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“I HAVE REVEALED YOUR NAME”: THE HIDDEN TEMPLE IN JOHN 17

William Hamblin

Abstract: John 17 contains a richly symbolic Last Discourse by Jesus, in which the disciples are assured a place in the Father’s celestial house or temple. To fulfill this promise Christ reveals both the Father’s name and his glory to his disciples. Jesus’s discourse concludes with the promise of sanctification of the disciples, and their unification—or deification—with Christ and the Father. This paper explores how each of these ideas reflects the temple theology of the Bible and contemporary first-century Judaism.

Introduction

One of the most important trends in the past decade of Johannine studies is the increasing recognition of the centrality of temple theology in the Fourth Gospel.¹ While John 17 has been called Christ’s “High Priestly Prayer” since at least the sixteenth century,² recognition of this chapter’s temple theology is often not fully appreciated.

John 17 should be contextualized within the larger Passover narrative of the last days of the life of Jesus. In John

1. See Appendix 1 for major studies.

2. By David Chytraeus (1530–1600), cited by D. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 552–53.

11 and 12, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, followed by his anointing by Mary of Bethany (John 12:1–11), and his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12–19). In John 13, Jesus washes the feet of the disciples (John 13:1–11)—which parallels a temple ritual, since feet needed to be clean before entering the temple precincts. As the *Mishnah* emphasizes: a man “may not enter into the Temple Mount . . . with the dust upon his feet.”³ Then, on Passover eve, Jesus gives his Last Discourse to his disciples, found in John 13–17. John 17, the conclusion of this discourse, is an extended prayer, in which Jesus blesses the disciples. It is immediately followed by Jesus’s departure to Gethsemane, arrest (John 18:1–19), trial (John 18:20–9:16), crucifixion (John 19:16–37), and resurrection (John 20:1–30). John 17 thus holds a central position in the Gospel: the transition point between Jesus’s mortal ministry and the return to the celestial glory of the Christ. In this regard, John 17 serves as a symbolic temple for the Gospel of John—it is the meeting place of heaven and earth, where man encounters God. In this paper I will briefly examine six temple themes in John 17.

1– “My Father’s House”

The temple context of John 17 is made explicit at the beginning of the Last Discourse in John 14:2, where Jesus says, “in my Father’s house are many rooms (*monai pollai*). If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”⁴ The only other use of the phrase “my Father’s house” by Jesus occurs in John 2:16, where, during his purification of the temple, Jesus objects: “do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” When Jesus says “my Father’s house” it is his unique

3. *Mishnah*, *Berakoth* 9.5. Note, also, that whereas the disciple Abraham washes the feet of God in Genesis 18:4, now God washes the feet of his disciples in John 13:1–11.

4. Translations throughout are mine. J. McCaffrey, *The House with Many Rooms: The Temple Theme of Jn. 14, 2–3* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1988).

way of saying “the temple,” since God is his Father, and the temple was commonly known in the biblical traditions as the “house of God.”⁵ So, the most straightforward reading of John 14:2 is that Jesus begins his Last Discourse saying that there are many rooms in the temple, and he is going to prepare a place for his disciples there.

What does Jesus mean when he says that his “Father’s house has many rooms” (*monai pollai*, pl. of *monē*; John 14:2)? Of course, in a purely practical and material sense the temple of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus did indeed have many rooms and courts, as can be seen from the detailed descriptions found in Josephus and the Mishnah.⁶ But on the eve of his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus is not saying that he is going to the physical temple to prepare a place for his disciples. In the next verse, John 14:3, he makes this clear: “If I go and prepare a place [*topos*] for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that **where I am**, there you may be also. And you know the **way** [*hodos*] to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” (John 14:3–5).

In a sense, then, the rest of the last discourse, John 14–17, is an answer to Thomas’s questions, “where are you going?” and “what is the way there?” The answer is that Christ is returning to the presence of his Father in the celestial temple, and

5. In the Hebrew Bible the temple is called “house of YHWH” 243 times, the “house of God” 81 times, “temple of YHWH” 27 times. It is also called the “temple of God” 9 times in the New Testament. YHWH is the Hebrew for LORD or Jehovah.

6. Josephus *Antiquities* 15.11; Wars 5.5; *Mishnah, Middoth*; M. Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 72–183; J. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-biblical Source Book* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 142–53; J. Patrich, “Reconstructing the Magnificent Temple Herod Built,” *Biblical Review* 4/5 (1988): 16–29; L. Ritmeyer, *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006); A. Kaufman, *The Temple Mount: Where is the Holy of Holies?* (Jerusalem, Har Year’eh, 2004).

the way there is the Christian Way, or *hodos*. Remember that Christianity was originally known as “the Way” in the first decades before non-Christians started calling Jesus’s followers Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26).⁷ The Way of Christ is the Way to the presence of the Father in the celestial temple, as is expressly stated in Hebrews 10:19–20 (cf. Hebrews 9:8). “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh” (Hebrews 10:19–20).

The phrase *where I am* occurs four times in the New Testament, only in John, and always as a technical term describing Jesus’s return to the Father.⁸ Jesus repeatedly claims that he has “come down from heaven” (John 6:38), and that the Father has sent him.⁹ He also frequently alludes to returning to “him who sent me” (*ho pempasanta me*),¹⁰ a clear allusion to the Father. In Greek “where I am” is *hopou eimi egō*, and may be related to the esoteric “I AM” (*egō eimi*) statements of Jesus in John.¹¹ Jesus tells his disbelieving critics, “You will seek me and you will not find me. *Where I am* you cannot come” (John 7:34, 36; see also John 8:21; 13:33). On the other hand, he says

7. Christians are initially called “those of The Way” (Acts 9:2; Greek: *hodos*), see W. Bauer and F. Danker (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 556–7 (hereafter BDAG), cf. “Way of the Lord” (Acts 18:25), “Way of God” (Acts 18:26); Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; Christ is “the Way,” John 14:6; “the Way” to the heavenly Temple, Hebrews 9:8; Hebrews 10:19–20.

