

FIRST TEMPLE SYMBOLISM IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL. WHO WERE THE JEWS?

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'Jews' said Josephus, 'is the name they are called by from the day that they came up from Babylon' (*Antiquities* 11.173). The Samaritans, however, described themselves as 'Hebrews... but not Jews.' (*Antiquities* 11.344). Those who claimed to preserve the ways of the first temple in Jerusalem - best represented by the Enoch texts - described the people who returned from Babylon not as Jews but as 'an apostate generation' (*1 Enoch* 93.9), people whose temple offerings were polluted and whose eyes did not see (*1 Enoch* 89.73-74).

This division within the heirs of Hebrew temple tradition is clear in the words of the Third-Isaiah, writing just after the people from Babylon had come to the land. They had barred foreigners and eunuchs from their temple, as prescribed in Deuteronomy 23.1-3, but the prophet said the temple should have been a house of prayer for all peoples (Isa.56.7). He was unsparing in his condemnation of the newly established temple worship and its priests: the great offerings of the bull, the lamb, the cereals and the frankincense were no better than murder, offering a dog, offering pig's blood or blessing an idol (Isa.66.3-4). Psalms 15 and 24, which represent the older ways, did not list eunuchs and foreigners among those excluded from the temple; upright people with clean hands and a pure heart could ascend the hill of the LORD and stand in the holy place.

The temple and its purity were issues in both Third Isaiah and *1 Enoch*: the Jews and the 'others' had different criteria. Those whom Josephus identified as 'the Jews', that is, those who followed Deuteronomy's definition of purity, were seen by the others as polluters of the temple. Jesus taught that it was the pure in heart who would see God (Matt.5.8), and that true defilement came from the human heart (Mark 7.14-23), so purity continued to be an issue. John records enigmatically that the disciples of the Baptist, having seen how many went to Jesus' disciples for baptism, had discussed with a Jew' [an early text has the plural here, 'the Jews'] about purity (John 3.26), presumably about the practice of baptism. John's Gospel, which gives the meaning of Jesus' ministry - 'that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God - sets the cleansing of the temple early in the story. This is the first indication of what John meant by 'the Jews'.

It was believed - how widely we do not know - that the Messiah would destroy the temple built by the group from Babylon and build a new, true temple. Using the convention of describing the people of Israel as sheep, *1 Enoch* predicted that the old house would be folded up and carried away, and the LORD of the sheep would erect a new house (*1 Enoch* 90.28-29). In Matthew's (and Mark's), account of Jesus' trial, witnesses claimed that Jesus said: 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days'; to which Caiaphas replied: 'Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God' (Matt.28.61,63). The high priest, then, expected the Messiah, the Son of God, to destroy and rebuild the temple. In the opening scene of his gospel, John used these same titles to introduce Jesus, but added two more: the King of Israel and the Lamb of God, 'Lamb' being the other meaning of the Aramaic word 'Servant'. John chose titles that present Jesus as one of the sacral kings of the first temple: he had John the Baptist identify Jesus as the Lamb of God, the one on whom the Spirit came to mark him as the Son of God; then he had Andrew tell Simon Peter 'We have found the Messiah'; and then Nathanael saying 'You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel' (John 1.33-34, 41, 49).

Throughout his gospel, John presents the Jews as a group who have not only rejected the ways of the original temple; they have forgotten them. They no longer understand them. As he presents his case, John uses bitter irony against those he calls the Jews, culminating with his account of Good Friday. He has Pilate say to the Jews: 'Behold your King'; and he has the chief priests answer: 'We have no king but Caesar' (John 19.14-15). John described the crucifixion as the moment when Jesus was 'raised up' (John 3.14; 8.28; 12.32, 34), and here the allusion is to the LORD whom Isaiah saw in the temple, high and lifted up, and also to the Servant who was exalted and lifted up before he suffered so that his knowledge could make many righteous (Isa.52.13; 53.11).

In this paper I shall set out some of the ways in which John used this first temple royal symbolism and show that he used irony to emphasise how much the Jews had lost touch with their original temple teaching and beliefs.

