

## **Lives 1st Gatherings** ***Things to Explore & Discuss***

### **Introduction to the Temple and Kingdom of Elohim**

By Jim Myers

*The Skies, the Earth were finished, and all their host.  
Elohim finished on Day Seven his mission which He had done.  
And He **rested** on Day Seven from all His mission which He had done.  
Elohim blessed the Seventh Day  
and separated it because on it He **rested**  
from His mission which He had created and made.  
Genesis 2:1-3*

In the *New King James Version* of the Bible, the first story in Genesis is about “**God creating the Heavens and the Earth.**” However, when I explored the Hebrew text behind my English translation, I discovered the story is about “**Elohim creating His Temple and Kingdom.**” The key word that made it possible to understand the ancient meaning is translated “**rested**” in the verses above.

Anchoring texts to timelines and places are essential factors for discovering meanings of words. *Genesis* is part of the **Torah Scroll**, which also includes *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*.

*At first when the Torah was forgotten in Israel,  
Ezra came up from Babylonia and reestablished it.  
When once again it was forgotten,  
Hillel the Babylonian also came up to the Land of Israel  
and reestablished it.<sup>1</sup> (Sukkah 20a).*

Ezra was a priest, scribe, and representative of the King of Persia. He was the chief scribe of a team that produced the first Torah scroll. The scribes were descendants of captives taken to Babylon after the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. There are important references to stories about Babylonia gods during major celebrations. That is where found the ancient meaning of the word “rests” above.

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<sup>1</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 20a.

A temple is built in the ancient world so that deity can have a center for his rule. The temple is the residence and palace of the gods. The role of the temple in the ancient world is not primarily a place for people to gather in worship like modern churches. It is a place for the deity — *a sacred space*. It is his home, but more importantly his headquarters — the control room. **When the deity rests in the temple it means that he is taking command, that he is mounting to his throne to assume his rightful place and his proper role.**<sup>2</sup>

In temple stories in the Middle East, the creation existed to serve the gods and goddesses. But as I said above, the Torah changes the meanings of things stated in those stories.

In Genesis, creation is not set up for the benefit of God but for the benefit of humanity — an anthropocentric view. Thus we can say that humanity is the climax of the creation account. **Another contrast between Genesis and the rest of the ancient Near is that in the ancient Near East people are created to serve the gods by supplying their needs.** That is, the role of people is to bring all of creation to deity -- the focus is from inside creation out to the gods. **In Genesis people represent God to the rest of creation.** So the focus moves from the divine realm, through people, to the world around them. People represent God to the rest of creation.<sup>3</sup>

This is repeated in Psalm 132:

<sup>7-8</sup> Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool — “arise, O Lord, and come to Your **resting place**, You and the ark of Your might” . . . <sup>13-14</sup> For the Lord has chosen Zion, He has desired it for His dwelling: “This is My **resting place** for ever and ever; here **I will sit enthroned**, for I have desired it.”

Genesis 1:1-31 describes the construction of the **Creator’s Temple and Kingdom**, as well as the functions of places and things. **Day Seven** signals that construction has been completed and all things, but one, are now functioning. **The eyes of members of ancient audience are focused on the ADAM!** **BHC**

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<sup>2</sup> *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* by John W. Walton © 2009; InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL; p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> *The Lost World of Genesis One*; p. 69.