

GROUP ASCENSION TO HEAVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES AND IN EARLY JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

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There are many accounts in both ancient and modern scripture and other religious writings about individuals that ascend into heaven. We have stories of Enoch, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, and others ascending up through the various levels of heaven into the presence of God. Commenting on some of these types of accounts that can be found in Latter-day Saint scripture, Elder Neal A. Maxwell observes,

According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the crucial holy endowment was administered to Moses “on the mountaintop.” . . . Nephi, too, was caught up to an exceedingly high mountain (see 1 Nephi 11:1) and was instructed not to write or speak of some of the things he experienced there. (see 1 Nephi 14:25)¹

Elder Maxwell, following Joseph Smith, describes these particular ascents into heaven as entailing or including the giving of the “holy endowment.” Thus, Latter-day Saints should be able to look at these experiences of Nephi, Moses, Enoch, or Elijah and arguably draw parallels between them and their modern Latter-day Saint temple experiences. However, a major difference between the ancient stories of individuals journeying to heaven and the experience of modern temple-goers is that modern temple endowments generally involve group settings.

Although the majority of ascents to heaven found in sacred writings record the experiences of individuals, there are also several

examples of “group ascension” as well. A well-known example from Latter-day Saint scripture is the account of Enoch and the city of Zion, in which Enoch and his whole community ascend to heaven. We are told in Moses 7:21 that “Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven.” Similarly, Moses 7:69 states, “And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED.”

Other examples of communal ascension from the scriptures include the following:

- Melchizedek and his people (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:32–34)
- Joshua the high priest and his fellows (Zechariah 3:8)
- The Three Nephites (3 Nephi 28:13–17)
- Moses, Aaron and his sons, and the seventy elders of Israel (Exodus 24:9–11)
- Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1–9)²
- The Church in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*

There are also a number of early Jewish and Christian extrabiblical texts that contain similar accounts of groups journeying into the heavenly realm. The following are just a few examples:

- “The History of the Rechabites” (*The Story of Zosimus*)
- “The Four Who Entered Paradise” (Tosefta, Talmuds)
- Jesus taught the Apostles how to ascend to the highest heaven (*The First Book of Jeu*)
- Ascension of the community in the Dead Sea Scrolls (*Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the *Hodayot*)

Although the scope of this paper will not allow for a discussion of all of these examples, an analysis of a sampling of some of the diverse sources should provide sufficient evidence that the idea of group ascension was a widespread phenomenon in ancient times, as it is in modern scripture and the modern Latter-day Saint temple experience as well.

An example of group ascension in the Old Testament that often goes unnoticed, perhaps due partially to the confusing language employed, is that of the high priest Joshua and his companions in Zechariah 3. Here, Zechariah is shown a vision of the heavenly

council, where he sees Joshua the high priest standing before the members of that council (Zechariah 3:1–4). The Lord commands that Joshua be clothed with a clean change of raiment—the mitre and robes of the celestial priesthood (Zechariah 3:4–5). He is directed to make a covenant to walk in the Lord’s ways and keep his charge. He is promised that if he does so, he will judge the Lord’s house, keep his courts, and will be given “places to walk among these that stand by” (i.e., the members of the divine council; Zechariah 3:7; compare Moses 7:69).

Although the Lord and the angel of the Lord are speaking directly to and about Joshua in these lines, Zechariah 3:8–9 moves immediately into a situation in which the angel of the Lord addresses Joshua and other individuals who are present with him in that setting. The angel declared, “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at” (Hebrew, “they are men that are a sign”). Although the angel may have been referring to individuals who were serving with Joshua only in the mortal realm, the more straightforward interpretation is that the angel was directly addressing subordinate priests who were with Joshua during this experience in the divine council. More will be said about this example subsequently.