Before the Babylonians looted and destroyed the temple buildings in about 600 BCE, Josiah had destroyed the first temple cult. His purges were the culmination of many years of attempts to change the ways of the temple. Most of our canonical sources, however, were either written (or edited and transmitted) by those who favoured the changes, and so this ongoing cultural revolution is usually described by modern biblical scholars as 'reforming the temple'. There was an influential group in Judah who favoured and promoted the teaching now found in Deuteronomy. Nobody knows where they came from, but they claimed the credit for Josiah's actions.

They wrote the fullest surviving account of Josiah's work, and they wanted their readers to believe that finding a copy of Deuteronomy in the temple prompted the great purges. We should therefore expect to find in Deuteronomy an indication of what was removed from the older temple cult. Eventually Moses and the Exodus, commemorated each year in the Passover, replaced the anointed kings and their temple festivals in the autumn. It is relevant to our quest that Ezekiel, whose family were first temple priests (Ezek.1.3), prophesied and prescribed the festivals for the restored temple. His Passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month, bears no resemblance to the familiar Moses-and-Exodus Passover, beyond the eating of unleavened bread (Ezek.45.21-24). Both the great 'reformers' of the temple – Hezekiah, recorded in 2 Chronicles 30 - and Josiah recorded in 2 Chronicles 35 – marked the completion of their work by holding a great Passover in the temple, even though the season to commemorate the building of the temple was in the autumn, at Tabernacles. This was Moses taking over the temple; and by the time of Jesus, Moses has even taken over the roles of the ancient king. Philo could say that Moses was named God and King of the whole nation when he entered the presence of God on Sinai (*Life of Moses* 1.158).

Throughout his gospel, John presents the Jews as disciples of Moses – not in itself surprising – but this must be understood as 'disciples of Moses' in contrast to the first temple ways that were superseded by the Deuteronomists' increased emphasis on Moses. The people who preserved the ways of the original temple and hoped that the temple they knew would soon be replaced, wrote the history of Israel without mentioning Moses or the Exodus; this is the *Apocalypse of Weeks* in *1 Enoch* 93. They also described the period from Isaiah onwards as a time when the sheep forsook their temple and their eyes were closed (*1 Enoch* 89.51-67). There is no mention of the great 'reforms' of the temple in the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. The evidence is consistent in the non-biblical sources, and gives the other side of the picture, that assumed by the Fourth Gospel.

Here now are just three examples of how Deuteronomy rejected the ways of the first temple monarchy:

- First, Deuteronomy emphasised that the people had seen no form of the LORD when the commandments were given: 'You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice.' (Deut.4.12). The other, older, account in Exodus says the elders on Sinai *saw* the God of Israel (Exod.24.10).
- Second, the people were not to interest themselves in secret knowledge, but to concentrate only on keeping the commandments (Deut.29.29). These commandments had not been brought down from heaven, nor carried across the sea, a curious reference until one recalls that the heavenly throne was surrounded by a crystal sea. (Deut.30.11-13; Rev.4.6).
- Third, the Law of Moses was to be their wisdom (Deut.4.6).

We shall see that these were the problems for the disciples of Moses as John depicted them in his gospel: seeing the LORD, presumably the LORD in human form, and secret knowledge brought from heaven, which was wisdom.

We find evidence for these aspects of the older temple in biblical texts that are now obscure, or rather, have been obscured by those heirs of the Deuteronomists who transmitted them. Again, I offer only three examples of those which are relevant to John's Gospel, although there are many.

First, there is a passage in Proverbs 30 which is now opaque, but originally concerned the ancient king going to heaven to receive divine wisdom. William McKane, in his great commentary on Proverbs, said this about the corrupted state of this particular text: 'We should look for an original that has the appearance of being 'theologically scandalous'.¹ The passage in question is part of 'the words of Agur, son of Jakeh', of whom nothing else is known. The text seems to describe someone ascending to heaven and acquiring knowledge in the presence of God. In the Lxx, however, this text is in a different place and so in a different context. It is found after Proverbs 24.22, where it is not the words of Agur son of Jakeh, but the words of the king. And where the Hebrew has 'I have not learned wisdom' (Prov.30.3b) the Greek has 'God has taught me wisdom'. This shows that two Hebrew letters have changed places, giving *lo'*, meaning 'not' - I have *not* learned wisdom', where the original Hebrew and then the Lxx read *'el*, meaning 'God' - 'God has taught me wisdom'. Thus the king ascending to heaven to learn wisdom from God was the 'theologically scandalous' original, and consistent with Deuteronomy's question: Who has ascended to heaven to bring down secret teaching? – contrasted with the Law of Moses that was given to everyone.

