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## **Tamid: Zacharias and the Second Temple**

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## TAMID: ZACHARIAS AND THE SECOND TEMPLE

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Lisle G. Brown

**Abstract:** *This essay follows Zacharias' biography from entering the priesthood till the day the angel Gabriel appeared to him in Herod's temple. After recounting the procedures to become a priest, Brown focuses on the day when Zacharias prepared to bring one of the two central standing offerings. He points out that likely, a priest would only have a once in a lifetime chance to partake in the core of this ceremony, entering the Holy Room and burning incense on the Inner Altar. Brown paints a very visual picture of this day, immersing us in the ritual of the time, a ritual that became even more significant for Zacharias by seeing an angel in the temple, something that has not happened before nor after in the Second Temple.*

**[Editor's Note:** Part of our book chapter reprint series, this article is reprinted here as a service to the LDS community. Original pagination and page numbers have necessarily changed, otherwise the reprint has the same content as the original.

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Many Latter-day Saints who read Luke's account of Zacharias's visitation of Gabriel while offering incense at the golden inner altar of the second temple (see Luke 1:5–23) likely view it as a requisite prelude to Gabriel's more momentous annunciation to Mary later in the chapter (see Luke 1:26–37).<sup>1</sup> It probably does not occur to them to ask

how Zacharias came to be in the temple for that important event. They may think that this was just to be expected because it was part of the normal duties of temple priests. Some may feel that it was not uncommon for him to offer incense and that it was just an ordinary day for Zacharias at the temple — until Gabriel appeared to him. After all, he was a priest, so it would not be surprising that he would be found ministering in the temple. But these assumptions are most assuredly not the case. Even if Gabriel had not appeared to Zacharias, it would have remained the most significant day of his lengthy temple labors. Indeed, he would have never forgotten the day when he offered incense in the house of the Lord!

Unfortunately, most Church members have little, if any, idea how the Jewish priesthood functioned during the first Christian century.<sup>2</sup> Few know how Zacharias became a priest or why it was extraordinary for him to be offering incense in the temple at all.

### **Organization of the Jewish Priesthood in New Testament Times**

The Gospels refer to a cadre of men associated with the temple at Jerusalem as the “chief priests” (see Matthew 27:1, 6; Mark 15:1, 10, 11; Luke 22:2, 4; John 19:6, 15).<sup>3</sup> The book of Acts also described these leaders as “the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests” (Acts 5:24). The War Scroll, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, uses similar words to describe them: “the high priest and his deputy ... [and] an order of major priests, twelve in number.”<sup>4</sup> These titles enumerate the elite group of men who made up the priestly hierarchy that was attached permanently to the temple. The Mishnah provides the actual titles of the twelve chief priests mentioned in The War Scroll and adds three to their number.<sup>5</sup>

During the first century of the Christian era, there were fifteen chief priests, to which can be added the high priest (*kohen gadol*) and the deputy of the priests (*segen hakohanim*), making a total of seventeen priests in the temple hierarchy.<sup>6</sup> They were among the most powerful and influential men during Zacharias’s time, standing at the very pinnacle of Jewish society.<sup>7</sup> The Gospel writers, however, used the most severe terms in describing these men. They were portrayed as corrupt and scheming individuals who ultimately sought and achieved the Savior’s death (see Matthew 26:59; Mark 11:18, 14:55; Luke 19:47).

It is clear, however, that Zachariah was nothing like these priestly elites. Luke describes him as a priest who was “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”

(Luke 1:6).<sup>8</sup> There was, indeed, a stark division between the priestly hierarchy in Jerusalem and the ordinary priests who lived throughout the rest of the country. Joachim Jeremias noted that “an intense antagonism had grown up in the period just before the destruction of the Temple” between the priestly aristocracy and the other priests, mainly because of “tyranny and nepotism.”<sup>9</sup> While Jesus frequently criticized the temple priestly elites, there is nothing in the Gospels where He found fault with the ordinary priests. Many of these men were probably like Zacharias, completely devoted to their priestly duties, and were undoubtedly good and honorable individuals.

According to Luke, Zacharias was a priest of the “course of Abia” (Luke 1:5).<sup>10</sup> A “course” (*mishmar*) was a body of men who descended from Aaron and held the right to the Aaronic Priesthood by birthright.<sup>11</sup> There were 24 such courses (*mishmarot*), each of whom served a weekly tour of duty — from Sabbath to Sabbath — in the temple at Jerusalem; for this reason they were called “weekly courses.” Each weekly course had a director (*rosh hamishmar*) who was responsible for its members’ conduct while serving in the temple.

Each weekly course was further divided into small clans or family groups of priests known as the daily courses (*batei avot*). Each daily course (*beit av*) served on an appointed day during the week in the temple. Each daily course also had its director (*rosh beit av*). The exact number of daily courses is uncertain; most commentators put the number at seven, because of the eight days that the daily courses served in the temple.<sup>12</sup> These 24 courses involved about 7,200 priests: 300 priests in each weekly course, which were divided into some 150 daily courses, with each daily course having about 50 members.<sup>13</sup>

Because of the weekly and daily aspects of temple service, a priest like Zachariah would have had the opportunity to serve in the temple only once every 24 weeks, or approximately twice a year. Even then, he had a less than a 25% chance of being selected to serve, because less than a fourth of the priests in the daily course were needed for the day’s service. (He would have had additional opportunities to serve during the three annual pilgrim festivals — Passover, Feast of Weeks, and Festival of Tabernacles — when priests from all the courses could travel to the temple to help with the throngs of people who flooded the temple mount on those festive occasions.) It is clear that the opportunities for service by the priests of the second temple were limited; obviously Zacharias did not have the opportunity for frequent temple service that many Latter-day Saints enjoy today.

When not conducting their priestly obligations with the fellow priests of their course, they lived and worked throughout Judea and Galilee with the rest of the people.<sup>14</sup> They were aided in their support by certain “gifts” from the people, which was required by the law of Moses.<sup>15</sup> They were honored and revered in their local communities. Zacharias lived with his wife, Elizabeth, in an unidentified village in the “hill country of Judea, from the neighborhood of priestly Hebron.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Zacharias Becomes a Priest**

Luke gives very little in his Gospel about the lives of Zacharias and Elizabeth. He recorded nothing about Zacharias’s lengthy career as a temple priest, nor any other related incidents of his life. However, using a variety of sources, it is possible to reconstruct much of Zacharias’s typical activities as a priest. Only an understanding of such functions provides a glimpse at how extraordinary it was for Zacharias to be burning incense when Gabriel appeared.

Latter-day Saints are well acquainted with the procedure for receiving the priesthood in this dispensation.<sup>17</sup> Age is a crucial requirement. A boy must be twelve years of age before he can receive the Aaronic Priesthood, and a young man must be eighteen to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Even when men reach the proper age, they do not request the priesthood — they must be invited. That is, they must wait for a bishop or stake president to approach them about their willingness to receive the priesthood. If willing, they must be living a worthy life. Their worthiness is determined during a private interview with a bishop or a stake president; during the interview the leader typically asks them about their willingness to serve the Lord; their faith in Jesus Christ; their testimony of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and the Church; and whether they are living a life free of serious transgressions or sins. Upon successfully passing the interview, the boy’s or man’s name is presented before the general membership of the Church in a sacrament meeting or stake conference for a sustaining vote — by uplifted hands — before he receives the priesthood.

After he is approved by sustaining vote, a boy or man has hands laid on his head by someone who holds the priesthood and who confers the priesthood upon him and ordains him to an office in the Church (typically a deacon or elder) and blesses him with encouragement and promises. In order to minister in the temple, Melchizedek Priesthood holders must also observe similar procedures, including interviews and

consecrations (setting apart) before they are allowed to participate in temple rituals.

Under the law of Moses, there were also certain procedures that men had to observe in order to become priests — but the process had few, if any, similarities to the procedures of our day. Nonetheless, Zacharias would have had to pass successfully through all the procedures before receiving authority to officiate in the temple rituals. Let's reconstruct the required procedure and follow Zacharias as he became a priest — one who was authorized to minister in the house of the Lord.

### **Zacharias and the Qualifications for the Priesthood**

The age at which Zacharias received his authority to begin functioning as a priest is unknown. One author wrote, "The age at which the priests were allowed to enter upon their office is not stated in the Scriptures, but it is supposed to have been thirty years. From twenty-five to thirty they learned their duties, and from thirty to fifty they served their office, when they might retire, if they chose."<sup>18</sup> Such information does appear in the scriptures; in Numbers 4, Aaron's descendants were directed to serve in the tabernacle "from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old" (Numbers 4:3). The Torah specified an age of 25 years when Levites could undertake their duties (see Numbers 8:24); King David later lowered it to 20 years (see 1 Chronicles 23:24–27). David's dictum may have also applied to men who desired to become priests.

It is likely, then, that when Zacharias was in his 20s — certainly no older than 30 — he made his way to Jerusalem for an interview that would determine whether he was qualified to serve as a priest in the temple.<sup>19</sup> Unlike our contemporary practice, he was not called to this interview by the presiding officer in the priesthood, the high priest, but he presented himself when he felt he was ready, making known his personal desire.

This interview took place within the temple precincts in the nonconsecrated portion of the Chamber of Hewn Stones, where the Sanhedrin met.<sup>20</sup> This body of 71 men constituted the ultimate body of Jewish jurisprudence, and one of their most important functions was determining the qualifications of those who presented themselves to officiate in the temple; they usually sat daily for just such potential visits.<sup>21</sup> The interview itself was not held in private with the high priest but before the entire assembled Sanhedrin with the high priest normally presiding. It was also unlikely that Zacharias was the only candidate, because typically there would be other young men who also desired to serve in the temple. This was likely Zacharias's first — and perhaps

only — encounter with this august body, and it must have been an intimidating experience. Undoubtedly, he had traveled to the temple with the members of his course. These men of experience would have prepared him — but even though he might have been well prepared, he still must have approached the day with nervous apprehension; he was about to pass through quite an ordeal.