8. John 7:34–36; John 12:26; John 14:3; John 17:24; see also the related “where I am going” statements: John 7:33; 8:14, 21; 13:33, 36; 14:3–5; 16:5.

9. John 5:36–37, 6:44, 57, 7:16, 29, 8:16–18, 42, 12:49, 14:24, 17:8, 18, 21, 23, 25, 20:21.

10. John 7:33, 5:30, 6:38–39, 7:16, 28, 8:26, 29, 9:4, 12:24, 13:20, 16:5.

11. John 6:35, 48, 8:12, 24, 28, 58, 10:9, 11, 36, 11:25, 13:19, 14:6, 15:1; see C. Williams, *I Am He: The Interpretation of “Ani Hu” in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1999); D. Ball, *‘I Am’ in John’s Gospel: Literary Function, Background, and Theological Implications* (Sheffield: Academic, 1996); P. Harner, *The ‘I Am’ in the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970).

to his disciples at the beginning of his Last Discourse, “*where I am* there you may be also” (John 14:3, 12:26). Likewise, at the close of the Last Discourse, Jesus prays that the disciples may be “may be with me *where I am*, to see my glory” (John 17:24).

The *where I am* language clearly refers to being in the presence of the Father in heaven. Thus, as I understand these passages, the “Father’s house” is the temple by which means Jesus returns to the Father’s presence. In the context of first-century biblical traditions, this can only mean the celestial temple. If most modern Christians were to consider where the Father dwells, they would probably say “in Heaven.”¹² By this they generally don’t mean the visible sky—which is the literal translation of the biblical terms for heaven¹³—but an ultra-dimensional place beyond time and space.¹⁴ On the other hand, if you were to ask a first-century Jew or Christian where God dwells, they would undoubtedly respond, “in his temple in the sky.” The vast majority of modern Christians have lost an understanding of the mythos of the celestial temple, even though it is central to the biblical traditions.¹⁵ In the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 11:4 is explicit: “YHWH is in his holy temple (*hêkal*); YHWH’s throne is in heaven.” The Psalmist likewise tells us that God “has looked down from the height of his holy place/temple (*qodeš*), from heaven YHWH beholds the earth” (Psalm 102:19). The clear idea

12. For ancient conceptions of the heaven, see E. Wright, *The Early History of Heaven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998).

13. Hebrew (*šamayim*) and Greek (*ouranos*).

14. For general surveys of the history of the idea of Heaven, see: J. Russell, *A History of Heaven: The Singing Silence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); C. McDannell and B. Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); A. McGrath, *A Brief History of Heaven* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003); K. Rushby, *Paradise: A History of the Idea that Rules the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2006); C. Muessig and A. Putter, *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

15. J. Parry and D. Parry, “The Temple in Heaven: Its Description and Significance,” in *Temples of the Ancient World* ed. S. Ricks and D. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 515–32.

behind these passages and related passages¹⁶ is that God dwells in a temple in heaven.¹⁷ If anything, this idea is even more clear in the New Testament, particularly in Hebrews 8–10 and in scattered passages throughout the book of Revelation, which is set almost entirely in the celestial temple.¹⁸ This is where Christ is going to prepare a place for the disciples, who are called the “pillars in the temple of my God” (Revelation 3:12), who will sit enthroned beside the throne of God.¹⁹

As a brief digression here, it is worth noting that recent studies of early Jewish mysticism, known as the *hēkalot* tradition, also demonstrate the importance of visionary experiences of the throne of God and the celestial temple among Jews in the first few centuries after Jesus.²⁰ From these and related texts we are now able to better understand first-century Jewish ideas about the celestial temple and throne of God as a context for related early Christian concepts. If we read John 17 in this context, its temple motifs become quite significant.

Thus, the Last Discourse of Jesus is framed at both the beginning and end by two *where I am* temple statements, telling the disciples in John 14:2 that Jesus is going to prepare a place for them, so that, in the end, they will be with Jesus in the celestial temple and see his glory (John 17:24). This explicit framing of the Last Discourse with temple imagery should alert us

16. See also Psalm 18:6; Wisdom of Solomon 3:14; *Testament of Levi* 5:1, 18:6; *1 Enoch* 14:18–20; Philo, *Laws*, 1.66

17. This is also clear from the *Song of the Sabbath Sacrifice* in the Dead Sea Scrolls; see Jared C. Calaway, “Heavenly Sabbath, Heavenly Sanctuary: The Transformation of Priestly Sacred Space and Sacred Time in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the Epistle to the Hebrews” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010), and more broadly, P. Alexander, *Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (New York: Continuum, 2006).

18. Revelation 7:15, 11:19, 14:15–17, 15:5–6, 8, 16:1, 17.

19. Revelation 3:21, 4:4; Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30.

20. C. Rowland and C. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); R. Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2005).

to the probability of additional temple language and motifs throughout John 17.

2– Revelation of the Name of the Father (John 17:6, 11)²¹

In John 17, Christ is *given* the Name of the Father by the Father (John 17:11–12), and later *reveals* or *makes known*²² this divine Name to the disciples (John 17:6, 26). How would a first-century Jew have understood this claim that Jesus knew and revealed the name of the Father?²³

In Old Testament traditions, God personally revealed his true name YHWH (יהוה)—generally Anglicized as Jehovah—to Moses (Exodus 3:15), claiming that before the time of Moses, God had not been known by this name YHWH (Exodus 6:3).²⁴

21. A. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield: Academic, 2002), 323–45; J. Fossum “In the Beginning was the Name: Onomanology as the Key to Johannine Christology,” in his *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 109–34; G. Shirbroun, “The Giving of the Name of God to Jesus in John 1:11, 12” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1985); For later Christian interpretations: N. Janowitz, “Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius,” *History of Religion* 30 (1991): 359–72.