¹ W McKane, *Proverbs*, London: SCM Press, 1977, p.644.

John's gospel often says that Jesus was teaching on earth what he had learned in heaven:

- The words of John the Baptist about Jesus: 'He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, and yet no one receives his testimony' (John 3.32).
- And three sayings attributed to Jesus himself: 'We speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony.... How can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?' – his words to Nicodemus (John 3.11-12).
- 'I have come down from heaven' (John 6.38).
- 'I speak of what I have seen with my Father' (John 8.38).

There are many examples here too, but the clearest and yet the most overlooked, is the beginning of the Book of Revelation: 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him to show his people what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus, even to all that he saw.' (Rev.1.1-2). Jesus was one of the people who had stood in heaven – in the temple this was represented by the holy of holies - and there received heavenly teaching.

In the temple, those who mystically stood in heaven were standing in the holy of holies which represented the state outside time and matter, the state of unity that lay beyond and so, in a sense before, the material creation. In the temple this state was hidden behind the veil and because it housed the cherub throne, and it was known as the Kingdom. This is why Jesus said: 'The Kingdom of God is in the midst of you' (Luke 17.21). Because it represented Day One of the creation, it represented the source and the beginning, the uncreated divine light. This is where John begins his gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word... in him was light... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...' In the temple, this was ritualised as the King emerging from the holy of holies.

It had been a first temple practice for the king/high priest to enter the holy of holies and there to learn from the LORD. This was the original context for that theologically scandalous passage in Proverbs 30, in which someone had ascended to heaven and come down. He had learned wisdom and knowledge in the presence of God which included the secrets of creation and the name of the divine son. This material can be found in *1 Enoch*, especially in the section known as the *Similitudes*, but there is still some evidence in the Hebrew Scriptures of people who entered the holy of holies and acquired knowledge there.

- The last words of David (2 Sam.23.1-7), show how this was understood. David was the anointed one who was raised up by God and then spoke the words of the LORD. The vital words, 'raised up by God' are found in the Qumran Hebrew text but not in the Masoretic which is different and unreadable. The Lxx has 'whom the LORD raised up', representing the same text as Qumran. In both Hebrew and Greek, the verbs translated 'raised up' can also mean 'resurrect'. It seems there was something theologically scandalous about this 'raising up' which had described the process [or the result] of entering the holy of holies, and so the Masoretic text obscured the words.
- The Second Isaiah had stood in the holy of holies, and the LORD reminded him of the future that he had already seen. '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? (Isa.40.21). Isaiah had learned this from the beginning, the Day One before creation and the foundation of the earth. The LORD then spoke of the future destruction of the princes of the earth.
- Habakkuk stood 'on the tower' - the holy of holies was often called the tower – and he looked out to see what the LORD would tell him. The LORD answered him 'Write the vision, make it plain upon tablets... If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay' (Hab.2.1-2).

David learned wisdom about being a king; Isaiah and Habakkuk learned about the future.

Jesus too received these visions. Luke says that when he was 40 days in the wilderness, 'the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time' (Luke 4.5). The timeless moment of vision was a holy of holies experience, and John presents Jesus as one of these temple mystics who had been raised up, resurrected. These people revealed what they had learned in heaven, something the writers of Deuteronomy forbade. The Book of Revelation shows that Jesus received knowledge of the future: 'The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place...'