Under the law of Moses, the priesthood was reserved for the literal descendants of Aaron and his four sons (see Exodus 28:1–4), because the Lord conferred it “upon Aaron and his seed throughout all their generations” (D&C 84:18). The essential requirement was a proper lineage — Zacharias had to prove he was a literal descendant of Aaron. Accordingly, the first question raised by the members of the Sanhedrin concerned Zacharias’s parentage. If his “father’s name was inscribed in the archives of Jeshana at Zipporim,” this was sufficient proof and “no further inquiry was necessary.”<sup>22</sup> The archives of Jeshana at Zipporim must have been an authoritative list of all men who had served as priests in the temple in the past. The scriptures do not record whether Zacharias’s father’s name was found in this special archive.<sup>23</sup> Presumably it was, but if not, he would have to bring proof of his priestly lineage. If he brought witnesses, probably priests in his daily course, they could testify that his mother was one “of the daughters of Aaron” (Luke 1:5) whose husband had ministered at the altar; that could also suffice as acceptable proof.<sup>24</sup> If not, then the inquiry into his genealogy would be thorough and perhaps time-consuming. For the candidate whose genealogy proved inadequate, his rejection was humiliating. He dressed and veiled himself in black, a symbol of both humility and mourning.<sup>25</sup> As he left the temple mount, his distress was observed by all, and only the veil he wore prevented his identity from being revealed.

After establishing his rightful lineage, Zacharias next endured an even more grueling examination, one highly personal and potentially embarrassing. It was based on a requirement recorded in Leviticus: “No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God” (Leviticus 21:21). The Lord then listed these blemishes: blindness, lameness, disfigured body, crippled hands or feet, hunchbacked or dwarfed, cataracts or defective eyes, or festering sores (see Leviticus 21:18–20). Some of these bodily defects would have clearly prevented the man from performing the physical requirements of temple service — for example, if he could not handle the temple vessels or utensils, move with ease about the massive



Outer Altar of Burnt Offerings, nor see clearly. Others were physical defects that could detract from the purity and sanctity of the temple — if the animal sacrifices to be offered were to be without blemish, then those who ministered the sacrifices should also be without blemish. Indeed, the Lord said that such a man should not “come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them” (Leviticus 21:23).

The amount of scrutiny Zacharias endured of his personal body depended on which Jewish party was in ascendancy in the Sanhedrin when he appeared. If the high priest were a Sadducee and his party in the majority on that day, the examination might be cursory, but if the high priest were a Pharisee and his party dominated, it could be embarrassingly thorough. The Sadducees accepted only the Torah or the written law (the five books of Moses) as authoritative and rejected any teachings outside the sacred canon, while the Pharisees accepted both the Torah and the traditional teachings or oral law as binding. The oral law consisted of interpretations of the Torah that were passed from generation to generation among the Pharisaical rabbis and that was accordingly known as the Oral Torah.<sup>26</sup> Over time, these oral teachings became a formidable compilation of expansive rules and regulations that far surpassed in complexity those in the written law. By Zacharias’s time, the Pharisaical list of permanent disqualifying blemishes had grown from the dozen or so in the Torah to 140 permanent and 22 temporary situations.<sup>27</sup>

A Sadducean examination would have probably included a look at Zacharias’s eyes, nose, hands, feet, and back, and after brief inquiry about his general well-being, he would have passed.<sup>28</sup> If the Pharisees conducted the examination, a myriad of “blemishes” could have disqualified Zacharias. These included such physical “defects” as a pointed skull, a bald head, a humped back, no eyelashes, only one eye, a drooping eye, a squinted eye, eyes of two different colors, crossed eyes, too long or short a nose, a large upper lip, missing teeth, a protruding belly, left-handedness, missing fingers or toes, six fingers or toes, knocked-knees, a club foot, a withered arm or hand, pockmarked skin, and so on.<sup>29</sup> Some “defects” even necessitated an examination of his private parts. Even if the blemish was hidden by clothing, it was still considered serious enough to bar the candidate. These blemishes were sufficient for a permanent disqualification for the priesthood and temple service. There were also temporary situations such as a marriage to a divorced woman or slave,

ownership of an inn, or employment in a dishonest trade. A man could rectify these and appear before the Sanhedrin again for consideration.<sup>30</sup>

If a man's genealogy was acceptable, but he was determined to be "blemished" in some way, he was still a priest by right of birth, and the Sanhedrin could not nullify his inheritance nor support from the temple, but he was afforded a lesser status. He could not don the priestly vestments and enter the temple's sacred precinct, the Priests' Courtyard, to participate in the sacred rituals. He could, however, perform other necessary but menial functions, such as sorting out the wormy wood from that deemed fit for use on the temple's altars. He also had the right to attend the feasts made up of part of certain parts of sacrifices with all the other priests of his course.<sup>31</sup>

If on a given day all the candidates passed this rigorous two-part test, the members of Sanhedrin were especially overjoyed. This suggests that many did not pass and that it was not common for all candidates to qualify on any given day. If all passed, the Sanhedrin would "make [it] a day of celebration" and exclaim in unity, "Blessed is the Omnipresent, blessed is he, that a cause for invalidation has not been found in the seed of Aaron. Blessed is he who chose Aaron and his sons to serve before the Lord in the house of the Holy of Holies."<sup>32</sup>

Zacharias obviously passed all these requirements and was deemed fully qualified for service in the temple as a priest. At this point Latter-day Saints might expect that the high priest or another appointed priest would have placed his hands on Zacharias's head and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood on him. However, this was not the procedure. Aaron's male descendants were viewed as holding the priesthood as their inalienable birthright, but they just had to prove their legitimacy for performing the temple rituals. They received this authorization by an investiture, not an ordination.<sup>33</sup> This investiture consisted of having their names officially recorded and then being escorted immediately into the Temple Courtyard.<sup>34</sup> After the candidates immersed themselves in a pool in a room beneath the Hall of the Flame, they were dressed in the temple vestments and began their training on that very day. Zacharias's first act as a priest would have been to make the initiation offering, which was required by all new priests on the day of their investiture (see *Leviticus* 6:19–23).<sup>35</sup> Upon returning home, Zacharias would invite his family and friends to join in a celebration in which he would give thanks to the Lord that he had been found eligible for service in the Lord's house.<sup>36</sup>

### Entering the Temple Courtyard

Let's now follow Zacharias on that portentous day when he made his way to the temple with his companions of the Abia course from the hill country of Judea to Jerusalem. He had undoubtedly made this trip many times over the years and he probably felt this time would be similar to the others. According to LDS custom, it was in the winter, and the weather may have been cold, but this did not deter him, even though the priests were lightly dressed and went barefoot on the cold marble floor of the temple courtyard during their service.<sup>37</sup> The priest's principle responsibility during the day was to conduct the sacrifices of two unblemished lambs, which were required to be offered continually under the law of Moses:

Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. (Exodus 29:38–42)<sup>38</sup>

This sacrifice was called the *tamid*, a Hebrew word that means “standing,” “continual,” or “daily.” Clearly, the first *tamid* commenced the daily ministrations in the temple; the second ended the day's service. The *tamid* played the central role in Zacharias's experience in the temple. In fact, his vision of Gabriel could have occurred during any *tamid* that week when his course ministered in the temple — on the Sabbath afternoon when Zacharias arrived, during any days of that week, or on the following Sabbath morning when his course finished its weekly service. Luke did not record during which *tamid* of the possible 14 during the week the event occurred. For the purpose of this paper, we'll assume a morning *tamid* during the week as the most instructive.

On the appointed day, Zacharias with the rest of the priests of his daily course arrived at the temple mount in the late afternoon, probably before the commencement of the evening *tamid*. Zacharias went to the

Chamber of Pinchas the Clothier, where he received his vestments, but he did not put them on at that time.<sup>39</sup> Instead, he made his way to the northwest corner of the Temple Courtyard to the Hall of the Flame. This was a large domed building that served a number of purposes, including the priests' dormitory.<sup>40</sup> Here, after an evening meal, he spent the night sleeping on the floor, or more likely on raised sections reserved for older men, his temple vestments folded neatly in a bundle beside his head.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Morning *Tamid***

Each morning during the week the temple services began with the *tamid*. Because the number of priests in the daily courses always exceeded the number required for administering the ritual, each *avodah* (assignment or service) was assigned during one of four lotteries. These lotteries were conducted to determine which of the priests would fulfill the various responsibilities required for the two daily sacrifices. The lotteries allowed each priest an equal opportunity to participate in the day's temple services. The Supervisor of Lots conducted the lotteries. This man, whose name may have been Mattiah ben Samuel,<sup>42</sup> was a member of the priestly hierarchy who were permanently attached to the temple. He was a man of considerable influence, sitting on the Sanhedrin, and was a subordinate priest in authority to the deputy. His responsibility was to conduct the four daily lotteries, "for only in this way could the continuity be maintained in the performance of the [temple] cultus by the regular changing weekly courses."<sup>43</sup>

### **The First Lottery**

The first lottery was held well before dawn. Of course, there is no way of knowing if Zacharias participated in this lottery. Being one of the older priests, he may have deferred to the younger priests so that he could have had a little more rest before starting the day's strenuous activities. Let us presume, however, that he chose to participate. He would have arisen with the other priests and made his way to a winding staircase in the northwest corner of the Hall of the Flame, where he descended the stairs into a subterranean room. There he removed his clothing and immersed himself in a pool of fresh, standing water called a *mikveh*, which ritually cleansed him for the day's services.<sup>44</sup> After drying himself by a fire, he put on his temple vestments and went back upstairs to the dormitory, carrying his ordinary clothes in a bundle that he placed on the floor to be picked up and taken back to the Chamber of Pinchas.

