

## ENTERING THE TEMPLE

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When Solomon's great temple stood in ancient Jerusalem, each man in Israel had to make a pilgrimage three times a year to visit the holy place. Women were exempt from this rule because of their duties at home, but if they could travel, they went. In the temple it was not possible just to enter the holy place and look around. Access to the temple building was restricted to the priests, and only the high priests could enter the holy of holies, but the people of Israel filled its courts.

There were degrees of holiness within the temple building, which was divided into two areas: the great hall and then the inner room that was screened from the hall by the curtain that is usually called the veil of the temple. When Moses on Sinai received from the LORD instructions for building the place of worship, he was told:

You shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen... and the veil shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy place (Exod. 26.31, 33).

'Most holy' is sometimes translated 'holy of holies'. The holy of holies was behind the veil. Later we learn the distinction between 'holy' and 'most holy'. When Moses was told to make a perfumed holy oil and anoint the tabernacle and all its furnishings, the LORD said: 'You shall consecrate them that they may become most holy. Whatever touches them will become holy' (Exod. 30.29). 'Most holy', then was an actively holy state: a most holy object or person could impart holiness to others.

This means that the holy of holies in the temple imparted holiness. Anyone who entered was transformed into a holy one. Those who entered the holy of holies became angels, holy ones, sons of God. They were transformed. The wonder of the temple was its power to transform.

The great veil was a huge piece of fabric, woven from four colours: red, purple, blue and white, to represent the four elements from which matter was formed. Two Jewish writers, Philo and Josephus, who lived in the time of Jesus, gave this information, and both were from a high priestly family. We can assume that what they said was correct in their time, but there is no way of knowing if this was the original belief about the colours of the temple veil.

One of the problems with temple symbolism is that so little is revealed. The Bible gives great detail of how the tabernacle and Solomon's temple had to be built and furnished, but no reason why this had to be done in this way. The veil had to be woven in a particular way, but no reason was given.

The explanation that the veil represented matter is important for understanding what the whole temple represented. To our way of thinking and speaking, it *represented* the whole creation, but for those who worshipped there, it *was* the whole creation.

When Moses assembled the tabernacle, the stages of the work corresponded to the six days of creation. You can see this if you compare Genesis 1 and the second half of Exodus 40 where Moses assembled the tabernacle. The third day of creation, the day of the dry land and plants, corresponded to the third stage of assembling the tabernacle which was when Moses set in place the golden table to receive the plant offerings: bread, oil and incense. You can work out this pattern for all six days of creation. The veil which separated the holy place from the most holy place corresponded to the firmament that separated the heavenly world from the lower world. If, as Philo and Josephus suggested, the veil represented matter, then the holy of holies represented the heavenly world hidden from human eyes by matter.

As with so many small details in Scripture, this is hidden in the text itself, but not often noticed. The Hebrew text of Genesis says that the beginning of creation, the source of creation, was *Day One*. It does not say 'first day'. For all the other stages of creation, the text says *second* day, *third* day, *fourth* day and so on, but the beginning is not 'first' because it was not part of a time sequence. *Day One* was outside time and beyond matter.

Day One was said to indicate something completely different but hugely important. It indicated the Oneness, the Unity of the Glory of God that underlies all creation and is not affected by time and matter. It is the state of the Glory of God that is hidden from human eyes. This important evidence set in the Hebrew text was preserved by the Greek translation, which also has Day One. The ancient translators, unlike many modern ones did not change things when they thought was a mistake in the text. They kept what was written and then thought about the mystery.

This piece of evidence helps us to understand the world-view of the temple. Outside the veil was the world of matter, the visible world of time and change. Beyond the veil there was no matter and no time. Those who looked out from the holy of holies, beyond the veil, saw all creation and all history as one pattern, woven together like the veil itself. This is a possible setting for some words in Isaiah, which would show that the idea is very old indeed.

Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?  
It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
And spreads them like a tent to dwell in;  
It is he who brings princes to naught,  
And makes the rulers of the earth as nothing (Isa.0.21-23).