The ascent to heaven to learn wisdom is the first example of a first temple practice that was obscured in the Masoretic Hebrew text; the second example underlies the Masoretic Hebrew text of Psalm 110.3 which describes - or rather, *originally described* - the birth of the divine Son. It is now two lines of almost opaque Hebrew, and there have been many attempts to translate them: the AV of the second line is '...in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth'; the RSV has 'upon the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew your youth will come to you'. There is no Qumran text to

compare, but the Lxx has ‘Among the splendours of the holy ones, From the womb, before the morning star, I brought you forth.’ All the versions agree that the person became a Melchizedek priest by this obscured process, and the presence of Melchizedek is the most likely explanation of the state of the Masoretic Hebrew text.

The opaque Hebrew once described the process in the holy of holies - ‘among the splendours of the holy ones’ - by which the Davidic prince became the divine Son - ‘I have begotten you’. The dew, which is in the Hebrew text but not the Greek, was the perfumed anointing oil in the holy of holies. This symbolised the gift of Wisdom, the gift of the Spirit. When Enoch spoke of his own experience of anointing, he described the oil that transformed him into an angel as ‘like sweet dew and its fragrance like myrrh’ (2 *Enoch* 22). Now this particular Enoch text is of uncertain date and provenance; but whoever wrote it knew the meaning of temple anointing, that the anointed one became divine. The myrrh-scented oil prescribed in Exodus 30 imparted ‘most holiness’ to whatever it touched and so transformed a human being into a most holy one.

This anointing was described as birth, and in temple discourse, this was resurrection. ‘I have begotten you’ is how the Lxx read the Hebrew of Psalm 110.3, but because this was a theologically scandalous passage, the same consonants had to be read in the Masoretic text with different vowels, and they became ‘your youth’. The Davidic prince who was ‘born’ in the holy of holies had entered the Kingdom. He was then sent forth to rule, and he *was* the presence of the LORD with his people.

The man begotten by the LORD became his human presence and was known as his Son, but also as the Melchizedek priest. Nobody is certain how to translate ‘After the order of Melchizedek’, but the name itself is enough to identify the temple thread. Jesus was recognised as Melchizedek [not ‘another Melchizedek’, but rather ‘Melchizedek again’], and so the Book of Hebrews contrasts the priesthood of Aaron with that of Melchizedek. The former became priests on the death of their fathers, in other words, they achieved priesthood by descent and by death. In contrast, the Melchizedek priest achieved his status by ascent, resurrection and the gift of eternal life. This is the gist of Hebrews 7.11-25. Thus he became ‘a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek’.

Psalm 110.3, before the Hebrew was obscured, was another theologically scandalous passage about the anointing and heavenly birth of the Son of God who was named Melchizedek. Philo, a learned contemporary of John, said of Melchizedek that when he met Abraham, he did not offer the customary hospitality of bread and water (Deut.23.4), but offered his guest wine (Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.82; Gen.14.18). Since Philo here was allegorising the story to make another point, it is likely that he did not originate this observation about Melchizedek. Now during the years of Jesus’ ministry, Melchizedek was expected to return at any time, as can be seen from the Melchizedek text found at Qumran. At the beginning of his account of Jesus’s public ministry, John told the story of the miracle at Cana. Jesus offered the guests wine when they had been expecting water. He commented: ‘This, the first of his signs... manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him’ (John 2.11). *John presents Jesus as Melchizedek*. Having introduced Melchizedek the expected high priest, John then described how he cleansed the polluted temple.

The third example of first temple practice that has been obscured is where a non-Deuteronomist describes the enthronement of Solomon (1 Chron.29.20-23). Here, it is the inaccurate English translators who perpetuate the work of the Deuteronomists and give a false impression of this kingship ritual. The AV is accurate and has: ‘All the congregation... bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD and the king’; but the RSV has ‘[They] worshipped the LORD and did obeisance to the king’. The RSV translation has two beings and two verbs, but the Hebrew has one verb – they worshipped – and then just one being: ‘the-LORD-and-the-king’. The LORD and the king were one. As if to emphasise the point, we are then told that Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king; in other words, he was the human presence of the LORD. The same usage is found in Revelation, for example in the final scene where the faithful all stand in the holy of holies: ‘The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be [there], and *his* servants shall worship *him*’ (Rev.22.4-3). It was one throne on which there was one being who was both divine and human. So too John’s Jesus declared ‘I and the Father are one [thing] (John 10.30).