Now he waited patiently with the other early risers for the arrival of the Supervisor of Lots.<sup>45</sup> The priests who waited spoke only in subdued tones so as not to disturb the other priests still sleeping in the hall. Since the Supervisor of Lots came at an unspecified time each morning, the priests of the first lottery had to arise early enough to be sure they were prepared for his arrival.<sup>46</sup> Eventually, the supervisor knocked at a small door — not the large doors that opened directly into the courtyard, but a small door built into the larger doors.<sup>47</sup> When one of the priests opened the small door, the supervisor stepped into the room and announced in a loud voice, “Whoever has immersed should come and participate in the lottery.”<sup>48</sup> His words commenced the temple services for the day.

This and each of the subsequent three lotteries were carried out in the same fashion. The Supervisor of Lots stood in the center, and the priests stood in a circle around him. The supervisor indicated one priest, who removed his cap. This priest would select a number that far exceeded the number of priests present. Each of the priests would raise his right hand over his head, where it could be easily seen, and extend either one or two fingers. The supervisor counted their fingers, because it was forbidden to count people in the temple precincts. Slowly the supervisor counted the fingers until he reached the man who matched the number selected by the bareheaded priest, because “whoever won, won.” There was no appeal.<sup>49</sup> That priest had won the privilege of beginning a process of clearing the outer altar of its ashes for the coming day.<sup>50</sup> If on this particular day Zacharias was in the group of priests for the first lottery, he was not selected.

Zacharias and the other priests filed into the courtyard through the small door, and the supervisor divided them into two groups. Since it was still dark and there were no lights in the Temple Courtyard, each group received a torch. They separated, one group going in one direction and the other going in the opposite. The two groups walked around the Temple Courtyard through its portico,<sup>51</sup> inspecting the temple’s exterior by the torch light. Upon meeting on the east side of the massive Outer Altar of Burnt Offering, opposite the Chamber of Bakers, they greeted each other with the question, “Is it well?” They all responded, “It is well,”<sup>52</sup> indicating all was in readiness for the day. The Supervisor of Lots directed a few of the priests to go to the Chamber of the Bakers and to begin to prepare the *chavitin*, or high priest meal offering.<sup>53</sup>

After the selected priest removed a shovel full of ashes from the previous day’s sacrifices, some of the other priests rushed to help clear the ashes from the altar; others began to carry preselected logs of wood

from the Wood Room to build the altar's three pyres.<sup>54</sup> As this was being done, the priests who had not taken part in the first lottery began to assemble in the Chamber of Hewn Stones to participate in the second lottery — until all members of the daily course were present.<sup>55</sup>

### The Second Lottery

The second lottery, conducted just like the first, determined the order of sacrifice — those who would participate in the sacrifice of the lamb and the specific ritual functions that took place afterward. Thirteen priests were selected in this lottery, but there was only one actually selected by lot, for “whoever won, won.”<sup>56</sup> The first priest selected was the one who would catch the blood of the sacrificial lamb in a cup and throw the blood on the Outer Altar.<sup>57</sup> The other twelve priests were those who conducted additional parts of the service.

The first priest to the right of the one who won the lottery would actually yield the knife, sacrificing and butchering the lamb. The next six priests to the right would wash and carry the butchered portions of the lamb on large silver platters partway up the ramp of the Outer Altar, where they would salt the pieces of lamb. The next two priests would remove the ashes from the Inner Altar of incense and attend to the wicks on the menorah in the Holy Room in the temple.<sup>58</sup> The final three priests would carry the following vessels partway up the Outer Altar's ramp: a pot, a plate, and a chalice, containing the fine flour for the meal offering; the high priest's *chavitin* or “pancake” offering; and the wine libation respectively.<sup>59</sup>

Again, Zacharias would have stood in the circle of priests. It is also likely that in the past he had fulfilled many of the assignments of the second lottery during his lengthy service as a priest in the temple. He was likely very experienced in catching and throwing the blood, using the sacrificial knife, carrying the butchered parts of the lamb partway up the ramp, making the various offerings and libation, and attending to either the menorah or Inner Altar that stood in the Holy Room. However, on this day he was not selected for any of them.

Although not selected to fulfill any of these responsibilities, there was still much Zacharias could do while waiting for the next two lotteries. He could have helped to carry logs to the altar and helped prepare the various pyres for use. He could have helped attend to any of the pyres on the Outer Altar. Since only the priests could enter the Temple Courtyard, they were required to keep it clean, and Zacharias could have spent this time sweeping and cleaning the various rooms of the temple or buildings

around the Temple Courtyard. It is also possible that as an experienced priest, he could have been asked to mentor a new priest who might have been selected in the lottery and who was not totally familiar with his responsibility. This was the method by which the priests were trained — they were instructed by an experienced priest until they gained an understanding and knowledge of the specific service. This was critical because if any priest made a critical mistake, it could invalidate his service.

It is unnecessary in this paper to describe in detail the functions of these thirteen priests as they carried out their assigned responsibilities of the second lottery. It is sufficient to note that during this time the lamb was sacrificed and butchered; its blood was splashed on the four corners of the Outer Altar; and the various parts of the butchered lamb were washed, cleaned, and placed on silver platters that were carried by the assigned priests partway up the ramp leading to the Outer Altar. Here the various parts were salted using a large pile of pure salt on the ramp. While this was going on, the two priests who were assigned to clean and prepare the menorah and the Inner Altar of Incense also performed their responsibilities, leaving behind the vessels they used in the Holy Room. The three priests also prepared the two meal offerings and wine libation and brought them in their vessels partway up the ramp of the altar at the appointed time. All of these duties were performed as the sun came up and were only accomplished well into the morning hours.<sup>60</sup>

### **The Third and Fourth Lotteries**

Upon the completion of the responsibilities of the first and second lotteries, the ritual changed from sacrificial to liturgical, as all of the priests of the daily course again gathered in the Hall of Hewn Stones for the recitation of morning prayers.<sup>61</sup> Upon the completion of the prayers, the sacrificial ritual recommenced when the Supervisor of Lots called out, “Newcomers only! Whoever has never once offered the incense, let him come and draw lots.”<sup>62</sup> This indicated that only those priests who had not been chosen in any of the previous third lotteries could participate, regardless of age. Apparently, the other priests who had not been selected in the first two lotteries stood aside and observed the proceedings, because there was yet another lottery that followed immediately in which all could participate.

The third lottery was the day’s most significant lottery. It was to select the priest who would enter the Holy Room and burn incense on the Inner Altar. The priests viewed this as “the most honourable service

in the daily ministry,<sup>63</sup> which bestowed upon the priest special blessings. Because of this, all of the priests of the daily course had to have this opportunity before any other priests who had previously served had the opportunity to participate again in the lottery. This meant that this was essentially a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.<sup>64</sup> It is even possible that a priest could serve his entire life and never be selected.

Since Zacharias was an elderly man at this time, it is likely that he had stood for the third lottery scores of times but had never been selected. Each time he was not selected he would likely have been deeply disappointed. Indeed, all the priests in the third lottery stood there with great expectation that they would be selected, and not being chosen was probably a tremendous letdown.

When Zacharias won the lottery, he turned to the priest to his right and said, “Be privileged with me, with respect to performing the shovel service.”<sup>65</sup> This priest would prepare the Inner Altar for burning of the incense. Zacharias also had the pleasure of selecting another priest to assist him in his service.<sup>66</sup> If he followed custom, he would have chosen a relative or a close personal friend from among the priests — perhaps even one who had previously won the third lottery, so he could answer any questions Zacharias may have had, since no one was allowed to observe this service.

The fourth and final lottery of the morning, *tamid*, was designed to select the priest who would toss the butchered lamb on the pyre. He received the butchered portions from the second lottery priests, who completed their service by carrying them partway up the ramp, so that he could throw them onto the Outer Altar’s pyre for burnt offerings.<sup>67</sup> The High Priest, if he so desired, could also claim the privilege of the fourth for himself, as well as any of the services of the *tamid*.<sup>68</sup>

After the 18 priests had been chosen by the day’s four lotteries, those who had not been chosen returned to the Chamber of Pinchas the Clothier, turned in their vestments, and dressed in their ordinary clothing.<sup>69</sup> These priests probably remained on the Temple Mount to perform other nonceremonial duties during the rest of the day.<sup>70</sup> It appears that there may have been a permanent temple priestly cadre, who performed the public sacrifices after the *tamid*.<sup>71</sup> If during the day priests of the daily course desired to participate in the afternoon’s fourth lottery<sup>72</sup> or to participate in a sacrifice or offering by an individual, they returned to the Temple Courtyard, received their vestments, and washed and clothed themselves before conducting the service.<sup>73</sup> Almost six months would pass before they would have the opportunity again to



officiate in the *tamid*, if a pilgrim festival did not intervene during this interlude.