Another example very similar, in many aspects, to the brief account of Joshua and his fellows is that of the ascension of the priestly circle described in certain writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls. A series of texts known as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (a.k.a. the “Angelic Liturgy”) was found at both Qumran and Masada. These songs contain descriptions of the various areas of the heavenly realm, including the celestial Holy of Holies and throne of God, and the worship practices of the angelic beings there. Many scholars have concluded that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* were used to perform a ritual drama—a ritualized ascent to heaven.

James Davila explains, “The [heavenly temple] was understood to be staffed by angels, but the participants in this weekly cultic drama must necessarily have taken on the roles of these angelic priests and so have undergone a process of temporary transformation or angelification on some level.”³ The human participants in the ritual are thought to have imagined themselves in the celestial

realm, performing the priesthood duties of the angels in the heavenly temple.

Carol Newsom suggests that “the recitation of these Sabbath songs was a major vehicle for the experience of communion with the angels”⁴ and “is intended as a communal experience of the human worshiping community” that gives the participants “a sense of being in the heavenly sanctuary and in the presence of angelic priests and worshipers.”⁵ Håkan Ulfsgard describes his view of their function: “They may have been intended to convey to the earthly worshippers the experience of being present at the continuous heavenly liturgy before the throne of God.”⁶ Crispin Fletcher-Louis sees the *Songs* as a “conductor’s score” for not merely a descriptive heavenly tour but a more concrete, ritualized heavenly ascent. What we see in these texts, he argues, should be considered the ritual ascension of the human community to heaven, where they experience a vision of God’s throne and are temporarily transformed into an angelified or deified state.⁷

Scott Mackie and Philip Alexander specifically refer to the *Songs* as implying a “communal heavenly ascent.” Alexander comments,

The communal chanting of these numinous hymns on successive Sabbaths was apparently deemed sufficient to carry the earthly worshippers up to the courts of the celestial Temple, through the nave and into the sanctuary, and to set them before the throne of God. . . . *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* implies a communal ascent: if one makes the ascent then one does so in a group. . . . *The Self-Glorification Hymn* (another similar text from the Dead Sea Scrolls), however, seems to imply that some individuals within the community, like Enoch and Levi and other great spiritual heroes of the past, had made the ascent on their own. Such individual ascent was probably the exception, rather than the rule.⁸

This “cultic drama” may have been a part of the initiation of new priests within the community and likely involved the taking of oaths and the making or renewing of covenants. Judith Newman observed that this ceremony would have “included the yearly evaluation of members and initiation of new members into the *Yahad* (community).” “The initiate,” she notes, “was required to swear an oath . . . to turn toward the torah of Moses.”⁹ The initiates, or

individuals exalted to participate in the angelic liturgy, covenanted that they would obey God's revealed teachings.¹⁰

The last song of the series describes the participants, after they had apparently ascended to the celestial Holy of Holies, performing their ritual duties while wearing their priestly vestments. Crispin Fletcher-Louis argued that there is evidence "that the Qumran community believed the garments of Exodus 28 should be worn simultaneously by more than one priest."¹¹ The worshippers who participate in this celestial liturgy were clothed in heavenly garments and divinely commissioned to share with others the knowledge revealed to them.¹²

Philip Alexander goes on to suggest that the leader of this liturgy, much like Enoch, would likely have already made the ascent himself and would thus be qualified to lead his congregation into the celestial realm. I have found a related pattern of themes in my own research on other Qumran texts, including a collection of poetic compositions or songs known as the *Hodayot*, or "Thanksgiving Psalms," and the scroll labeled 4Q381, a collection of noncanonical psalms. I will briefly outline the pattern that I have been able to piece together, drawing on an array of different texts within these collections. When these themes are brought together, the following picture begins to emerge:

- a. an individual, often the leader of the group or community, recounts how he has been taken up into heaven to stand in the divine council;
- b. he is taught the heavenly "mysteries," often by God himself;
- c. he is appointed to be a teacher and is called to teach the mysteries to others;
- d. those who follow his teachings are then permitted to participate in a heavenly ascent or vision.