22. Reveals = *phaneroō*; makes known = *gnōrizō*, cognate with *gnosis*/knowledge.

23. General background on the Divine Name: G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Eerdmans, 1964–1977), 5:242–82 (hereafter, TDNT); G. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible* (Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1975); S. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology* (New York: De Gruyter, 2002); C. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 93–96; J. Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (New York: Westminster, 1964), 147–63; L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 381–9; J. Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 70–83.

24. However, the name YHWH is used in the book of Genesis: For example, Cain and Abel make offerings to YHWH (Genesis 4:3–4), and Seth and Enosh “called upon the name YHWH” (Genesis 4:26). This paradox is one of the factors behind the formation of the Documentary Hypothesis, which posits several different sources for the Pentateuch.

Up to that point, the name of God had been secret. Israel thereafter makes its covenant with YHWH,²⁵ to only worship “YHWH your God.”²⁶ At the same time, God also revealed another name to Moses, “I AM” (אֲנִי) (Exodus 3:14).

The importance of the divine Name YHWH is found throughout the Hebrew Bible. Israel is consistently commanded to “call upon the name of YHWH.”²⁷ Likewise, they are to glorify or praise the name of YHWH.²⁸ Hymns praising the name YHWH are found throughout the Psalms. Many Israelite names are theophoric, and include the name YHWH in personal names in one form or another.²⁹ The Divine Name is also found written in ancient nonbiblical sources from Israel, including inscriptions, letters, and seals.³⁰ As far as we can tell, there was originally no prohibition against writing or saying the name YHWH in ancient Israel; only against blaspheming or misusing the name, or falsely claiming to speak in the name of YHWH (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11).

A major transformation in Israelite Name theology, however, occurred in the Second Temple period, between the conclusion of the Hebrew Bible and the time of Jesus.³¹ Restrictions on the ritual writing and pronunciation of the name YHWH de-

25. Exodus 24:7, 34:10; Leviticus 26:45; Deuteronomy 5:2–3, etc.

26. Exodus 20:2–5, 34:14; Deuteronomy 5:6–9, 6:4.

27. Genesis 4:26; Psalm 105:1, 116:17; Isaiah 12:4

28. 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2, 86:9, 12, 96:8, 115:1; Isaiah 24:15; Revelation 15:4; 3 Nephi 9:15; 3 Nephi 11:7, 23:9; Ether 3:21; Doctrine and Covenants 45:4, 76:43.

29. For example, Isaiah = *yēša’-yāhū* = “YHWH saves”; Jeremiah = *yirmē-yāhū* = “YHWH establishes.”

30. General: R. Hess, *Israelite Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 269–90; inscriptions: Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 350–438; letters: J. Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 61–80, 112–33; seals: I. Gorelick (ed), *Ancient Seals and the Bible* (Malibu, CA: Undena, 1983).

31. For a general survey of Rabbinic concepts of the Name of God, see S. Cohon, “The Name of God: A Study in Rabbinic Theology,” *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 23/1 (1950–51): 579–604; E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1987), 124–34.

veloped by at least the third century before Christ. Instead of actually pronouncing the name YHWH when reading scriptures or praying, Jews increasingly used the Hebrew *ădônāy* (אֲדֹנָי), which becomes *kurios* (κύριος) in Greek, both meaning simply “lord.”³² In Hebrew biblical manuscripts from this period they often wrote the name of God in the Paleo-Hebrew script indicating its special status and unique pronunciation.³³ By the time of Jesus many Jews had begun to simply say *ha-šēm* (“the Name” [of God]) when they came across the name YHWH in reading a text. An early form of this practice can already be found in Leviticus 24:11, 16 where an Israelite is described as blaspheming “the Name” (*ha-šēm*), meaning the name YHWH. These practices still continue among Orthodox Jews today, who, when reading aloud or speaking the name YHWH, will say *ădônāy*, *ha-šēm*, or vocally spell the name, *yôd-hê-vāv-hê*.

These practices derived in large part from contemporary interpretations of the biblical prohibition against “taking the name of YHWH your God in vain” (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11). There was a Rabbinic inclination to “make a hedge for the Law,”³⁴—which is to say, interpret the law in the broadest sense possible to prevent one from even coming close to breaking a commandment. From fear of inadvertently “taking the name of YHWH in vain,” Jews increasingly refused to say God’s name at all. The transformed nature of this prohibition is clearly

32. The sages of the Talmud described this tradition: “The Holy One, blessed be He, said: ‘I am not called as I am written: I am written with [the letters] *yod he* [waw he, that is יהוה, or YHWH], but I am read, [with the letters] *alef daleth* [nun yod, that is אֲדֹנָי, or ADNY, *ădônāy*]’” (*Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushim* 71a). The English practice of writing LORD in small capital letters for the Hebrew YHWH derives from the ancient Greek and Latin Bibles, where the proper name YHWH is consistently rendered *kurios* and *dominus* respectively.

33. L. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 99–110; this is reflected in many of the biblical manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the *Exodus Scroll*; L. Schiffman and J. VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:600–602.

34. *Pirke Avot*, 1.1.

reflected in interpretations of Leviticus 24:11–16. The Hebrew text of verse 16 reads: “whoever blasphemes/slanders the name of YHWH shall surely be put to death” (Leviticus 24:16). But the Greek Septuagint, reflecting Jewish beliefs and practices in the second century BC, reads: “whoever names the name (*onomazōn de to onoma*) of the Lord (*kurios*) shall surely be put to death.” In other words an original prohibition against *mis-using* the name YHWH had become transformed by at least the second century BC into a prohibition against even *pronouncing* the name at all.³⁵

The Rabbis creatively misread Exodus 3:15 along similar lines. There YHWH is to be God’s name “forever,” in Hebrew *lě-‘ōlām*. The Rabbis, however, vocalized the word *lě-‘ōlām* as *lě-‘allēm*, meaning “concealed.”³⁶ Thus, they took this passage as a command to conceal rather than pronounce the divine name revealed by God to Moses.³⁷ This is part of the Rabbinic tradition of God’s hidden, unpronounceable, and “ineffable name,” the *šēm ha-mēfōrāš*. This phrase is not found explicitly in the Hebrew Bible, but derives from an Aramaic Targum interpretation of Judges 13:18, where an angel asks, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful (Hebrew: *peḥi’*, פֶּחִי)?” The Aramaic Targum of Judges, however, translates “wonderful” as *mēpāraš* “ineffable,” meaning that the name of God is unpronounceable or unknowable.³⁸

There were two exceptions to this general prohibition against naming the Divine Name. The first, and foremost, was the pronunciation of the name YHWH by the High Priest in the temple on the Day of Atonement. The biblical text of the Day

35. Philo (*Life of Moses*, 2.114, 205) and Josephus (*Antiquities*, 2.276), both near contemporaries of Jesus, confirm these concerns for proper use for the name of God in the first century AD.