### **Zacharias Burns Incense on the Inner Altar**

Let us now follow Zacharias more closely as he fulfilled the responsibilities of the third lottery. Upon his selection to officiate at the golden Inner Altar, Zacharias “would start to gather and prepare all that [was] necessary to perform the incense service.”<sup>74</sup> He first washed his hands and feet at the laver.<sup>75</sup> He performed this sanctification “by placing the right hand on the right foot and the left hand on the left foot and washing them. [He bent] over in this position, [turned] on one of the Laver’s faucets, and [sanctified] both hands and feet simultaneously.”<sup>76</sup>

Zacharias then made his way to a large silver table near the ramp of the Outer Altar, upon which the 93 vessels for the day’s service had been arranged earlier that morning.<sup>77</sup> The vessel holding the incense had been previously prepared in the Hall of Avtinah by members of that family and placed on the table.<sup>78</sup> Zacharias picked up the gold, pot-shaped incense container with a lid. Inside it rested a large golden scoop that held three *kavs* (about 5.74 liters) of the incense, filled to overflowing. The gold container had two handles on opposite sides with which Zacharias carried it, taking care not to spill any of the incense when walking across the courtyard toward the temple.<sup>79</sup>

While Zacharias was retrieving the incense, the priest who had been selected in the third lottery to handle the coals walked up the ramp to the southwest corner of the Outer Altar and, using a silver shovel, pushed aside the ash from the pyre of incense and scooped up four *kavs* of glowing coals. He descended the ramp and, with the help of another priest, transferred the coals into a gold shovel that held only three *kavs*. The coals that spilled on the ground were swept into a small stream of water that ran in a channel through the Temple Courtyard from the Water Gate.<sup>80</sup> The silver shovel was used for two reasons. One was to protect the gold shovel from “being abraded from being used to scoop up the burning coals”; the other was because it was “more respectful to serve God with an overflowing vessel.”<sup>81</sup>

Zacharias and the priest with the golden shovel of incense joined the four other priests for the incense offering. These men approached the temple in great solemnity. At the forefront of the procession were the two priests from the second lottery who had cleaned the ashes from the Inner Altar of Incense and attended to the wicks of the menorah. Zacharias and the two companions who would assist him followed behind.<sup>82</sup>

Before they ascended the twelve steps leading to the temple's vestibule — in the relatively narrow space between the temple's steps and the Outer Altar — one of the priests picked up the *magrepha* and threw it to the ground.<sup>83</sup> The exact nature and design of this curious temple utensil is not known. Some commentators feel that it was similar to the rake used to clear the ashes from the Inner Altar, while others feel that it may have been some type of shovel or unique musical device created for this very use.<sup>84</sup> In any case, when it hit the stone floor of the Courtyard, it produced a loud noise that reverberated throughout the Temple Mount.<sup>85</sup> This served as a signal that Zacharias and his companions were about to enter the temple in order to burn the incense, the high point of the morning *tamid*. All the priests came running toward the Temple Courtyard to be present for the occasion, and the Levites began to retrieve their instruments for the musical offering that would take place as part of the anticipated wine libation. The director of the community (*rosh hama'adad*) began to gather the representatives of Israel (*maamad*) to the Court of Israel to observe the proceedings.<sup>86</sup>

Zacharias and his fellow priests ascended the steps to the vestibule. Here they met the Director of the Daily Course, standing by the heavy drapery that filled the doorway into the temple.<sup>87</sup> He was responsible to see that everything proceeded correctly. The two priests in front reentered the Holy Room one at a time. The first to enter was the priest who had earlier cleaned the ashes from Inner Altar. He retrieved the basket holding the ashes, prostrated himself<sup>88</sup> because he had completed his day's service, backed through the heavy draperies because no one ever turned his back to the temple veil, and stood on the temple steps. The second priest was the one who tended to the wicks of the menorah. He entered and, after making sure all seven lamps were burning brightly, picked up the jug of olive oil, prostrated himself, backed through draperies, and stood on the steps of the temple.<sup>89</sup>

All was now in readiness for the actual incense-burning rite, which would be conducted by Zacharias and the other two priests. After the second priest had exited, the priest who carried the coals in the golden shovel entered the Holy Room and "heaped the embers onto the altar, using the edge of the shovel to spread them out; then he prostrated himself and exited, taking his place with the other two priests on the steps."<sup>90</sup> His service prepared the Inner Altar for Zacharias to use. As these events occurred, a sense of great solemnity fell upon the priests in the Temple Courtyard and those in the Court of Israel. Silence reigned

as they watched Zacharias and his friend pass through the draperies into the temple's Holy Room.

Inside the two men approached the Inner Altar with its heap of glowing coals. Zacharias, taking the spoon filled with incense from the pot, handed the pot to his friend, who placed it on the floor. Zacharias next handed the spoon to his friend, who carefully poured the incense from it into Zacharias's cupped hands, making sure that none of it spilled in the process. The friend carefully poured any incense left in the pot on the incense in Zacharias's hands. This procedure was necessary because any priest, including Zacharias, "was by definition new to his job and lacked this training, [so] he needed another person to pour it into his hands ... [and] for this reason the friend or relative would enter with the *Kohen* [priest], to assist him by pouring the incense from the spoon into his cupped hands."<sup>91</sup> After this, Zacharias's assistant, keeping the scoop, prostrated himself and exited through the draperies, joining the other priests on the steps.<sup>92</sup>

One can only speculate on Zacharias's state of mind as he stared at the incense in his hands and at the golden altar before him. There likely would have been many emotions crowding his mind. There was probably joy and excitement, knowing that this was the only time he would ever officiate at the Inner Altar. There would undoubtedly have been some natural nervousness, because every priest during this, his first and only time, needed to make sure he performed the ordinance of properly pouring the incense onto the altar. He would have been conscious of the warning of the Director of the Daily Course, who told him as he passed through the draperies, "Take care not to start in front of you or you'll get scorched!"<sup>93</sup> Finally, he would also have been acutely aware of the solemnity of occasion as he stood in the overwhelming silence of the temple's Holy Room.

Then he heard the commanding voice of the Director through the drapery loudly state, "'Do it now!'"<sup>94</sup> Upon hearing these words, all of the priests, even those on the steps, now "moved away," retreating beyond the Outer Altar, because no priest could stand "between the Altar and the Antechamber (or any closer) during the time that the incense was being offered"<sup>95</sup> While Zacharias was in the temple burning the incense, "the whole multitude of the people [in the Priests' Courtyard and Court of Israel] were praying without at the time of incense" (Luke 1:10), have prostrated themselves in the direction of the temple.<sup>96</sup>

In the Holy Room, Zacharias reached across the coals to the far side of the altar and let the incense fall through his hands as he drew

them slowly back toward himself, the coals igniting the incense and its aromatic smoke rising from the smoldering mixture and filling the room. Then suddenly everything changed! Before him, Zacharias saw a personage in the murky smoke, even “an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense” (Luke 1:11). The singularity of offering the incense at the Inner Altar must have instantly vanished from his mind. Luke recorded the rest of the incident in the opening chapter of his gospel (see Luke 1:12–20).

It was not uncommon for the priests to tarry briefly after offering the incense to say a silent, personal prayer of thanksgiving before leaving, although this was not a requirement of the service. But Zacharias’s lingering in the Holy Room must have surpassed the typical time, and the priests prostrated on the ground outside “marvelled that he tarried so long in the Temple” (Luke 1:21). They probably more than marveled; they likely became concerned.

It must have been with a great sense of relief to those waiting when Zacharias parted the draperies and stepped clear carrying the empty incense vessel, but something was amiss in his demeanor. Zacharias was gesticulating, “for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless” (Luke 1:22). Although Luke wrote that, because of Zacharias’s muteness, the priests “perceived that he had seen a vision in the Temple” (Luke 1:22), this was probably not their initial reaction, because in the next part of the *tamid* Zacharias was supposed to take a leading role, in which he had to speak!

Some may picture the other priests hurriedly gathering around Zacharias in a state of possible confusion, trying to find out why he was silent and gesturing. However, this was highly unlikely because of the stringent requirement to carry the *tamid* forward without interruption, each priest carefully observing his part of the ritual, lest he invalidate his service through a misstep.

It is more likely that upon exiting the Holy Room, Zacharias would have been joined on the porch not only by the Director of the Daily Course, but also by the High Priest, the Deputy, and Director of the Weekly Course. These three priests would have walked up the steps after Zacharias had offered incense, in order to be ready for the next part of the *tamid*.<sup>97</sup> They would have found Zacharias’s condition perplexing and challenging.

Zacharias’s unexpected condition was not an inconsequential matter, and it likely would have been discussed by these four presiding priests. The question they likely asked was, did Zacharias’s muteness

disqualify his service at the Inner Altar, and should he be allowed to continue? Deafness and muteness were considered serious blemishes that prevented a man from even becoming a priest.<sup>98</sup> Any man with a blemish who knowingly officiated in the temple could be severely punished: “If a priest with a blemish [officiated], Rabbi said: He is liable to death; the Sages maintain: He is merely prohibited [from further service].”<sup>99</sup>

Since Zacharias had already offered the incense before he was struck mute, his condition probably would not have invalidated that part of his service at the Inner Altar — but could he continue or was he prohibited? Of course, Luke’s account focused on Gabriel’s visitation, so it is silent about the rest, and we do not know whether Zacharias was allowed to continue. According to some sources, he was yet to play an additional public role in *tamid*. During the pronouncement of the priestly blessing on the temple steps, “the incensing priest, repeated in audible voice, followed by the others, the ‘priestly blessing.’”<sup>100</sup> The “incensing priest” who led the other priests in this blessing would have been Zacharias, but he could not do it.