The LORD here was reminding Isaiah that he had stood in the holy of holies when he was called to be a prophet. He had stood in the beginning of creation and had seen from there all the works of the LORD in history. He already knew what would happen. The prophet Habakkuk had the same experience; he stood on the tower and looked out to see what the LORD would show him (Hab. 2.1). This was not a man standing on a watchtower as the lookout. It was the prophet standing in the holy of holies, which was often called a tower, and looking out to see what would happen in the future. He was told to record his vision on tablets, so that people could know when it was fulfilled.

So too with St John: 'Come up hither', said a voice from heaven at the beginning of the book of Revelation, 'Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this' (Rev. 4.1).

Day One, the beginning of all things, was represented in the temple by the holy of holies. It was built as a golden cube-shaped room, the gold representing the fire and light of the divine glory. Later Christian theologians would call it the pre-created light. Those who entered the holy of holies became holy ones and a part of that light. They understood the secret of the unity of all things because they had been there and become part of it. That is why in traditional Christian art, angels and saints are shown with haloes, because their presence brings the light of the Glory into our world.

In the holy of holies was the great cherub throne of the LORD with the ark as its footstool. This was both heaven and earth, as the Psalmist wrote. 'The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven' (Ps.11.4). The psalm ends 'The LORD is righteous, he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.'

Here again, if we look closely at the what the Bible says, much more is revealed.

The form of the Hebrew word, *ṣaddîq*, righteous, implies the meaning 'makes righteous', and in temple discourse, this meant healing and restoring. 'The LORD is righteous' meant 'the LORD heals

and restores'. Unfortunately, the Hebrew text here is damaged, but it seems to say that the LORD loves actions that promote righteousness – actions that promote healing and restoring. The upright person who does this will behold his presence. This is another aspect of entering the holy of holies: those who see the face or presence [in Hebrew it is the same word] of the One enthroned there, become part of his work of making all things one. In other words, they become part of the LORD's work of healing and restoring.

Each item of temple furnishing represented an element of temple teaching, and it may be that the teaching itself was kept secret. Origen, the Christian biblical scholar who died in 253 CE, said that only the high priests saw the sacred furnishings and so they were the only ones who knew the innermost temple teachings. He explained<sup>1</sup> that when the tabernacle was carried through the desert, as described in Numbers 4, the high priests had to wrap all the items before the lesser servants of the tabernacle, the Levites, were allowed near to carry them. So too with the teachings; only the high priest knew the real meaning of the temple, its form, its furnishings and its rituals. Elsewhere in Numbers we read that the high priest had to attend to all that concerned priesthood, the altar and matters within the veil (Num.18.7). Anyone else who approached these forbidden things would die.

From the very beginning, however, Jesus was recognized and proclaimed as the great high priest (Heb.4.14). The New Testament *seems* to say very little about this, but even the earliest Christian writers knew what this meant: Jesus knew the temple teachings and had revealed them to his followers.

Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, writing about 100 CE to the Church in Philadelphia in Asia Minor wrote this: 'Our own high priest- meaning Jesus- is greater [than the ancient priests] for he has been entrusted with the holy of holies and to him alone are the secret things of God committed.'<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Ignatius was not the only one who wrote like this: Clement of Alexandria, about 200CE, said Christians learned the traditions of the LORD by 'drawing aside the curtain.'<sup>3</sup> Origen knew there were greater things in Scripture that the prophets did not write down, and that Jesus knew them and taught them to a few people<sup>4</sup>. Many others repeated this claim. .

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<sup>1</sup> Homily 5 on Numbers

<sup>2</sup> *Philadelphians* 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Miscellanies* 7.17

<sup>4</sup> *Celsus* 3.37; 6.6

St Dionysius – nobody knows exactly when and where he lived - St Dionysius whose mystical theology has been a great influence on Christian theology and worship, wrote this to his pupil Timothy:

See to it that you do not betray the holy of holies. Let your respect for the things of the hidden God be shown in knowledge that comes from the intellect and is unseen. Keep these things of God unshared and undefiled by the uninitiated.<sup>5</sup>

This is the kind of divine enlightenment into which we have been initiated by the hidden tradition of our inspired teachers, a tradition at one with Scripture.<sup>6</sup>

The early Christians knew that they had inherited the inner secrets of the ancient temple and that these were still in the Scriptures if you had been taught how to read them. There is even a saying about temple secrets attributed to Jesus, although it is not in the New Testament.