36. In the unvoiced Hebrew texts of this era, both variants were written לְעֶלֶם (L’LM), and could in theory be pronounced either way.

37. *Babylonian Talmud*, *Kiddushim* 71a; TDNT 5:269.

38. Ronning, *Jewish Targums*, 78.

of Atonement ritual in Leviticus 16 does not mention a specific benediction to be said in the name of YHWH. Our information on the ritual pronunciation of the Name on the Day of Atonement comes from the *Mishnah*, a collection of Rabbinic oral traditions recorded around AD 200. “When the priest and the people which stood in the Temple Court [on the Day of Atonement] heard the Expressed Name [YHWH] come from the mouth of the High Priest, they used to kneel and bow themselves and fall down on their faces.”³⁹

The book of the Wisdom of Sirach 50 also contains a detailed description of the Day of Atonement ritual performed by the High Priest Simon the Just (219–196 BC), which likewise mentions the people prostrating themselves at the mention of the Name (Sirach 50:20–21), just as described in the *Mishnah*.⁴⁰ The Talmud records a tradition that after the death of Simon people ceased to speak the Name aloud.⁴¹

The name of YHWH was also invoked during the daily recitation of the priestly benediction described in Numbers 6:22–27.⁴² The *Mishnah* tells us that when the priests pronounced this blessing, “in the Temple they pronounced the Name as it was written, but in the provinces by a substituted word,”⁴³ probably *ha-šēm* or *ādōnāy*. The *Talmud*, a fourth to sixth century AD commentary on the *Mishnah*, describes this practice: “R. Tarfon said: ‘I once ascended the dais [of the temple] . . . and inclined my ear to the High Priest, and heard him swallowing

39. *Mishnah*, Yoma 6.2, 3.8, 4.2.

40. The Book of Sirach was written around 180 BC. In Hebrew his name is Šimʿôn ha-Šaddîq (“Simon the Righteous/Just”); he is often conflated by rabbinic tradition with Simon I, who was the High Priest around 300 BC. His purported tomb is still venerated by Ultra-Orthodox Jews in northern Jerusalem.

41. *Babylonian Talmud*, Yoma 30b.

42. The words of the blessing are found in Numbers 6.24–26, where the name YHWH is repeated three times; see also Psalm 67:1, 80:3, 19, 119:135.

43. *Mishnah*, Tamid 6.2; see also *Sifre Numbers* 43.

[i.e. whispering or pronouncing indistinctly] the Name [YHWH] during the chanting by his brother priests.”⁴⁴

If this report is accurate, it means that the name may have been whispered or mumbled so that only nearby priests could hear it distinctly, but not the people receiving the blessing, thus not revealing the sacred name to the non-priests.⁴⁵ When the temple was destroyed and the ritual pronunciation of the name ceased, priestly and rabbinic scholars preserved the correct pronunciation for several centuries by whispering the name to their disciples once every seven years,⁴⁶ but eventually the correct pronunciation of the sacred name was lost.

It is in this context of Jewish name theology that we need to examine John’s account of Jesus revealing the name of the Father while blessing his disciples. By the time of Jesus there was a strong tradition of the sacred secrecy of God’s name, which could only be pronounced by priests in the temple. In the context of first century Judaism, then, when Jesus reveals the name of the Father, he is acting within the framework of two important biblical traditions. First, the revelation of the names YHWH and I AM to Moses on Sinai, making Jesus the “prophet like unto Moses,” to whom God revealed his name.⁴⁷ Second, for a Jewish reader, the claim that Jesus *revealed* the name of the Father to his disciples would also imply that Jesus claimed the authority of the High Priest to reveal the Name, reflecting the divine authority/*eksousia* Jesus claims in John 17:2, where the Father gives “Jesus authority over all flesh, to give eternal life.” He was thus acting to bring about the eternal atonement and reconciliation of Israel with God.⁴⁸ In time, these traditions of the secret name of God would develop into

44. *Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushim* 71a.

45. See TDNT 5:268–9 for more references.

46. *Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushim* 71a.

47. Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22; 7:37.

48. Kerr, *Temple of Jesus’ Body*, 314–70.

widespread Name mysticism in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and related magical traditions.⁴⁹

The paradox here is that Jesus does not actually reveal the name of the Father in John 17:6 and 26, or anywhere else for that matter. Rather he simply says that he already *has* revealed it. Now it may be that the Name is not explicitly mentioned in John precisely because the Divine Name that Jesus revealed cannot be made public. Knowing that Jesus revealed the Name to the disciples is enough. On the other hand, it is possible that the Divine Name Jesus revealed is the word *Father*, for early Christians prayed and perform their rituals and liturgy not in the name of YHWH—though their use of *kurios*/Lord probably implies this—but expressly in the name of the *Father* and the Son and the Holy Ghost.⁵⁰

3– Christ as the Manifestation of God’s Glory (John 17:4–5)

In John 17:1 Christ prays: “May you [Father] glorify your Son that your Son might glorify you;” and adds that he has “glorified [the Father] upon the earth” (John 17:4). What is this glory? And how does Jesus glorify the Father? In Greek, the verb to glorify is *doksazō* (δοξάζω), meaning, “to praise, honor, extol,” or “make glorious or splendid.”⁵¹ The nominal form *doksa* (δόξα), means “brightness, splendor, radiance, magnificence, greatness, honor, fame, or prestige” (BDAG 257). While human beings, such as kings, can have glory, to fully understand the background of the idea of glorification in John 17, we need look at the concept of “glory” in the Hebrew Bible.