During the next part of the *tamid*, the second lottery priests took the butchered portions of the lamb from the ramp to the fourth lottery priest, who threw them on the burnt offering pyre. This would have given the High Priest and his small retinue a brief respite to make their decision before the priestly blessing. Of course, we cannot know their decision, but since the Mishnah does not specifically *require* the incensing priest to lead in the priestly blessing, the High Priest could have taken into consideration the special circumstances of Zacharias’s predicament. There was no precedent in the history of the second temple of an angel appearing to any priest in the Holy Room.<sup>101</sup> He could have simply chosen another priest instead of Zacharias, who could have participated with the other priests, simply mouthing the words while the others spoke aloud.

If the High Priest prohibited his continued service, Zacharias would have had to leave the Temple Courtyard immediately. Such an unprecedented action would have been viewed as especially disgraceful and humiliating, especially for a priest who had just burnt the incense on the Inner Altar. Hopefully, this did not occur. Regardless of the decision, of course, Zacharias would not be permitted to participate in any temple services until his voice returned at John’s naming (Luke 1:64).

### The Conclusion of the *Tamid*

For thoroughness in recounting the *tamid*, let us follow it to its conclusion, as if Zacharais had been allowed to finish his service. As noted above, at the conclusion of the burning of the incense, the High Priest, the Deputy, and two Directors of the Abia Course made their way to the temple's vestibule. After their decision, Zacharias took his place on the temple steps with the other priests. These priests waited while the second lottery priests completed carrying the butchered portions of the lamb up the ramp to the fourth lottery priest, who tossed them promiscuously on the Outer Altar's pyre of burnt offerings, after which he rearranged them properly before leaving.<sup>102</sup> He was followed by the two second lottery priests, who had previously carried the grain offering utensils to the ramp. They retrieved them and placed the grain offering — flour mixed with oil and salt — and the High Priest's *chivitin* offering of twelve pancakes, broken into halves, on the same pyre.<sup>103</sup> After this, these priests joined the others on the temple steps.

With all the priests of the lotteries on the steps, the High Priest, accompanied by the Deputy and the two Abia course Directors, entered the Holy Room.<sup>104</sup> Once the High Priest was properly positioned in front of the veil, the three priests exited, leaving the High Priest alone. After prostrating himself,<sup>105</sup> he also exited the Holy Room; the Deputy parted the draperies when he heard the approaching tinkling of the bells dangling from the hem of the High Priest's robe.<sup>106</sup> After the High Priest had exited, it was now the turn of the priests of the course of Abia on the temple steps. The five priests holding the temple vessels and utensils, including Zacharias, reverently placed them on the steps. All of the priests of the course walked up the steps, one by one, and entered the Holy Room, where they prostrated themselves and returned to their places on the steps.<sup>107</sup> This was a sign that they had completed their service.

Once reassembled, the view before the men in the Court of Israel would have been very impressive: the High Priest in his colorful vestments, the Deputy, and the two Directors of the Abia course all standing at the entrance to the temple's vestibule; the five priests with the vessels used in their service at their feet standing below them; and the rest of the priests, many in blood-splattered vestments, standing to their left below them on the steps. The assembled priests were now prepared to chant the priestly blessing, as recorded in Numbers 6:24–26. All the priests raised their hands over their heads in the priestly gesture.<sup>108</sup>

Following the lead of one of the priests, they pronounced the priestly blessing in unison upon the people.<sup>109</sup>

The *tamid* concluded with a joyous, musical celebration. After the priestly blessing, the Deputy made his way to the southwest corner of the Outer Altar, on his way picking up two flags that were among the utensils on the silver table. Two other priests mounted the marble table and stood ready with long, silver trumpets.<sup>110</sup> At least twelve Levite singers stood ready on the platform steps separating the Priests' Court and the Court of Israel with some other of their brotherhood holding musical instruments ready to accompany them.

When the second lottery priest reached the southwest corner and began to pour the wine libation into the receptacle in altar, the Deputy waved his flags. This was a signal for the two priests to give a long, steady blast followed by a series of staccato blasts from their horns. At the same time the director of music, Ben Ezra, crashed a large pair of symbols. This was a signal for the Levite musicians and singers to start chanting the day's psalm. Each day they sang a different psalm divided into three stanzas, with the trumpeters giving three horn blasts between each stanza.<sup>111</sup> At each sounding of the trumpets those assembled on the Temple Mount prostrated themselves toward the temple. As the sound of the trumpets faded away at the final stanza, the morning *tamid* ended. The priests were released from their morning service, and it was probably now that they swarmed around Zacharias and learned of his vision of Gabriel in the Holy Room.

### Summary

This paper has briefly described the episodes leading up to Zacharias burning incense on the Inner Altar in the second temple. I have covered the probable events of Zacharias's temple service from his investiture as a priest to his vision of Gabriel when he burned the incense in the Holy Room. I have shown that the act of burning incense by Zacharias was a once-in-a-lifetime event — one that under even normal circumstances Zacharias would have remembered and cherished throughout the rest of his life. But on this extraordinary occasion in Zacharias's life, there came an even more astounding event — the vision of Gabriel and his singular message to the elderly priest and his wife, Elizabeth, about their son, John. It is truly an extraordinary story, yet so briefly recounted by Luke, who simply focused on Gabriel's visitation and important message. It becomes even more memorable when one comes to see the "rest of the story."

## Notes

1. See: Thomas S. Monson, “Preparing the Way,” *Ensign* (Feb. 2002), 2–5; Merrill J. Bateman, “A Season for Angels,” *Ensign* (Dec. 2007), 10–15.
2. Joseph Smith once stated that Zacharias’s father was at one time “the officiating high priest at the Temple” (Joseph Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963], 261). If Zacharias was in his 50s or 60s when he burned incense, that means he would have been born during the time that John Hyrcanus II was the high priest (63–40 BCE). The lists of high priests from the Hasmonean dynasty (153–136 BCE) and the Herodian/Roman period (36 bce–70 ce) is generally well attested, and identifying any of them as Zacharias’s father is very problematic. Merrill J. Bateman mistakenly wrote that when Zacharias “entered the Holy of Holies in the temple, he saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar” (Bateman, “A Season of Angels,” 13). Zacharias entered the Holy Room that stood before the Holy of Holies — only the high priest could enter the latter room, which had no altar.
3. These chief priests also included some Levites (see 1 Chronicles 9:34; Nehemiah 12:22–24). For an extended treatment on the “chief priests and Levites,” their history and duties, see Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into the Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 148–181.
4. 1 QM 2:1 in Theodore H. Gaster, ed., *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, Third ed. revised (Garden City: NY: Anchor Books, 1976), 401. The “captain of the temple” and the “deputy” were the same priest.
5. M. Shekalim 5:1, which gives the names and titles of the fifteen men who occupied these offices. They were divided into two groups, reflecting their responsibilities — supervisors (*‘ammarklin*) and treasurers (*gizbarim*). Seven of them were supervisors, who oversaw the temple’s sacred functions, and the other eight were treasurers, who were responsible for the business functions of the temple. Both priests and Levites made up this group of men. The seven supervisors were Supervisor of Lots, Supervisor of Cisterns, The Herald, Supervisor of Shutting Gates, Supervisor of Knouts, Supervisor of Music, and Director of Levite Singers. The eight treasurers were Treasurer of Seals, Treasurer of Drink Offerings, Treasurer of Bird Offerings,



- Temple Physician, Preparer of Show Bread, Manufacturer of Incense, Superintendent of Curtains, and Superintendent of Vestments.
6. The *segan* is referred to in a number of ways: Captain of the Temple, Director of the Priests, Vicar, or Deputy. The importance of the office can be found in the Talmud: “The High Priest would not be elected high priest if he had not first been captain of the temple” (B. Yoma 3:8, as quoted in Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 162). Jeremias noted, “The captain of the temple, who was responsible for the conduct of worship and external arrangements in the temple, was the most important priest immediately below the high priest, and was the head of the chief priests” (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 180). He further noted that he “had permanent oversight of the cultus [temple services]” (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 163).
  7. In Joachim Jeremias’s excellent study of Jerusalem during New Testament times, he wrote of the high priest’s position: “when there was no king, [he] was the most eminent member of the nation” (*Jerusalem*, 148). He then observed, “The captain of the temple ... was the most important priest immediate below the high priest, and was the head of the chief priests” (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 180).
  8. The book of Acts also records that Barnabas, a convert to Christianity, was a righteous Levite (Acts 4:36).
  9. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 180–181. Chief among the priests’ complaints against the temple hierarchy was “forcibly appropriated hides of the sacrifices, which were distributed each evening among the priests of the daily course on duty” (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 180). These hides were a major source of the livelihood and support of the priests.
  10. Also spelled Abiah (see 1 Samuel 8:2; 1 Chronicles 2:24, 6:8, 7:8) or Abijah (see 1 Chronicles 24:10; 2 Chronicles 1:22, 12:16; 13:1, 17, 20, 21, 22; Nehemiah 10:7) in the King James Old Testament. Just because Zacharias was a member of the course of Abia, it does not necessarily indicate that he was a descendant of Abijah, because King David simply assigned priests to the 24 courses he created regardless of their lineage.
  11. These 24 courses were established by King David (see 1 Chronicles 24:3–19); Abiah was the eighth of the 24 courses (vs. 10). The 24 courses were each assigned to serve with one of the priestly courses (Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 208).
  12. Nesanel Kasnet, et al., “Tractate Tamid” in *The Mishnah: A New Translation with a Commentary by Yad Avraham, Anthologized from Talmudic Sources and Classic Commentators*, 44 vols. (Brooklyn,