The leader of the community gains access to the heavenly temple through his faithfulness and is then able to lead his followers in that same path of ascent.¹³

Returning to Joshua and his fellows in Zechariah 3, the experience of the high priest and his subordinate priestly colleagues contains many parallels with what has been described of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and these themes found in the *Hodayot* and

other Qumran texts. The narrative in Zechariah 3 is abbreviated and lacking in detail, but the basic elements seem to be present:

- Joshua the high priest ascends to heaven.
- He is clothed in the robes of the angelic priesthood and directed to make a covenant.
- His followers, fellow priests, also ascend and the angel of the Lord addresses them.
- They are given a revelation and a stone and are to be “signs” unto others (see Hebrew of Zechariah 3:8).

The *Epistle to the Hebrews* is a powerful example of this pattern of ritualized group heavenly ascent in the New Testament. The author of the epistle discusses how Abraham, while he was wandering in the land of promise, living in tents, “waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10 NKJV). The text implies that all of the ancient patriarchs were seeking to reach, or return to, a country *or a city*—a heavenly city (Hebrews 11:13–16). Hebrews 12:22 associates this city with Mount Zion.

The author contrasts the experience of the Israelites under Moses and how they were not able to even touch Mount Sinai with that of the followers of Jesus Christ who were given full access to Mount Zion. Speaking to a community of Christian believers, the author declares, “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, . . . and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven” (Hebrews 12:22–23). Whereas the ancient Israelites did not ascend the holy mountain to see God, the followers of Christ, in imitation of their Master, are able to go up to the heavenly heights and worship among the angels.

Hebrews is structured around the ideas of Jesus Christ’s high priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, his ascension into heaven and enthronement in the celestial sanctuary. The author of the epistle treats at length the notion that the followers of Christ, because of his exaltation, are, in like manner, now able to enter the heavenly sanctuary. The exact function and use of the epistle have long been debated by scholars. Harold Attridge believes it to have been presented as an “oratorical performance.”¹⁴ Scott Mackie refers to it as a “mystical drama.”¹⁵ Similarly, a number of scholars,

including Crispin Fletcher-Louis, John Dunnill, Luke Timothy Johnson, and Silviu Bunta, have described Hebrews as a symbolic, participatory liturgy that moves worshippers from the profane to the sacred sphere.¹⁶

In other words, the epistle, or at least parts of it, was plausibly meant to have been performed, or acted out. This ritual enactment could have included a series of events set in the heavenly temple that are dramatically brought to life through the use of visually-oriented literary practices such as dramatized “narrative with speaking actors,” visual imagery, cues, and commands—including directions to “behold,” “gaze upon,” “draw near,” and “enter.”¹⁷ Scott Mackie has attempted a reconstruction of this dramatic portrayal, which he understands to be a “divine adoption ceremony.” He outlines the following elements:

1. Depiction of Jesus’s ascent to heaven and entry into the celestial temple—“a great high priest that is passed into the heavens” (4:14)—Christ entered “into heaven itself.”
2. Dramatic reenactment of the Son’s exaltation (chapters 1 and 2)—“Now see Jesus crowned with glory and honor” (Hebrews 2:9)¹⁸—“Sit on my right hand” (1:13).
3. Declaration of familial relationship between Father and Son (“naming ritual”)—“Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (1:5; 2:12–13).
4. Son confers family membership on community (they are his siblings)—“Behold I and the children that God hath given me”—“bringing many sons unto glory”—“not ashamed to call them brethren” (2:10–15).
5. Community is provided access to the heavenly temple by Jesus, their High Priest—they are exhorted to boldly “enter” the heavenly sanctuary and “draw near” to God’s throne (4:14–16; 10:19–25).¹⁹

Upon entry into the heavens, the Christian community hears the declaration, “Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (Hebrews 12:22–24).