49. For some of these later traditions, see V. Izmirlieva, *All the Names of the Lord* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

50. The belief that the Divine Name was the word *Father* is reflected in some later third-century Gnostic writers. See Appendix 2 for examples.

51. BDAG 258; TDNT 2:232–55.

In the Septuagint the Greek word *doksa*/glory generally translates the Hebrew term *kābôd* (כבוד).⁵² Thus the ultimate background for the glorification language in John is the technical meaning of the phrase the “glory of YHWH” (*kābôd YHWH*) in the Hebrew Bible.⁵³ In its most narrow and technical sense, the Glory of YHWH is the visible manifestation of the presence of God in the Temple or Tabernacle.⁵⁴ This Glory of YHWH is most clearly described in the great theophanies at the tabernacle and temple.⁵⁵ It is represented as a blazing fire or a dazzling light,⁵⁶ though often enshrouded in a cloud.⁵⁷ In Ezekiel’s vision, the shining anthropomorphic figure on the chariot-throne is explicitly called the “Glory of YHWH” (Ezekiel 1:28), implying that the *kābôd*/glory has a human form. For Ezekiel, the departure of the Glory of YHWH from the temple is tantamount to its desecration, leaving it ripe for destruction by the Babylonians (Ezekiel 10–11).

When Moses saw YHWH on Mount Sinai, the *kābôd*/glory was so overwhelming that Moses’s face was transfigured, thereafter reflecting God’s Glory and forcing him to wear a veil to protect the Israelites from its stunning radiance.⁵⁸ In this context, when Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ “is the radiance of the

52. *Kābôd* means “heaviness, weightiness, importance, glory, splendor, distinction, or honor,” L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner (eds.), *The Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), hereafter HALOT 457.

53. T. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Gleerup, 1982).

54. Exodus 16:7, 10, 24:17; Leviticus 9:23; Numbers 14:10; 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chronicles 7:1–3; Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 1:28, 3:12, 23, 10:4, 18, 43:2–5, 44:4–8; Psalms 26:8, 29:9, 63:2.

55. Sinai: Exodus 16:7, 10, 24:16–17, 33:22. Tabernacle: Exodus 29:43, 40:34–35; Leviticus 9:23; Numbers 14:10, 16:19, 42, 20:6. Temple: 2 Kings 8:11; 2 Chronicles 7:1–3.

56. Exodus 24:16–17; Deuteronomy 5:24; 2 Chronicles 7:1–3; Isaiah 4:5, 60:1, 19; Revelation 21:23.

57. Exodus 40:34–38; Numbers 16:42; 1 Kings 8:10–11; d 2 Chronicles 15:4.

58. Exodus 34:33–34; 2 Corinthians 3:13; this is part of the source for modern concepts of halos around holy persons in art.

glory of God and the **exact imprint** of his nature” (*charaktēr tēs hupostaseōs*, χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως), it is simply a way of saying that Christ is the “glory of ΥΗΩΗ,” which is to say, the physical and visible manifestation of the presence of God on earth.⁵⁹ On the other hand, on occasion the prophets proclaim that God’s *kābôd*/glory is not restricted to the temple, but fills the whole world.⁶⁰

There are a number of ways in which John describes the glory of Jesus. Christ had glory with the Father before the world was (John 1:14; John 17:5). Christ’s glory comes from “the one God” (John 5:44; John 8:54), but his glory is the glory of the “one Son” (*monogenos*, John 1:14). The miracles of Jesus manifest God’s glory.⁶¹ When John describes Christ as the “light of the world,”⁶² the overall context probably has at least partial reference to God’s shining glory/*kābôd*. This is reiterated by the fact that for John, glory is something that can be seen.⁶³ The Father gives his glory to the Son, who will in turn give it to the disciples (John 17:22).⁶⁴ On the other hand, the ultimate glorification of Jesus will only occur after the resurrection, for during his mortal ministry he “was not yet glorified.”⁶⁵

What does it mean that Christ glorifies the Father? Christ does not *make* God more glorious, but *reveals* God’s already existing luminous glory to an uncomprehending world (John

59. See also 1 Corinthians 2:8. This is in part why medieval Christian artists generally depicted Jesus, the Glory of God on earth, as the anthropomorphic Glory of God figure in Ezekiel’s chariot.

60. Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 6:3, 66:18; Psalms 97:6, 19:1; Habakkuk 2:14.

61. John 2:11, 11:4, 40.

62. John 1:9, 3:19, 8:12, 9:5, 11:9, 12:46.

63. John 1:14, 11:40, 12:41, 17:24.

64. The idea that the Father glorifies the Son is somewhat paradoxical in light of the statements by Isaiah that God does not share his glory (Isaiah 42:8, 48:11). The Father is also glorified not only by the Son, but by the faith and deeds of Christ’s disciples (John 14:13, 15:8; Peter likewise glorified the Father by his martyrdom, John 21:18–19.)

65. John 7:39, 12:16, 23, 13:31; Matthew 24:30, 25:31; Mark 8:38, 13:26; Luke 21:27, 24:26.

1:5, 10, 14). When the Father makes the Son glorious, the Son thereby *reveals* the glory of the Father. One element of this concept is that the resurrection will reveal the glory of the Son, and thereby the Son will reveal the ultimate glory of the Father. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once” (John 13:31–32).

In other words, there is a reciprocal glorification of the Father and the Son. The glorification of Christ also comes in part through his departure out of this world (John 13:1)—where his glory is masked—and his return to the glory he had in the celestial temple with the Father before the world was.

With this ancient temple context for the idea of *kābôd*/glory in mind, we can examine the importance of the concept in John 17. Remarkably, six of the twenty-six verses of John 17 speak of glory and glorification.