- NY: Mesorah Publications, 1984-2011), Kodashim, 4; Tamid, 119. Hereafter cited as Kasnet, “Tamid.” Alfred Edersheim described how the daily courses functioned according to their number in the weekly course: “The service of the week was subdivided among the various families which constituted a ‘course’; so that if it consisted of five ‘houses of fathers,’ three served each one day, and two each two days; if of six families, five served each one day, and one two days; if of eight families, six served each one day, and the other two in conjunction on one day; or, lastly, if of nine families, five served each one day, and the other four took it two in conjunction for two days” (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple — Its Ministry and Services*, updated ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1988), 62).
13. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 199–200. There were 9,600 Levites with 400 per course (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 204).
  14. According to Edersheim, about half of the priests of the weekly courses lived in Jerusalem’s densely populated quarter known as Ophel. The rest of the priests resided throughout the land, with about half of them living in or around Jericho (Edersheim, *The Temple*, 56).
  15. There were 24 such gifts, mostly food, that helped support the priests: ten were received or eaten within the temple precincts; four were received or eaten within the walls of Jerusalem; and ten were received or eaten outside Jerusalem (see Deuteronomy 18:3–4). See Edersheim, *The Temple*, 73–74, where he lists generally each of the 24 gifts.
  16. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 11–120. Edersheim posits that Luke 1:39 may actually refer to the “the city of Jutta” (Joshua 21:16), instead of to “a city of Juda.”
  17. The general instructions for conferring the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood are outlined in *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops, 2010* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 146–147.
  18. William Carpenter, *A Popular Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures* (London: Wightman and Crump, 1926), 521.
  19. If Zacharias was in his 50s or 60s when he burned incense in the temple, that would mean in all probability that he became a priest during the tumultuous period from 40 to 30 BCE, when the high priest offices were transferred from the Hasmonean rule to those appointed by Herod the Great. (See “High Priest,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, nn.)
  20. The Chamber of Hewn Stones was the largest structure on the northern side of the Temple Courtyard and was constructed entirely

of especially dressed square stones, probably limestone. The building was divided between a sacred portion and a non-sacred portion. A doorway into the non-sacred portion opened from the Temple Mount and there was also a doorway that opened into the Temple Courtyard, where the temple stood. Wooden “beams” divided the space in the large hall between the two portions. When the Sanhedrin was in session, the members sat on benches or chairs in the non-sacred portion, since only kings of Davidic descent were allowed to sit while in sacred space, based on the occasion when David “sat before the Lord” in the Tabernacle (see 2 Samuel 7:18) — not even priests were allowed to sit. When Zacharias was examined by the Sanhedrin, he would have also stood before them in the non-sacred portion. (See Yoan Elan, “Tractate Middos,” in *The Mishnah: A New Translation with a Commentary Yad Avraham Anthologized from Talmudic Sources and Classic Commentators*, 44 vols. [Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1984–2011], Kodashim, 4; Middos, 166–168). Hereafter cited as Elan, “Middos.”

21. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 66. Rabbi Yoav Elan stated that candidates presented themselves every day (Elan, “Middos,” 168).
22. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 66
23. Jesus spoke about “Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Matthew 23:35). Joseph Smith accepted that Zacharias’s father was Barachias, who was “the officiating high priest at the temple that year [and] was slain by Herod’s order, between the vestibule and the altar” (Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 261). Most commentators, however, feel that Barachias was not Zacharias’s father, but Jesus was making reference to Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, the last recorded martyr in the Old Testament (see 2 Chronicles 24:20–22). The early Codex Sinaiticus does not have Barachias’s name (quire 75, folio 6r), suggesting that Barachias is a later gloss. For a brief discussion of this issue, see, James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1961), 567.
24. A. J. Maas, *A Day in the Temple* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1892), 167–168.
25. M. Tamid 5:4; Elan, “Middos,” 169; Maas, *A Day in the Temple*, 174.
26. After the destruction of the temple in 70 CE and the subsequent dispersal of the Jews, the passage of time raised the possibility that the oral traditions, which dated from the earliest Pharisaic times, would be lost. According to Jewish tradition, Rabbi Judah HaNasi undertook the mission of compiling and writing down these oral

teachings into what became known as the Mishnah, which consists of sixty-three tractates into six divisions. This is fortunate because much of the knowledge of the functioning of the second temple comes from a number of these tractates, especially the ten that make up the Mishnah's fifth division, entitled, *Kodashim*, or Holy Things, which deals with the temple, its physical appearance, and its sacred functions.

27. The list of disqualifications is based on Mishnah Bekhorot, Tractate 6 (Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988], 787-810). This tractate enumerates the blemishes that disqualify animals for sacrifice on the altar. The feeling of the Pharisees was that, if these blemishes prevented an animal for selection as a sacrifice, then the priests officiating at the altar should not suffer from the same or similar physical defects.
28. Maas, *Day in the the Temple*, 168.
29. M. Bekhorot, 7; Maas, *Day in the Temple*, 168-169; Neusner, *The Mishnah*, 800-803.
30. Maas, *Day in the Temple*, 169-170.
31. Elan, "Middos," 169.
32. M. Middot 5:4. (All quotations from the Mishnah are taken from Neusner, *The Mishnah*). Some commentators feel that the phrase "a day of celebration" refers not to the Sanhedrin, but to the man's family, relatives and friends who were invited for joyous and festive party upon his return home after his first service with his course (Elan, "Middos," 169).
33. During the time of the First Temple the High Priest was washed, clothed in his full temple robes, and then he was anointed with especially prepared olive oil, just as Aaron had received from Moses (Leviticus 8:6-9, 12). However by the time of the Second Temple, the High Priest was no longer anointed, because of the loss of the composition of the holy oil. Instead, a week-long investiture and solemn celebration was instituted. Although, Moses also anointed Aaron's sons, some commentators feel that ordinary priests, even during the First Temple period, were only invested in their robes and were not anointed. (Edersheim, *The Temple*, 67).
34. The Temple Courtyard was made up of two sections, the large Priests' Court where the temple stood, and the Court of Israel, on the east end, where men who were not priests would enter. (M. Middos, 2:5-6).

35. Elan, "Middos," 169. See: KJV Leviticus 6:19-21.
36. Elan, "Middos," 169.
37. LDS tradition holds that "October [was] the probable birth month of John the Baptist" (Richard G. Oman, "Exterior Symbolism of the Salt Lake Temple: Reflecting the Faith That Called the Place Into Being," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 36 [1996-97], 47). The normal nine months of gestation would have placed Zacharias's visit to the temple in January or February, the middle of winter. Kenneth W. Doig calculated that John's conception occurred between 8 and 5 BCE. Although, he favored the first week of October 6 BCE for Zacharias' temple service and John's conception, another possible date was during the last week of January 7 BCE, which would place John's birth in late October (and Jesus's birth the first week of April). See: Kenneth W. Doig, *New Testament Chronology*, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), online version: <http://www.doig.net/NTC07.htm>, accessed 20 July 2012).
38. See also Numbers 28:1-8.
39. The priests did not keep their temple robes at their homes as many Latter-day Saints do. Instead, they were kept at the temple, where members of the family of Phineas were responsible for them. There they could be cleaned and recycled when they wore out or became too soiled to be used. The Chamber of Pinchas the Clothier was on the right hand side of the Gate of Nicanor. It contained 96 receptacles in the wall for the priestly vestments. There was one receptacle for each of the four types of vestments, which was labeled with the article of the vestments that it contained. Each of the 24 courses of priesthood had their own receptacles (M. Middos 1:4; M. Tamid 5:3). See; Elan, "Middos," 28; Kasnet, "Tamid," 124-125.
40. M. Middos 1:6-9 describes the Hall of the Flame. It was one of the larger structures in the Temple Courtyard. It was a domed building that stood partially on consecrated ground and partially not. A series of wooden beams indicated the division of the two parts in the building. The priest's dormitory was on the non-sacred portion, where the priests slept on the floor, with ledges around the room reserved for older priests. There were also doors into chambers in the four corners of the building. Two chambers stood on consecrated ground: in the southwest corner was a chamber where the sacrificial lambs were kept and in the southeast corner was a bakery for making the Showbread. The non-sacred ground rooms were: the Hall of Stored Stones in the northeast corner, containing stones from the old

- used during previous times; and in the northwest corner a winding staircase descending into a subterranean room where priests ritually bathed themselves. See also M. Tamid 1:1.
41. There were no beds in the priests dormitory because it was felt that to carry beds into the temple would be unseemly. There is some differences whether the priests slept with the robes under their heads as pillow or beside them. Most favor that their robes were not under their heads (B Tamid 26b).
  42. Name is found in a list of temple officials, dated for a few decades before the destruction of the temple in 70 BCE. See, M. Shekalim 5:1; and Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 170.
  43. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 165.
  44. No priest was allowed to perform any of the temple rituals unless he had first ritually cleansed himself by immersing himself in this pool of water. This was particularly important in the first lottery, “for two reasons: (a) so that the winner of the lottery would be prepared to perform the service immediately; (b) for fear a *Kohen* [priest] who was enthusiastic about the *mitzvah* [fulfilling the commandment] might rush onto the Courtyard upon being chosen, without first immersing himself” (Kasnet, “Middos,” 19).
  45. In the M. Tamid he is called the “appointed one” (1:2). There are several places in M. Tamid where a priest, who takes a prominent role in the supervision of the ritual, is also called by that same appellation. (1:2; 3:1,2; 5:1; 6:3 and 7:1). Some commentators feel that this refers to one individual throughout the ritual — the Supervisor of Lots, who sees that the ritual is properly performed. Others feel that it refers to the Supervisor of Lots on the first occasion and the rest of the times to the Deputy of the Priests, because he is the “appointed one” who substitutes for the High Priest and is responsible for seeing the *tamid* is properly performed. Still others feel that it is the priest who is appointed to supervise that portion of the tamid, and would vary according to the service being performed. (Kasnet, “Tamid,” 19-20). The reconstruction presented in this paper follows the final view.
  46. The Supervisor of Lots came anytime in the early morning, “sometimes he [came] at cockcrow, or near then, earlier or later” (M. Tamid 1:2). Some commentators felt that this could also refer to a priest known as the crier, who was “in charge of awakening his fellow *Kohanim* (priests) for the daily service” (Kasnet, “Middos,” 21). In any case the Supervisor of Lots never came in the middle of the night when the priests were asleep.