In a book attributed to Clement, the bishop of Rome at the end of the first century, St Peter says this: ‘We remember that our LORD and teacher, commanding us, said: “Keep the mysteries [or secrets] for me and the sons of my house<sup>2</sup>. This is why he also explained to his disciples privately the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’<sup>7</sup> The familiar teachings in the gospels about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God were in fact teachings drawn from the mysteries of the temple. In other words, they were for those who became the new high priests, which explains why Jesus said that some of his teaching was not intended for everyone:

When Jesus was alone, those who were about him with the twelve, asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them ‘To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything is parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn again and be forgiven (Mark 4.10-12).

Note that Jesus quoted from Isaiah 6, the words Isaiah had to give to his own people back in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE when they had adopted false teaching. ‘I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips’. The warning from the LORD was that false teaching made it impossible to see the truth. Those who accepted false teaching would see but not see, hear but not hear, and so they would never turn and be restored.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 372A

<sup>6</sup> *Divine Names* 592B

<sup>7</sup> *Clementine Homilies* 19.20, also in Clement of Alexandria *Miscellanies* 5.10.

Jesus knew that some of the people listening to him would not recognise the source of the teaching he gave them, and so would not understand it or accept it. Then there are the enigmatic words of John the Baptist to his own disciples when he was speaking about Jesus: 'He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony' (John 3.32). What had Jesus seen and heard? We are not told, but the first Christians knew.

Jesus had secret temple knowledge, and his quotation from Isaiah 6 suggests that the problem about temple knowledge came not from recent developments, but from events as long ago as the time of Isaiah, when false teaching first began to spread among the people of Jerusalem.

The Enoch writings tell about this. *1 Enoch* was copied out for many centuries by the monks in Ethiopia. It was Scripture for the first Christians. Preserved in this anthology of ancient material, which could well be a collection of ancient high priestly teaching, is a brief and enigmatic history which says that the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, the temple in Jerusalem became corrupt. This was the time of Isaiah. The priests in the temple abandoned Wisdom and lost their spiritual sight. Then the temple was destroyed.<sup>8</sup>

The people who rebuilt the temple in 525 BCE, the building we call the second temple, were apostate and impure. That is a sweeping judgment on the people who built the second temple and collected the Hebrew Scriptures, but it must be kept in mind when we try to recover the wonder of Solomon's original temple and its teaching. The people who built the second temple and transmitted the Hebrew Scriptures were deemed apostate and impure by the old believers. The people who built the second temple did not hand on some of the teaching of the older temple. They regarded some of it as blasphemous, for example seeing the LORD in human form, and this may account for the damaged state of some of the texts they copied out..

There had been a dramatic break. The first and second temples were very different from each other, but many people never forgot the older ways and longed for them to be restored.

When St John recorded the words on Jesus' cross, he gave the full inscription which is longer than that in the other gospels. St John was there when Jesus died, and thought it important to record the full title: 'Jesus *the Restorer*, the King of the Jews'. It did not say 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews'. The Greek says *Nazoraios*, not *Nazarenos*, This also became the Hebrew name for the Christians: *Notsrim*, the preservers or restorers. Jesus was restoring the older royal temple.

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<sup>8</sup> *1 Enoch* 93

This was the role of the Messiah. When the accusers at Jesus' trial before the high priest said that he had threatened to destroy the temple and build another, the high priest did not ask Jesus if his was true. Instead he asked: 'Are you then the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?' (Mark 14.58-61). Building a new temple meant the Messiah had come, who would restore the old ways and the older teachings. .