John’s Jesus brought heavenly knowledge to earth. He was the LORD incarnate, whose glory John had seen. *These were precisely the elements of the older temple-theology that Deuteronomy rejected*: seeing the form of the LORD – which the Deuteronomists had denied was possible – and bringing heavenly knowledge to earth, which the Deuteronomists said was not necessary since they had the commandments given to Moses.

John also had Jesus describe himself as an anointed high priest although not using those words. 'Anointed' is an important distinction, because the contemporary high priests were not anointed. The holy oil had disappeared in the time of Josiah (Babylonian Talmud *Horayoth* 12 ab), and the high priests of the second temple were known as the priests of many garments: an ordinary priest wore four items - trousers, tunic, sash and turban - whereas the high priest also had the blue outer robe, the ephod, the breastplate and the golden signet inscribed with the Name of the LORD (Mishnah *Yoma* 7.5). The claim to be an anointed high priest immediately indicated a high priest of the original temple, and thus one born as a Son of God.

Bearing this in mind, consider the debate in the temple when the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy, making himself God. Jesus replied by reminding them of the ancient ritual in the holy of holies: 'Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated - that is, anointed - and sent into the world [so presumably this anointing was in heaven] - "You are blaspheming" because I said "I am the Son of God"?' (John 10.36; c.f. 5.18). He was claiming the status of the first temple high priest-kings, as seen in Psalm 110 and also in Psalm 2: 'You are my son; today I have begotten you'. The Jews had apparently forgotten this. Nicodemus had the same problem with heavenly birth. When he went secretly to Jesus in Jerusalem, Jesus said to him, 'Unless one is born from above/again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God', and 'Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God'. Nicodemus asked how anyone could enter his mother's womb a second time and be born (John 3.13), and Jesus then asked *him* how a teacher in Israel did not know these things. The 'Jews' in John's Gospel were those who had lost the teachings of the first temple.

The Jews in John's Gospel were the heirs of the Deuteronomic revolution, and they are frequently depicted by John as the people of the law of Moses. Jesus asked the Jews when he was in the temple at the feast of Tabernacles, 'Did not Moses give *you* [not *us*] the Law?' (John 7.19). When Jesus had come out of the temple, he opened the eyes of a blind man [the text says he anointed them!], and the Jews then accused the healed man of being a disciple of Jesus 'but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he has come from' (John 9.28-29).

Caiaphas knew enough of the ancient role of the high priest to make his bitter remark about the death of Jesus. Melchizedek, according to the Qumran Melchizedek text, was expected to return at any time and to offer the great atonement sacrifice at the end of the tenth Jubilee. The description of the day of atonement in Leviticus 16 is only an outline of the complex ancient ritual, in which the high priest, who 'was' the LORD, sacrificed a goat to represent the LORD and used the blood to renew the eternal covenant and inaugurate the Jubilee. At the Jubilee, everyone returned to his family and his property (Lev.25.8-12). In other words, the symbolic death of the LORD brought the scattered people home. A vestige of the ancient practice survives in the amnesty for fugitives when a high priest died (Num 35.28). When the Jews were plotting to kill Jesus after the raising of Lazarus, John attributes bitter irony to Caiaphas who reminded them of something they had forgotten, the day of atonement in the original temple. 'But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them: "*You know nothing at all; you do not understand* that it is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but.. prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad' (John 11. 49-52). This was the great Jubilee that Melchizedek would bring.