47. The large doors of all the buildings around the Temple Courtyard would not be opened before the time of the morning sacrifice, hence the reason that the priests of the first lottery used a small door, not the main doors of the Hall of the Flame, to enter the Courtyard (M. Middos 1:7; M. Tamid 1:2).
48. M. Tamid 1:2.
49. This lottery was held in the Hall of the Flame, because the doors to the Temple Courtyard were not yet open. All subsequent lotteries would be held in the Chamber of Hewn Stone (Kasnet, "Tamid," 22).
50. Initially, this service had not been conducted by a lottery. Earlier every interested priest participated in a foot race up the ramp of the Outer Altar; the first reaching the top won the privilege of clearing the first shovel full of ashes from the pyre of burnt offerings. On one occasion an overly enthusiastic priest pushed another one off the ramp; the fall breaking the priest's leg. This was not an insignificant injury for a priest. Any resulting lameness or limp could have denied him his temple service. After this unfortunate incident, the temple hierarchy decided to make the service a matter of a lottery. See: M. Yoma, 2:1; and Kasnet, "Tamid," 18.
51. There was a colonnade of a series of stone columns enclosing the Temple Courtyard, topped with a roof that ran from the columns to the wall, creating a portico around the entire courtyard (Kasnet, "Middos" 24).
52. M. Tamid 1:3.
53. The Chamber of the Bakers was in the wall separating the Temple Courtyard and the Courtyard of Women. Its doorway stood opposite the great Outer Altar (M. Middos, 1:4). The *chavitin* refers to this meal offering, made of oil and flour and seasoned with frankincense, which was formed into large loaves. They were both baked and fried, resembling pancakes when cooked. Twelve were prepared each day. (Leviticus 6:14-15; Elan, "Middos," 29).
54. There were three pyres on the altar of burnt offering. The largest was the pyre used for the burnt offices, from which the altar received its name. The second was a smaller pyre which provided the hot coals for use on the altar of incense in the temple's Holy Room. The final one was the perpetual fire, an even smaller pyre that was continually attended to day and night, so that its fire never went out. This was necessary so that if the fire of the other two pyres burnt out during the night when the temple was closed, there was still fire available to relight them in the morning.

55. For a description of this service of this lottery, see: M. Tamid, 1:4-2:1-5.
56. There was actually only one winner of the lottery, although 13 services were selected. Nesanel Kasnet explains why, “Although thirteen *Kohanim* [priests] won privileges (the nine who carried sacrificial items to the Altar ramp; plus the ones who slaughtered, threw the blood, cleared the [Inner] Altar, and cleared the Menorah), the Mishnah speaks of a single winner because, in fact, only one lottery was held. The *Kohen* [priest] who won it performed *zerikah* (receiving the blood [in a cup]) and throwing the blood [on the Outer Altar] and the twelve *Kohanim* [priests] next to him took the other services in turn” (“Tamid,” 55-56).
57. Some readers may wonder why throwing the blood was won by lot, while the actual sacrifice of the lamb that necessarily preceded it, was not. Nesal Kasnet writes, “Even though *shechitah* [slaughtering the sacrifice] precedes *zerikah* [throwing the blood] in the day’s service, the lottery winner was assigned the latter task since it was greater than the former: *shechitah* may be carried out by a non-Kohen [non-Priest] whereas *zerikah* must always be performed by a *Kohen*” (Kasnet, “Tamid,” 56).
58. The Second Temple had two large rooms. These were the Holy of Holies (*kodesh kodashim*) and the Holy Room (*heichal*); a veil separated them. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year — on the Day of Atonement (*yom kippur*). The priests who officiated in the *tamid*, only entered the Holy Room. It contained three pieces of furniture: the Menorah on the south side, the Table of Show Bread on the north, and the Inner Altar in the center, facing west towards the veil. The Mishnah Middos contains a detailed description of the Second Temple.
59. M. Tamid, 3:1.
60. For a description of this service, see: M. Tamid, 3:1-9; 4:1-12.
61. They recited the following: A blessing, the Ten Commandments; the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), Deuteronomy 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41. They then blessed the people with three benedictions of eighteen. On the morning *tamid* of the second Sabbath, the final *tamid* of their weekly service, they added a blessing for the outgoing weekly course.
62. M. Tamid 5:2.
63. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 120.



64. "The Talmud expounds on this and states emphatically that in all the hundreds of years that the holy temple stood, no man ever repeated the incense service. This fact in itself translates into an amazing detail: there were so many priests in each family clan that a lottery gathering never once took place (and this scene was replayed every day over many hundreds of years) wherein everyone present had already performed this service!" (Temple Institute, "New Comers Only," A Day in the Holy Temple [[http://www.Templeinstitute.org/day\\_in\\_life/newcomers.htm](http://www.Templeinstitute.org/day_in_life/newcomers.htm)]).
65. This procedure is not recorded in M. Tamid 5:5, but most commentators accept the view of Rabbi Yehudah, who stated, "the priest who has merited the incense service exclaims to the one who stands to his right at the time of the lottery: You have merited along with me, the service of the shovel!" (B Yoma 25b). Others offered the view that the priest who won the third lottery could choose whomever he wished, but the typical practice was to select the priest to his right, so as not to upset those not chosen (Elan, "Tamid," 129). Rabbi Yehuda stated another view, "Maimonides, however, maintains that whoever won the privilege of the removing the ashes from the[outer] altar at dawn, also merited this service of the shovel as well (T'midim, 4:5)." (Temple Institute, "Which Priest Merits the Shovel of Coals?" A Day in the Holy Temple, [http://www.Templeinstitute.org/day\\_in\\_life/merit.htm](http://www.Templeinstitute.org/day_in_life/merit.htm)]).
66. M. Tamid 6:3. This was the only service in the *tamid* that was not selected by a lottery.
67. There is a difference of opinion concerning this lottery. The unnamed rabbi, Tanna Kammas, who traditionally compiled the Mishnah held that six entirely new priests were selected. They carried the sacrificial parts of the lamb up the altar and threw them on the pyre of burnt offerings. Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov disagreed, saying only one priest was selected to throw the sacrificial lamb, and six priests of the second lottery finished their service by carrying the lamb up the ramp, where they gave it to the priest of the fourth lottery, who tossed the parts on the pyre. See: Mishnah 5:2. For this paper I have followed Rabbi Yakov's viewpoint.
68. "The *Kohen Gadol* [High Priest] has the right to choose to offer any sacrifice or select for himself any portion thereof without having to win the privilege in the lottery" (Kasnet, "Tamid," 164).
69. The *tamid* required the services of only eighteen priests out of the probably fifty in the daily course.

70. It appears that those who were chosen in the lotteries in the morning *tamid*, except the third lottery, also performed the same ritual duties in the afternoon *tamid*. The Mishnah records that, if the priest who was selected in the second lottery to attend to the Menorah, “found the two easternmost lamps burning, he would clear the ash of the eastern [lamp], and [would] leave the western [lamp] burning, because from it [the *Kohen*] would kindle the [other lamps of the] Menorah in the evening.” (Tamid 6:1. Emphasis added). This suggests that he ministered in his assigned duty, both in the morning and “towards dusk,” i.e., the afternoon *tamid*. If this priest performed the duties of the second lottery in both *tamid* services, it strongly suggests that all the priests of the morning lottery (except the third) also ministered in the evening *tamid*.

It also appears that those priests who won the morning lotteries also served throughout the rest of the day in the temple, as individuals brought their animals for the various personal sacrifices and other offerings. All priests who ministered in the Temple Courtyard had to wear their priestly attire. All such sacrifices would have had to be completed before the commencement of the evening *tamid*.

71. Tractate Tamid, 5 in the Jewish Virtual Library ([http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0019\\_0\\_19559.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0019_0_19559.html)), printout, p. 67. One commentator observed that “the private offerings brought by Jews during the day were handled by the permanent staff of the Bet Mikdash [temple]: it was only in the Tamid that the ‘irregulars’ participated — and even that under close supervision as we have seen” (Jewish Virtual Library). The exact number of these permanently assigned temple priests — not the seventeen priestly elites — are not known. Their existence can be inferred because of the close supervision of the priests of the various courses, whose knowledge of the temple rituals could have been limited for some of their number, because of their relatively infrequent service during the year. This would especially be the case if a priest won a lot for service he had never done before.
72. If any priest had not been chosen in any of the morning lotteries, he could still choose, and likely did, participate in the afternoon’s third lottery for the privilege of burning incense on the Inner Altar, if he had never won that lottery.
73. Kasnet, “Tamid,” 123.
74. Kasnet, “Tamid,” 126.