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There are several places in the New Testament where the followers of Jesus are depicted in the holy of holies, in other words, as high priests who have who know the secret teachings. First, there is Hebrews 12, where some pilgrims have completed their journey and reached Jerusalem:

You have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven...

[You have come] to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better things than the blood of Abel (Heb.12.22-24).

The pilgrims are standing with the angels. They are all in the holy of holies with the assembly of the Firstborn, a title given to the ancient Davidic kings in Jerusalem. With them are the spirits of just men made perfect, who are the righteous ones whom we met in Psalm 11, beholding the face of the LORD. Jesus is there, and his blood has been sprinkled to renew the covenant. This is the Day of Atonement in heaven. All rituals in the earthly temple reflected the worship of heaven, although in temple discourse they *were* the worship of heaven. The familiar words 'They will be done on earth as it is in heaven' are temple talk.

**In the world of the temple, this implied many things:**

- They were standing in the holy of holies and therefore had been transformed;
- They were themselves a part of the divine glory and unity;
- They had seen the secrets of the holy of holies,

Malachi reminded the priests of his time - about 400 BCE - that they were the angels of the LORD of Hosts. Angel and messenger are the same word in Hebrew, and so the prophet was reminding the

angel priests that they had to teach the ways of the LORD. (Mal.2.7). How these angel priests decided what to reveal is not known, but St Dionysius later warned his disciple Timothy:

See to it that you do not betray the holy of holies. Let your respect for the things of the hidden God be shown in knowledge that comes from the intellect and is unseen. Keep these things of God unshared and undefiled by the uninitiated.<sup>9</sup>

This is the kind of divine enlightenment into which we have been initiated by the hidden tradition of our inspired teachers, a tradition at one with Scripture.<sup>10</sup>

In the Book of Revelation, St John had a vision of the same temple throng, standing before the LORD on the throne and seeing his face, in other words, standing in the holy of holies.

The throne of God and the Lamb shall be [in the temple city], and his servants shall worship him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they shall need no light of lamp or sun, for the LORD God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever'' (Rev.22.3-5).

This was the heart of St John's vision of the temple city, and the original meaning of Jesus' saying: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt.5.8). They stood in the eternal light, the pre-created light, of the holy of holies.

The Name on the forehead was the sign of the ancient high priest, marked with the oil when he was anointed. In the first temple, this took the form of a diagonal cross. Nobody knows why the Name of the LORD was represented by a diagonal cross, but the prophet Ezekiel says this was so (Ezek.9.4). He was himself a priest, and received a vision of angels coming to destroy the city. He also heard the LORD offering protection to those who had remained faithful. There was a scribe with the angels, and the LORD told him to put a mark, a diagonal cross X, on the foreheads of all the faithful.

Tracing this thread through temple texts reveals one of the most important teachings in the New Testament: the Christians were the restored, high priests. The false teaching in the time of Isaiah eventually led to a revolution within the priesthood. Many left the polluted temple and some even joined with the Babylonian army many years later when they attacked Jerusalem. Presumably they hoped to restore the older ways when the Babylonians had conquered the city. That is speculation,

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<sup>9</sup> *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 372A

<sup>10</sup> *Divine Names* 592B

but people remembered for centuries that these priests eventually went south and settled in Arabia, taking the older faith with them.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps this is why St Paul, after his conversion, went to Arabia (Gal. 1.17), to learn about the roots of his new faith which was in fact the older faith.

The people in the holy of holies, wearing the Name, also saw the face of the LORD. In the older temple, it was the duty of every man in Israel to go to the temple three times a year to keep the great festivals of unleavened bread, harvest and ingathering (Exod.23.14-17). ‘Three times in the year shall all your men appear before the Lord GOD’. This is what the current Hebrew text wants us to read. But there are problems with this verse, because the natural way to read that Hebrew is: ‘Three times a year shall all your men *see the face of the LORD*’.