- “Father, the hour has come; **glorify** your Son so that the Son may **glorify** you.” (John 17:1)
- “I **glorified** you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, **glorify** me *in your own presence* with the **glory** that I had *in your presence* before the world existed.” (John 17:4–5)
- “All mine [the disciples] are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been **glorified in them**.” (John 17:10)
- “The **glory** that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one,” (John 17:22)
- “Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may *be with me where I am*, **to see my glory**, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

This glorification language in John 17 has three themes. (1) Mutual shared glorification of the Father, Son and disciples. (2) Through this mutual glorification comes mutual oneness (John 17:22). (3) The disciples will be where Jesus is, in the presence of

the Father, where they will see Christ's full glory. Among first-century readers this glorification language in John 17 would have evoked ideas of God's glorious theophanies in the temple, and Christ's postmortal glorification by the Father would imply a glory-theophany in the Celestial Temple.

4– Expulsion of the Evil One (John 17:15)

One of the unique rituals of the Israelite Day of Atonement⁶⁶ was the scapegoat, or 'Azā'zel (עֲזָאזֵל), described in Leviticus 16.⁶⁷ While the precise meaning of 'Azā'zel is debated, the most widely accepted interpretation is that it is the name of a demonic power. This is also reflected in Second Temple pseudepigraphic literature, especially *1 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.⁶⁸ The sins of Israel were transferred to the head of the goat which was driven into the wilderness “for 'Azā'zel,” representing the expulsion of sin and evil from the community

66. For a collection of primary sources, see: D. Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament*, vol. 2A: *Feasts and Sabbaths: Passover and Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 253–340. For studies, see: J. Baumgarten, “Yom Kippur in the Qumran Scrolls and Second Temple Sources,” *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 6/2 (1999): 184–91; D. Stokl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from the Second Temple to the Fifth Century* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2003); D. Freedman, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 1:72–75 (hereafter, ABD).

67. Leviticus 16, 23:26–32; Numbers 29:7–11; Exodus 30:10. For studies see: J. Collins (ed.), *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 241–42; ABD 1:536–537; E. Feinberg, “The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115 (1958): 320–31; L. Grabbe, “The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 18 (1987): 152–67; H. Tawil, “Azazel the Prince of the Steppe: A Comparative Study,” *Zeitschrift für altestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980): 43–59.

68. *1 Enoch* 8:1; 9:6; 10:4–8; 13:1; cf. 54:5–6; 55:4; 69:2; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:6–14; 14:4–6; 20:5–7; 22:5; 23:11; 29:6–7; 31:5. For studies see G. Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 383–405; P. Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 195–233; L. Grabbe, “The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 18 (1987): 152–67.

of Israel (Leviticus 16:21).⁶⁹ This rite is a prerequisite for the purification of Israel in preparation for the visitation of YHWH with the High Priest in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle or temple. At the culmination of the ceremony, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and made “atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly” (Leviticus 16:33), thereby reconciling Israel with God.

What does all this have to do with John 17? In John 17:15, Jesus asks the Father to protect the disciples from the Evil One .

I do not ask that you take them out of the *world* [*kosmos*]
but that you protect them from *the evil one* [*ho ponēros*].
(John 17:15)

This phrase is often understood by modern Christians as a prayer for protection from evil in an abstract sense. But in its first century context, *ho ponēros* meant the Evil One, that is Satan.⁷⁰ This is made clear by a quick survey of related New Testament descriptions of Satan. The Evil One here is described elsewhere in John as the *archōn tou kosmou* (ἄρχων του κόσμου)—the “ruler of the world.”⁷¹ In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul calls Satan the “god of this Age” (*theos tou aiōnos*). First John tells us that “the whole world [*kosmos*] lies [in the power] of the Evil One” (1 John 5:19).

At the beginning of the Last Discourse, Jesus says explicitly that “the ruler [*archōn*] of this world [*kosmos*] will be cast out” (John 12:31). Because Satan is cast out by Christ, the disciples are protected from his power, as described in John 17:15. The ritual expulsion of evil from the community of Israel was symbolized in ancient times by the temple scapegoat ritual. With evil banished, the community could be purified and prepared

69. Or perhaps archaically, the placation of ‘Azā’zel by a goat-offering.

70. BDAG 851.

71. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; see also Paul in Ephesians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 2:6–8.

for the presence of YHWH. Likewise, by casting out the Evil One, and atoning for sin, Christ prepares the disciples to be where Christ is, that is, in the celestial temple with the Father.

5– Sanctification or Consecration of Christ and the disciples (John 17:17–19)

With the expulsion of Satan, the stage is now set for the sanctification of the disciples. The concept of sanctification is an important one in the Israelite temple mythos. Fundamentally, anything associated with the temple or the presence of God must be holy. There are many examples of this in the Hebrew Bible.

- The Israelites were required to consecrate themselves for the Sinai theophany, including washing themselves and donning clean garments.⁷²
- Aaron and the Levite priests must be consecrated to serve in the Tabernacle.⁷³
- Sacrificial offerings made to God must be consecrated.⁷⁴
- The tabernacle, temple, furniture, utensils, and clothing associated with it must likewise be consecrated.⁷⁵

The verb in most of these passages is *qaddeš* (קִדְּשׁ), which means literally to make something *qōdeš*, or holy. Unfortunately, because of the nature of English, we often use several different words to translate this one idea: consecrate, make holy, and sanctify and their variants. In most English translations these three different English roots nearly always translate the

72. Exodus 19:10, 14, 22; Leviticus 11:44; Numbers 3:13, 8:17, 11:18; Joshua 3:5, 7:13; 1 Samuel 16:5; Joel 2:16.

73. Exodus 28:3, 38, 41, 40:13; Leviticus 8:10–12, 21:10; 1 Chronicles 15:12–14; 2 Chronicles 5:11, 18, 29:15, 30:17, 24; 2, 35:6; Ezekiel 48:11.