According to Mackie, all of this would have been performed by actors or described in a way that the participants could vividly imagine themselves as being in the heavenly temple and visualize Christ on his throne, and so on. I would also note here that Hebrews 6:13–18 indicates that the participants are the recipients of promises, or covenants, from God that are associated with the Abrahamic covenant. The confirmation of the divine oath with these “heirs of promise” serves to give them hope.

Verse 18 indicates that those who have received this covenant have “fled” in order to “take hold upon the hope set before” them. There is, perhaps, a comparison that we can make here between the idea that this community has “fled” and the statement in Moses 7:69, “Zion is fled.” Importantly, the “church” that can be found in this city on Mount Zion is actually the Church of the “Firstborns”—plural—in Greek. Verses 19–20 of Hebrews 6 tell of the hope that the community holds dear: “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the innermost sanctuary behind the veil, where Jesus, our forerunner, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”

Summarizing his findings regarding this ritualized ascent, Mackie concluded,

Hebrews depicts Jesus’ exaltation as involving an ascent, as he “passed through the heavens . . .” and “entered into heaven itself. . . .” He is also said to be “leading . . . many children” into the same “glory” he possesses (2:10). Most importantly, the two key entry exhortations, 4:14–16 and 10:19–23, both commend an act of entry that follows and imitates Jesus’ own heavenly ascent (4:14) and passage “through the curtain” (10:20). Therefore, a mystical, heavenly ascent of the whole community would appear to be envisaged.²⁰

As Andrew Louth has argued, those Christians who embark on the mystical journey to reach God do so not individually but as a community—as the body of Christ.²¹

As I have shown here, the theme of communal heavenly ascent is repeated frequently in the writings of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. The general pattern that can be seen includes, among other elements, the following: (a) an individual ascends to heaven and sees God; is clothed in heavenly garments or otherwise

“transfigured”; (b) is taught the heavenly mysteries by God/angels (revelation of divine wisdom/knowledge); (c) is appointed to be a teacher, to share this knowledge with others; and (d) those who receive his teachings are allowed to make the (ritualized) heavenly ascent and enjoy the same experiences as the teacher.

This is the pattern that can be seen in the stories of Jesus and the Church in Hebrews, Jesus and the Three Nephites in 3 Nephi, Enoch and his city in the book of Moses, the teacher and the community in certain of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Joshua and his fellows in Zechariah 3, and many more. Furthermore, examples such as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the *Epistle to the Hebrews* provide evidence that at least some of these accounts of group ascension to heaven were originally used in the context of ritual, as dramatic performances meant for group participation.

It can be further argued that this phenomenon was not new to Second Temple Judaism or early Christianity. Several of the Old Testament psalms can be seen to support this idea of a ritual group ascent to heaven.

For example, Psalm 89 was seen by some at Qumran as referring to the notion of ascent to heaven.²² Verses 1–14 of Psalm 89 can be read as if the psalmist—King David—were in heaven, singing praises to God for his mighty works. Verses 5–7 read,

5 And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty [*b'nei elim*, sons of the gods] can be likened unto the LORD?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints [holy ones/angels], and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

The most straightforward interpretation of these verses is, arguably, that the psalmist is present in heaven beholding Jehovah among the other members of the divine council. In that setting, he can contrast the glory and wonders of Jehovah with that of the other heavenly beings.

Psalm 89:15–18 can be understood as referring to the king's followers who are likewise worshipping in the Lord's presence. They walk, like Enoch and his people, before the Lord's face. Verses 15–16

(ESV) read, “Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face, who exult in your name all the day and in your righteousness are exalted.”

The Hebrew word translated as “exalted” here is *rum*, which can mean “to be lifted up to a height” and can be understood as a reference to heavenly ascent. The fact that the people know, or have been taught, the “festal shout” (Hebrew, *teru’ah*) is an indication that they are participating in a sacred ritual.²³ Several other passages in the Psalms explicitly or implicitly describe a ritual ascent to heaven in the form of a ceremonial procession up to the heights of the temple mount.