The Jews did not even understand the Scriptures that Moses had written, and here we need to remember that the early Christians understood the Hebrew Scriptures very differently from the way they are understood by Christians today. Christians usually read the Old Testament in Deuteronomists' way, not in the way it was read and understood by Jesus and John. For the early Church, the LORD in the Old Testament was the Son of God Most High, just as Gabriel announced to Mary: 'He will be great and will be called Son of God Most High' (Luke 1.32). The monotheism that we now assume as the religion of Israel was in fact a development introduced and imposed by the Deuteronomists as part of Josiah's purges. Theologically scandalous texts were changed - we know of a group of temple scribes whose role was to remove blasphemies from the sacred writings - and so they altered the ancient Song of Moses, which described how God Most High allocated the nations according to the number of the sons of God and gave Jacob to Yahweh. The Masoretic text says God Most High allocated the nations according to the number of the *sons of Israel* - which makes no sense, but hid a theologically scandalous reading (Deut.32.8). The Qumran text has the original 'sons of God' and the Lxx calls them 'angels of God'. This ancient poem about the sons of God whose second part described how the Lord became King (Deut.33.5), was attached to the end of Deuteronomy because this was the setting for Deuteronomy, this is what Deuteronomy replaced. Moses brought the law from the presence of God, instead of the Davidic king, the LORD.

Paul knew this distinction: 'For us, there is one God, the Father... and one LORD, Jesus Christ...' (1 Cor.8.6); and his contemporary Philo described the second divine being as the High Priest and King. He said that the Logos, the title used by John in the prologue to his gospel, was revealed in the High Priest (*Migration of Abraham* 102); was the First born, the High Priest of the Cosmos (*On Dreams* 1.215); and the High Priest and King (*On Flight* 118). Philo also knew that some people confused and conflated these two, but they were mistaken: 'For just as those who are unable to see the sun itself see the gleam of the parhelion and take it for the sun, and take the halo round the moon for the moon itself, so some regard the image of God, his Angel the Logos, as his very self.' (*On Dreams* 1.239).

John's Jesus engaged the Jews on this very point of the second divinity when he was in Jerusalem for an unnamed feast. He distinguished between the Father and himself, and said that the Hebrew Scriptures referred not to the Father but to him. '[The Father's] voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen' - an ironical allusion to the claim of Deuteronomy that the LORD was not seen when the commandments were given. 'You search the scriptures... and it is they that bear witness to me' (John 5.37, 39). Similarly, Jesus said to the Jews in the temple: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad' (John 8.56); and they replied: 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?'. The first Christians understood the story in the same way as Jesus did: when the LORD appeared to Abraham at Mamre, this had been a pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus. Sozomenes, in fifth century Palestine, wrote this in his *Church History*: 'It is recorded that [at Mamre] the Son of God appeared to Abraham with two angels... He who for the salvation of mankind was born of a Virgin, there manifested himself to a godly man.' (*History* 2.4). This was why Constantine built a great basilica at Mamre. John himself explained that Isaiah had seen the pre-incarnate Jesus in his vision of the LORD enthroned in the temple amidst the seraphim: 'Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him' (John 12.38-41). Isaiah said he had had seen the King, the LORD of Hosts' (Isa.6.5); John said he had seen the One who became incarnate in Jesus. John the Baptist too said he was preparing the way of the LORD, a quotation from Isaiah 40.3 which says the way of Yahweh. Jesus and his followers believed that he was the Son of God Most High, Yahweh, the LORD, a distinction that was lost after the work of the Deuteronomists. The early church proclaimed 'Jesus is LORD', and they meant 'Jesus is Yahweh'.

The theme of the high-priest and king of the first temple runs right through John's gospel. He begins with the One in eternity who was born in the flesh, and then identifies Jesus with the titles of the ancient kings. Next, he is Melchizedek offering unexpected wine to the guests, and then he cleanses the temple. Here John - and none of the other Gospel writers - says that Jesus used a whip (John 2.15). The high priest was instructed, when he scattered the blood on the day of atonement to cleanse and consecrate the temple, to use the action of a whip (*Mishnah Yoma* 5.4). And then there are the debates with the Jews, who never understand what he is doing or saying because they have lost touch with their temple roots. And finally, Jesus is raised up under the title 'the King of the Jews'. He enters the holy of holies - the cave tomb - and then emerges again, resurrected. Mary sees the two angels in the cave where he had lain, just like the two cherubim in the holy of holies who flanked the throne whence the King came forth.

The Jews, then, were the people who had lost touch with the original temple. They were the spiritual heirs of the exiles from Babylon who returned and built a temple that so many people rejected as impure. When John revealed and interpreted the visions of Jesus in the Book of Revelation, he described the destruction of this impure temple and he called it the great Babylon.