What happened to some of the texts? Over the centuries, the teachers of Israel developed and changed their understanding of their faith, and some of the older ways were felt to be primitive and even blasphemous. The movement to change the temple – what Isaiah described as the false teaching – had its greatest success in the time of King Josiah, who purged many of the old ways from the temple in 623 BCE. His followers said he was purifying the temple, but many people said he was destroying the old faith. Seeing the face of the LORD implied that the LORD had a human form. This was one of the beliefs that Jesus restored.

The scribes who served the new regime did not often change the sacred texts; more often they just pronounced them differently. You can do this in Hebrew, where the written form is only the consonants. By adding different vowels as you read, you can in fact change a word, and this is what happened here. Seeing the face of the LORD GOD became ‘appearing before the Lord GOD’, and so the older idea that they saw the Lord GOD disappeared.

The ancient blessing given by the high priests could not be changed or removed.

The LORD bless you and keep you,

The LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you

The LORD lift up his face upon you and give you peace’

So they shall put my name upon the people of Israel and I will bless them (Num. 6. 24-27). .

This blessing was fulfilled for those whom St John saw in the holy of holies: they saw the shining face of the LORD, it gave them grace and peace, and his Name was marked on them.

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<sup>11</sup> Jerusalem Talmud *Ta’anit* 4.5, about 400 CE.

The mark of the Name became the diagonal cross, X. that Christians received at their baptism, and so St John saw the baptised servants of the LORD standing before his throne (Rev.22.4)..

The face of the LORD and seeing the face of the LORD became a sensitive matter, and by the time of Jesus, it was forbidden to explain what the ancient blessing meant. ‘The blessing of the priests is read out but not interpreted’<sup>12</sup> is one of the rules in the Mishnah, the collection of Jewish laws and customs written down about 200 CE. St John, however, began his gospel by declaring: ‘We have beheld his glory’ (John 1.14), a controversial statement, and Jesus, as we have seen, taught ‘Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God’ (Matt.5.8). Both these are familiar verses, but set in the context of the temple, they begin to reveal their original meaning. *They also show that the followers of Jesus had preserved the ways of the older temple.*

The older, literal meaning disappeared from many texts, not just from these examples I have given: the purpose of pilgrimage and the high priests’ blessing. We suspect that some of the older understandings the temple also disappeared. This creates problems for anyone trying to reconstruct the meaning of the temple.

The Book of Revelation described the people who stood before the throne. First there were the 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel, sealed on their foreheads with the seal of the living God:

Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God... [and he said] ‘Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads’ (Rev. 7.2, 3).

This is what Ezekiel had seen many centuries earlier; the faithful being marked with the Name before the day of destruction. Then St John saw another multitude:

A great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands... (Rev.7.9).

These were the servants whom we saw in the holy of holies, but the palm branches suggest a time nearer to the feast of Tabernacles, when the LORD would appear. The next time we see the 144 000 marked with the Name, they are the Host of the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion (Revelation 14.1), and finally they emerge from heaven as the angel army of the King of kings and LORD of LORDS (Rev.19.15-16) as he fights the final battle with the sharp sword from his mouth, his teachings. .

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<sup>12</sup> Mishnah *Megillah* 4.10.

The followers of the Lamb were marked with the diagonal cross, so they were the baptized. They were the new high priests, all of them, and they wore white garments of the holy of holies. A text known in the time of Jesus, the *Testament of Levi*, described the consecration of the high priest, but not according to the rituals prescribed in Leviticus 8. The strange ritual has puzzled scholars for a long time, because it is very similar to the earliest Christian form of baptism: anointing, washing, feeding with bread and wine, clothing in linen, a crowning with a wreath.<sup>13</sup> It is possible that the consecration ritual from the older temple survived as the Christian baptism, further evidence that the Christians were the new high priesthood.

They were the restored royal priesthood, the Melchizedek priesthood, just as St Peter had taught: 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people...' (1 Pet.2.9). St John heard the 24 elders in heaven singing about the royal priests who would reign on earth (Rev.5.10).