75. No priest could perform a service in the Temple Courtyard without first washing his hands and feet, even though he had dipped himself in the pool beneath the Chamber of the Hearth at the beginning of the day (Exodus 30:20-21). He was required to wash his hands and feet at the laver that stood in the Temple Courtyard between the Outer Altar and the temple (Middos, 3:6; M. Shekalim, 6:4; M. Tamid 3:4). In the Second Temple during the Christian era the laver was a large brass vessel that had twelve spigots, which was fashioned by the High Priest Ben Kavin, who had improved on an earlier two-spigot vessel (Kasnet, "Tamid," 28). The Savior alluded to such a practice when he washed the Apostles feet, telling Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10).
76. Kasnet, "Tamid," 31.
77. The number 93 comes from the M. Tamid, 3:4. These silver and gold utensils were kept in the Chamber of Vessels, whose exact place among the buildings of the Temple Courtyard is not given in the Mishnah. There were two tables that stood between the Outer Altar and the Temple: "On the one of the marble they laid out the limbs [of the sacrificial lambs], and on the one of silver [was] the utensils of silver" (M. Shekalim 6:4).
78. The recipe for incense is recorded in Exodus 30:33, which mentions four ingredients by name: "stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense." Oral tradition mentioned seven additional ingredients: myrrh, cassia, spikenard, saffron, costus, cinnamon, and cinnamon bark. When combined together the daily portion of incense weighed about 5 pounds, so that each *tamid* required some 2.5 pounds of incense to be burned on the altar. The exact recipe and amounts of each ingredient was kept secret by the Atvinas family, so that the make up of the incense has been lost. (Ki Tissa: The Recipe for Ketoret [[http://www.ravkooktorah.org/KI\\_TISA58.htm](http://www.ravkooktorah.org/KI_TISA58.htm)], accessed 4 July 2012).
79. M. Tamid, 5:4.
80. M. Tamid 5:5. The priest "selected large, glowing coals (suitable for burning the incense upon)" the Inner Altar (Kasnet, "Tamid," 129.
81. Kasnet, "Tamid," 130. Kasnet also observed that the Priests' concern for damaging the gold shovel was "because the Torah was concerned for the money of Israel."
82. M. Tamis, 6:1. Kasnet, "Tamid," 141.
83. M. Tamid, nn. For an extensive analysis of this artifact and its construction, see: Joseph Yasser, "The Magrepha of the Herodian

- Temple: A Five-Fold Hypothesis,” *American Journal of the Musicological Society*, 13 (1960), 24-42.
84. Alan, “Middos,” 134-135.
  85. The *magrepha*’s sound was said to be so loud that “a person could not hear the voice of his fellow in Jerusalem” (M. Tamid 5:6).
  86. “*Maamad* refers to the group of men who stood in the Temple as the representatives of the community of Israel while communal offerings were made” (Kasnet, “Tamid,” 136). The Director of the Community was also responsible to see that the priests of the Abia course, who had disqualified themselves in some manner to serve in the Temple, gathered at the Nikanor Gate that opened into the Temple Courtyard, “where the people would see them and understand that they were *tamei* [unclean]” (Ibid, 137).
  87. In M. Tamid 6:3 this individual priest is not specifically identified, and there may even have been more than one priest present. Commentators typically identified him as one of the elders of the daily course who had previously offered the incense, so I have selected the Director of the Daily Course as a logical person, but he could have even been an experienced, ordinary priest, or the Deputy of the Priests.
  88. Kasnet, “Middos,” 141: At the end of his service the priest “would prostrate himself (as an act of submission to God), similar to a servant who completes a service to his master and asks him for permission to leave prior to departing.” There is a difference between kneeling and prostration; the former means to rest upon the knees, while the latter means to lay full-length upon the floor with the feet and hands extended and the face to the ground.
  89. Tamid 6:1. During the morning service the priest who cleaned the inner altar left the basket of ashes on the floor by the altar. The priest who tended to the Menorah left the container of oil on the middle step of a three-step stone that stood before the *Menorah*, which was placed there to allow the priest to easily reach the top of the approximately six-foot-high *Menorah* where the lamps were located (Tamid 3:9).
  90. Tamid 6:2.
  91. Kasnet, “Timid,” 147.
  92. Tamid 6:3. This interaction of the two priests during the *tamid* changed when the High Priest burned the incense. Unaided, he accomplished the same “feat by holding onto the vessel either with his fingertips or with his teeth” It was considered as “one of the most

- difficult services performed in the temple, and [it] required special training” (Kasnet, “Tamid,” 147).
93. Tamid 6:nn. While the Director of the Daily Course oversaw the sacrifice of the lamb, making sure it was properly performed, it was the Deputy who actually oversaw the “conduct of the daily ceremony,” and he likely stood at the entrance of the Temple and oversaw the important services carried out in the Holy Room (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 165).
  94. Tamid 6:2-3. Some commentators feel that the Deputy may have accompanied the two priests into the Holy Room to make sure that they performed their service properly, and only left the room after telling the priest to offer the incense. Who ever gave the command, after this he hurried to join his fellow priests beyond the Altar.
  95. Kasnet, “Tamid,” 151. This follows the instructions found in Leviticus 16:17.
  96. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 128. Edersheim recorded the silent prayer offered by the priests and the people during the incense offering. See Edersheim, *The Temple*, 128-129.
  97. It is likely that the throwing of the *magrepha* served as the signal for the High Priest, Deputy and the director of the daily course to make their way to the temple, in order to be ready for their part in the services.
  98. M. Bechorot 7:6. Robert J. Matthews speculated that Zacharias may have also been struck deaf as well. Luke wrote that when Zacharias’s neighbors “made signs” to him, asking how John would name his son, the priest “asked for a writing table and wrote” his name (Luke 1:62-64). In writing about this incident Matthews speculated, “Particularly interesting is the fact that the people found it necessary to ‘make signs’ to Zacharias to communicate with him. This is a strong suggestion that he was unable to hear them speak.” (*A Burning Light: the Life and Ministry of John the Baptist* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1972], 19). See also his article: (“John the Baptist: A Burning and a Shining Light,” *Ensign* [Sept. 1972], nn). Bruce R. McConkie also held a similar view, “Zacharias was smitten both deaf and dumb until the birth and naming of his son because he questioned the word of Gabriel.” (“A Man called John,” *Ensign* [May 1984], nn).
  99. B. Sanhedrin 83a.
  100. Edersheim, *The Temple*, nn. [The blessing ch. 8]. The priestly blessing reads: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of

Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”

M. Tamid states that “in the temple [the priests], would pronounce the name [of yhwh] as it is written” (7:2).

101. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 120. Edersheim discounted as fiction the tradition that for forty years an angel always accompanied the High Priest, Simeon the Just, when he ministered in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Edersheim, *The Temple*, 120). B. Yoma 39b reads “On every Day of Atonement an old man, dressed in white, wrapped in white, would join me, entering [the Holy of Holies] and leaving [it] with me, but today I was joined by an old man, dressed in black, wrapped in black, who entered, but did not leave, with me. After the festival [of *Sukkoth*] he was sick for seven days and [then] died.” Even if this account is correct, Zacharias was reportedly the only ordinary priest ever to receive such an angelic visitation in the Temple.
102. It should be pointed out that the High Priest could have decided to perform this part of the *tamid*, which he apparently did quite often, either doing it all himself, or with the assistance of the fourth lottery priests. In such a case, he would have performed the service and then walked back to the Temple.
103. Half of the twelve of the pancakes were placed on the Outer Altar in the morning *tamid*, and the other half were placed during the evening *tamid*.
104. The three priests actually supported the High Priest as he entered, one holding his right arm, another his left arm, and the third behind him, holding by the shoulders (M. Tamid, 7:1).
105. Leviticus 16:2 indicates that a priest could only prostrate himself in the temple upon the completion of his service, so the High Priest’s prostration on this occasion was viewed as a service in and of itself, which indicated that only the High Priest could prostrate himself in the temple at any time (Kasnet, “Middos,” 154).
106. M. Middos, 7:1.
107. The entire daily course of priests, who had completed their services, were now allowed to enter the Holy Room and prostrate themselves (see: Lev 16:2). Although parts of the *tamid* had yet to be performed, it was viewed as if these had in fact taken place, because the burning of the incense was seen as the completion of the entire *tamid*, whether

- the other services were actually accomplished or not (Kasnet, “Middos,” 154).
108. The gesture can be seen on many older Jewish tombstones. While chanting the blessing, each priest “joins his uplifted and outspread hands by making the tips of the first fingers touch each other. At the same time, the thumb is separated from the hand, and the first and second fingers of each hand are knit together, and divided from the joint third and fourth fingers” (Maas, *Day in the Temple*, 128). Actually, fans of the original Star Trek have seen part of the gesture, in Spock’s Vulcan hand salute whenever he wishes someone to “live long and prosper.” If Spock made the same configuration with his left hand and joined his two hands together, with the thumbs and forefingers touching, it would be a reasonable depiction of the priestly gesture. The split fingers and extended thumb represent the letter *shin*, the first letter in *El Shaddai* (God Almighty).
  109. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 130. In the synagogues the priest divided the blessing into three parts, the congregation intoning “Amen” between each verse, and he did not pronounce the ineffable name *yhwh*, but used *adonai* [Lord] instead. At the Temple the priests did not pause between the verses, but spoke it as one blessing, and they also pronounced the ineffable name. (M. Tamid 7:2).
  110. This was the same table, where the second lottery priest placed silver platters with the butchered portions of the lamb before carrying them part way up the ramp.
  111. The Levite singers and musicians performed a different psalm on each of the eight days of a course’s service: the seventh day during the Sabbath evening *tamid*, Psalm 92; the first day, Psalm 24; the second day, Psalm 48; the third day, Psalm 82; the fourth day, Psalm 94; the fifth day, Psalm 81; the sixth day, Psalm 93; the seventh day during the morning *tamid*, Psalm 92 (M. Tamid 7:4). During the week-day *tamid* they performed the same psalm in the morning and the evening services.

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