74. Exodus 29:27; 2 Chronicles 29:33.

75. Exodus 29:36, 44, 40:9–13; Leviticus 8:15, 8:30; Numbers 7:1; 1 Kings 9:3, 7; 2 Chronicles 7:7, 16, 20, 29:17, 30:8; Ezekiel 43:26. This includes Mount Sinai as a proto-temple (Exodus 19:23), on which, see J. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper, 1987).

Hebrew *qōdeš* in its various forms. Holiness language is temple language. The Septuagint, the ancient Greek Bible, consistently translates *qōdeš* as *hagios* and its variants.

In other words, throughout the Hebrew Bible, everything associated with the temple must be consecrated, or made holy. Only rarely do we find things not closely associated with the temple, described as being consecrated. Fundamentally, language of holiness, sanctity, and consecration is the language of the temple. This language is consistent throughout all books and periods of Israelite history.

Why is this important for our understanding of John 17? These verses contain the following prayer by Jesus. “**Sanctify** [the disciples] in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I **sanctify** myself, that they also may be **sanctified** in truth” (John 17:17–19).

That is to say, Jesus sanctifies himself so that the disciples may become sanctified.

This is, of course, precisely what the High Priest does in the Day of Atonement ritual (Leviticus 16). In a ritual of consecration (Leviticus 16:32) the High Priest first washes himself (Leviticus 16:4b), dons holy garments (Leviticus 16:4a), then offers a bull for a sin offering for *himself* (Leviticus 16:6). In other words, he first sanctifies himself, after which, in his sanctified state, he can officiate in the temple to sanctify the community of Israel through the other Day of Atonement rituals. Christ’s language here parallels that pattern. He says explicitly, “For their sake I make myself holy (*hagiazō*, singular present active = consecrate myself, sanctify myself) so that they [the disciples] may be made holy (*hēgiasmenoi* (plural passive) = consecrated, sanctified) in truth” (John 17:19).

To first-century Jewish readers, this language of consecration would have evoked the temple, with its rituals of purification, consecration, and atonement.

6– Celestial Ascent and Unification (or Deification) (John 17:20–24)

The last temple theme I'd like to discuss is the idea of celestial ascent and unification with God found in John 17:20–24.⁷⁶ This passage is the culmination of Jesus's prayer and Final Discourse, and I believe it defines the ultimate purpose of his mortal ministry.

I do not ask for these [disciples] only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The **glory that you have given me I have given to them**, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, *may be with me where I am, to see my glory* that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:20–24)

This passage describes three interrelated themes: **glorification**, *ascent*, and unification.

First, I have already discussed the importance of the idea of the Glory of God and its relation to the temple. Here, however, the focus shifts from the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son, to the Son sharing his glory with the disciples, as Jesus says: the “glory that you have given me I have given to them” (John 17:22). The idea here is not that the disciples merely *see* or *recognize* Jesus's glory. Rather, they are *given* the glory by the Son precisely as the Son is *given* the glory by the Father. Why is this glory given? “That they may be one even as we are one” (John 17:22). That is,

76. Kerr, *Temple of Jesus' Body*, 354–361.

being given the glory of Jesus is a necessary prerequisite for unification, the third theme I'll discuss in a moment.

Second, Christ prays that the disciples may "*be with me where I am, to see my glory*" (John 17:24). That is, Christ is not fully glorified until after his resurrection and ascent to heaven. Only when the disciples are "where he is" can they fully "see his glory" (John 17:24). As I discussed earlier, the temple is the place where we see the glory of God. The language describing Jesus's descent to earth and return to the Father in the Father's house with many rooms (John 14:2–3) alludes to the celestial temple.

Here Jesus is praying that the disciples may "be where I am," that is ascend to heaven. This is generally understood by modern Christians to refer to the postmortal ascent of the soul to God, as is implied in John 13:36, where Jesus tells Peter "where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward," which means, presumably, after death. However, in the context of the first century, visionary ascent by *mortals* to the heavenly temple was a widespread belief and practice among both Jews and Christians.⁷⁷ This is most clear from the book of Revelation, in which John has an explicit vision of the temple in heaven.⁷⁸ Paul also famously describes his visionary ascent to heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:1–9.⁷⁹ Early Christian literature likewise con-

77. For a general introduction see M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), and C. Rowland and C. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). P. Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven? 2 Corinthians 12.1–10 and Heavenly Ascent* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), surveys the scholarly literature and debates.

78. Revelation 1:5–20, 4–5, 7, 11:3–13, 19:1–10, 21, 22:1–7. The Transfiguration may also be understood as a visionary celestial ascent of Jesus: Matthew 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36.

79. See also allusive language in Galatians 1:11–17; 2 Corinthians 3:18–4:6; 1 Corinthians 15. On Paul's celestial ascent, see: C. R. A. Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor. 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: The Jewish Sources," *Harvard Theological Review*, 86/2 (1993): 177–217, and "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and Its Significance," *Harvard Theological Review*, 86/3 (1993): 265–92; Alan F. Segal, "Paul's Ecstasy," in his

tains numerous accounts of celestial ascent,⁸⁰ as do the contemporary Jewish texts of Hekhalot and Merkabah mystics, written after the destruction of the temple in AD 70.⁸¹ Jesus's call to his disciples to come to "where he is going" to "see his glory" fits well into this mythos of ascents to the celestial temple.

Third, the unification language in this passage is powerful and direct. Jesus prays:

- that [the disciples] may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us (John 17:21)
- they may be one even as we are one (John 17:22), and
- that they may become perfectly one (John 17:23)

Christians have been exploring the meaning of this glorification and unification language for two thousand years, and many different interpretations have been offered from different perspectives and periods. I suspect it can only be fully understood by one who has actually attained that state. But what is clear is that, according to John 17, the disciples can somehow receive the glory of God and become one with the Father and the Son.

Many early Christians believed that this and related language in the New Testament describes what they called *theōsis*, or deification. (In appendix 3 I have listed two dozen books on Christian *theōsis* published in the last decade alone.) The Greek

Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1990), 34–71; J. Tabor, *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, MD: University Press, 1986).