When Jesus read from Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, he said that the scripture was that day fulfilled (Luke 4.16-21), He was reading Isaiah 61, a passage that not only promised good tidings to the poor; but *also that a rejected priesthood would be restored and given their heritage* :

You shall be called the priests of the LORD  
Men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God...  
Instead of your shame you shall have a double portion...  
For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrong;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
And I will make an everlasting covenant with them (Isa.61.6, 7, 8).

This element in Jesus' teaching is often neglected.

When Jesus told his followers to take up their cross (Mark 8.34 and parallels), a saying which we usually understand as a warning to expect suffering, I suspect it was originally an invitation to sharing the high priesthood by wearing the cross.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me...  
For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of

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<sup>13</sup> Testament of Levi 8.2-10.

him will the Son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8.34, 38).

Jesus linked this saying about taking up the cross to the Son of Man coming in glory with his angels - a reference to the host in the Revelation 14 with the Name on their foreheads, the redeemed who had followed the Lamb. 'Take up your cross and follow me' was an invitation to become one of the restored high priests. The third commandment was originally directed to the high priests, because it warned them not to wear the Name of the LORD without due reverence. 'You shall not wear the Name of the LORD your God lightly, for the LORD will not keep him free from harm if he wears his Name lightly.' Wearing the Name lightly would give them no protection. (Exod.20.7).

The servants of the LORD whom St John saw before the throne were standing in the restored holy of holies. The throne was by the tree of life, and the river of the water of life flowed from it and out from the holy of holies.

There are several temple texts which show that those who entered the holy of holies were transformed and became a part of the holiness. They were taught the secrets of mercy and the secrets of righteousness.<sup>14</sup> In another account of his visions, Enoch says that the angels showed him the secrets of the heavens, how the kingdom is divided and the actions of men weighed in a balance.<sup>15</sup> This was the matters within the veil, everything revealed within the holy of holies (Num.18.7) that was entrusted only to the high priests. It was the fundamental teaching of the temple.

Since the Christians were the restored high priests, the knowledge on the holy of holies was the secret of the kingdom of God that Jesus taught privately to his disciples (Mark 4.11). Matthew, Mark and Luke do not reveal by name and in detail what this knowledge was, but once you recognise the teachings of the holy of holies from other sources, it becomes easier to see where they underlie the word of Jesus.

St John, both in the Book of revelation and in his gospel, gives the fullest account of the holy of holies. Most of the Book of Revelation is set there, and in his gospel he records Jesus' temple theology. The great high priestly prayer in chapter 17 sums up the secrets of the holy of holies:

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Enoch 71.3

<sup>15</sup> 1 Enoch 41.1

the unity of Father and Son, the unity of Son and disciples, and the fact that unity is proof of divine origin. 'I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me' (John 17.23).

The prologue tells of the One who came forth from the holy of holies, the true light, and how the transforming glory of the holy of holies became incarnate and brought to earth the most holiness that transformed people into angels and holy ones: 'But to all who received him, who believed in his Name, he gave the power to become children of God' (John 1.12).

Jesus knew he was returning to the pre-created light. He prayed: 'Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made.' He had come from Day One, the holy of holies, and he was returning.

St Dionysius again:

In the divine realm, unities hold a higher place than differentiations. They have the first place and they remain united even after the One, while retaining its singularity, has turned outwards to differentiation.<sup>16</sup>

The divine Light grants to creatures the power to rise up, so far as they may, towards itself and it unifies them by way of its own simplified unity.<sup>17</sup>

This is a seventeenth century English prayer asking for the post mortem experience of the glory, but temple discourse knew that some entered the glory before physical death. This was the glory that was waiting for those who entered the temple.

John Donne's prayer. (1572-1631).

Bring us, O LORD, at our [last] awakening, into the house and gate of heaven, there to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there can be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence but one equal music; no fears nor hopes but one equal possession; no ends nor

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<sup>16</sup> *Divine Names* 652A.

<sup>17</sup> *Celestial Hierarchy* 121B

beginnings but one equal eternity; in the habitations of thy glory and dominion, world without end,  
Amen

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