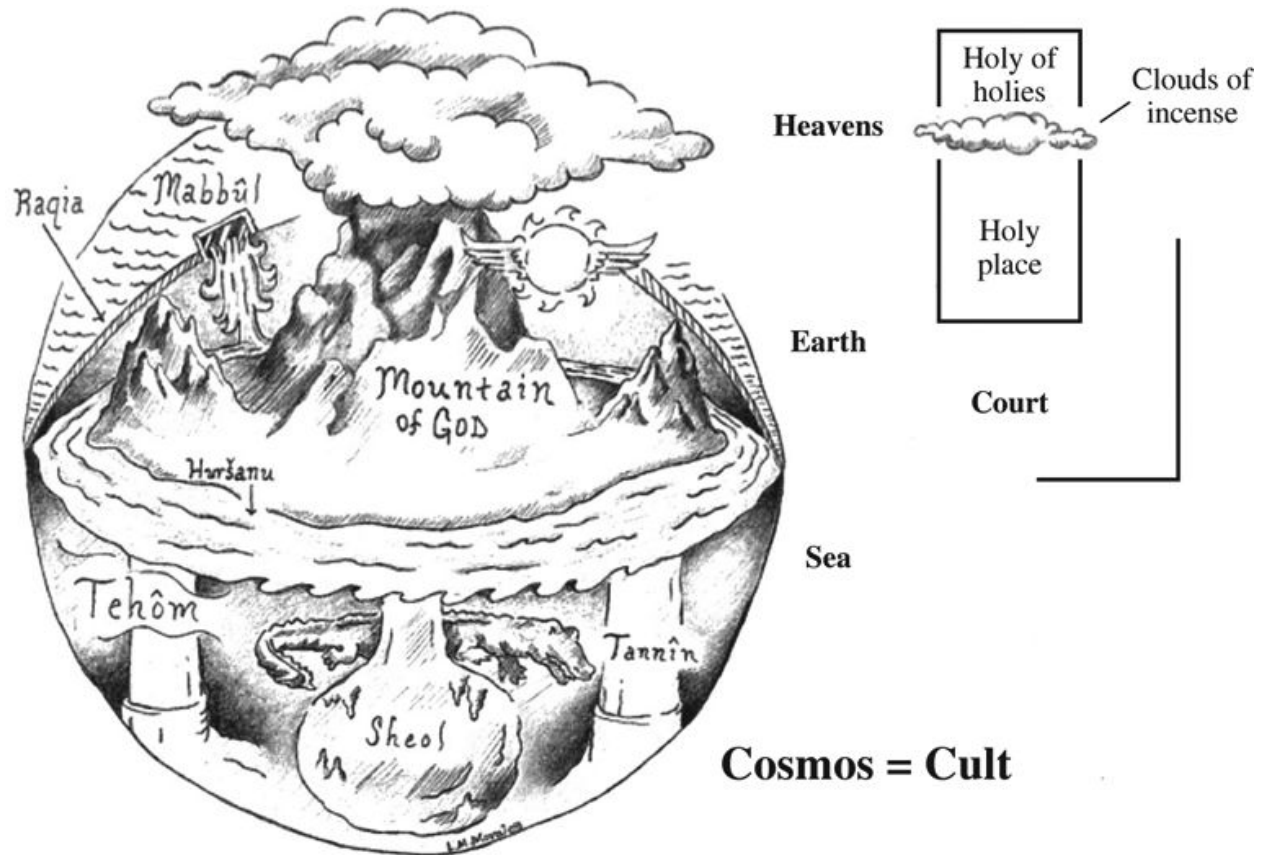
- (5) Moreover, the completion of the tabernacle construction at the end of Exodus is described in terms that echo the completion of creation, using similar words and phrases:

<i>Exodus 39–40</i>	<i>Genesis 1–2</i>
And Moses saw all the work and, behold, they had done it (39:43)	And God saw all that he had made, and, behold it was very good (1:31)
Thus was completed all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting (39:32)	The heavens and the earth were completed and all their array (2:1)
When Moses had finished the work (40:33)	God finished the work which he had been doing (2:2)
Moses blessed them (39:43)	And God blessed (2:3)
to sanctify it and all its furnishings (40:9)	and sanctified it (2:3)

Now, given the similarities between cosmic mountains and temples, the following threefold correspondence may be developed:

Creation	\approx	Mountain of God	\approx	Tabernacle
Heavens		Summit		Holy of holies
Earth		Midsection		Holy place
Seas		Base		Outer court

L. Michael Morales, [*Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*](#), ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 37, New Studies in Biblical Theology (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 101.



III. Second, the tabernacle corresponds to Eden.

A. Compare

1. [Cherubim] Gen. 3:24 and Exod. 36:8,35; Exod. 25:18-22,26:1
2. [Tree] Menorah

B. In sum, the tabernacle is a cosmos and its holy of holies the garden of Eden upon the mountain of God's clouded, heaven-accessing summit. As the high priest enters the tabernacle, therefore, he travels westward as an ascent of this cultic mountain. (L. Michael Morales, 102.)

Crisis continued:

Exodus 40:35