For example, Psalm 68 depicts “solemn processions” involving God ascending “up into the sanctuary” (Psalm 68:24). Jehovah, leading “thousands upon thousands” of chariots, marched “from Sinai into the holy place” and “ascended the high mount” (Psalm 68:17 NRSV). The ascension of the Lord is accompanied by human participants—the faithful of the tribes of Israel. Psalm 68:24–27 (NRSV) reads,

Your solemn processions are seen, O God, the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—the singers in front, the musicians last, between them girls playing tambourines: “Bless God in the great congregation, the LORD, O you who are of Israel’s fountain!” There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead, the princes of Judah in a body, the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

Psalm 47 describes a similar setting in which the people are clapping, shouting, and singing because “God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet” (Psalm 47:5). Psalm 84 paints a more intimate portrait of one who is participating in this procession, or pilgrimage, up to the temple:

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord (Psalm 84:1–2 NRSV);

Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.

Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion (verses 4–5 NRSV).

They go from power to power until they see the God of gods in Zion (verse 7, my translation).²⁴

The Hebrew word for “power” or “strength” used here is *chayil*, which can also refer to an army, or the captain of an army—also to the “host” of heaven, the angels. It is possible, then, that Psalm 84 is referring to a processional journey to the temple that includes passing through different stations, or possibly gates, attended by “angelic” guardians, until they finally reach their ultimate goal of “seeing” the Lord in his temple.²⁵ More evidence for this conclusion can be found in Psalms 24 and 118.

Parts of Psalm 118 can likewise be seen as describing a ritual procession up to the temple, with explicit mention of passing through the temple gates. The psalmist is apparently addressing the gatekeepers: “Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it” (Psalm 118:19–20 ESV). He then addresses the Lord directly, as if now standing before him, saying, “I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation” (verse 21 ESV). The one who has entered through the gates is blessed by those (priests?) in the interior of the temple precincts: “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord” (verse 26 KJV).

Psalm 24 seems to describe a very similar situation. A group of people ascends “the hill of the Lord” seeking “the face of the God of Jacob” (Psalm 24:3–6). The text implies that they have a dialogue with the guardians of the temple gates in which they ask for the gates to open so that they may enter. The members of this procession are apparently accompanying their leader, the Lord, “the King of glory,” and are able to enter by virtue of his name and because of their spiritual preparation (verses 4, 7–10).²⁶

We may see in these descriptions a leader who “comes in the name of the Lord” and asks for the gates to be opened so that he and his “righteous” followers may enter the temple courts. The psalms discussed here strongly resemble, for example, the idea in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* of Jesus leading his followers to the heights of Mount Zion, to the celestial city; or the story of Enoch and his city of Zion, which were taken up to dwell in God’s presence.

Examples of this pattern of individual ascension to heaven of a leader/teacher and, subsequently, a group of faithful followers can be found throughout a broad range of sacred writings, including the Old and New Testaments, the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish texts, early Christian extrabiblical writings, and also scripture revealed in modern times, like the book of Moses. Due to the ritualistic nature of many of these texts, as has been discussed in this presentation, there is compelling evidence that there existed anciently a communal, or group, heavenly ascent ritual that should be seen as comparable, in many aspects, to the modern temple experiences of the Latter-day Saints.