80. See: *Apocalypse of Peter*, in K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 591–615 (hereafter ANT); *Apocalypse of Paul* (ANT 617–644); *The Assumption of the Virgin*; *Acts of Andrew and Mathias* 17 (ANT 290); *Question of Bartholomew* (ANT 652–72); *Letter of James* 14–16 (ANT 680–1); *Ascension of Isaiah*.

81. For a basic bibliography of Hekhalot and Merkabah mysticism, see: Don Karr, <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/mmhie.pdf>. For a survey with relevance to early Christianity, see Rowland and Morray-Jones, *Mystery of God*; for general background on early Jewish mysticism, see: P. Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2011).

Orthodox tradition has retained the most continuity with this ancient Christian idea. Among Catholics it has largely faded into a vague background,⁸² while many Protestants are unaware that deification is an important ancient Christian idea.⁸³ Basically, many Protestants see the idea of the deification of Man as *challenging* the omnipotence of God, whereas many Greek Orthodox see the deification of Man as the ultimate *manifestation* of the omnipotence of God.

Nevertheless, several allusions to deification are expressed in the New Testament. In Revelation 3:21 Christ tells John, “the one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I [Jesus] also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” The idea that the righteous disciples will sit enthroned with God in the celestial temple in heaven—based on Psalm 110:1—is also found elsewhere in Revelation (Revelation 4:2–6, 11:16, 20:4), as well as in the Gospels (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:29–30). For many early Christians this idea of *synthronos*—enthronement beside God—can only be allusion to deification.

Paul makes this rather explicit: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18; cf. Romans 8:29).⁸⁴ Note here that “seeing the glory of the Lord [Jesus]” transforms us into that glorious image, just as Jesus says in John 17:24, where the disciples go to where Christ is to see and receive his glory. First John also describes it: “when [Christ] appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:1–3, at 2). Paul teaches

82. A recent study from the perspective of Catholic theology is D. Keating, *Deification and Grace* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007).

83. On the idea of deification in Protestant theology, see M. Habets, “Reforming Theōsis,” in *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed. S. Finlan and V. Kharlamov (Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2006.) 146–67.

84. For deification in Paul, see M. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapid, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

that the disciples can become “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,” and can “share the likeness of the image of the Son” (Romans 8:17, 29; cf. Galatians 4:4–7). Second Peter describes this as becoming “partakers of the divine nature” (*theias phuseōs*) (2 Peter 1:4).

As I understand it, this glorification, ascent and unification language in John 17 and elsewhere in the New Testament is describing the ultimate goal of Christian *theōsis*. But that is another paper. For my purpose here, it is sufficient to recognize that ascent to the celestial temple to see the glory of God is a key concept in the first-century temple mythos, and thus further reflects the centrality of the temple in John 17.

Conclusion

Although the word *temple* is never explicitly used in John 17, the temple mythos is foundational to this chapter. We have seen that the Last Discourse begins with Jesus preparing a place for the disciples in the Father’s House, or the celestial temple. When Jesus reveals the Name of God to his disciples, he is acting in the context of first century temple Name theology that restricts pronunciation of the Name to the temple. The temple was the site of the manifestation of the glory of God. The expulsion of evil and sanctification of the disciples likewise alludes to temple rites. Finally, the celestial ascent and glorification of the disciples is closely related to the mythos of ascent to the celestial temple. In conclusion, the temple mythos is central to John 17, and it is thus rightly called Jesus’s High Priestly prayer.

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Neil Newell): The Book of Malchus, (*Deseret Book*, 2010). A fanatical traveler and photographer, he spent 2010 teaching at the BYU Jerusalem Center, and has lived in Israel, England, Egypt, and Italy, and traveled to dozens of other countries.

Appendix 1: Recent Studies on Temple Themes in the Gospel of John

Chronological Order

Coloe, M. *God Dwells With Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Liturgical Press, 2001).

Kerr, A. *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield, 2002).

Fuglseth, K. *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective: A Sociological, Historical, and Comparative Analysis of Temple and Social Relationships in the Gospel of John, Philo, and Qumran* (Brill, 2005).

Um, S. *The Theme of Temple Christology in John's Gospel* (T&T Clark, 2006).

Hoskins, P. *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Wipf and Stock, 2007).

Daise, M. *Feasts in John* (Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

Perrin, N. *Jesus the Temple* (Baker Academic, 2010).

Appendix 2: Gnostic Sources on the Divine Name

M. Meyer, *et.al.* (eds.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (2007).

Because of the coming of Christ it was said publicly: Seek, and those that are disturbed will receive restoration, and he [Christ] will anoint them with oil. The oil is the mercy of the Father, who will be merciful to them; and those whom he has anointed are the perfected. (*Gospel of Truth*, 36:13–20)

He [the Father] begot a Son, and gave him His name. . . . The name [of the Father] is invisible, for it alone is the mystery of the invisible, which comes into the ears that are completely filled with it by him. For indeed, the Father's name is not spoken, but it is apparent through a Son. (*Gospel of Truth*, 38:10, 15)

In this way, then, the name is a great thing. Who, therefore, will be able to utter a name for him, the great name, except him alone to whom the name belongs and the sons of the name in whom rested the name of the Father, who in turn themselves rested in his name. (*Gospel of Truth*, 38:25)

Only one name is not uttered in the world, the name that the Father bestowed on the Son; it is above every other—that is, the name of the Father. For son would not become father had he not put on the name of the father. Those who possess this name think it but do not speak it. Those who do not possess it do not think it. (*Gospel of Philip*, 54:5–12)

Appendix 3: Bibliography of Recent Books on Deification

Alphabetical Order

- Bartos, E. and K. Ware, *Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Gorgias, 2007).
- Burns, Charlene, *Divine Becoming: Rethinking Jesus and Incarnation* (Fortress, 2001).
- Casey, Michael, *Fully Human-Fully Divine: An Interactive Christology* (Liguori, 2004).
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