Notes

1. Neal A. Maxwell, *Lord Increase Our Faith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1994), 78.
2. The examples of Moses, Aaron, and the seventy elders and of Peter, James, and John are like those mentioned by Elder Maxwell for Moses and Nephi—they resemble other accounts of ascents to heaven but took place on mountaintops.
3. James R. Davila, “Exploring the Mystical Background of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 443.
4. Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition*, Harvard Semitic Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 27:18–19.
5. Newsom, *Songs*, 17.
6. Håkan Ulfsgård, “The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Heavenly Scene of the Book of Revelation,” in *Northern Lights on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Nordic Qumran Network 2003–2006*, ed. Anders K. Petersen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 255–56.
7. Crispin Fletcher-Louis, “Heavenly Ascent and Incarnational Presence? A Revisionist Reading of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1998 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 367–99.
8. Philip Alexander, “Qumran and the Genealogy of Western Mysticism,” in *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9–11 January, 2005*, ed. Esther Chazon, Betsy Halpern-Amaru, and Ruth A. Clemens (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 226–27.
9. Judith H. Newman, “Priestly Prophets at Qumran: Summoning Sinai through the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” in *The Significance*

- of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. George J. Brooke, Hinday Najman, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 61.
10. This concept is very similar to the passage in another Qumran text (IQHa XII) in which the speaker refers to a group of followers that have “gathered together” for the covenant and whom the speaker has “examined.” See David J. Larsen, “Angels among Us: The Use of Old Testament Passages as Inspiration for Temple Themes in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 5 (2013): 91–110, at 108.
 11. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 358.
 12. Larsen, “Angels among Us,” 108–9.
 13. For more on this, see Larsen, “Angels among Us,” 92–102.
 14. Harold Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily (λόγος παρακλήσεως): The Possible Location of, and Socialization in, the ‘Epistle to the Hebrews,’” *Semeia* 50 (1990): 211–26, at 217. As George Nickelsburg has argued, it is very possible that the Enochic Book of Parables was originally meant to be an oral performance, an idea that he discusses in depth in the second volume of his commentary on 1 Enoch, in the section entitled “Orality and Performance.” George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 36–38.
 15. Scott D. Mackie, “Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 62, no. 1 (April 2011): 78.
 16. See Scott Mackie, *Eschatology and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 170–71; John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 261; Luke Timothy Johnson, “The Scriptural World of Hebrews,” *Interpretation* 73, no. 3 (July 2003): 238; and Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), xii. Silviu Bunta, “The Convergence of Adamic and Merkabah Traditions in the Christology of Hebrews,” paper read at the 2010 SBL Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Nov. 21, 2010.
 17. Mackie, “Ancient Jewish Mystical Motifs in Hebrews’ Theology of Access and Entry Exhortations,” *New Testament Studies* 58, no. 1 (Jan. 2012): 88–104, at 98. Mackie, “Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism,” 78.
 18. Translation of Hebrews 2:9 is Mackie’s.
 19. Mackie, “Ancient Jewish,” 98–99, n34.
 20. Mackie, “Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism,” 98.
 21. Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 199–200.
 22. Larsen, “Angels among Us,” 98, 100.

23. The *teru'ah* was a shout or a trumpet blast (or both) which was usually given in the context of a temple ritual on a festival day, such as the Feast of Trumpets or Day of Atonement. For more on this, see Larsen, "Angels among Us," 101–2.
24. For a comparable translation, see *The Aramaic Bible in Plain English and the Contemporary English Version*.
25. "Power" was later a name for a rank of angel in the angelic hierarchies known in early Christianity; compare Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 3:10. Epiphanius cites the Gospel of Philip as saying, "The Lord revealed unto me what the soul must say as it goeth up into heaven, and how it must answer each of the *powers* above" (Against Heresies 36:13).
26. For more on these psalms and the notion of a ritual ascension to the temple, see David J. Larsen, "Ascending into the Hill of the Lord: The Psalms as a Key to Understanding the Rituals of the First Temple," in *Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium, 14 May 2011*, Temple on Mount Zion, Series 1, eds. Matthew B. Brown, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Stephen D. Ricks, and John S. Thompson (Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2013), 171–88; Larsen, "Psalm 24 and the Two YHWHs at the Gate of the Temple," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored, Proceedings of the Second Interpreter Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 25 October 2014*, Temple on Mount Zion, Series 3, eds. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2016), 201–23.